



First Parish in Bedford

Capital Campaign News

It's our turn

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Welcome to the First Parish in Bedford Capital Campaign Newsletter! This newsletter will keep the congregation informed about what the Capital Campaign Committee is doing and the current progress of the Campaign.

Nuts & Bolts of Our Capital Campaign

We've been talking a lot about the various issues that need to be addressed to maintain our 207 year old building. Our home needs a little TLC that is above our annual maintenance budget. It's those big projects all homes have: siding, windows, roof, furnace, driveway. If you've owned a home, you know those big ticket items happen.

Our church is no different. In terms of maintenance, every 10 - 15 years things need to be addressed. Our last Capital Campaign took place around 2010-2012, so we're due.

That is why we're exploring the idea of a Capital Campaign. So how does it actually work? The committee wasn't entirely sure how it would work when we started. And we figured you might have similar questions.

So, here we go.

Church Funding In General

The budget of the church is based on various sources of income. These include fundraisers, income from the lease of cell tower space in the belfry, money from the church endowment, as well as collection from weekly services. The most important source of our budget comes from our annual pledge drive. All that money goes to paying salaries, heating the building, keeping the lights on, etc.

How Do We Pay For Those Big Ticket Items?

Every building has an occasional "big ticket" expense. Homeowners can go to a bank and take out a home equity loan or fund it through savings. As a church we could do something similar. We could borrow money against our endowment, but that's shortsighted and ends up kicking the can down the road for future parishioners to pay.

If we don't want to borrow the money, we need to raise it another way. We need to turn to the people who care most about our church, namely, all of us.

How it Started and First Steps

Last year the church lost heat in one of the sections of the church. One of the four rooftop HVAC units over the Common Room failed and needed to be replaced on an emergency basis. It was determined that the remaining three units were at the end of their life and needed to be replaced sooner than later. After that, a committee was formed to identify what other maintenance issues there might be.

That committee identified a number of issues that should be addressed. The Board voted to create the Capital Campaign Committee that was formed over last summer. The committee members consist of Peter Cho, Jennifer McClain, Gene Kalb, Tom Flannery, Bob Dorer, Joan Bowen, and Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger.

Over the summer 2025, the church hired Sara Green, a consultant from the UUA, to coach the committee and help us explore what might be possible with our congregation. In parallel, the committee started exploring the list of issues and how they might be addressed.

It became clear early on that there were many decisions to be made. We know we have to balance being fiscally prudent and living our values regarding our environmental impact. Those decisions are complicated and need the help of professionals..

That led us to hire GreenerU to help us understand the choices and the impact of each. GreenerU is currently exploring the projects and getting to know the congregation and what's important to us.

What's Next

On February 8, the church will vote on the motion to undertake a capital campaign, its purpose and the goal. It is a simple Yes or No vote whether to go forward with the campaign.



If We Vote Yes, What Happens Next?

If the congregation approves that motion to undertake a Capital Campaign, then the Capital Campaign Committee will identify the projects we recommended and their associated costs. Then we'll move forward with the fundraising. We'll identify a financial goal and work with the congregation to solicit pledges to support the Campaign. We will embark on the campaign, with a goal to conclude at the end of May.

How Does Pledging Work?

Pledges toward the Capital Campaign will be separate from annual Stewardship pledges. Capital Campaign pledges will be due over three years. As an example, if you pledge \$30,000 to the Capital Campaign, you could pay it all at once or spread it out over those three years.

Can I Specify What Projects I Want To Fund?

The short answer is no. Your opinions are certainly important, but ultimately the Board makes the decisions as to what will be funded.

Do I Still Need To Pledge With The Annual Stewardship Campaign?

Yes. The Annual Stewardship Campaign will continue to happen each year and is separate from the Capital Campaign. We need your annual Stewardship pledge because we still need to pay the staff, turn the lights on, etc.

Capital Campaign Committee: *Peter Cho, Jennifer McClain, Gene Kalb, Tom Flannery, Bob Dorer, Joan Bowen, Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger*