

First Parish Arlington

Frequently Asked Questions – Capital Campaign 2012-2013

Frequently Asked Questions about the Capital Campaign

December 2012

Financial Feasibility Study Results

What did our UUA stewardship consultant say in his final report?

Mark Ewert recommended that we go ahead and pursue a capital campaign this year. He found that we could confidently expect to raise \$1.2 - 1.5 million, and perhaps as much as \$2.0 million. While this isn't enough to accomplish the whole "Dream" scenario we voted on in October, with its new three-story wing for meeting and education, it is certainly enough to make major improvements in our accessibility and classroom and meeting space. Of course, we could end up exceeding his prediction! However, we will celebrate any amount we raise as a major accomplishment and put the money to good use. He also said that there was an unusually high rate of people willing to volunteer for a capital campaign effort, which spoke well of our positive feelings for First Parish. More details can be found at our website: <http://firstparish.info/index.php/building-br-renovations>

Vote on January 13

Are we voting to go ahead with the capital campaign on January 13?

Yes! A "yes" vote on the 13th will launch us into a capital campaign process. It would be our largest collective project in over 30 years. We would start fundraising in the spring, and this will be the major focus of our congregation for the rest of the year, and fundraising and building will last three or more years. While proceeding with the campaign was approved by our UUA consultant and unanimously recommended by Parish Committee, this is such an important decision, we won't go ahead unless we feel the vote is decisive.

Can I vote by absentee ballot or by proxy?

No, you must be present. Our bylaws require that all voting be conducted in person at a duly called meeting with a quorum present.

Will there be lunch and a children's program at the meeting?

Yes! The youth group will be offering a lunch for purchase, as a fundraiser for their service trip. There will be an entertaining program for children in the Bailey Room from noon to 1 pm.

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The Plan

What are we planning to build?

The final plan will be developed when the fundraising is completed. However, we know that we will build something that addresses the needs that we have identified and the parts of our mission we want to more fully support. It will be in the direction of the "Dream" scenario we voted on in October, which prioritizes meeting and classroom space that is more useable and suited to our needs, and improved accessibility. Actual renovation options, which were identified and priced in the architectural scope study, may include an elevator in the RE wing, reconfiguration and updating of classrooms, doors to close off the vestry and the parlor to make them more useable, and accessibility features throughout the building.

How will we decide what to build exactly?

When the pledge amount, plus the amounts of any loans, mortgages, grants, or other sources, is determined, as early as spring 2013, we will know our building budget. The building committee will then go back to the architects to draft a proposal. Parish Committee will seek congregational support on a final plan before a contractor is engaged.

Then What Happens?

February - Leadership fundraising will begin to secure major gifts to get the campaign off to a good start.

March 2 - The general campaign will begin with a Campaign Kick Off

March - Households will be visited by a capital campaign steward to discuss their gift. We will need lots of folks willing to visit up to 4 households to discuss this along with regular pledges -- training, script and materials will be provided. This is actually a nice way to get to know some First Parish people in a new way. We did the annual pledge this way for a period of time, and most people enjoyed their home visits and still feel a relationship with the folks who visited.

Later spring - Results of the pledging complete

Summer 2013 - Return to architects for a draft proposal

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Pledging

How do I decide how much to give?

The estimate of \$1.2 - 2 .1 million is based on a projection of an amount that is 3 to 5 times the total annual pledge amount. This doesn't mean everyone will be able to triple their pledge - some will do more, some less. Everyone will be asked to give as generously as they possibly can. Often a gift like this is drawn not from a household's general operating fund, but from a source such as a sale of stock or other investment, rental income from a summer property, or temporarily redirecting your annual charitable giving budget. Pledges will be given over a over a three year period. First Parish, unlike a national charity, depends solely on us, its members, for funds. Think creatively about how you can make what may well be the largest contribution you have ever made to the church.

What about my regular annual pledge? Am I supposed to keep up with that, too?

Yes. Annual pledges support the operating costs of our congregation and are needed to continue at our normal level of operations. The Parish Committee recognizes that individuals may prefer not to increase their annual pledge rates while we are in the middle of a capital campaign but they need to continue. Your visiting steward will ask for your annual pledge at the same time as your capital campaign pledge.

What is the period of time during which you will collect my capital pledge?

The campaign is expecting to obtain pledge commitments during the Spring of 2013. Typically, the subsequent collection of funds is spread over a three-year period, or longer, depending on the timing and scope of the final building project.

What if I am limited in my ability to contribute financially?

Certainly money is key for a capital campaign, and we urge everyone to think about making a pledge that is generous for your household, no matter the resulting dollar amount. Temporarily redirecting your annual charitable giving budget may be an option for some of us. We also recognize that contribution to our community is in many forms, and we hope that everyone will become involved in volunteering for all things from a big jobs to smaller tasks.

General Questions

When did First Parish have its last capital campaign?

The last campaign was over 30 years ago, when the church was rebuilt following the 1975 fire. (Read Oakes Plimpton's excellent book on the subject to find out what happened then.) First Parish has not conducted a capital campaign or performed significant maintenance to the building other than based on specific needs (the replacement of the sanctuary lighting) or problems (replacing the boiler). As a result we are unpractised in organizing and giving to a capital campaign. It is important to understand that

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capital campaigns are a normal part of congregational life. Typically, congregations engage in a capital campaign at least once every 10 or 15 years.

What about programming? Are we putting aside any money in this plan for that?

Expanding our program in some way may very well follow improving our space. At this point in the process, we have not specifically decided whether to incorporate program funds into the capital campaign itself or to address this in another way. We will continue to discuss this point throughout our process this year.

Will the trust funds contribute to this campaign?

Yes. The Trustees have been discussing a significant contribution for more than a year now. Working with our investment advisor and the capital campaign finance team they will figure out a contribution that makes sense to support the campaign and also abide by the fiduciary responsibility they have in administering the unrestricted trust funds. They are also considering extending a mortgage much as they have done in the past for large capital projects.

What about our renter, the Sunshine Nursery School?

We depend on rental income and value the positive environmental impact of having our building used during weekday hours. A half-day nursery school is in many ways a good fit for us. Sunshine has been a good tenant for many years, and we would like to continue our relationship with them. We hope to find way to adapt our space that serves the current and anticipated needs of First Parish but allows continued sharing with Sunshine.

I am excited! How can I get involved?

Great! We want everyone to be excited and inspired by this effort. It is our hope that every member of our community embraces this project and maintains enthusiasm throughout the duration of the resulting campaign and building effort. This is a tremendous opportunity for our community to grow and work together to achieve our common vision. There is much work to do and many, many ways to help.

To ask more questions or get involved please contact the Capital Campaign co-chairs:

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