

OUR BUILDING

Projected Expenses: \$110,176
% of Total Budget: 19%



Psalm 132:7—Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool.

Our First Church Building is full of surprises. Our Facilities Team has our hands full keeping up with the maintenance and requests from staff and members. We are currently working with a vendor to design and install a new Audio-Visual System that will allow us to Live Stream worship services when we return for Sanctuary worship as a congregation. In the meantime, it will ease the process for staff to record weekly services, weddings, and memorial services.

Other projects we have scheduled for the coming year include roof patching, exterior painting, and installation of new cabinets in the balcony for bells and the sound system. Our paid cleaning and maintenance staff have used the COVID year to accomplish tasks difficult to complete in an occupied building, such as refinishing the dining room floor.

We also organized and managed volunteers planting new signs in the parking lot, another group who built raised garden beds and harvested vegetables for Feeding Chittenden this past summer, and we helped construct the Backpack Blessing Arch. Without the financial support of our members we could not keep up with these needs. Thank you to all of you who support this work.

—Doug Viehmann, B&G Team

“Our building comes alive as Elissa shifts her place in the sanctuary during worship.”

—Pam Meaker

“Our church building is important to me because my spirituality is grounded in sharing faith with the many who share theirs with me.”

—Ellen Pine

“Our church building gives us a sense of sacred space which complements our community of believers.”

—Michael Samara



First Congregational Church



Youth Mural



Memorial Garden

Welcoming All, Seeking Justice, Finding God



STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN 2021

Building Bridges to Our Church's Future



Dear Friends:

I often wonder at how accustomed I have become to instantaneous results and feedback. If the refresh button on the computer were an actual button, it would have worn out by now. At my writing, the clearest result of this week is how profound our fractures are.

It seems that fractures and access have defined 2020. On the one hand, our physical access to one another has been restricted in ways not seen in our lifetimes. Simultaneously, the internet has given us unrestricted access both to information, and also to one another's thoughts. Yet, that very expansiveness has allowed us to pick and choose the voices and the information we want to hear. Our difference, rather than dissipating in the vast ocean of information, has been reified.

It might seem an odd time to write about Stewardship. But I think the need for First Church to live into its faith could not be clearer – not simply for the community, but for ourselves. No matter the outcome of the election, as social ties fracture, we gather with those who are **not** like us. As the world has come to expect all things to be available and on hand now, we trust that God's time is so much longer than our own. Rather than looking outward for the causes of division, we start with ourselves. Rather than looking to our own desires, we look outwards at who is most in need. As we look at the brokenness in front and inside of us, we see glimpses not of what has been, but what might be.

As you will see, over the past 8 months, we have done truly wonderful things. Together. Being fully staffed, with Hannah here, has been key to creating meaningful online worship experiences. We have undertaken new study groups – Privilege and Anti-Racism, Bible Study, Art and Civic Life. We have held regular vigils and begun new processes for Art and Feedback. We have launched a Visioning Task Force to help us understand how we can best build bridges in the next generation. *All under a global pandemic!* If you need to be convinced we're a good investment – read on. We have worked to make sure our budget is tight, but also faithful.

Of course, this is going to be a rough year for many. If you are able to pledge more to cover those who are struggling, we are grateful. If you are able to give less, *we understand*. In fact, due to several generous donations to a Pastoral Care Fund, we do have some funds available if Covid has you caused economic stress. Please contact me to discuss, confidentially, how we might be able to support **you** in this time.

You see, the purpose of Stewardship is only partially about a budget; it is also about *you*. About *you* building bridges to the life that *you* want for yourself and community. About committing yourself to living the values you espouse. And if you don't feel those values resonating right now – well, there really is only one way to grow your commitment.

Yours, truly, in faith and hope, *Elissa*



WORSHIP

Projected Expenses: \$211,784
% of Total Budget: 37%



Psalm 95:6—Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

The current pandemic emergency has required much of everyone, and our church is no exception! However, in challenge is sometimes strength, and it is more than fair to say that our worship life together has been blessed by the can-do spirit of wonderful, creative leadership! When it was no longer safe to gather physically together, our talented staff fearlessly took worship onto the YouTube platform where streamed video of worship evolved quickly into a rich new communal experience, available not only to friends and family near and far, but also to virtual visitors.

Members, families, and youth are often invited to respond with selfie snapshots or video clips that reflect on the message for the following Sunday worship, or provide video readings or lead prayer. Seeing leaders and participants on the screen and far closer than is possible in sanctuary worship is an added feature, as is the variety of places where videos are made and the integration of imagery. Though it continues to be unsafe to physically sing together, music continues to be a vitally important part of our worship experience. Pre-recorded instrumental and vocal music provided by both staff and laity add special musical offerings to worship, and support the remote singing of hymns.

This continues to be at once a challenging and enriching time that has introduced us to some exciting new possibilities for the time when we will once again physically gather together in our splendid sanctuary to worship God.

—Ann Vivian, Worship Team Chair

“Being able to continue to worship together virtually this past 7 months has kept me connected to everything! While I cannot wait to be with you all in person, this “computer” connection has kept the feelings of being part of something bigger than myself alive. My physical world is smaller right now but my spiritual world is big, alive, and well!”

—Susan Saunders

“Continuing to worship together virtually these past 7 months has allowed me to feel connected with the church, get to know members better, strive for a spiritual focus, keep issues and needs in perspective, and gain inspiration from the words, talents and insights of members and our wonderful staff.”

—Amy Mellencamp



Ann Vivian



Helen & Maria Worden



Lincoln Saffran

CONNECTIONS

Projected Expenses: \$75,504
% of Total Budget: 13%



Psalm 132:7—For where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there among them.

The salve to our isolation and loneliness is our connection to God and each other. This past year’s isolation and the resulting loneliness has dominated our lives. But in part through the wonders of technology, our connection to our First Church faith community has comforted, supported, and enlivened us, which reinforces our understanding that God’s love persists and will prevail.

Hundreds of wellness calls are being made to members by the “expanded” Pastoral Care Team. The Men’s Breakfast and Women’s Book Group continue online. We have enjoyed First Church Jeopardy games and “Good Luck, Bad Luck or No Luck at All”, a Moth style storytelling event, virtually. Spirit Seekers, hosted by Lucy Samara, Amy Mellencamp, and once by David Neiweem, has featured many from our faith community enlightening us about their life stories and faith journeys. Wondrous Walks, organized and led by Cyndy Hall, has been a breath of fresh air for those who wanted to hike together.

Despair in these trying times seems to be around every corner, but our connectedness as a faith community has helped us to walk on by with our heads up and our eyes and hearts open to the glories of our God.

—Steve Hyde

“I feel the most connected to First Church when I attend worship, hear the prayer requests, and attend fellowship. I am always impressed at how members give of themselves in many ways.” —Reid Willis

“Getting together with other quilters to make quilted blankets for baptisms and lap quilts for our people who need a warm hug has led me to new relationships and gives me joy.” —Dawn Plante

“Getting to know other male members through the monthly men’s breakfast has added to my list of friends with whom to go biking and do other activities beyond church events.” —Anonymous



Love Grows Here



Spirit Seekers



Wondrous Walks



SERVICE/OUTREACH

Projected Expenses: \$97,494
% of Total Budget: 17%



1 Peter 4:10—As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.

Devotion to service is a core part of the character of our church as a church community. Service, outreach, and mission work are some of our key activities. Your pledge dollars help us host programs that support the basic needs of people in our congregation and community through the Joint Urban Ministry Project, Legal Clinics, and a pastoral discretionary fund. These programs express our caring and compassion for our neighbors. Pledge dollars also enable staff to organize and lead mission trips for faith development and service. These trips connect our youth and adults to community needs that may be unfamiliar, but that can inspire deep faith reflection and growth. By supporting these efforts through the church budget, we make a real and tangible commitment to service.

Beyond support through the budget, church members are engaged in outreach and service through many ongoing activities such as the Small Potatoes, Dismas House meals, and Meals on Wheels. Our Share Christmas giving is a long tradition involving many members. This summer raised bed gardens on the front lawn, built and tended to by our teens and others, produced vegetables that were given to Feeding Chittenden. Volunteer sewers have made hundreds of pandemic face masks for members and others in need. Members have held “Silent Vigils for Racial Justice” monthly on our front lawn. Elissa and Hannah have facilitated discussion groups on racism and white privilege that have further opened our eyes to the lack of equality for people of color in our country. These are the many ways our church reaches out to serve.

—Reid Willis, Outreach Team

“It is so wonderful to hear the responses of our Possibility Shop customers when they find just what they needed.” — Pam Meaker

“Delivering Meals on Wheels gives me contact with aging people who are so appreciative and with underprivileged people who need the healthy meals delivered to them.”

—Lynn Schouten

“First Church has provided paths for me to serve the needs of the less fortunate in our community. Our small congregation continues to provide a wide safety net through the dedicated involvement of so many members. Increasingly, our immediate neighbors need our support.”

— Al Weldon



Meals on Wheels



Small Potatoes



The Joy Garden

FAITH FORMATION

Projected Expenses: \$70,994
% of Total Budget: 13%



Luke 18:16—Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Your giving supports our families from babies to adults. The Faith Formation team holds our youngest members with loving arms in the nursery, where their first encounter with First Church provides a warm, loving, safe environment to explore. As preschoolers, our children continue to experience church as a fun, enriching, developmentally appropriate space with caring adults to begin telling the stories in the Bible, and receiving their own Story Book Bible. Elementary age kids delve deeper into these stories and learn what it means to follow the ways of God. In third grade, with your gifts, they receive a Children’s Bible of their very own. Middle School students find a safe place to ask questions about faith and explore how this ancient book remains relevant today and how they can serve church and community.

This journey continues as our High School youth experience helping a world in need through YES. They travel the road to confirmation, led by Elissa. Again, the congregation puts a Bible and a pocket cross in their hands to help them remember we will be with them as they continue this faith journey.

As for our adult members, Faith Formation supports them through service trips (like the recent trip to Puerto Rico), adult studies, and multigenerational events like Peace Camp. Without your support we cannot provide these educational and enriching experiences.

—Hilah Clarke, Faith Formation Director

“I believe in introducing my children to relationships with people that are grounded in faith and simply doing good in our world.”

—Elise Polli

“Sunday School gave our children a foundational knowledge of Jesus, faithfulness, and Christianity from a love and compassion perspective. As my children said during their senior sermons, “We don’t have all the answers, but we know what questions to ask.”

—Michael Samara

“For me, my faith journey, as an adult, continues to this day, with the many wonderful adult education opportunities I have been a part of at First Church.” —Steve Hyde



YES Car Wash



BIBLE STUDY WITH ELISSA
THURSDAYS AT 7:30 A.M.

INFO ABOUT JOINING THIS ZOOM MEETING:
WWW.FIRSTCHURCHBURLINGTON.ORG

Bible Study



Word of God for All Ages



CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Deuteronomy 16:17—Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you.

Our Stewardship Campaign time is already here due to our fiscal year changing to concur with the calendar year. Last year’s fiscal year was only 8 months long. As you consider what you will pledge this year, please remember that we are back to a 12-month fiscal year for 2021. As you read through the pages of this pamphlet I hope you are impressed with all that our minister, staff, team leaders, and FCC members have done for us during this difficult “stay at home” time. In some ways it seems that the many virtual events throughout each week have helped us all to know each other a little better, thereby bringing us closer together. We urge you to prayerfully consider what your church means to you and your families as you fill out your pledge card.

Thank you all from your Stewardship Campaign Team.

—Janice Claypoole, Eric Davis, Bruce Hewitt, Steve Hyde, Pam Meaker, Stan Schmidt, & Dawn Plante, chair

“We pledge to FCC because our church family and the mission of this church community are very important to us. An ongoing pledge ensures that our work and fellowship can continue!”
— Linda & Alan Elrick



Dawn Plante, chair

“I was raised in a tithing tradition. I pledge to FCC because of the focus on justice, outreach, mission, faithful pastoral care and vibrant worship. Music brought me to FCCB and creative virtual connections keep my faith alive in this challenging COVID time.” — Anonymous

We Are Together Virtually:

Sunday Worship ☞ Church School ☞ Fellowship Hour ☞ Tues–Fri Prayers ☞ Bible Study ☞ Spirit Seekers ☞ Sermon Discussions ☞ Anti-Racism & White Privilege Study Groups ☞ Music Matters ☞ Peace Camp ☞ Confirmation Sunday ☞ Moth Style Story Telling ☞ Jeopardy Game Nights ☞ Women’s Book Group ☞ Memorial Services ☞ Men’s Breakfast ☞ Annual & Team Meetings ☞ Our Church Podcast ☞ Legal Clinics

Other New Happenings:

The Haven ☞ Community Gardens ☞ Silent Vigils for Racial Justice ☞ Visioning Team ☞ Wondrous Walks ☞ First Church Phonic ☞ Church Back Wall Mural ☞ Pastoral Care Calls ☞ Sewing & Donating Hundreds of Masks ☞ Backpack Blessing Arch Drive-through ☞ Renewing Historic Wedding Vows for a Same-Sex Couple ☞ Home Delivery of World-Wide Communion

PROPOSED BUDGET

Matthew 6:20-21—Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

2021 PLANNED INCOME

Pledges	\$390,000	73.3%
Other Donations/Gifts	\$24,646	4.7%
Fundraisers	\$55,500	10.5%
Transfers	\$62,300	11.5%
Total	\$527,446	100%

2021 PROJECTED EXPENSES

Worship	\$211,784	37%
Faith Formation	\$70,994	13%
Service/Mission	\$97,494	17%
Connections	\$75,504	13%
Buildings/Grounds	\$110,176	19%
Total	\$565,951	100%



Donna Lee & daughters-in-law



A Note on Planned Giving

What is it? All we have is a gift from God.

This church has been here for us and our community and we have an opportunity through our bounty to help support it going forward.

Planned Giving is a program that can be adopted and set in motion to help keep us on this path.

Ways to Give. Gifts can be funded with cash, appreciated securities, real estate, tangible personal property, or even closely held stock. They can be made as either **grants** (gifts) or **bequests** (made as part of a will or trust).

Some Examples. Under current tax laws, the cost basis of **appreciated securities** is stepped up upon death thereby avoiding direct tax on the appreciation. This aspect of the tax law may change in the coming years. A gift of appreciated securities made now supports the work of the church now and into the future, while offering the chance for a current Federal Tax deduction for the full contribution with no tax due on your gain.

If you are over age 70½, annual gifts of up to \$100,000 may be made directly from your IRA through an **IRA Charitable Rollover**. You pay no income tax on the gift and it goes toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). It should be noted that the RMD has been suspended for tax year 2020 per the **CARES ACT** OF March 2020. Other popular planned giving vehicles include **Charitable Gift Annuities** and **Remainder Trusts** which offer flexible gift options and various lifetime income for you and your beneficiaries, while making a future allowance for the work of the church.

Note: A planned giving plan starts with sitting down with your tax professional and legal and financial advisors. The above is for informational purposes only & should not be considered personal investment or tax information.

—Stan Schmidt