

CORNERSTONE

CAMPAIGN

— BUILDING BRAVE SPACES TOGETHER —

Case Statement



Proposed Rogers Avenue Entrance

So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone; in him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

- Ephesians 2: 19-22



1929 Ground Breaking



1933 UCC Cornerstone



1933 UCC Building



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BUILDING BRAVE SPACES TOGETHER

In 2023 UCC will celebrate 150 years since our founding as TCU's church. We look back with gratitude at all the ways God has blessed and used UCC to bless others. We also look ahead to discern how God is calling UCC to serve the generations to come.

An important part of the rich history and lore of University Christian Church is the laying of the cornerstone to build our beautiful sanctuary on March 5, 1933—the very day that President Roosevelt ordered all the nation's banks closed, trying to fend off the Depression. This speaks to the faith, courage and trust of this congregation; we are always willing to face struggles bravely.

Now, 90 years later, this dynamic, thriving congregation is being called to once again renovate our sacred spaces for future generations. There is no doubt that UCC's ministry momentum and hospitality goals are impacted by our aging facility. We believe that this renovation prepares our historic church for new experiences in faith formation, a greater variety of worship, and an improved setting for building relationship and practicing hospitality. Our hope is to make it easier to come together and to create a facility that reflects the warm and welcoming spirit of our congregation.

Once again we find ourselves looking to undertake a significant project in the midst of uncertain times and a volatile economy. But we've been here before; we have a history of being brave and faithful in difficult times.

Our theme for this campaign—**Cornerstone: Building Brave Spaces Together**—speaks to that legacy, connecting us to that history, while also calling us to look forward. It reminds us that we are here because of the courageous, faithful generosity of those who have come before us—and calls us to practice the same. What we love is what someone else paid for, and we have been entrusted with this incredible church.

A central element of our mission and ministry is to create welcoming spaces where all are included; brave spaces where we can be honest and open; where people are “no longer strangers” and we can do the hard work of discernment to uncover what God is calling us to do, both as individuals and as a community of faith.

I am so excited, church, to build on our great history in order to create a bright future as together we transform our current building into a space that feels welcoming to all.

With gratitude and hope,

Rev. Dr. Russ Peterman
Senior Minister

A NEW SEASON OF MOMENTUM

God is at work now—through the inspired leadership of Rev. Dr. Russ Peterman, a talented team of ministers, and gifted lay leaders—equipping UCC for a new chapter of ministry. Membership is growing—152 new members since 2020—and our campaign to more clearly communicate the pathway to discipleship means new members are finding their place to serve and grow.

This new member engagement initiative is surpassing expectations. In terms of worship attendance, we average 36 first-time visitors every month and welcomed 42 first-time visitors on Easter Sunday. An impressive hospitality team is at work on Sundays greeting guests and helping them connect with UCC. We have launched a new alternative worship service, TEN:10, that is exceeding even our biggest hopes. TEN:10 began with 85 in attendance on August 15, 2021, and we recorded 158 on Easter.

Last year our senior minister and the Board of Stewards initiated a bold vision for ministry to students. Rev. Alison Fitzgerald, the newest addition to our ministry team, is building a program that will focus on dynamic faith formation that begins in sixth grade and continues through college.

Our latest community project is our partnership with Alice Contreras Elementary School and Academy 4. Beginning last fall, more than a hundred UCC members have been investing their time and talents in monthly mentoring and encouragement for the entire fourth grade class. We look forward to growing that relationship in the years to come.

In keeping with our vision to transform the world by living out Christ's courageous love, UCC will invest \$555,000 in outreach and missions in 2022 both here at home and around the world.

In January more than 49% of our participating members answered the call to take the next step in their giving. The result was a \$422,000 increase in estimates-of-giving for 2022. Generous giving during 2021 made it possible to end the year in a positive position. This allows us to further pursue our goals and strategic priorities in 2022 with a strong financial foundation.

Our growing endowment, now totaling \$18 million, provides a permanent source of annual income in excess of \$700,000 that directly supports ministries, outreach and increasing maintenance costs for an aging facility. In 2021, we celebrated new gifts and commitments to our Endowment Fund totaling over \$800,000! We give thanks to God for the generosity of members who honor loved



THE CHALLENGES OF OUR AGING FACILITY

There's no doubt that UCC's ministry momentum and hospitality goals are impacted by our aging facility. Current challenges include:

- Long hallways, hidden staircases and exterior doors with no windows which make our building difficult to navigate for visitors and members alike.
- Insufficient lighting and sound systems in Walker Hall which impact our fastest growing worship service. The floor is damaged. Sunday morning seating demands make it difficult to convert the space for other uses.
- Primary parking along Rogers Street is on the opposite side of the building from our main entrances. For visitors, it is a bit like coming in the back door of a restaurant. It is especially confusing for those attending special events at UCC.



- The chancel in our sanctuary is inaccessible to anyone with limited mobility. This prevents those people from engaging in key worship leadership. In addition, many of our restrooms fail to meet ADA requirements.
- With Walker Hall dedicated to worship on Sundays, there are no large gathering spaces for children and youth activities on the weekends.
- Most exterior doors must be locked manually making it impossible to respond quickly to a security lockdown. Security cameras only monitor three entrances. Our historic sanctuary is the least protected space in terms of security and fire detection.
- Because our facility lacks a voice evacuation system, our building does not meet current smoke/fire detection codes.



SETTING THE STAGE FOR WHAT'S NEXT

A group of strategic priorities adopted by UCC leadership in 2019 serve as the ministry roadmap for what's next and help us imagine the facility we need to get there.

We seek to:

- **Grow Younger** through focused attention on a vibrant Sunday morning experience along with programming and special events designed to reach young adults and young families. Our new ministry to students is the result of our commitment to re-examine and reimagine our programming for youth and college.
- **Grow Deeper** by developing robust, intentional faith formation ministry for adults. Establish and teach a discipleship pathway for all ages.
- **Grow Outward** by investing our time and talents in a signature outreach program that invites a large number of UCC members to partner with local schools.

Continued growth in these three areas depends on a facility that better supports today's priorities and reflects the warm and welcoming spirit of our congregation.

Features of the proposed renovation include:

- Welcoming, expanded entrance on Rogers

Street with exterior bell tower design and lots of windows to add light and visibility.

- Bright and airy two-story inviting commons area on first floor with seating areas to encourage conversation.
- Easily accessible and centrally located first floor gathering space across from Walker Hall for coffee and conversation. This puts community at the heart of the space and fosters connections between members attending different worship services.
- Improved navigation for families with second floor spaces for children and youth that are visible from first floor commons area.
- Updated ministry center for children and youth feature a centralized entrance to modernize the check-in experience and provide added security. Each space includes a large group gathering area with a stage and classrooms featuring all the technology needed to make learning fun.
- A new second-floor gathering area with comfortable seating and plenty of room for receptions and small group functions. This allows ample spaces for congregation fellowship before and after worship. Staff offices will be relocated to the third floor to make room for additional second floor adult classrooms.
- Walker Hall will be updated and better equipped for TEN:10 worship and large gatherings and serves as a highly adaptable multi-purpose space used throughout the week by our congregation and community groups.
- A wheelchair lift will make the sanctuary chancel accessible for all.
- A new security system and upgraded fire detection/alarms will provide added protection for our congregation, Weekday School, and the many outside groups who share our facility.





Gallery



First Floor Commons



First Floor Commons



Cantey Entry



Rogers Street Entry



Walker Hall set for TEN:10 Worship



First Floor Gathering Space - Rogers Street Entry



Children's Ministry Check-In



Youth Assembly Space

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does spending money on this project make sense right now, with a struggling economy?

COVID-19 has certainly introduced new challenges, but it is a cliché that there is ever a “perfect time” to initiate a capital campaign. It takes time to conduct a campaign and finalize construction plans. It is our hope that prayerfully, faithfully, and joyfully committing to this project together now will encourage our congregation to look past our present challenges into the hope filled future in which God is calling us.

What if we don't raise enough money? Will there be long term debt (debt not covered by campaign commitment)?

If we fail to raise the needed amount, the Building Committee along with the Board of Stewards will consider options from right-sizing the project to considering a prudent amount of long-term debt.

When would construction begin? Will it happen all at once or in stages?

The hope is that renovating existing space will begin as early as summer of 2023. Our architect anticipates this taking 14-16 months to complete. Obviously we'll need to do the work in stages to allow us to continue to function as a congregation with as little disruption as possible.

What will happen to Weekday School during construction?

Since construction will be carried out in stages, we will work with Weekday School to plan for construction during the summer break and secure off-site teaching space if needed. The needs of WDS families and staff will be a priority as we plan construction.

How long does the campaign last?

The campaign begins in September as we share information about our plans and enter into a season of prayer. Campaign chairs Harold and Pat Muckleroy will introduce the inspiration phase of the Cornerstone campaign in worship on October 1. We will celebrate Commitment Sunday on October 30. Members will be asked to make a three-year commitment over and above their current giving to the church. We will spend a week or two in early November gathering in remaining commitments so that we can announce results before Thanksgiving.

How were decisions about this project made and what are the next steps?

Leaders for each ministry area met with Andrew Oxley of OWT architects to discuss the space needed to support ministry now and future expansion. Preliminary plans were presented. The pandemic caused us to tap the brakes on architectural plans to re-invent many aspects of ministry. As ministry slowly returned to “normal” we scheduled another round of talks with OWT. Some ministry adjustments made during the pandemic provided new direction and momentum. The existing plan was revised where needed to accommodate these changes. Once our campaign is completed, an advisory committee will work with OWT on final plans based on the funding pledged by members.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will this have an impact on our Outreach ministry and the impact that we will have in our community?

Outreach will always be a ministry priority at UCC. In 2022 we plan to invest \$577,800 in loving our neighbors through Outreach projects at home and around the world. This represents 15% of our projected total receipts and includes \$103,000 of annual earnings designated for Outreach from gifts to our Endowment Fund. Funding for Outreach is secure and will continue to grow.

As part of our facility renovation, Walker Hall will be renovated with two priorities in mind: updated worship space on Sunday mornings that easily converts to facilitate Outreach activities during the week. We will also update the adjacent “dormitory” (currently used for Room in the Inn) so that we can continue to host Room in the Inn while providing year-round hospitality and lodging to church groups and other volunteers who come to Fort Worth for community service.

How does this impact operating costs?

Controlling operating costs is always a challenge with an older, aging facility. For the past several years, UCC has been working to integrate energy saving equipment and measures wherever practical and whenever funds allowed. The most notable improvements have been the replacement of outdated and inefficient HVAC equipment and lighting with more energy efficient solutions. Competitive rates on electricity costs have also helped control costs and our architect is helping research the viability of a solar energy system. Energy efficiency will be a priority with this renovation.

How do you plan to increase security for the sanctuary?

None of the exterior doors leading into or adjacent to the sanctuary can be locked electronically. In case of a threat, doors would have to be individually secured by hand. In addition, there are no security cameras monitoring sanctuary entrances. Finally, there are no fire and smoke detection alarms in the sanctuary. Our plan for facility improvement includes electronic door locks, security cameras and a smoke/fire detection system in the sanctuary that meets current codes.

Do we really need to do this?

Our goal is a facility that supports ministry today and prepares us for the next 150 years of serving our community. We need a facility that is easier to navigate. We need a secure facility. We need flexible space equipped for worship and accessible for all. We need a Rogers Avenue entrance that is visible and welcoming to everyone who parks behind our building. We need large group spaces for children and youth. We need additional classroom/small group spaces for adults.

How does this plan align with the goals and future needs of UCC: growth, variety of services and serving the community?

Our mission to seek the sacred, commit to love, and empower to serve has been in front of our leaders through every step of planning. We are focused on creating spaces with greater flexibility for worship, teaching and outreach. It's common knowledge that first-time visitors to any church will decide whether or not to return based on their experience in the first ten minutes. We are laser-focused on removing facility obstacles that impact first impressions and limit growth.

We believe this renovation prepares our historic church for new experiences in faith formation, a greater variety of worship experiences, an improved setting for UCC hospitality, and enhanced technology and security.

Your generosity will equip University Christian Church to faithfully pursue our mission as we seek the sacred, commit to love, and empower each other to serve our neighbors across the next chapter of our ministry.

OUR VISION

Transforming the world by living out Christ's courageous love.

OUR MISSION

Seek the Sacred • Commit to Love • Empower to Serve

