

Investing in Our Second Century

The three visions above – *worship, community, mission & outreach* – can be broken down into four areas of investment: facility renovation, building expansion, organ purchase, and mission & outreach.

While we do not have firm estimates, due to changing construction costs, we have worked with our architect, the Long-Range Planning Committee, the Board of Trustees, and the Organ Committee to project preliminary cost estimates. To complete the building expansion alone, described in our council-approved master plan, we need to raise at least \$2.5 million – more than we are likely to achieve in Phase One.

According to our consultant, Bea Stoner, Plymouth is capable of raising \$1.2 million to \$1.5 million in Phase One of the Second Century Campaign. The more we raise, the more we can accomplish during Phase One. **After pledges are received, the congregation will vote on what we will undertake as Phase One.** As a target, based on findings from members of Plymouth, the Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee is making a preliminary recommendation that the following items comprise Phase One:

Known priorities (from member input to Bea Stoner):

Facility renovation (<i>accessibility, rest rooms, roofs, furnaces, etc.</i>)	\$500,000
Building expansion (<i>Administrative Wing and East Gallery only</i>)	\$350,000

Prospective priorities:

Chancel redesign (<i>accessibility, functionality, choir/organ location</i>)	\$100,000
Organ purchase	\$80,000
New North Entrance, parking lot surfacing, total landscaping	\$450,000
Mission & outreach (<i>optional, up to \$148,000</i>)	to be determined

Campaign Phase One Goal **\$1,480,000**

The Second Century Campaign will likely have several phases. The new construction not completed in Phase One (but described in the master plan) leaves more than \$2 million for a future phase in the campaign. Combining all the phases of the Second Century Campaign, we present a *vision goal* of \$3.6 million.

Campaign Costs and Administration

To undertake a capital campaign of this magnitude, and because we have not done such a campaign in 25 years, the Church Council decided that it was critical to retain fund-raising counsel. The Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee, after interviewing three consultants, chose Beatrice Stone of *Spiritmatters* as our consultant. Bea is a lifelong UCC member and served on the national staff of the denomination before establishing her own firm. Bea recently guided the UCC congregations in Longmont and Boulder to successful goals. Her fee is 3 percent of the first million of our target goal and one-half percent above that.

The campaign will be conducted by a Campaign Leadership Team, which will be selected by the Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee, in consultation with the Church Council. Income generated by the campaign will be kept separate from Plymouth operating budget.

Why a Campaign?

A capital campaign has dramatic impact on a congregation, not simply in its outcome, but in the way it *deepens a church's faith*. We will all be challenged at a deep level about our core values and commitments.

Second, the vision presented is *based on what we have been saying as a congregation*, through our strategic plan, master plan, and by being a part of Plymouth's growth.

Third, *it's our turn*. We have enjoyed the facilities at Plymouth that our forbears built, and we need to create a legacy for those who follow us. We must ensure that the voice of progressive Christianity will continue to be heard in Fort Collins and beyond. With God's help and yours, we will leave this important legacy.

The Second Century Campaign for Plymouth

"If I have seen further, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants."

Isaac Newton, 1675

For more than 100 years, Plymouth Congregational UCC has been an integral part of the spiritual and cultural landscape of Fort Collins. From its earliest German Congregational roots to its new home on Prospect Street in the 1960s to its socially and theologically progressive focus that continues today, Plymouth is a beacon in Fort Collins. ***This is the legacy we have inherited and the foundation upon which we must build.***

It has been 25 years since Plymouth has conducted a capital campaign, when the North Wing was built. The rest of the facility is now 45 years old and showing signs of wear and age. (We have two large roof areas and two 45-year-old furnaces that need replacing.) Stewardship of God's planet will also come into play, as we make our church building more energy-efficient. Neither wing has fully accessible facilities for persons with disabilities.

Like our forbears in the faith, we must ensure that future generations will inherit the blessings that we enjoy. We, like those hearty *Volgadeutsch* pioneers, must invest our assets – and ourselves – to strengthen our community of faith not simply for our own benefit, but for those who will come after us in Plymouth's second century. ***This campaign will be our legacy.***

Our Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee is listening to the congregation and paying special attention to our Strategic Plan and our Mission Statement. Based on input from Plymouth members, a feasibility and leadership analysis from our consultant also indicates directions for our campaign goals. With the vision of enhancing our faith community, engaging the ministry of our members, inviting others into our faith community, and joining with others to promote a more just, inclusive, and peaceful world, the Exploratory Committee has identified three primary areas of investment: ***Worship, Community, and Mission & Outreach.***

"O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth."

Psalm 96

WORSHIP is the centerpiece of life at Plymouth; it is the act that undergirds all that we do, and it is our central reason for being. When we seek solace, it is often through the gathered community worshipping God together. When we need to find strength in the struggle for justice, we seek God's presence through worship. When our minds and our hearts need stimulation to grow, we often find worship as the starting point.

Music is absolutely central to our worship. For many in our tradition, it is a primary way we connect emotionally with God in prayer, praise, lament, expectation, and celebration. Even before the psalms were composed, our forbears in the faith used music – especially congregational singing – as a vehicle for the creative expression of our relationship with God.

The situation is no different today. As a congregation, we need to ensure the *vitality of our music program* by providing the tools that we need not only for performance, but for participation. We have a wonderful piano and a great set of hand bells, but we are currently without an organ.

Some may feel that an organ is superfluous, but when a family is planning a wedding or a funeral, an organ suddenly seems central. Not everyone feels that an organ is essential to worship, those who do tend to be passionately in favor. And when the back half of the sanctuary cannot hear instrumental accompaniment

with hymns, diminishing congregational singing, an organ becomes even more attractive (especially with antiphonal speakers in the rear).

An Organ Committee has been studying, researching, and auditioning various organs for more than a year. One of the key issues considered – in light of having to replace our 14-year-old organ – is long-term reliability and commitment to maintenance. Committee members went to great pains with this aspect, including an extensive dialogue with the CEO of the Allen Organ Company. After all their research, and doing a “test run” with two different organs in our sanctuary, *the committee unanimously recommends Allen.*

Our worship space has served us well for many years, and it is ready for some updating. A primary concern of the congregation has been *wheelchair accessibility*. Inadequate *lighting* in the sanctuary makes reading for some persons impossible. It is difficult to claim to be an Open & Affirming church while not having an accessible sanctuary.

One of the needs identified by our choir members and staff is the location of the choir loft (partially behind a wall), where they cannot be heard during hymns or service music. *Reconfiguration of the chancel area*, while preserving its architectural integrity, is needed, though no formal plans have been completed. We will also consider new cabinetry at the rear of the sanctuary for new organ speakers, as well as relocation of the organ console, so that the organist can see the choir and director.

Plans also include a *memorial garden or columbarium* in the courtyard outside the sanctuary, where the cremated remains of our members can be interred. For many, having a meaningful place to visit the remains of a loved one has deep spiritual meaning, especially when it is in their spiritual home.

Plymouth’s Strategic Plan calls for use of the current sanctuary to accommodate 450 worshippers during two Sunday services, so no dramatic expansion of the sanctuary is anticipated.

In all, we need to create spaces and tools to enhance the way we and those who follow us worship God together at Plymouth.

*“For we must consider that we shall be as a
City upon a Hill;
the eyes of all people are upon us.”
John Winthrop, 1630*

COMMUNITY is a word with myriad dimensions in the life of our congregation. With more than 500 members – about 25 percent of whom have joined in the last three years – our community is in the midst of wonderful growth. We all come to Plymouth with different needs: for *Christian education* (both for children and adults), for *fellowship and connection*, and for *spiritual growth and exploration*.

Part of the wonderful challenge we face is outgrowing our current facility. We know our space is no longer adequate when:

- more than 75 persons are spilling out of an adult education forum room meant for 40;
- we have 17 confirmation students crowded into the minister’s study because there is no available classroom;
- we don’t have space for both a nursery *and* a preschool classroom;
- members and visitors have trouble finding parking;
- our choir gets dislocated because we need more office space;
- our congregation has trouble fitting into our fellowship hall for a meal.

These are the problems every church wants to have!

To examine the space needs of our family of faith, the Church Council commissioned a Long-Range Planning Committee to select an architect and complete a master plan: a work now completed that will help guide how our space needs will *match our programmatic needs* over the coming five to ten years.

Even before looking at space, our congregation started by looking at its programs and staffing. The Strategic Planning Team presented a year’s worth of interviews, survey data, and other findings to the congregation in January 2004. This formed the starting point not just for the master plan, but in turn for the capital campaign. We determined that we need to let programs drive space needs.

Working with the award-winning architectural firm, RB+B, the Long-Range Planning Committee discovered that Plymouth is not effective in using our spaces for multiple purposes. In the *master plan*, the new fellowship hall has movable walls, creating space for adult education classes. Dedicated rooms are provided for our teen fellowship groups, which will also serve as classroom space for them on Sunday morning. The choir will have an adequate facility for its rehearsals, and the space could serve well for larger group meetings. Reconfiguration of staff offices will not only free up two rooms for youth education in the North Wing, it will locate all the staff in one place, increasing their efficiency and communication. Throughout all new construction, we will place a high priority on energy-efficiency and full accessibility for persons with disabilities.

As we continue to grow both spiritually and numerically, we must be sure that we reflect God’s extravagant welcome to all persons. A full classroom or overflowing parking lot or an inaccessible bathroom sends the opposite message to a visitor.

We must provide not only for us who now are part of this community of faith, but also for those whom we will welcome.

*I have been young, and now am old,
yet I have not seen the just forsaken or their children
begging bread. They are ever giving liberally and
lending, and their children become a blessing.
Psalm 37*

MISSION AND OUTREACH have long been priorities at Plymouth. Based on input from the congregation, we are recommending an *option* that would enable donors to designate 10 percent of their gift to provide seed money for a mission and outreach endowment.

Through our operating budget, we are able to make relatively small, short-term contributions to such organizations as Homelessness Prevention Project and Habitat for Humanity. And we support our denomination and its mission through our annual giving to Our Church’s Wider Mission. *But what if we could do more?* What if we could have sustained giving to do more with global mission or helping peacemakers or supporting seminaries or helping to fund projects that don’t put a band-aid on a situation, but rather get at the root of a systemic problem? That takes concerted effort and planning.

Unlike many churches of our size and age, Plymouth has no endowment. To provide *seed money* for the Plymouth Fund for Mission and Outreach, we propose giving those who contribute to the Second Century Campaign the *option* of tithing ten percent of their gift to start such an endowment. As memorial gifts are left to Plymouth, they could help grow the endowment principal.

The Church Council recently chartered a special committee to develop a thorough-going policy to administer the endowment. (A congregational vote will be taken in advance of the campaign regarding an endowment policy.)

The Plymouth Fund for Mission and Outreach is a way that we can help ensure that our passion for justice, education, and Christ’s compassion have a means to grow into our second century.

*“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”
Proverbs*