

The Case for our Capital Campaign

REMEMBERING OUR PAST

Building for the Future

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

WE HONOR THE PAST WITH REFLECTION
BUT THE FUTURE CALLS FOR ACTION!

What is the most tangible act of respect and support each of us can offer at this time in the life of our congregation? It is to give of our resources so the place we hold both necessary and holy will, by our actions, be made strong. Yes, we are at a crossroads, but we need to prepare for the road more traveled. If we do all we can to prepare our facility for the future, this will be a busy, thriving and comfortable home for our spiritual life. Our gift will make us each a part of that future.

INSIDE:

1. PRIZING OUR PAST
2. THE PROCESS BEHIND THE CAMPAIGN
3. CAMPAIGN CHOICES NOW



TO PRIZE OUR PAST:

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FIRST PARISH UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST A Tale of Vision and Commitment

VISION: A brave band of forty-five farming families in 1710 petitioned the Colonial Governor for a new town charter to separate from the town of Dedham and to establish the town of Needham. So that the town could be incorporated, Needham citizens voted to tax themselves 80 pounds to build a church in 1711.

WISDOM: A twenty-two year old Harvard graduate, John Townsend, ministered to this new church for forty-two years (1720-1762). A parsonage was built and he was paid by the town until 1734. In 1773 the meeting house burned and the following year the town of Needham voted 200 pounds to build the second meeting house on the same site at Nehoiden St. and Central Ave.

COURAGE: In 1775 forty men left from the parsonage for the Concord and Lexington battles. Five met their deaths in what is now Arlington.

CREATIVITY: The wise purchase of the Paul Revere bell honored the 100th year anniversary of the church and led to the construction of a bell tower. Rather than repair that tower in 1836, it was decided to build what is now our church.

FARSIGHTEDNESS: In 1879, the church was moved to the new town center on Great Plain Ave. on rollers pulled by strong teams of horses across town, a 73-day journey, to the present site. Parish Hall was added in 1888.

FLEXIBILITY: The 20th century saw changes in the facade and interior, resulting in a more "Colonial look." The Religious Education wing was added in 1949. During the 60's the Unitarian and Universalist Churches were united.

COMMITMENT: In the 1960's, contending with dwindling membership, a dedicated "core" labored unceasingly to stretch scarce funds to preserve their treasured First Parish. Participation in Social Action projects proved stimulating and beneficial -- METCO, fair housing, Roxbury Tutoring, programs for seniors, civil rights involvement all flourished.

POSITION OF WOMEN: Women were first allowed to vote within the church in 1870. Our first woman minister was Rev. Judith Mannheim who was called in 1988 and she served for three years.

EXCITEMENT AND GROWTH: Rev. John Buehrens, former president of the UUA, became our minister in 2002 and has sparked growth in membership, programs and enthusiasm for the future of First Parish.

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1. PRIZING OUR PAST

*Our heritage is one of
inspiration -- a tale
of members who for
centuries have as-
sessed the needs and
met the challenges.
We can do no less.*



GETTING TO “YES” THE PROCESS BEHIND THE CAMPAIGN

We have developed a great affection for our Meeting House in the years we have lived in it, and it has served us well. Although familiarity is often forgiving, we cannot ignore in perpetuity the problems of living in our beloved building. Time and constant activity have contributed to the signs of wear, and the demands of changing uses have altered our expectations for physical space.

ASSESSING THE NEED

Recognizing the need for building improvements to meet the needs of our growing church community, our Parish Committee appointed a Capital Projects Study Committee in the fall of 2002 to determine how we could go about planning a renovation project. Initial studies were conducted and a tentative plan was laid out to involve the entire church community in the plans for renovations. At the Annual Meeting in May, 2003, a Strategic Planning Committee was appointed, and funds were appropriated to hire a UUA consultant, Jerry King, to help us. The committee was charged with clarifying our vision and mission, developing a strategic plan for the next five years, recommending various building options, and reporting their findings at the next Annual Meeting.

THE PLANS TAKE SHAPE

The committee’s work began in the fall of 2003 when the church community participated in “visioning” workshops, and approved new vision and mission statements in December. A Building Design Team was appointed to conduct a survey of the church committees, determine our collective space and physical plant needs, and draw up a list of building requirements – completed in January, 2004. Working with an architect since the spring of 2004, the Building Design Team has developed preliminary plans. **These plans meet our priority needs:**

- increased Parish Hall social space
- increased classroom space
- improved accessibility
- improved infrastructure and energy efficiency
- repairs to the bell tower
- improved kitchen

They offered two options to the congregation in January 2006. a renovation plan with total cost \$2.6 M and a new construction plan with total cost of \$3.2M

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2. THE PROCESS BEHIND THE CAMPAIGN

We have identified the critical needs for our growing church and developed building plans that address these needs.



OUR CHOICES

THE MEMBERSHIP DECIDES: A choice between the two plans will be recommended to the membership by the Capital Campaign this spring. The decision will be based on input from the membership, gathered in neighborhood meetings, in one-on-one conversations, and feedback received during the annual canvas. This is a dynamic process and the Capital Campaign is eager to learn and carry out the will of the membership.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Renovation Plan: Total: \$2.6MM

Estimated Sources:

Endowment= \$580K

Mortgage= \$600K

Capital Campaign= \$1.420MM

New Construction Plan: Total: \$3.2MM

Endowment= \$580K

Mortgage= \$600K

Capital Campaign= \$2.020MM

CAMPAIGN TIMELINE:

January – February 2006:

Canvass Orientation

January - March: Neighborhood Meetings

February – November: Capital Campaign

April 30: Annual Meeting/Vote

June 2007: Construction begins

THE FUTURE IS COMING-

Work will begin in June 2007 to improve First Parish for our growing social, educational and religious needs. To honor our past and make ready for our future, we need the highest level of participation in the Capital Campaign of all members, friends and supporters of our shared community.

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3. CAMPAIGN CHOICES NOW

*What we need to do to
build for the future of
First Parish*

