

Nov. 19, 2015

FUPC Members, Friends, & Alumni:

As we near Thanksgiving, I wanted to express deep gratitude for your support of the *Rebuilding Walls* capital campaign and improvements underway at First UP. Your prayers, encouraging notes, financial gifts, and overall partnership in the Gospel are already leading to real rebuilding of the congregation's physical and missional presence in the community. Thank you!

With dumpsters, debris, construction fencing, and porta potties filling up the front yard, we didn't think we'd see many new folks joining us this fall. Clearly God has other plans! This fall worship attendance has continued to rise and a handful of young adults and families have found a church home with us, undeterred by worshipping in a virtual construction zone (though truthfully the sanctuary has been very minimally impacted and the temporary heat has worked out better than expected).

New ministry initiatives for all ages have been in the works—some are rolling out now and others, such as a new curriculum for K-4 kids, will launch as soon as the renovations are complete and classroom space is available. We're actively envisioning how we'll better utilize the building in the near future: starting a young mothers group, cooking for the hungry, reaching out to internationals, hosting Bible studies for young adults, and eventually hosting a VBS, to name just a few possibilities. In other words, "renovation" is an apt metaphor for what is happening within the congregation's spiritual and missional imagination/vision as well.

After commencing in late August and hitting delays in September, construction has gained momentum over the last month and most of the mechanical system is in place, concrete is poured, and literal rebuilding of the walls is underway. We discovered a host of latent conditions after demolition—not a complete surprise in a 19th century building with a generation or two of deferred upgrades. For example, we found original cast iron columns that were settling and disintegrating—some had even separated from support beams above and were no longer doing their job. This explained unevenness of the floor and problems with the sliding doors above. There were similar issues with deteriorated walls, windows and frames, and foundation elements, all confirming the timeliness and importance of this project.

We continue to marvel at the gifts God has given for just such a time as this, not only the financial gifts and prayer support that so many have offered, but also the immense time and talent offered to both campaign and construction. Retired architect and ruling elder John Shank's tireless service as the church's primary point of contact with the architect and builder, and ruling elder-elect John Shue's strong leadership on the Building & Grounds committee, are a couple notable examples of God working through his people to bring this project to completion. Many others of you have undertaken the "cost of discipleship" as able and called—expressions of the unity of the Body across many generations and geographical locations that are bringing about real spiritual and missional renewal here in Cambridge in concert with the physical transformation underway.

This is our current financial situation:

- \$655,000 pledged by 47 individuals or households to the 3-year campaign, \$327,000 fulfilled to date.
- \$179,000 in funds designated for building accessibility and heating system upgrade.
- \$50,000 promised in the form of a matching grant from the Cambridge Historical Commission.
- \$700,000 loan approved from the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP), with the stipulation that loan balance be no more than \$600,000 when construction is completed.
- \$960,000 is our base contract with the builder
- \$96,000 (10%) is budgeted for contingency; *\$98,500 is the estimated contingency expense to date.*
- \$50,000 is budgeted for architecture and engineering; *\$70,000 is the estimated architecture/engineering expense to date* (due to additional services required, including structural engineering).

As noted, we've exhausted contingency funds. At this rate, we'd be surprised if there weren't a few more change orders and then, when the project is complete, we'll need new tables, chairs, shelving, kitchen items, etc. We'd very much like to keep the debt burden down so as not to negatively impact the operating budget and place constraints on ministry and mission in the year ahead. **If you are able to make a year-end gift, that would be a wonderful encouragement and aid to these ongoing renewal efforts!**

We are so blessed to be a house of prayer drawing all nations and generations to worship the triune God, and to be a missionary people going forth in the power of the Spirit to share the good news of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ. Thank you immensely for joining us in this Nehemiah ministry of rebuilding walls even as an "Ezra ministry" of training and equipping the church to be light and salt in our city continues to take shape.

In Christ,

Kevin

P.S. You'll find regular updates and pictures on the website. www.fupc-cambridge.org

P.S.S. Little Folks Fellowship (LFF) preschool has been approved to remain at the First Reformed Presbyterian Church on Antrim St. until completion of construction in the latter part of January —this location has been providential and we are deeply grateful for the hospitality of our FRPC neighbors.