October at Emmanuel

It's October at Emmanuel again which means Stewardship Campaign time, but remember that it's also time to appreciate our Sanctuary and the rest of our buildings and property. As our website points out, that the cornerstone for the original Sanctuary was laid on October 11, 1866, and that the Sanctuary was consecrated one year later on October 24, 1867 – now 158 years ago. If you look at historic photographs of the Sanctuary, it is apparent that the space has certainly evolved and expanded. Our Sanctuary is an amazing space; it has been cared for, maintained, expanded and improved over the past 158 years because of the faithful stewardship of members. As members today, we are the current beneficiaries of that stewardship and the other financial gifts of the Emmanuel membership who came before us.

As John Long pointed out last week during his remarks announcing the start of our 2025 Stewardship Campaign, there are ministries funded by our stewardship that are clearly visible and important and others less visible but still important. Continuing care for our building and Sanctuary is perhaps one of those less visible but still important ministries.

During the past couple of years, our pledge dollars have provided the resources to complete several important but less obvious additions and improvements in our building and the Sanctuary. We now have high speed telephone and internet service in the building with the conversion to fiber optic service. We replaced our 30-year-old telephone system with new equipment and a far more flexible user-friendly system. We upgraded the building fire monitoring and alarm system and extended that system into the Preschool and Sanctuary. We extended the building WIFI service into the Sanctuary providing improved capabilities to stream our services to members not able to attend in-person; and we added the door security systems at the Behold and Preschool entrances. All of these improvements were not very obvious but certainly important.

Three years ago, your pledge dollars and other financial gifts allowed Emmanuel to renovate the Bell Tower and to replace the original steel cladding on the Steeple after 155 years with copper likely to last for the next 150 years. Those improvements were certainly far more visible to the membership and also to the surrounding community. The bright new copper cladding was a bold statement regarding our commitment to sustain our building and Sanctuary. This year, we are presently watching the completion of our new digital information sign on the Jones Hall lawn adjacent to Lockwood Avenue. Perhaps some of you reading this were not in favor of adding the digital sign; but look at it as another outward expression of our commitment to sustaining and improving our building and property.

Recently I was asked by John Long as the Junior Warden for building concerns to prepare and provide to the Vestry a list of building and property needs and wants for repairs and improvements. I can tell you that it is not a short list. It has been my experience during my involvement with the care of our building and property, that there is always a list. I suspect that there has always been a list, and that there will always be a list. Like anything else we care about our building and property do, and always will need our care, maintenance, and improvement.

Thank you for your past stewardship, and your important consideration during this October for the 2025 Stewardship Campaign; sincerely Dave Pluhar.