

# Facts Update for Frequently Asked Questions

## **Question: How were these plans developed?**

**Answer:** In 2016 we started a Strategic Planning process that culminated in a Strategic Plan. This Strategic Plan was adopted by the Congregation at our annual meeting in February 2017. This plan defines our Vision as comprised of four pillars: Welcome, Worship, Learn, Serve. At the same time, the fire chief was increasingly warning us that our facility was unsafe for current use and that any future uses would have to be put on hold until we were in compliance with fire and life safety codes.

In December 2017 the Building our Vision team was formed to see what changes were needed to better live into our strategic plan. The plans put in place to bring the facility into code compliance and to enable us to live into our strategic plan emphasize the pillars of Welcome, Worship, Learn, Serve, built on a foundation of Safety. These plans have been developed by BoV over the course of the last year-and-a-half.

The BoV plans have been thoroughly communicated to, and refined by, the congregation in that period of time. BoV has held planning sessions, information sessions, Sunday updates, feedback sessions, and more. This dialogue has continued up to and including the recent products and pre-Commitment parties of the Funding our Vision (FoV) team, as FoV seeks to provide the wherewithal to finance the project we recommend.

The Funding our Vision team was formed in November 2018, in response to the overwhelming vote by the congregation in October 2018 to engage in a capital campaign to support the structural changes proposed by BoV. FoV has been hard at work since the inception of the *Joy of Generosity* capital campaign a few months ago. This capital campaign culminates on Commitment Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, Palm/Passion Sunday when we hope to have the Letters of Intent completed by the congregation.

## **Q: How does the pay-in period work for the Letters of Intent (LOIs)? Do I have to give it all in one year or can I spread out my donation?**

**A:** The pay-in period is three years and starts on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 continuing through April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. This allows contributions to be deducted across four tax years and could benefit some members who itemize on their tax returns. The number of payments and their timing is determined by the donor and can be indicated on the LOI.

## **Q: Is this renovation project really needed?**

**A:** Our church, as fond as we are of our current meetinghouse, is in need of renovation, to restore and update the appearance, to serve more members, to improve our ability to meet changing community needs, to tackle persistent and ongoing maintenance issues, and to bring our facility up to code for fire safety and life safety.

Many of the expenses for the renovation project are actually money that we would be spending anyway (see maintenance discussion below). We are leveraging our spending in these cases in innovative ways, such as the new patio. Rather than piecemealing or stringing projects together we can do them at once – for efficiencies of scale – and end up with an improved, more appealing product that is better suited to our needs.

**Q: Aren't we just "feathering our own nest"?**

**A:** Our church life is currently limited by our facility. Missions we know we would like to undertake we can't because of facility limitations. We are not up to code (as noted above) and the Fire Chief views our facility as unsafe. Although current groups using the church have been 'grandfathered', we are not permitted to take on new groups or uses for Hardy Hall until the fire/life safety issues have been corrected. Please note that the Fire Chief is solidly in favor of and has voiced his approval of our plans in meetings with the selectmen and even in the 'epic' video.

The fire and safety improvements include on-grade exits from Hardy Hall to a new patio, improved pedestrian flow on the lower level to facilitate egress, and fire-rated stairways on both the west-side opposite the library and on the east-side. This approach avoided a costly, less effective approach that would have required lower level sprinklers and underground water storage.

These changes will allow us to better serve our needs as well as the needs of the community, and to live into our strategic plan of welcome, worship, learn and serve. As the church gets new life so will our programs. We have already started work on a "Living our Vision" team to ensure our facility will be used to the utmost.

**Q: What are we paying for?**

**A:** The recommended project is a renovation project that addresses safety concerns and provides new capabilities for innovative ministries in support of our strategic plan, including improvements for welcome, worship, learning and service. All this while maintaining the historic look-and-feel of the church. Approximately 1950 square feet of new space will be provided but nearly every surface will be touched in some way, and approximately 4600 square feet of our space will undergo substantial renovation.

When completed, our meetinghouse will be brighter with more natural light from new windows, our church will be more accommodating for families and less mobile individuals, and will incorporate a variety of improvements for new flexibility and new missions. Our kitchen will be updated with an eye to efficiency and versatility, enabling additional community outreach. The patio is expected to become a welcome new interface for community and church events in the town center. Most importantly our church will be more welcoming, with improvements for worship, learning, and service, and it will be safer.

**Q: How will this project raise our faith?**

**A:** By involving all our members, our friends, and the community in the project and in the exciting possibilities that the project opens up, each of us can experience a richer and more meaningful spiritual life, growing closer to God and to our fellow Christians.

**Q: How are future maintenance actions affected?**

**A:** A lot of thought has been given by the BoV team to deferred maintenance items as well as likely near-term and mid-term maintenance needs and operating costs. Addressing our long list of deferred maintenance items has always been one of the major goals of the renovation. Our architect has completed a thorough assessment of our building and its systems to ensure that we understand current and upcoming maintenance needs.

If the renovation is completed as currently defined, all substantial deferred and near-term maintenance needs will be addressed as part of the project. Also addressed as part of the project cost are the critical building and life safety code-compliance issues; without this renovation we will need to address code-compliance needs in future years as part of our annual budget process or using funds from the endowment.

We have a substantial amount of work we need to do related to maintenance and code-compliance. If we don't do this work now, it will have significant impact on future budgets.

**Q: Is there a schedule for when this is all happening?**

**A:** For planning purposes our tentative schedule is as follows.

Our *Joy of Generosity* capital campaign is geared toward Commitment Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, Palm/Passion Sunday, when we are asking that Letters of Intent (LOIs) be completed by the Congregation.

Two weeks later, April 28<sup>th</sup>, we will announce the results of our capital campaign.

The following week, May 5<sup>th</sup>, we are planning for a congregational vote to approve proceeding on a recommended, tailored, phased renovation project using the funds from the *Joy of Generosity* campaign.

Pending approval by the congregation, work will proceed on construction drawings for the entire project, and for selecting a construction manager. Ground-breaking for a two-phase project is planned for September this year.

Phase 1 is focused on the lower level and excavation of the east-side lawn outside Hardy Hall and comprises key safety features. A six-month construction schedule for Phase 1 is anticipated.

Following the completion of Phase 1, a second phase focused on the upper level will commence, including excavation of the south-side of the church facing Monument Square with the new construction and improvements we will be recommending.