



The UU Church of Buffalo



Financial Feasibility Study Carry the Light Forward Capital Campaign

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Stewardship FOR US
Building Cultures of Generosity and Commitment

April 2024

Introduction

- Financial Feasibility Study (FFS) objectives:
 - Determine the readiness of Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo to conduct the *Carry the Light Forward* capital campaign
 - Estimate the total amount of money such a campaign might raise
 - Identify next steps to maximize chances of success
- The FFS was conducted by Barry Finkelstein and Rev. Sara Green, Unitarian Universalist *Stewardship for Us* Consultants
- Findings are presented in this slide deck and two appendices



The Carry the Light Forward Capital Campaign

This campaign will finance urgent needs for the UU Church of Buffalo's historic building in support of mission and vision:

- Reclaim damaged spaces for worship and other mission-driven uses
- Address safety and health for our members, visitors, and future members
- Improve accessibility
- Expand the reach of programs and ministries within our membership and in the surrounding area



Accomplishments to Date: An Impressive Foundation

- Conducted extensive research and analysis into the physical problems to be addressed and developed preliminary cost estimates, updated post-pandemic
- Established a Campaign Steering Committee and engaged the Stewardship Committee and Fixed Assets Committee to aid with a planned Combined Annual/Capital Campaign
- Secured a \$250,000 matching grant from the National Fund for Sacred Places, an impressive feat that inspires early generous giving
- Hired experts to help oversee the projects, manage the bidding process, and refine cost estimates
- Enlisted support from the current Interim Minister and recently retired settled minister for much-welcomed leadership and inspiration
- Initiated efforts to engage the congregation via newsletter articles, discussion sessions, and development of initial campaign materials



Methodology and Scope

- The Study was based largely on information collected from 47 members or friends comprising 35 pledging households:
 - Confidential interviews with 39 people (27 households)
 - On-line survey input from 8 households
- Interviewees were generally representative of the Congregation, with an over-weighting of potential larger contributors
- Participants represent 23% of the pledging households, and their Annual pledges account for 53% of the total dollars pledged



Methodology: Data Collection

- The interviews and survey covered the following:
 - Familiarity with and support for the project
 - Importance of this effort in the life of the Congregation
 - Personal connection to UUCB and vision for the future
 - Likely financial contribution to the campaign
 - Factors affecting support and level of giving
 - Other topics (volunteering for the campaign, planned giving)



Methodology: Analysis

- Level of enthusiasm and support for the project and the church were assessed
- Multiple approaches and scenarios were used to estimate the amount of money that might be raised, and to help set an inspiring yet attainable campaign goal:
 - Intended pledging of participants was used to create multiples of annual giving, and then to project beyond the study group
 - Results were adjusted to reflect the bias of the study sample toward likely generous givers
 - Several scenarios were run to provide a range of likely outcomes
 - A preliminary Essential Gifts Chart was created to indicate the number of gifts at each level needed to achieve a \$1,000,000 goal
 - The intended gifts planned by FFS participants were slotted into their levels, and the chart used to highlight additional gifts needed
 - A second Chart was created to show the potential for raising \$1,250,000



Results: Support for the Project

- The project enjoys very strong support.
 - On a scale of 0 to 10, the **average rating for importance was 9.15**, which is very strong
 - Only 1 person out of 47 rated it below 5, and **44 people (94%) rated it 8 or above**
- The most important feature of the project was taking care of the beautiful, historic building
- Several people noted that all of the planned work is essential although they were unable to name specifics



Results: Concerns about the Project

- Can we raise the money – this was the concern voiced the most (14 people)
- How to inform and inspire the congregation, especially for a project that's not sexy
- Will this work carry us for the next decade or so
- Can we manage and do this all well, including setting priorities, hiring contractors



Results: The Project and People's Vision

Highlights

- People were inspired and eloquent about their visions for UUCB, emphasizing growth, younger families and RE/youth, presence in the community, music, a new settled minister, and financial stability
- The **project very rated high** in terms of support for people's vision (8.89), not always the case for an infrastructure-driven project.
 - Only 1 response was below 5, and 85% rated it 8 or above.
 - People recognize the importance of the building to their vision

Word Cloud



The Numbers

- Summary:
 - Sum of intended contributions of the study participants is at least \$650,000 and likely to be \$730,000
 - \$650,000 is 3.4 times annual, \$730,000 is 3.8 times annual
 - 17 households indicated a desire to give more, based on a variety of factors, primarily personal capacity (13) and knowing about others' generosity (6)
 - Upside potential is \$765,000 or 4.0 times annual
- The good news:
 - 22 intended pledges (63%) are \$10,000+
 - 5 pledges are \$50,000+
 - The top 2 are \$90,000 and \$75,000 (conditional)
 - Only 1 household (3%) is unwilling to commit at this time and likely to contribute



The Opportunity and Challenge

- Current data indicates that UUCB can raise between \$1M and \$1.25M
- This represents 2.8 to 3.5 times annual giving
- Various scenarios produced results ranging from a low of \$1M to a high of \$1.35M
- The Essential Gifts Chart on the following page indicates likely required giving to reach a \$1M target
- The top givers require attention



Essential Gifts Chart \$1M

UU CHURCH OF BUFFALO

Gift Range	Number Needed	Funds Needed	No. from FFS	\$\$ from FFS	% from FFS	Avg from FFS	No. Needed	\$\$ Needed
100,000+	1	\$120,000	0	\$0	0%		1	
50,000-99,999	3	\$180,000	5	\$315,000	175%	\$63,000	-	-
30,000-49,999	3	\$100,000	6	\$190,000	190%	\$31,667	-	-
20,000-29,999	5	\$110,000	4	\$85,000	77%	\$21,250	1	\$25,000
15,000-19,999	6	\$100,000	2	\$32,500	33%	\$16,250	4	\$67,500
10,000-14,999	12	\$130,000	5	\$58,000	45%	\$11,600	7	\$72,000
TOTAL MAJOR GIFTS	30	\$740,000	22	\$680,500	92%	\$30,932	13	\$164,500
7,500-9,999	10	\$75,000	2	\$16,500	22%	\$8,250	8	\$58,500
5,000-7,499	12	\$65,000	5	\$28,500	44%	\$5,700	7	\$36,500
3,000-4,999	15	\$60,000	0	\$0	0%		15	\$60,000
1-2,999	20	\$35,000	3	\$5,600	16%	\$1,867	17	\$29,400
<1,000	40	\$25,000	3	\$1,000	4%	\$333	37	\$24,000
TOTAL GENERAL GIFTS	97	\$260,000	13	\$51,600	86%	\$3,969	84	\$208,400
GRAND TOTAL	127	\$1,000,000	35	\$732,100	73%	\$20,917	97	\$267,900
% Total from Major Gifts	24%	74%	63%	93%				
% of Households Contribution	85%							



Essential Gifts Chart \$1.25M

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Gift Range	Number Needed	Funds Needed	No. from FFS	\$\$ from FFS	% from FFS	Avg from FFS	No. Needed	\$\$ Needed
100,000+	1	\$120,000	0	\$0	0%		1	\$120,000
50,000-99,999	5	\$315,000	5	\$315,000	100%	\$63,000	-	\$0
30,000-49,999	3	\$190,000	6	\$190,000	100%	\$31,667	-	\$0
20,000-29,999	5	\$110,000	4	\$85,000	77%	\$21,250	1	\$25,000
15,000-19,999	6	\$100,000	2	\$32,500	33%	\$16,250	4	\$67,500
10,000-14,999	12	\$130,000	5	\$58,000	45%	\$11,600	7	\$72,000
TOTAL MAJOR GIFTS	32	\$965,000	22	\$680,500	71%	\$30,932	13	\$284,500
7,500-9,999	10	\$85,000	2	\$16,500	19%	\$8,250	8	\$68,500
5,000-7,499	12	\$75,000	5	\$28,500	38%	\$5,700	7	\$46,500
3,000-4,999	15	\$60,000	0	\$0	0%		15	\$60,000
1-2,999	20	\$40,000	3	\$5,600	14%	\$1,867	17	\$34,400
<1,000	40	\$25,000	3	\$1,000	4%	\$333	37	\$24,000
TOTAL GENERAL GIFTS	97	\$285,000	13	\$51,600	75%	\$3,969	84	\$233,400
GRAND TOTAL	129	\$1,250,000	35	\$732,100	59%	\$20,917	97	\$517,900
% Total from Major Gifts	25%	77%	63%	93%				
% of Households Contribution	86%							



How Might We Reach Either Goal?

- Consider how we might fill slots on the charts
- \$160,000 to \$285,000 more in major gifts?
- High annual givers not in the FFS:
 - 3 giving \$5,000+
 - 17 giving \$2,500 - \$5,000
 - Total annual from these 20 is \$74,000: 3X their annual = \$220,000; 4X = \$296,000. Might they give at these levels?
- Can we encourage some of the larger givers in the study to reach or exceed 3X annual?
 - Half of FFS participants are below 3X
 - If all got to 3X we would have an additional \$150,000
- Several people indicated a need to discuss the campaign further or consult advisors. What might these people pledge?



Reasons for Optimism

- The generosity of study participants
- Consistency in vision for future (growth, new minister, stability, beautiful functional building, presence)
- Upside potential of increased education, inspiration, and engagement.
- Motivation to rise to the challenge of the grant
- Several people would be motivated to give more if they saw that others were being generous
- The strong positive views of the project's importance and alignment with people's vision
- The commitment and generosity of the campaign team



Data Highlights

- Volunteering for the campaign:
 - 13 people agreed to be visiting stewards and 6 more said maybe
 - 17 declined
 - 15 people agreed to do other tasks:
 - Event/party: 3
 - Publications or graphics: 2
 - Publicity and Communications: 5
 - Web site or social media: 0 – include Instagram and Snapchat and similar
 - Database and tracking: 1
 - Whatever you need: 5
 - Get these people involved early!
- Planned Giving:
 - 14 people have included UUCB in estate planning and 15 intend to
 - 39 people would like information about how to do that or would like to be included in any planned giving events or sent information
- Names provided separately in Appendix B



Recommendations

Be bold and confident, and launch the campaign as planned!

Leadership	Communication and Messages	Campaign Execution
<p>Decision-making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set campaign goal that is inspiring but not deflating if not reached• Refine project as necessary to map to goal• Firm up cost estimates <p>Organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarify roles – divide and conquer• Set management policies to inspire confidence <p>Visibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate full leadership support and the campaign's priority	<p>Detailed communication planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Steady flow of info• Formal and informal• Involve many people <p>Messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UUCB giving• Project details• Make this report available along with summaries• Giving stories – share yours and other UU• Leadership processes and controls• Easy to give• Costs, budgets and actuals• Process and timeline	<p>Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involve many people• Events <p>Leadership phase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic approach to each leader/donor• Make direct asks that will achieve goal <p>Public phase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruit many stewards• Ensure excellent support for the stewards <p>Data management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Track progress aggressively• Actual vs. expected• Effectiveness of messages/events

Key Success Factors

- Engage with and listen to leadership givers
- Coordinate messaging on all facets of the project, the campaign, the grant, progress, etc.
- Ask for early cash
- Demonstrate over and over again that you know what you are doing
- Divide up “point” responsibilities
- Engage lots of people; resist doing things yourselves
- Talk up the campaign at every opportunity



Other Considerations

- Plan for slippage –some people will not fulfill their pledges
 - 5-10% is reasonable.
- Keep asking over the full 3-year period:
 - New members as they join
 - Returning members
 - current members whose financial situation might improve
- Close the gap measures have been successful in UU congregations and some were brought up by interviewees:
 - Challenge or matching grants
 - Named bricks or similar
 - Naming rights for specific spaces
 - Extending the campaign to 4 or even 5 years
 - Miracle Sunday



Materials to be Provided

- Appendix A: Charts, Tables, Word Clouds
- Appendix B: Confidential lists
 - People intending gifts of \$10,000 and up
 - Campaign volunteers
 - Interest in planned giving
 - Suggestions for people to approach for major gifts



Conclusion

You can do this!

