



Dear Oakland Family,

On Sunday, September 27th, I announced a return date to the sanctuary for in-person worship. This return date is November 15th. As has been proven with other churches across the country, even after the sanctuary is reopened, we can expect many people to continue worshipping online. Knowing this, there are improvements that need to be made to the Audio/Visual capabilities in our building. These improvements will enhance our Livestream capabilities, as well as the visual and sound quality in the sanctuary space itself. Furthermore, this will provide exceptional capabilities for special worship experiences in years to come. This is an exciting possibility and I am pleased our Fellowship of Deacons and Finance Committee have endorsed this expenditure.

Because of the expense associated with this project, the congregation must approve moving forward. You are receiving this letter as notice of our plans pending church approval. On **Wednesday, October 7, from 5:30-6:00PM** a discussion will be held via Zoom. **The code for this discussion is 713 378 3329.** On **Sunday, October 11**, an electronic vote will be held using a secure link sent by email from the church office. This vote will be conducted similarly to other votes we have conducted during the pandemic period. If you are not able to vote electronically, absentee ballots will be available in the church office on **Thursday, October 8, and Friday, October 9, from 8:00AM-3:00PM** each day.

In summary, here are the proposed improvements that will take place in the sanctuary building:

- Improve the quality of sound for both in-person and livestream services, including audio quality of choirs, choral and musical ensembles, Crossroads Band, and handheld microphones. The livestream audio will run on a separate mixer so that instruments such as the organ and handbells will be more audible.
- Ability to stream other platforms such as YouTube and Facebook Live from the sanctuary space.
- Added speakers in the choir loft and under the balcony to ensure better sound for worshippers.
- Replacing old wireless equipment (microphones, etc) currently operating on frequencies now considered “illegal” by the FCC as of July 2020 due to reassignment to cell phone providers.
- A major lighting upgrade which is twenty years overdue will improve the visual quality of the pulpit, platform, choir loft, and communion areas. Special worship services and events throughout the year will benefit from the added flexibility of an integrated digital system.
- Emergency exit lighting, currently non-existent, will be added to the sanctuary space.
- Included in this proposal are small improvements to the overall technical, sound, lighting, and video capabilities throughout our facilities.

Equipment quotes and installation prices have been secured by trusted companies that have been in partnership with Oakland for many decades. The total expenditure for this project is \$108,000.

The Finance Committee, with the endorsement from our Fellowship of Deacons, make the following proposal for financing this project:

- It is recommended that the aforementioned Audio/Visual project be paid for with available funds on hand from favorable budget variances and receipts exceeding expenses year to date. Currently this is over \$100,000 favorable.



- The majority of the variance comes from the following accounts:
Debt Retirement – approximately \$27,000 and increasing throughout the year. The debt was retired in January 2020, but the budget was not modified.
Reduction in utility expenses – currently favorable variances of approximately \$24,000 due to the building being closed. This variance amount is also expected to increase.
CARES ACT FORGIVENESS (PPP) - PAYROLL PROTECTION PROGRAM. This represents approximately \$60,000 of loan forgiveness for OBC. Funds are in the bank and the budget was not reduced representing the receipt of funds. **Per discussion on Wednesday, October 7, no money will come directly from PPP to fund this project.**

Again, let me reiterate how much potential is present in this Audio/Visual improvement project. I am grateful for the leadership of so many in bringing this project, severely overdue, to fruition. If you have questions, I encourage you to be present for our Zoom discussion on Wednesday, October 7, from 5:30-6:00PM. Voting instructions will be sent via email next week. Should you not receive an email link, or you need to vote absentee, please contact the church office at 803-328-3864.

Sincerely,

p.p./Rev. Dr. Jeff Hayes
Senior Minister

Mr. David Williams, Deacon Chairperson
Mr. Carl Compton, Finance Chairperson