

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS | 2016 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

## **What has been the process for deciding upon vision priorities?**

For a detailed, step-by-step depiction of our process with key dates, please consult the display on the wall in Margaret Jewett Hall, as well as the FCC website.

We have been working for almost two years to develop our campaign vision, which grows out of our First Church mission statement and ministry plan.

We conducted a congregation-wide survey last spring and have held several Q and A and open sessions where we have listened to desires and dreams for our building and ministry.

Our consultant conducted a series of individual and small groups to better understand our priorities and reported on his findings.

We have engaged over 50 members on campaign leadership teams, and the campaign vision has been a topic on the agenda of every Executive Council meeting since last fall.

Rob Olson has presented and heard feedback from various First Church leadership groups and from the congregation on numerous occasions, the most recent of which was last Sunday. Rob will continue to consult with our building team here at First Church as the project design evolves.

## **How did leaders come to the current building proposal?**

Feedback from the congregation, as well as updated compliance requirements regarding bathrooms in public spaces, guided the current proposal, which includes the kitchen, changes to the Hastings Room (see next question), new bathrooms, and refurbished meeting spaces as clear priorities. We heard less enthusiasm for the idea of a divider wall in Margaret Jewett Hall and changes to the Narthex entry.

We have professional estimates based on Rob's conceptual drawings for the spaces under consideration: \$900k for the Kitchen and Hastings Common; \$550k for bathrooms; and \$350k for chapel refurbishment, including removal of the old organ and acoustic treatment.

We have, for the moment, set aside \$300k for building preservation and \$50k to do some landscaping and/or Margaret Jewett Hall circulation.

## **Why can't we keep the Hastings Room as it is?**

The Hastings room is a beautiful space that holds a very special place in the hearts and memories of many of our members. We know that there is significant reluctance to open this space. If we want a larger and more functional kitchen, changes to the Hastings Room are necessary.

We considered other places to put the kitchen—the library, the stage, the nursery—and none proved to be either structurally or financially feasible.

A smaller Hastings Room won't be the same Hastings Room, and our programs there are already overflowing the current space. An open Hastings Common will be a wider and more welcoming gathering place, a place for small and large public meetings and receptions.

Our Sunday morning programs will shift to the Chapel and Margaret Jewett Hall while we live into using this new space as a place of informal meeting and hospitality.

## **What will we use for meeting spaces and why might we need to change the chapel?**

Opening the Hastings Room will necessitate a shift to new meeting spaces. One option for storage and small group meeting space will be to repurpose the current nursery. Another is an improved Library. Finally, a refurbished Chapel, with warmer lighting and acoustics, can still maintain its sacred character for worship and be used for small groups, Choir rehearsals, and formation gatherings.

## **What about an elevator and accessibility?**

An elevator, while important to many, was not as widely embraced as the kitchen. We simply do not have enough funds to accomplish both the elevator and kitchen in this first phase. However, the inclusion of the bathrooms now will allow us to more easily and cost effectively build an



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, continued

elevator (where current bathrooms exist) in a next phase of building toward a 30-year master plan.

In 2013 we worked with an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) consultant, who determined that 90% of our current programming is handicapped-accessible. We hope to improve in this area by opening up spaces on our first floor, including the kitchen, and by installing a ramp between the front two walkways so that the main sanctuary door will be wheelchair-accessible.

### **What about the preservation work, masonry, and energy efficiency measures?**

An initial professional engineering study carried out in the summer of 2015 confirmed that we have largely been keeping on top of necessary maintenance for a building as old as ours. Several aspects of our roofing and masonry will require attention in the coming years, especially the window lintels and stonework enclosing the library, so part of the design phase will entail a more rigorous prioritizing and cost estimation.

We will attend to the most pressing areas of concern as part of this construction phase and weave future expenses related to masonry and preservation into our annual budget planning and capital reserve accounts.

We also seek opportunities to achieve higher energy efficiency. Any work we do will include utmost attention to environmental and energy impact.

### **What may make borrowing a prudent decision at this time?**

The Finance Team's reasoning took into account several factors and assumptions, including:

- The overwhelmingly strong response to the campaign vision
- Data-driven assumptions about our congregational growth in membership and pledges
- Carefully compiled estimates of increased revenue for building use that our project can bring
- An anticipated campaign in 2026 that would allow us to retire whatever lingering debt we may have at that point
- The costs of borrowing and annual payments on loans

Detailed spreadsheets forecasting our annual financial picture projected that this campaign could help relieve some current pressure that capital projects place on our endowment (i.e. masonry work). Their projections also assure that post-campaign masonry and preservation work would be included in the annual budget such that future campaigns could be devoted to program and building improvements, and if need be, to paying off debt.

### **What about more fundraising?**

Yes! We are actively reaching out to building users and have already secured commitments from a key partner in this work, the Newtowne School. In addition, we are following up with people within our congregation who may still wish to make or increase their pledge.



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