



FOUNDATION for the FUTURE



ROOTED IN **trust.**
SHAPED BY **generosity.**
BUILT TO **endure.**

OUR STORY

a cornerstone in the heart of the city

Dear Church,

Rooted in the heart of downtown, First Church draws people from across Austin into a community where all are invited to know God's love and to join in God's work of transformation. Our ministry continues to grow—reaching beyond our walls to serve our neighbors, our city, and the wider world.

In recent years, we have undertaken the essential restoration of our Sanctuary Building's exterior. Thanks to your generosity, that work is nearing completion. It has required significant investment, and we anticipate approximately \$3 million in project-related debt. We need to address this debt now to allow our Sanctuary to continue serving our ministry without placing strain on our operating budget.



“As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but rather on God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.” —1 Timothy 6:17–19

LEGACY preserving the Sanctuary Building for generations



“Communion is the time I’ve loved the most with my toddler. He loves to walk up and receive the bread and juice, and his face lights up when those serving tell him God loves him.”

—Stacey McAtee

As United Methodists, we understand generosity as a response to God’s grace. Scripture calls us to be “rich in good works, generous, and ready to share,” laying “a good foundation for the future” (1 Timothy 6:18–19). This campaign is an expression of that calling.

Through the Foundation for the Future campaign, we seek to retire this remaining debt while also pursuing a limited set of interior improvements that will strengthen our ability to worship, welcome, and serve. These updates will enhance accessibility, flexibility, and the use of technology—helping ensure that all who enter can fully participate in the life of this community.

The scope of what we are able to accomplish will depend on the generosity of this congregation. Together, we have the opportunity not only to care for what has been entrusted to us, but to prepare it for the future God is still shaping.

We are standing on a foundation laid in faith by those who came before us. Now it is our turn to build—so that this Sanctuary may continue to be a place of worship, welcome, and witness for generations to come. Thank you for your faith, your generosity, and your commitment to the life of this church.

With great love,

Taylor

Pastor Taylor

FOUNDATION for the future

This campaign has two clear goals:

1

Retire the remaining debt from the exterior phase of the Sanctuary Building restoration.

2

Complete improvements to the accessibility, flexibility, and hospitality of the Sanctuary interior. Specifically, both the chancel and Foyer will be expanded and audiovisual equipment and lighting will be upgraded.

The Foundation for the Future capital campaign is our opportunity to continue the work that makes everything else possible. These spaces are central to how we share worship and extend welcome.

THE TRANSFORMATION

all are invited to know God's love and to join God's work

Accessibility is the cornerstone of this next phase of construction, because true welcome begins with full participation. Planned improvements will:

- Remove physical barriers to the chancel and improve the flexibility of the space
- Strengthen lighting and sound
- Expand hearing assistance
- Update technology for streaming and media

These changes are not cosmetic; they are load-bearing investments that ensure worship can be fully experienced—even by those joining from beyond the room.

Improvements to the Foyer will further reinforce First Church's hospitality. As a downtown church that regularly welcomes community partners, advocacy groups, and public-service organizations, these updates will ensure our points of entry are open, functional, and gracious.

Together, we are ensuring that this community of faith remains grounded and open, a place where barriers are removed, welcome is extended, and people find a spiritual home for generations to come.



Our historic Sanctuary Building exists not only for us, but also for the wider community that we serve.



THIS MOMENT stewarding our resources well

We have nearly completed the essential restoration of our Sanctuary Building's exterior. That project required intentional investment, and we estimate that the project-related debt will be approximately \$3 million, less than was initially expected. Addressing this debt now ensures that our Sanctuary can remain a spiritual foundation for generations to come.

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

Debt Reduction

\$3,000,000

Retire the remaining debt from the exterior phase of the Sanctuary Building restoration.

Interior Renovation

\$1,000,000

Renovate Sanctuary Foyer, rebuild the chancel for increased flexibility and accessibility, and update the lighting and audiovisual technology.

TOTAL

\$4,000,000

“Our Sanctuary waits to hold me each week in the midst of every joy, sorrow, mystery and pain. This space is holy ground. It is my refuge.”

—Jan Berger

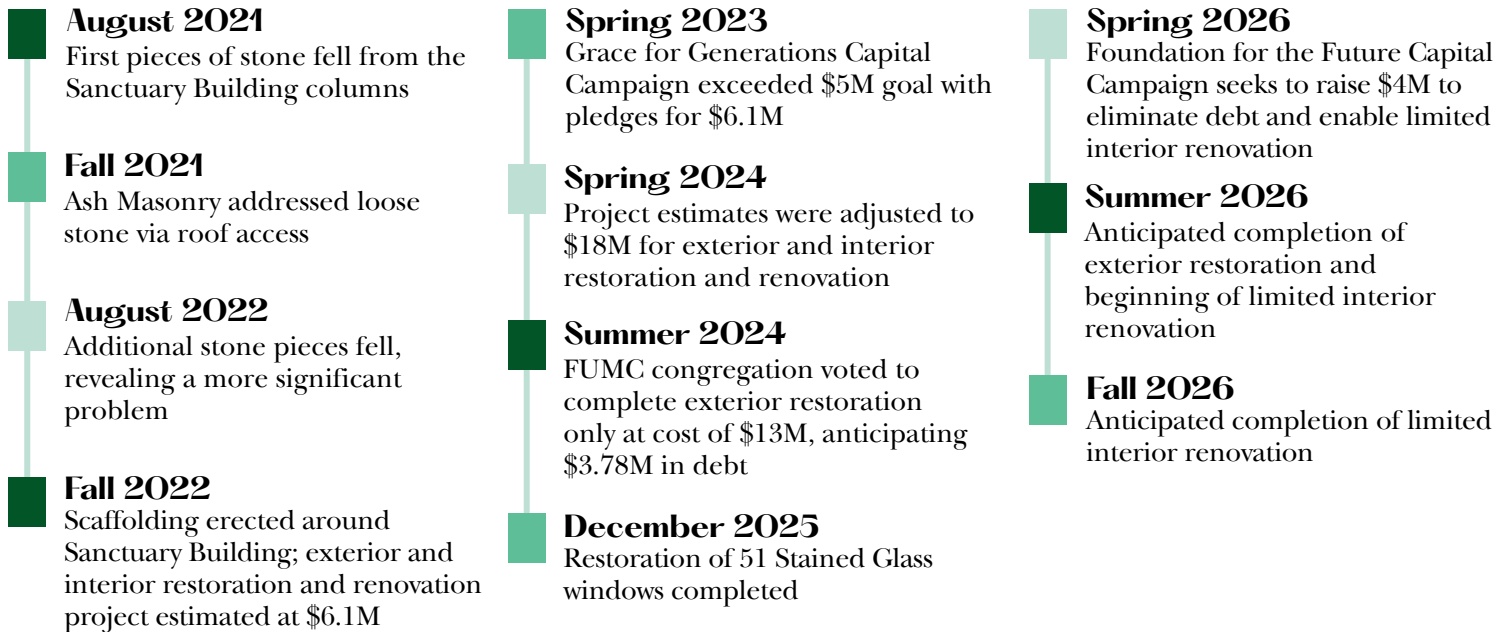
We now have the opportunity to complete a limited interior renovation project. These updates represent only a portion of the original interior work planned before the cost of exterior repairs grew significantly higher than estimated.

Even after we complete this proposed project, we will still need to repair and secure the Sanctuary's plaster ceiling, install new dome lighting, restore the pews and floor, and rebuild the organ chests.

Any gifts in excess of what is needed to address the immediate priorities of this campaign will provide seed funds for future renovation goals. The Building Committee will make recommendations about the use of those funds, while the Trustees will authorize any additional work to be done, in consultation with the Finance and Executive teams.

FREQUENTLY asked questions

How We Arrived At This Moment And What Comes Next



The Foundation We Are Building Now

WHY ARE WE DOING ANOTHER CAMPAIGN?

Because restoration costs exceeded initial expectations, debt was necessary to complete essential Sanctuary Building repairs. This campaign will eliminate that debt so we can focus our resources and operating budget on ministry.

WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT?

Our first priority is to eliminate the debt from the exterior Sanctuary restoration. Because of lower costs and generous support, the Building Committee recommended pursuing a second priority, a limited interior renovation to include rebuilding the chancel, expanding the Foyer, and updating audiovisual technology.

Stewarding Our Resources For The Future

HOW MUCH DEBT DO WE ANTICIPATE NEEDING TO PAY OFF?

We estimate project-related debt will be approximately \$3 million, though this may vary depending on several factors. These factors include the final construction cost and the rate of giving, which will impact the principal ultimately drawn.

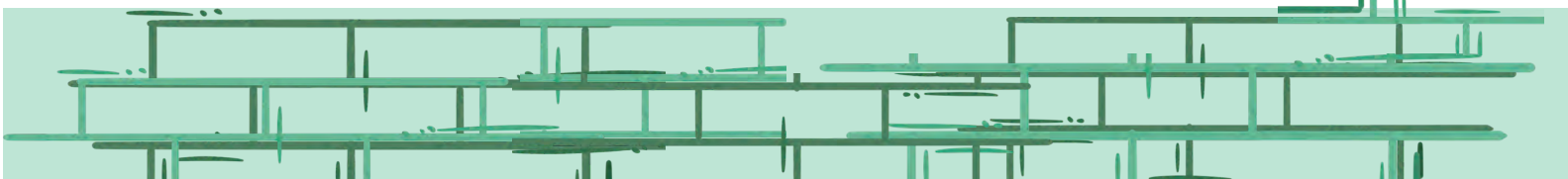
HOW ARE WE CURRENTLY MANAGING THE LOAN, AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF WE DO NOT PAY IT OFF THROUGH A CAMPAIGN?

Texas Methodist Foundation allows interest-only payments for the first three years of the loan. At this time, the Finance Committee is making those interest payments through funds given to the Grace for Generations campaign. Current donations allow us to further delay draws on the loan, thus keeping the principal balance as low as possible. Without a debt elimination campaign, loan payments would need to be made from the ministry plan (operating budget). This would have a significant impact on church programs and staffing.

Progress On The Restoration Project

IS THE PROJECT ON SCHEDULE?

Exterior construction on the Sanctuary Building is slated for substantial completion this summer.



Grace for Generations Strengthens Our Foundation

WHAT WAS THE GOAL AND HOW MUCH DID WE RAISE DURING THE GRACE FOR GENERATIONS CAPITAL CAMPAIGN?

The initial Grace for Generations campaign fundraising goal was \$5 million. To date, we have raised \$6.8 million, with approximately \$400,000 in pledges remaining to be paid. What incredible generosity!

Leveraging Every Resource Wisely

WHEN WILL WE RECEIVE A HISTORICAL DESIGNATION? WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL THAT MAKE?

We have applied to be listed on the National Register for Historic Places (NRHP). That process is extensive and time consuming. Our consultant completed the application in May 2024. Once approved by the Texas Historical Commission (THC), the application must be officially certified by the National Parks Service. We do not anticipate any issues that would prevent us from receiving the designation, which will allow us to qualify for the Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (PTCP) for restoration of historic buildings. However, we cannot apply for the Texas Historic PTCP until the exterior renovation project is complete. This program offers a franchise tax credit of 25 percent on all restoration work completed. While the church does not pay franchise tax, there is a market to sell tax credits to businesses at a discounted rate. We anticipate receiving approximately 22 percent of the total value of the restoration project upon selling our credit.

WHEN WILL WE RECEIVE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE PROJECT AS A RESULT OF THE HISTORICAL DESIGNATION?

Tax credits are granted only after approved work is completed and certified. We anticipate our NRHP listing later this year and hope to move forward with the tax credit sale in 2027.

Impact on Worship

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED TIMELINE FOR A POTENTIAL LIMITED INTERIOR RENOVATION? WILL WE BE OUT OF THE SANCTUARY, AND FOR HOW LONG?

There are cost savings associated with extending the current project and addressing the interior renovations as soon as possible. If we are able to take on the limited interior renovation project, we will seek to begin this over the summer so that it could be completed in time to return to the Sanctuary by Christmas Eve.

HOW WOULD INTERIOR RENOVATIONS AFFECT THE STYLE OF THE SANCTUARY?

While we anticipate that the limited renovations to the Sanctuary's interior will improve flexibility and accessibility, they will retain the style and character of our historic Sanctuary.

WHICH PORTIONS OF THE INTERIOR RENOVATION WOULD STILL BE INCOMPLETE?

If we complete the limited interior renovation project, we will still need to repair and secure the plaster ceiling, install new dome lighting, remove and restore the pews, restore the floor, and rebuild the organ chests.

IF WE EXCEED OUR \$4 MILLION GOAL, WOULD WE TAKE ON MORE OF THE INTERIOR RENOVATION?

Possibly! If we raise enough to complete additional interior renovations, that work may be postponed to strategically minimize time away from the Sanctuary.

Discerning Our Next Faithful Steps

WHO WILL DECIDE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Your generosity and response to this campaign will guide our decisions about whether to take on interior renovations. Our Building Committee will continue to work with our architects and utilize congregational feedback we have already received to develop those plans, and the FUMC Trustees will authorize any additional work to be done, in conversation with our Finance and Executive teams.





**Together, we are
laying a faithful
foundation for the
future God is still
building.**

