



February 27, 2019

LETTER FROM MATT ON THE SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Dear members and friends of the Hills Church,

A Special Congregational Meeting has been called for Sunday, March 3, to take action on a plan to replace and upgrade the heating system of the church building. This is an important decision for the ministry and life of our church.

The heating system was identified as the largest area of needed renovation by the professional Facility Condition Assessment Plan, which was conducted in 2017 and presented to the congregation in 2018, and it is central to the master plan for capital improvements that will be finalized and presented for discussion and approval this spring.

Although the full master plan will be considered at a later date, the heating system is unquestionably a centerpiece. A decision and commitment at this meeting on March 3 will allow us to take advantage of the summer season for renovation work when the church is less busy and the nursery school is off, addressing the least reliable aspects of the system in time for next winter. A recently completed engineering study of the system has provided the necessary information to take action at this time.

Currently, the church has an oil-fired steam boiler nearing the end of its useful life. It provides hot water heating for the west half of our building, which holds the Sanctuary and Assembly Room, and steam heating for the east half, which holds the offices, classrooms, Reception Room, and nursery school, plus Wallace Chapel. Just after Christmas, a steam pipe in the Sunday nursery/crib room ceiling began leaking, and the repair led to the temporary relocation of this room. Work on the new heating system will begin with a switch to hot water heating for the entire building, and will ultimately move from oil-based heating to a more efficient system, lowering energy and maintenance costs and providing for more even heating and cooling of the building. The possibility of continuing to repair the existing system was studied, but it was determined to be unfeasible for both reliability and financial reasons.

A decision to proceed on the heating system will also initiate a capital campaign to raise funds for the heating system and for other aspects of the master plan when they are approved. I am grateful for church members Bob Minetti and Steven Patrick, who have agreed to chair a committee to plan this capital campaign.

I am grateful for the dedication of many people, especially the members of the Master Planning Committee, who have prepared the church for action to address the long-term strength of our church as a center for Christian ministry and witness.

I hope that you will join us for the Special Congregational Meeting on March 3, immediately following the worship service, and I welcome your thoughts and questions at any time.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster
Senior Minister