

In my limited time I will suggest looking at the current renovation projects in historical perspective, and I will propose that Council pause the construction phase for one year – from April 2026 to April 2027.

- This will allow the many remaining design and funding uncertainties to be worked out.
- Perhaps even more importantly, it will also provide an opportunity for the Sr. Pastor to minister to a congregation in need. And our congregation is in need.

History is made by small choices and actions of people who don't realize they are making history. This was true of a carpenter's son in Galilee 2,000 years ago and of those who came after him and built a movement that became what we know as Christianity. And it is true of you, the stewards and representatives of the Plymouth Church congregation today.

6 years ago we were blest by the arrival of a new Sr. Pastor with a strong biblical foundation, a somewhat evangelical style, and a vision for the future that puts Plymouth's trajectory in the 21st century on a swerve.

The planned renovation of the sanctuary and chancel – perhaps the most radical modification in the church's 155 year history -- is emblematic of this swerve.

I urge the Council to see this transformational moment for what it is. Think about how you want your choices and actions to be recorded in Plymouth's history; you surely don't want to be remembered as reckless. And give the congregation the sense that they are *all* participating in history.

How Council handles the current renovation projects at this historical moment is crucial and it is risky.

- Acknowledge the risks inherent in the many still-unresolved funding uncertainties -- now abundantly in evidence and already well known

to the congregation -- and the risks in design challenges that remain only partially solved, even as the PMC has reached a major milestone, as was described earlier in this meeting. We are still only at a conceptual design stage.

and

- **Show an understanding of the profound challenges – theological, pragmatic, emotional -- that our congregation is facing and, to be frank, is not dealing with very well for the most part.**

Finally, two Key Points:

1) Pausing the project for a year will reduce risk. It will not increase costs, since income can be generated from early donations, offsetting inflation. The remaining design uncertainties can be worked out, reducing the likelihood of overruns and unexpected contingencies, allowing a far more confident budget to be presented to the congregation.

2) In addition, asking the Sr. Pastor to minister to the visioning needs of a congregation currently in danger of fracture will allow a stronger congregational commitment in favor of the renovations to be developed as a unified consensus. Right now, as a congregation, we do not have a unified vision relating to the sanctuary.

The lay leadership is fully capable on their own of making these renovations happen, and they can do so with meaningful input from the congregation.

But only the Sr. Pastor can minister to her people.