

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How does a Capital Campaign work? When is the money due? How much money would need to be raised before construction starts?

Through a proven process of prayer, education and inspiration, members are asked to make a three-year commitment in addition to their commitment to the operating budget. Should the church approve it at the Church Conference, this campaign will be conducted this spring. The outcome of the campaign is based on total pledges, anticipating that the money will come in over the three-year period. It would be at the conclusion of this spring campaign that we would refine the decision about what we could afford to build and continue with building plans.

2. Are we considering one capital campaign or two?

At the Church Conference on January 22, we are voting to conduct one three-year capital campaign. The Building Committee has suggested that, with two consecutive three-year campaigns, we could potentially fund our facilities priorities and eliminate all of our existing debt. Currently, however, we are just voting on one three-year campaign.

3. What is the plan if we don't raise enough money?

The concepts and budget presented at the Town Hall meeting were an example of an affordable way to accomplish our facilities priorities. At the conclusion of the Capital Campaign this spring, and after the Building Committee has done more work on plans and prices, the Building Committee will be able to make a more accurate recommendation of how much we would plan to build and the cost for this plan.

4. How will the congregation be kept informed about the progress?

The Building Committee and the Capital Campaign Teams will seek every opportunity to keep the congregation informed through written communication, presentations in worship and emails and other electronic means. Further, we will continue to conduct Town Hall meetings from time to time to allow opportunity for direct interaction and more feedback.

5. Why not pay off the debt first and then raise money for new construction?

The Building Committee, like the leadership of the church, desires to eliminate our existing debt. But our primary focus is on the Vision 2020 Stepping Stones. In order to continue to be as effective as we can be, our facilities must be as effective as our ministries. Certainly debt costs money. And construction/renovation costs money. The Building Committee has researched this and found that the cost of construction is increasing (5-6% per year) at a rate greater than the cost of debt and this trend is projected to continue for the foreseeable future. In other words, if we pay off the debt first and wait to start construction, it will cost the church much more than if we build now and then pay off debt. By pursuing two back-to-back campaigns, we have the capacity to be debt free and fund our building priorities in six years.

6. How will construction be phased to accommodate all our programs to minimize disruption?

The Building Committee has put together a "Building Sequencing" team. They are responsible to review and propose phasing of the construction, demolition and renovation activities to be the least disruptive to the many ongoing programs and ministries. This may include temporarily relocating programs and may even include portable buildings with the goal of accommodating our ministries cost-effectively during construction.

7. If youth go to the first floor, what will become of the Parlor?

The details of interior layouts has not yet been determined. The Building Committee has worked hard on analyzing our needs, developing a master site plan and a possible construction plan for the next phase. There are many, many details to work out over the next year – from interior walls to location of restrooms, to color of carpet. The Building Committee is aware of the versatility of the Parlor and will consider options to keep a similar room that is multipurpose.

9. How will offices on the second floor work? Whose offices will be up there?

This is similar to the question above. If we continue with the plan to tear down the youth building, we would lose a number of offices, including the workroom and copy room. These would need to be relocated. At this point, it is suggested that they could be housed in part of the second floor of the Children's Building. But it is too early to know exactly how that would be arranged or who would be located there.

10. Can we reduce some costs with volunteer labor?

Yes, but there are certain legal and building code issues we must consider. Construction of this magnitude requires permits and inspections and oversight. Further, there are liability issues that could put architects and the construction company at risk if volunteers do certain kinds of work. But you know our church – we have many committed and skilled volunteers. We will seek every opportunity to save costs by doing what we can with volunteers.

11. What will be done to remodel sanctuary?

Our beautiful sanctuary is in need of some refreshing and updating. However, the feedback from the church is that it is not as high a priority as addressing the needs of youth, children and hospitality. It is too early to tell how much we will be able to afford to do in the sanctuary until after the Capital Campaign. It could involve needed remodeling to the chancel and choir loft area and updating and improving our audio equipment. Many of our pews are in poor shape and need repair or replacement. Or it may be as minor as repainting. We will just have to see how much we can afford.

12. What is the plan to complete the Master Plan? How much would it cost? How many more phases?

The answer to this question is outside the scope of our current project. In order to determine how to best address our current needs, we need an understanding of what the final build-out might look like. Therefore, as a first step, we updated our Master Plan and then focused on the immediate project.

13. Why is the front of the church/main entrance on the back side of the building where it can't be seen from Greenville Ave.?

The positioning of our existing facilities limits our ability to have a main entrance on Greenville. The layout of the sanctuary has a major impact on where to place a front entrance. The Building Committee has been investigating options to make the church more visible from Greenville Ave.

14. What will happen to ministries that use the Wesley House (Ministry Center) and the storage building?

For this phase, there is no plan to make any changes to the Wesley House and the storage building. In the Master Plan, it is no longer present and the space is repurposed. So, for this phase, those ministries are not impacted. However, the Building Committee has acknowledged the importance of those programs and they will not be ignored. Perhaps a section of new construction in the Master Plan will include an area of classrooms with direct exterior access, but this is yet to be determined.

15. What is our capacity for financing? Interim financing?

We are in the very early stages of the process. The Building Committee has created a Finance Team that will work on cash flow, interim financing, etc. A financial plan will be presented to the church.

16. Does the building plan allow for adequate parking?

Very little parking will change in this project. We believe we have adequate parking all the way through completion of the master plan.

17. Will there be a covered drop off?

Yes, the Building Committee acknowledges the need for curbside drop off. The details are still to be determined.

18. What might be the impact on our church and this project of the coming UMC decision on homosexuality?

We believe that God has called us to be a church that embraces all generations on a life-changing Christian journey to change the world. We are committed to pursuing our vision and reaching our mission field no matter what.

19. Is there research and projections of increased attendance and giving as a result of a capital campaign?

Yes, we have seen data that suggests that a building program can energize a church and create excitement. As a result, church members are more willing to invite others to their church and this can lead to growth. Most, if not all, of the churches visited by the Building Committee were experiencing an upsurge in attendance.

However, we do not assume that new construction itself will increase attendance. Buildings do not generate growth, but they can inhibit growth. We recognize that we must make improvements to our Youth and Children's areas, and need a hospitality area to encourage more fellowship opportunities.

20. What is current giving membership?

In 2016, 531 family units gave an average of \$3,611 each to support the General Operating Budget.

21. What is the cost per giving family on \$6M?

Every family has a different capacity to give. God has blessed each of us in different ways and we believe that He expects each of us to share our gifts. "Not equal gifts, but equal sacrifice." As a community of faith, we encourage everyone to prayerfully consider how God may use our gifts and to respond faithfully to God's leading.

22. Did we evaluate the health of FUMCA compared to other churches?

Church health is a difficult thing to evaluate and especially difficult to compare to other churches. The purpose of the Potential and Possibilities Study was to determine our church's readiness for a Capital Campaign and building project. Our Horizons Strategist has much experience with many churches and took these factors into account when doing his research and offered his thoughts regarding the congregation's capital fundraising capacity. Furthermore, members of the Building Committee visited many churches in our area who are either in the middle of construction or recently completed a new or renovation effort. The Building Committee has brought all of this knowledge into the analysis of our situation at FUMC Allen.

23. How do our finances compare to other churches that are building?

Members of the Building Committee visited many churches in our area who are currently in construction to collect lessons learned. Though we didn't have access to their financial records, we are aware that most of the churches that we visited are carrying debt. Our Horizons Strategist reminded us that it is not uncommon for congregations to carry debt in order to accomplish the respective vision for ministry to which they believe God is calling them. Ultimately, each congregation is unique, each vision is unique, and the circumstances for each congregation (demographics, facilities priorities, financial capacity, etc.) are unique. Rather than compare ourselves to others, we are committed to embracing our uniqueness and fulfilling what we believe is God's vision for our particular congregation called to serve our particular mission field. Our commitment is to be bold in pursuing such a vision and fiscally responsible in funding that vision.

24. What are the demographics of FUMCA compared to our community?

The median age for FUMC Allen is 47 years versus Allen surrounding area median age of 35.5 years. There is much more detailed demographic data (household income, population, ethnicity, and generational data) in the church office. Please contact the church office for more information.

26. What is our history of success of capital campaigns and history of debt?

The historical data on debt and previous capital campaigns was presented during the Town Hall meeting in August. Please contact the church office to get a copy of the graphs with historical data. In summary, we have very good success with capital campaigns in our history. We conducted back-to-back campaigns in 1998 and 2002 in which we raised close to \$4M. In 1998, the amount raised was 2.2 times our annual budget at that time. Our church has a long history of being good stewards with managing debt, generally keeping our debt service payments to a low percentage of our overall budget. In our 40 year history of records, as a percentage of our operating budget, our debt is lower now than it has been in all but three of those years.

27. What are the financial and membership trends of the church?

The financial history and attendance history were presented during the Town Hall meeting in August. Please contact the church office to get a copy of this graph. In summary, it shows that our church attendance has been declining over the past few years and at the same time, our per capita giving has increased.