



First Presbyterian Church of Howard County Capital Campaign Phase 2

Common Questions & Answers

Q: Why are we doing another capital campaign now? Why not wait until the economy improves?

A: Construction prices are currently 25-30% lower than they were prior to the recession. If we wait until the economy fully recovers, the cost of the project will likely increase by \$250,000 to \$300,000. We believe moving forward now allows us to take advantage of some positive signs in the economy and the associated optimism that people are starting to feel without waiting for construction prices to return to their peak. This view was substantiated by the results of a capital campaign feasibility study which was conducted with about 50 members of the congregation in September 2009.

Q: Why are we “spending \$1 Million on an elevator?”

A: The plan calls for much more than just an elevator. This plan is about improving accessibility and enhancing our fellowship opportunities in many different ways. The plan includes: space for fellowship between services, increased access to the sanctuary, additional sanctuary capacity (due to moving the A/V equipment to a separate room), elimination of the Branch Hall pass-thru, sprinklers in the narthex and sanctuary, air locks at the main entrances, energy-efficient windows, handicap-accessible bathrooms to serve Lyle Buck Hall and the sanctuary, an improved Welcome Center, additional storage space, and an elevator to allow everyone to access all parts of the church.

Q: Why do we have to make the Narthex larger?

A: Our current Narthex is congested, unwelcoming, and does not provide access to the fellowship hall without navigating stairs or going outside. Installing an elevator requires the rear wall to be moved out to provide access to all levels of the church. Adding a bit more space and a few additional modifications provides all of the benefits outlined in the campaign brochure.

Q: What happened to the money from the last campaign?

A: The money from the last campaign was allocated as planned toward the mortgage debt, mission, endowment, and campaign expenses. The \$300,000 for capital improvements from that phase of the campaign, along with the money raised for this phase of the campaign, will be combined to create the new Commons area described in the campaign brochure.

Q: What is the campaign contributing toward mission?

A: After phase 1 of the campaign, \$10,000 was contributed to Congregations Concerned for the Homeless and \$10,000 went to Grassroots Crisis Intervention. Another \$10,000 is currently earmarked to evaluate a potential childcare center or preschool at the church. Yet another \$10,000 will be allocated to mission by session.

Q: Will this project add to the mortgage debt?

A: No. In order to move forward with the construction at today's prices, we will need a short-term construction loan to cover the construction payments while pledge contributions trickle in over the 36-month term of the campaign. The construction cost estimates include an allocation to cover the construction financing.

Q: Why don't we focus on reducing our debt?

A: The church has been focusing on reducing our mortgage debt throughout the campaign period. Four years ago, our mortgage debt was almost \$1 Million. A combination of the first phase of this campaign, sound financial decisions by session, and continued contributions by members of the congregation have cut the mortgage debt in half to less than \$500,000.

Q: How much will the construction cost?

A: Based on an initial, detailed estimate from a highly-regarded construction company, our project would currently cost about \$1.1M.

Q: What if we do not raise enough money to cover the cost of construction?

A: Session and the campaign leadership believe that there is an ability and desire to reach the stated campaign goal based on the results of the feasibility study conducted in September 2009. The plan is not to compromise our design as our church leadership believes this is the right solution to address our accessibility challenges. Session will make a final decision on how to proceed based on the commitments made by the congregation.

Q: When would construction begin?

A: Assuming the congregation's commitment total reaches the goal and session votes to move forward, construction could begin as early as this summer.