



## First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, United Church of Christ

May 30, 2023

Dear Friends,

We are writing to invite you to make a special contribution toward the long-term financial health of First Church in Cambridge.

We give thanks that First Church is thriving with powerful worship experiences, intimate small group connections, and deepening engagement in racial equity and social justice, including our homeless ministries and earth stewardship. We are grateful for the vitality of our congregation through our grounding in God, our growing in community, and our acting in love. As we look to the future, we want to ensure that we are prepared and ready for where God is calling us to go.

In 2014, our congregation felt called to launch a capital campaign “For Such a Time as This” to make a generational investment in our building to sustain and support this vision of thriving and growing ministry and mission in Cambridge and beyond for many years to come. On top of the remarkable generosity of the congregation, seven years ago we voted to take out a 15-year loan to ensure we could complete the full renovation plan, which brought us our beautiful kitchen, four new accessible bathrooms, the Harter Room, Hastings Common, and other improvements.

In voting to approve this loan, leaders of the church made clear the expectation that we would need to hold another campaign to retire this debt. **We believe the time is now.**

Why now? Even as our community life flourishes, First Church faces significant financial challenges, including persistent budget deficits. A major strain on our budget is ongoing payments on the renovation loan as well as the no-interest loan we took out to install our energy-efficient boilers in 2020. We pay approximately \$80,000 per year towards the two loan balances and interest. These obligations put increasing pressure on our stewardship campaigns to raise what we need for loan repayment on top of church operations, and on our endowment to cover annual deficits.

This debt retirement appeal is one strategy among many we are employing to strengthen our financial health, alongside staffing decisions, expense reductions, a robust stewardship campaign to increase regular pledges, and launching the new “Foundation for our Fifth



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Century” initiative focused on planned giving and bequests. But paying off this debt quickly will have the greatest impact for balancing our budget and advancing our mission and ministry, including calling a second ordained minister and diversifying our clergy.

**We are inviting you to join this special appeal to retire our debt. Our goal is to raise \$450,000 over the next three years, an amount that will allow us to pay off these loans by 2026 and set our church on strong financial footing for the future.**

Please give prayerful consideration to what you are able to do to help accomplish this goal. We recognize that this request will be received differently depending on your circumstances, knowing that some are already stretched financially in your giving to First Church, while some have capacity to do more. Your carefully considered pledge or gift, and the participation of many, will be a source of strength and joy for our faith community, and we are so grateful for all of your ongoing financial support.

To make a pledge for any type of commitment – from one time to over three years – [please click here to fill out an online pledge form.](#) **We ask for as many initial responses as possible by June 30, as this will help guide our planning for our 2024 budget.**

**Together, we can ensure that this community of faith continues to proclaim God’s love and be a beacon of light, justice, and peace in our world “from generation to generation.”**

In faith,

Moana Bentin, Moderator

Meredith Quinn, Vice Moderator

Rich Goode, Treasurer

Jim Cairns, Associate Treasurer