

February 22, 2019

Dear Members and Friends of the Hills Church;

At our Annual Meeting last month, we gathered together to discuss and think about our church journey as a congregation. Gintas Vildzius spoke eloquently about the great meaning this place brings to our lives, and in our congregational tradition over the 170-year practice of this church, the importance of meeting to chart the course for another year as a united community in faith.

We are at the next step on this church journey.

If you have bundled up recently either during Sunday worship in the sanctuary or while participating in the life of our church during the rest of the week, you can appreciate that our heating system is “reaching the end of its useful life.” The Master Planning process which is currently underway includes several objectives to restore and renovate our church spaces, but it has become clear that the first priority is our need to address the heating system.

Renovations are inspiring, but an adequate heating system is a necessity:

- If you’ve volunteered on the third floor teaching our children or hosting families overnight during Family Promise;
- If you’ve experienced the support and dedication of our staff in maintaining the day-to-day operation of the church;
- If you’ve watched the nursery school program continue to grow and thrive;

You will understand why we as a congregation must address promptly this critical church need as part of the first phase in the Master Planning process.

This past Tuesday, February 19, Church Council met and after thoughtful discernment voted to approve a motion to call a **Special Meeting after worship on Sunday, March 3**, to formally recommend, and receive approval from the congregation to repair and upgrade the heating system at an expense of up to \$1.5 million. With the congregation’s approval, the Stewards Support Board will determine short term funding – until a capital campaign is established to cover these repairs and the yet-to-be determined expenses of the full Master Plan.

In order to take our church forward and continue to build a vibrant place where we can live and serve together as a faith community for each other as well as for neighbors beyond our walls, we need to take care of the spaces and systems that are no longer adequately supporting our mission.

Your voice is important – as it is our collective vote that will determine the next step on our church journey. Learn more about this proposal **this Sunday, February 24, right after the worship service** when an Open Forum will be held in the Reception Room to both provide you with additional information as well as answer your questions and concerns.

Can’t attend the forum but have questions and concerns? Please contact Mary Hill Canavan, Gintas Vildzius, or Chris Stowell at officeofthemoderator@hillschurch.org.

Most importantly, **please attend the Special Meeting following worship next Sunday, March 3**, where we will discern together the next step in our life as a faith community. (Please see the “Call to Special Meeting” itself, which is being simultaneously released.)

In service and faith,

Mary Hill Canavan
Office of the Moderator

Gintas Vildzius

Chris Stowell