



*Vol. 8 - February 5, 2026*

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.

## Time to Vote



### **This Sunday**

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.

This is a simple Yes or No vote. But what exactly are we voting Yes or No on?



## The Warrant

The church bylaws state before we pursue a Capital Campaign, we need a formal vote by the congregation. A formal warrant was posted on January 21, 2020

### THE WARRANT

THE FIRST PARISH IN BEDFORD, UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
BEDFORD, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MIDDLESEX SS:

To the Clerk, First Parish in Bedford

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are hereby authorized and instructed to notify the legal voters of said First Parish in Bedford in the County of Middlesex to meet at the Meeting House of said Parish on Sunday, the 8th day of February 2026, at eleven-forty-five o'clock in the morning and then and there to act on the following articles, viz:

I. To appoint a Minutes Committee. This group of three people will be responsible for reviewing the Clerk's minutes of the meeting in a timely manner, prior to being presented for a vote by the parish.

II. To see what action the Parish will take in support of the launch of a capital campaign from March 15, 2026 - April 25, 2026 with the aim of raising a minimum of \$1.5 million to fund a variety of major long-term infrastructure improvements over the course of three years as recommended by the capital campaign committee with input from the greater congregation.

III. To act upon such other matters as shall be deemed appropriate by the Moderator under the provisions of the by-laws.

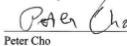
You are directed to serve this Warrant by posting an attested copy thereof at the Meeting House eight days, including two Sundays, before the 8th day of February 2026 and to return this warrant with your doings thereon at said meeting.

Witness our hands this 21st day of January in the year 2026.

The Parish Board:

  
Stacy Chandler, President

  
Mark Bailey

  
Peter Cho

*Approved via email.*  
Robert T. Carlson

  
Bea Brunkhorst

  
Susan Lincoln

  
Wendy Innis, Treasurer

**The full text of the warrant can be found here:**

<https://uubedford.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2026-2-8-Warrant.pdf>

## What A Yes Vote Does

A yes vote, simply put, allows the church to pursue a Capital Campaign. We have been explaining the needs of our building and proposed solutions throughout the church year. Here's the exact text the warrant

*II. To see what action the Parish will take in support of the launch of a capital campaign from March 15, 2026 - April 25, 2026 with the aim of raising a minimum of \$1.5 million to fund a variety of major long-term infrastructure improvements over the course of three years as recommended by the capital campaign committee with input from the greater congregation.*

## What a No Vote Does

It will mean that there will be no Capital Campaign. The infrastructure needs we have identified will be dealt with on an emergency basis, as best as we are able. We have some serious issues in need of rather urgent repairs. We really need to do this.

## **Is This Different From The Annual Stewardship Drive?**

Yes. Here's a brief summary of how the church raises and spends money

### **Annual Church Funding In General**

The annual budget of the church is based on various sources of income, including money that comes in through the Annual Stewardship pledge drive. Other sources of money 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 Annual Stewardship Pledge Drive is the most important source of the church's annual budget. The total of all these annual sources of income goes to paying salaries, heating the building, keeping the lights on, etc.

### **How Do We Pay For Big Ticket Items that are Outside of the Annual Budget?**

Every building has an occasional "big ticket" expense. If you own a home and need to replace your roof, you may go to a bank and take out a home equity loan, or you might fund it through savings. As a church we could do something similar. We could borrow money against our endowment, but that is generally a shortsighted option as it ends up kicking the can down the road for future parishioners to refund the endowment.

Another way to pay for big ticket items that aren't included in our annual budget is to raise the money. To do that, we turn to the people who care most about our church, namely, all of us.

## **Why Now?**

### **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 a 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.

We also hired Studio NDP to address other issues that have been identified..

### **If We Vote Yes, What Happens Next?**

The Capital Campaign Committee has identified projects we recommend and their associated costs. If the congregation approves that motion to undertake a Capital Campaign, then the next step is to solicit and secure pledges to cover the costs of those projects.

### **How Does Pledging Work?**

Pledges toward the Capital Campaign will be separate from Annual Stewardship Campaign pledges. Capital Campaign pledges will be due over three years. As an example, if you pledge \$30,000 to the Capital Campaign, you have three years to meet your commitment. It's important to remember that *in addition* to your Capital Campaign pledge, whatever you pledge to the Annual Stewardship Campaign will be due and payable within the upcoming church year.

### **How Much Should I Pledge?**

That obviously is a personal decision. The general rule from our research suggests 2.5 - 3 times your annual pledge is the standard amount that is pledged towards a Capital Campaign pledge. Again, a hypothetical. If your annual Stewardship Campaign pledge last year was \$10,000, then a good goal to commit to the Capital Campaign pledge would be to pledge between \$25k and \$30k. That \$25-30k pledge would be due over 3 years. Again, it's important to state: this is in addition to the annual stewardship pledge.

### **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.

## **What Are The Proposed Projects?**

You can read all about them and more information at our Capital Campaign webpage: <https://uubedford.org/capital-campaign/its-our-turn/>

## **What are the Priorities and Who Decides?**

The Capital Campaign Committee has spent the fall identifying issues that need to be addressed with proposed solutions and associated costs and tradeoffs. Ultimately it is the Parish Board that authorizes the disbursements of funds. The board will set the priorities based on how much money is raised and the urgency of some of the listed projects,

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



First Parish in Bedford  
**CAPITAL CAMPAIGN 2026**  
— It's Our Turn —  
Legacy • Community & Inclusion • Sustainability