

Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Called Congregational Meeting
5:30 PM
January 11, 2024

1. Invocation, Rev. Dr. Valerie Miller-Coleman, Senior Pastor

Valerie led the members in prayer.

Immediately following, Scott Morgan asked Mark Simpson, Parliamentarian, if a quorum was in attendance. Mark said more than 100 members were present and that the quorum requirement was met.

2. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda – Scott Morgan, Moderator

Scott called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm. Beth Harrison moved to approve the agenda as proposed; Ann McElhenny seconded; motion unanimously approved.

3. Overview of the purpose of the meeting – Scott

Scott introduced Doug Eason, Facilities Committee Chair; Devon Kim, Immediate Past Moderator; Doni Mooberry Slough, Treasurer; Johanna Cox, Organ Committee Member; Kim Manz, Minister of Music and Fine Arts; Sonia Jordan, Moderator Elect and Debbie Schmidt, Stewardship Committee Chair.

Scott said this capital campaign will differ from secular campaigns. Plymouth is at the campaign authorization stage and the actions normally preceding a capital campaign will follow.

4. How we got here – Devon Kim – Immediate Past Moderator

a. History and Facilities Master Plan

Devon gave a brief timeline (2018 to date) of the Facilities Master Plan. Attendees were also provided printed materials that provided detailed information of the plan's development (attached).

- 2018
 - Hearing loop funds raised.
- 2019
 - Committee formed to consider a coordinated approach to building needs.
- 2020
 - Clark Huesemann hired.
 - Committee holds eleven meetings over a two-year period.
 - Periodic updates provided to the congregation via various communication vehicles.
- 2022
 - Three-phased plan presented to congregation in August.
- 2023
 - Phase I (currently underway)
 - Phase II – Sanctuary
 - Council approved Generis Feasibility Study in September

5. What is being proposed

a. Sanctuary – Devon

- Choir loft lowered.
- Organ moved to front.
- Choir loft expanded for accessibility and additional choir members.
- Chancel is width of sanctuary; 3 steps up with ramps for improved accessibility on each side (keeping historic look and feel).
- HVAC issues addressed.
- Hearing issues addressed.
- Flooring included.
- Stained glass refurbished and cleaned.

b. Organ, Johanna Cox

Johanna said the Organ Committee was formed in 2009; she joined it in 2012. It was evident the organ was aging, and a plan was needed to address various concerns. The Reuter Organ Company was able to provide repair services until it closed last year.

The Organ Committee visited various churches to learn about pipe organs and their acoustical requirements. Quimby Pipe Organ, Warrensburg, MO has analyzed the organ and provided three options:

- Option 1 – Total rebuild - \$1,500,000
- Option 2 – Option 1 cost plus other features - \$1,900,000
- New – Approximately \$2,100,000

Johanna said the organ is old and Kim has been able to work with many of its issues. She personally feels it's imperative we have a pipe organ due to the historic background of the church. She also referenced the feelings a pipe organ can evoke. It's dynamic range and volume scale make it conducive to accompanying a choir, a soloist or simply standing alone.

c. Cost Estimates, Doug Eason

Doug referenced the rough estimates which were provided on the handout (attached). He worked with Clark Huesemann to obtain the estimates, which are based on square footage, and emphasized that these are high level estimates – there is no finite detail at this time. The line item, "Contingency, Fees, Carrying Costs", is included to capture all other associated costs.

He believes the proposed changes will not be an issue with the Kansas Historical Society

6. How we will pay for it - Doni Mooberry Slough

a. Phase II - Tax Credits and Grants, Doug

Funding for the project would include:

- Capital campaign.
- State of Kansas tax credits that are applicable to historical buildings.
 - Apply for 30% of what's allowable.

- Obtain the credits and sell them.
- Plymouth has successfully received funds from one and has been approved for another.
- Doug added there may be grant opportunities, including from the Rice Foundation.

b. Phase II, Capital Campaign, Doni

Doni said Music & Fine Arts was the first board she served on after joining Plymouth in 2011, so she's always been aware of concerns about the organ and accessibility. She then referenced the Biblical story of King Solomon and David and described how the story parallels with what's happening at Plymouth. She also said some members have expressed interest in lead gifts if a capital campaign is approved this evening.

7. How will this affect annual budget revenue? Doni

The Capital Campaign will have its own budget, separate from the operating budget. Campaign costs will be paid from reserves and repaid from campaign revenue. From her research, she's found that a non-secular campaign goes much more quickly, and many churches experience increased operating revenues, in addition to capital investment, following a campaign. If unexpected expenses occur, operating reserves can be utilized if needed.

8. How will we prioritize if we do not raise our goal? Scott

a. No long-term debt

Scott reminded the congregation that a financial goal isn't what we're looking for at this time. The goal is the overall project, which includes the organ, accessibility and building improvement. We can make the project fit whatever is raised. If we don't move forward, we'll be back in a year because the organ isn't going to fix itself and neither are the accessibility issues. He hopes we can do this and move forward, but the congregation will have the final say.

9. Proposed Motion

Devon made the following motion:

I move that Plymouth Congregational Church approve a campaign to renovate the Sanctuary, update the organ, HVAC and other appropriate items. The costs, currently estimated at about \$4.5 million, to be paid for through a combination of a capital campaign, tax credits and grants. No debt, other than carrying costs, shall be incurred unless approved by the congregation at a congregational meeting.

Dwight Hilpman seconded the motion.

10. Questions, Discussion, Vote

Diane Low asked if the vote is strictly on the money issue and will the project be discussed with the congregation in the future? Scott explained the vote this evening is to decide whether to proceed with a capital campaign.

Sue Himes asked if the church has previously approved a capital campaign. If so, was it successful? Scott said over the years, campaigns have been conducted and one did result in debt, which has been paid off. The most current campaign was twenty years ago, to replace South Church.

Mary Lake said she contributed to the last campaign but wanted to express her concerns about the sight lines shown on the conceptual drawings. The three steps will not allow many to see various parts of the service. And as a member, if you cannot see you cannot be actively involved in the service.

David Trevino agreed with Mary regarding the sight lines and asked if there would be another meeting to vote on the design. He also expressed his concern for safety and wondered about the ability to safely leave the building.

Scott expressed his appreciation for these concerns and said they will work with the architects to address them. He added the intent is to be welcoming and accessible to all and these concerns will be taken into account.

John Lord asked if there were thoughts of additional audio-visual technology which might be utilized. Scott said he couldn't provide an answer at this time.

Dwight Hilpman asked how long the campaign would take. Scott said the 3-year campaign would start in early April and end in late May.

Mark Osborne said he and his wife attend a Presbyterian Church in Oregon during the summer, which has screens on both sides so all can observe the service. He also said most churches are using electronic organs and asked how the cost of an electronic organ compares with a pipe organ.

Kim said the Organ Committee decided not to go that route, so he couldn't provide pricing. He also said this is the third organ in Plymouth Church and reminded the members that a pipe organ is a living, breathing instrument.

Susan McCarthy said that regarding accessibility, prior to the 1990 sanctuary remodel, there was one primary exit door, and we now have two main exit doors. It demonstrates how we can improve and still maintain our historical identity.

Mark Jordan asked if the congregation would vote on the actual design. Scott said he couldn't say what level of congregation support will be needed regarding the final plans.

Ron Johnson asked if Doug said the Historical Society will approve the proposed changes. Doug responded that in looking at rules and guidance he feels that what we're doing should fit the criteria, but we won't know until we can provide more complete design information.

Jackie Lord said she knows we're voting on a capital campaign, but what is the cost to run it. Doni said Generis will be paid \$40,000 to conduct the campaign, but she's adding \$10,000 for unexpected expenses, for a total of \$50,000.

Barney Korbelik then called for the question.

John Lord requested that the vote be tallied (written ballots). The Chair denied the request.

Steve Bradt asked for clarification of (1) what the vote is for and (2) what is required for further discussion. Mark said a call for the question requires a second. If approved, the vote on the motion can go forward.

Sacie Lambertson seconded the call for the question.

A voice vote was taken on calling the question and Scott ruled the “ayes” have it.

Scott then called for a voice vote on the motion to approve the capital campaign. Scott ruled the “ayes” have it.

Devon moved to adjourn; Doug seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by
Larissa Long, Clerk