



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

305 EAST MAIN STREET • DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA 27701 • 919-682-5511

Dear friends,

At the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday at the end of worship, I shared with those in attendance or online an update on the 2022 Building Beloved Community Capital Campaign and the proposed building renovation and expansion plan. Because not everyone was able to attend (or watch) the meeting, I wanted to share that information with you again here:

As most of you know, through our 2022 Capital Campaign we have raised (through your pledges and a \$600,000 bequest) over \$3 million. This was exactly what we hoped to raise to do the renovation and expansion you can see posted out on the bulletin board in the foyer. Unfortunately, as we shared with you in a detailed brochure this time last year, around the same time the capital campaign began, construction expenses began to rise significantly and before we knew it, we could no longer afford to build the plan designed for us. In 2024, under the leadership of Paul Baldasare, we applied for grants that supported church capital projects (most do not). We also talked to potential donors outside of our membership. Recognizing the challenges before us, the Session held a Saturday retreat last fall. On that day, Tyler Momsen-Hudson, chair of the Building Committee, Paul Baldasare and I carefully reviewed with the Session the proposed renovation and expansion plan (and how we got to that plan from our 2019 long-range plan), the revised cost of the plan due to inflation, and the overall financial picture – in other words, exactly what it would take to move forward with this project.

The results were clear. We need an additional \$2 million to proceed with the current plan. In addition, we would still need to borrow \$1 million to be paid off at a later date. After small and large group conversations, the Session decided we needed to have a “Plan B” to share with the congregation as another option to continue to try to raise money for the current plan. At their next stated meeting, they voted to explore renovation options that would keep the current footprint of the church. This means that the fellowship hall, kitchen, volunteer and Walk-in Ministry offices, bathrooms, gathering spaces, and memorial garden would not be expanded, but would be renovated.

The preparation of Plan B is in process now. The Building Committee is meeting weekly to consider alternative plans that will enhance, repair, and beautify our current space. When the time is right, we will bring both plans back to the congregation to get your feedback. Ultimately the Session will decide how we will proceed, but not before the congregation has a chance to grasp the financial implications of the original plan and see a possible revised plan.

In addition to this, the Session approved a Building Assessment. This will happen this spring and will give us a 15-year picture of what repairs, replacements, and maintenance work is required, and when required projects should happen. This information will also help us consider how to move forward.

Most of you have already contributed to the 2022 Capital Campaign. We cannot thank you enough for your generosity and vision. Funds already contributed have been invested at the recommendation of our Finance and Investment Committee and are



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earning interest until we need those funds. We want to be good stewards of your gifts. We want to move forward in a way that is faithful to the intention of your gifts. We also do not want to make decisions that will burden our annual budget in the future.

The Finance and Investment, Property, and Building Committees, in addition to the Session, have been working and praying that the Holy Spirit will help us discern the right way to proceed as a congregation. You are critical partners in this work, too, as your faithful generosity is what will sustain our future direction and pave the way for generations of people to worship, learn, grow, and follow Jesus by loving God and neighbor.

We have trusted God throughout this process, and we continue to trust that God will lead us to the right plan for the future generations of people who live out their faith as a part of First Presbyterian Church. We hope to have more information to share with you for conversation and feedback by late spring. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

With Gratitude,

Mindy