



# ***Not for Ourselves Alone: Building an Inclusive Future***

## First Universalist Church Capital Campaign

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Why do we need a Capital Campaign?**

The simple answer is that our building is getting in the way of our ministry. Not only is the sanctuary in need of repairs but many of our members struggle to hear our fabulous ministers. We strive to be a welcoming congregation but the layout of our building and lack of a central reception area are barriers to visitors getting to know us. We need to upgrade the religious education wing to serve the high numbers of children in our education program, to provide opportunities for greater collaboration with allied organizations, and to provide warm, comfortable spaces for adult programming. Our HVAC, electrical, and other systems are on their last legs. The truth is we've probably put off this campaign for far too long.

#### **How was the decision made to remain at 3400 Dupont?**

The Senior Ministry Team and the Board of Trustees developed a vision for how to better execute our ministries in our current space, which is centrally located for members and close to neighborhoods we wish to serve. After extensive conversations with the church's realtor, we discovered it would potentially take three to four years to move. More importantly, assuming we stay within the city as we have been for our entire ministry, it is unlikely that we would find a sanctuary as large as ours, our parking situation would not improve, and we would still need to remodel that space. The conclusion was that moving is not a viable option to address our needs. The Ministers and Board believe that improving our current space is the best use of our resources and will best serve the diverse interests of our congregants and the surrounding community.

#### **Will the Capital Campaign address the shortage of parking?**

The lack of ample convenient parking is a challenge for many of us and a hardship for some of us. It has been that way for the 23 years we have been at 3400 Dupont and it was a challenge when the church was at 50th & Girard. In an age in which the decline of the automobile may only be a decade away, our values urge us not to double-down on personal convenience, fossil fuels, and individualism. Instead, we have created a task force to examine parking issues and to look for creative solutions using our existing resources.

#### **Has the Board approved the plans that were presented at the focus groups?**

No. The drawings presented at the focus groups were the work of a "pre-design" team of talented church members. The team spent many hours coming up with estimates of the relative costs of making different improvements to our Church building so that we could give people a good idea of the relationship between our vision and costs. After the campaign concludes in spring 2017, work will begin in earnest to determine how much of the plan we can implement.

#### **How will the campaign reflect our racial justice work?**

The Board of Trustees is committed to viewing all important decision-making through a racial justice lens. Although this effort is never complete, we have identified several areas in which we can ensure that the campaign reflects our values:

- The campaign co-chairs and the Senior Ministry Team have been charged with examining all campaign processes for unconscious bias, and will regularly report to the Board of Trustees regarding racial justice issues.
- The Church has adopted a vendor policy through which prospective contractors will be asked to respond to specific questions about equity within their organizations, including ownership, employment, and job assignment. The answers to these questions will be factored into the vendor selection process.
- After we move from the fundraising portion of the campaign to design, we intend to give specific consideration to how the internal appearance of the church contributes to or detracts from creating a space that welcomes individuals of diverse backgrounds and traditions.

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**How did we conclude that \$6.4 million is the right number and within reach for our congregation?**

Our “pre-design” team, working with staff and church members, concluded that our estimated needs are \$6.4 million. Initially, in the dreaming stages of the “pre-design” phase, the team outlined a \$10 million vision; this has been scaled back to reflect the true needs of the church. We have hired a highly-experienced consulting firm, James D. Klote & Associates, to guide us through this campaign. The firm has extensive experience helping churches raise money—including a number of Unitarian Universalist churches—and has had success raising five times a congregation’s annual giving. For First Universalist, that puts us at about \$6.0 million.

**What if we don’t raise \$6.4 million?**

We have big dreams for our Church and we are confident that this campaign will be successful. If we raise less than our needs, a team of congregants will work through the preliminary plans, review the most pressing concerns of the congregation as expressed in the focus groups, and implement as much as we can afford.

**Will I have to make my gift all at once?**

No, pledges may be paid over a five-year period.

**May I use a credit card to pay both annual and capital campaign pledges?**

Yes. The church is charged 2.7–3.5% of the total amount donated, plus a \$0.45 fee per transaction.

**May I use securities to pay both annual and capital campaign pledges?**

Yes. Thanks to Accredited Investments the church is not charged a brokerage fee.

**Why do we want to pay off the mortgage?**

Paying off our mortgage would allow the church to take about \$60,000 per year that is currently spent for principal and interest and redirect those funds into future programming and staffing. Because we are a non-profit, we do not derive any tax benefit from having an outstanding mortgage.

**Why didn’t the plans presented at the focus groups include the Arches Room?**

Building regulations require that renovations to any existing space be made completely accessible. For the Arches, that would mean installing a second elevator at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars. The pre-design team determined that the cost of renovating the Arches would far exceed the benefit the church would derive from doing so.

**What will happen to the library?**

During the initial discussions, no changes were introduced for the library, although it may be enhanced by additional technology.

**What is the plan for our kitchen?**

The kitchen is the heart of many of our programs. Since the focus groups, we’ve learned that we do have a “commercial kitchen.” Moving forward, those who regularly use the kitchen will have input on changes that would make it more functional to meet our needs.

