EMBRACING OUR FUTURE

2021-2023 Capital Campaign
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond is a non-denominational, collaborative interfaith congregation with an emphasis on connecting our faith and beliefs to actions in the world. First established in 1830, it is a beacon of liberal thought, acting on such priorities as anti-racism, marriage equality, and sanctuary for undocumented immigrants. UUs welcome and accept all people to sermons and teachings which embrace the wisdom of the world’s faith traditions. First UU is a large congregation, with more than 600 empathetic, generous individuals who care deeply about social justice and share a love for a diverse Beloved Community.

"First UU has been a welcoming and supportive community for me. I have been given space to develop and grow during my seven years there. I love being amongst a community that shares core principles, but is also an eclectic gathering of folks. UUs are my Chosen Family."

Drew Fridley

The distinctive building at 1000 Blanton Avenue, designed by noted architect Ulrich Franzen, has been a home to Richmond’s Unitarians and Universalists since 1972. As most homeowners know, a roof does not last forever; its average life span is 25 years. Having witnessed the aged, broken roof and related issues of our church home, the Board of Directors asked the congregation to approve a capital campaign.

Embracing the Future is the result of our congregation’s favorable vote in 2019 for a goal of $2 million. A steering committee was appointed in 2020, but the Covid-19 virus changed the timeline. Now, as we all emerge from the pandemic, we are more ready than ever to improve our shared space and build our future.
Our Church Home

We grow in search of Wisdom,
We care in support of Community,
We act in service of Justice.

Our mission statement has guided our activities, both inside our building and outside in the community. In order to fully engage in our mission, we need a dry, efficient gathering space for our Beloved Community's services, religious education, rituals, and events. We also want to provide a debt-free organization that allows us to use more financial resources for mission and social justice activities.

The 6th and 7th Principles of Unitarian Universalism call us to act in response to ongoing climate change. We must share our love for planet Earth by reducing our carbon footprint with the use of renewable energy. And we must be mindful that as sea levels rise, forests burn, and Earth's populations endure floods or droughts, it is often the global poor who are the hardest hit. It is incumbent upon us as UUs to model the right behavior in energy-saving measures. Let's not wait any longer to take care of the roof over our church home while also taking care of our planetary home!

As a healthy, strong, and generous congregation, First UU is a vital part of the Greater Richmond Region. Because of our commitment to grow in wisdom and to care for each other through programs such as Lay Pastoral Care, we are able to act for justice in our community. The Richmond Pledge to End Racism, our ministries with Cardinal School and Caritas, and our involvement with Richmonders Involved to Strengthen Our Communities (RISC) are all examples of ways that First UU makes a difference in the work for justice and equity. We are proud to be members of this dynamic congregation.

Annette Marquis and Wendy DeGroat
OUR TOP PRIORITIES

Embracing Our Future

aims to accomplish four distinct goals, with priority to be given to the roof and energy project. The other major priority, debt reduction, will be addressed as the Board sees fit. Additional funds raised above those amounts will go toward human resource transition costs and to the establishment of a capital reserve fund.

• We need a complete roof replacement with insulation and related energy efficient remediations. The roof has multiple leaks, pooling water (rather than draining) and rotting trim around the clerestory or upper windows. The roof is neither smooth nor flat, but features some 42 elevations because of gas and electric HVAC units, turrets, etc.

The project includes the exciting addition of solar panels over the Great Hall. Solar power will offset our electricity use by 30 to 40%, ultimately reducing our electric bill, the largest utility expense in our operating budget. First UU used 134,240 kilowatts of electricity in the last 12 months, which is roughly equivalent to electricity used by 11½ homes.

Cost estimates for the roof work vary from that approved in 2019 because (1) we have more detailed estimates from three area contractors, (2) in general, construction costs have gone up, and (3) we have realized the importance of striving for Net Zero Carbon Emissions and therefore the opportunity to “Go Solar.”

The sooner we fund the roof and energy project, the sooner we can get started on this vital component. If you plan to join the capital campaign through installments, please consider making a larger first payment.

• Another important concern is our debt retirement. This campaign aims to pay off the loan we secured to realize our goals from the Honoring Our Roots-Realizing Our Dreams campaign of 2011. It is important to fully satisfy this loan not only to eliminate the monthly payment’s strain on our operating budget, but also to provide a debt-free church future for our children and subsequent generations of Richmond UUs.

• Finally, funds will support capital human resource expenses related to attracting the best possible candidates for future open positions. In addition, we will establish a capital reserve fund that will protect our operating budget from unforeseen capital expenses.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Present needs and approximate costs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Roof replacement/solar/energy improvements</td>
<td>$900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Debt retirement</td>
<td>$900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fund for robust human resources</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Capital reserve/Emergency fund</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Costs shown are estimates and are subject to change.
As members of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond, we are committed to building a beloved community that ministers to a racially, culturally, and generationally diverse population. A community where folks are not only welcomed but also included when they enter our building. A community that is committed to eradicating racism and advocating for economic, environmental, and immigrant justice. A community that is theologically and spiritually diverse. A community where our members are willing to go beyond the corner of Blanton Avenue and Garrett Street to spread the life-affirming, life-transforming, lifesaving good news of Unitarian Universalism. The beloved community that we aspire to be right now. This is the beloved community that I want to belong to in the future.

Our investment in the Capital Campaign is essential to the future vitality and ministry of First UU. This investment will provide the funds to take care of our building, where many seek sanctuary. Paying off our debt will enable us to deliver programs and ministries that will continue to be that clarion voice of justice-seeking people this community desperately needs right now and in the future. As we Embrace this Future, we, the members of First UU, are called to invest in our future; this is why I wholeheartedly support our Capital Campaign, Embracing Our Future.

100% PARTICIPATION

We need everyone to join in this effort to secure our building and church organization. We know that some gifts will be large and others small. The most important goal here is that everyone participates. We can accomplish our goals if 100% of our members of record, plus our many friends, contribute to the campaign!

Let us invest responsibly in our future and accomplish the goals of this capital campaign. Thanks to each of you for your thoughtful consideration of being an essential participant in the healthy future of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond.

Please open your hearts to the love you have for First UU and see how that love can manifest into a generous donation to Embracing Our Future.

“During our thirteen years as members of First UU Church, we have found it rewarding to be a part of a spiritually conscious community. First UU is a place where the inherent worth and dignity of each individual is not just a slogan. This is important to us. Our church is a place where we gather in support of each other and has become a space where many other community groups are invited to share our building. We support preserving our physical space. Our financial gifts are being used for causes we believe in and we intend to continue our support.

Reggie & Barbara Henderson
More than a few people have reacted with astonishment when we say that we took on the role of co-chairing the Capital Campaign. But for us, this is an opportunity to inspire our fellow congregants to invest in the future of our cherished church. Anne-Marie is a 12-year member of First UU who has seen over those years the power that a faith community can bring to individuals’ personal spiritual journeys and to our shared commitment to action in our larger world. Kevin and his wife Christina joined four years ago, seeking a place to form community in the Richmond area and to have an environment for thoughtful education and learning for their young son.

We have seen the church grow as more and more people in greater Richmond learn about what we have to offer. There’s rarely a person who doesn’t ask, when you tell them what church you go to, “Oh, do you mean the church that took in a sanctuary guest?” “The church that is a leader in RISC?” “The place that offers training in anti-racism?” “The church that has been out front in advocating for LGBTQ rights?”

As any homeowner knows, you need to keep investing in the value of your property. Thus, this Campaign focuses on actual physical improvements (the roof) and our financial viability (the debt), but it’s also centered around our shared belief that First UU offers a home and community in a world full of challenges and uncertainties. Investing in our church now is a recognition of our values. We hope you join in our enthusiasm for what we can accomplish in this campaign.

Anne-Marie McCartan & Kevin Thrasher
Campaign Steering Committee Co-Chairs
EMBRACING OUR FUTURE

2021 - 2023 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN
FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF RICHMOND