



Sixth Presbyterian Church

A Case for Campaign Support

Winter 2018

Executive Summary

Entering 2018, Sixth Presbyterian Church continues to grow in membership and to expand a community of faith throughout and beyond Pittsburgh's East End. The church's commitment to full inclusion starts internally with those who seek to participate in church life and spreads outward with progressive activities to advance social justice, peacemaking, and environmental stewardship. A community landmark, Sixth Church provides a space for worship, Christian education, and outreach to those in need. Sixth also serves as a central location for community gatherings and social services programming. As we seek to strengthen our work in the world, we realize that our church infrastructure faces significant needs. Assessments by our House Committee indicate three urgent renovation concerns: sanctuary windows, accessibility features, and interior plastering and painting. By addressing these challenges now, our church building will remain an important center of Christian ministry and mission. We believe that a three-year capital campaign to raise \$380,000 will help ensure that Sixth Church's legacy endures well into the future.

Historical Context

Since its founding in 1850, Sixth Presbyterian Church has ministered in an ever-changing urban setting. Sixth Church moved from Pittsburgh's Hill District to its current location in Squirrel Hill in 1903, and by 1945, church membership exceeded 1200 members. As suburbs began growing, membership at Sixth declined. By the early 1970s, after being served by five ministers, the church retained only a core group of faithful worshippers. From 1970 to 2003, the church was led by Rev. John McCall, now Pastor Emeritus. According to church historian David Miller, new members who joined Sixth shared Rev. McCall's passion for social justice. As an example, Sixth participated actively in dialogues with the neighboring communities and encouraged women to participate fully as members of Session and as associate pastors working within Sixth. Under Rev. McCall's leadership, Sixth affirmed and expanded its welcoming ministry to LGBTQ members in 1997 by becoming the first More Light Network church in the Pittsburgh Presbytery, and one of a growing number of More Light churches across the United States. Throughout its history, Sixth has launched and supported many social outreach programs offering material and spiritual support to those needing food or shelter. Since 1980, for example, Sixth has taken a leading role with other churches in raising and distributing 10,000 small emergency grants through the Lazarus Fund to help people stay in their homes. By the late 1990s, church leaders had chosen to sell a parcel of vacant property and create an endowment to maintain the existing church building. In 2000, construction of a housing complex began on the adjacent parcel. The developer agreed to clean and repair the pollution-damaged exterior of Sixth, providing a welcoming face to the community.

The Church in 2018

Since 2014, Rev. Dr. Vincent Kolb has guided Sixth in its growth. Our Mission Statement, revised before Dr. Kolb's arrival, reflects our unique identity in Christ. "We are an open and affirming community of faith in Jesus Christ. At home in an urban neighborhood of many faiths, we acknowledge that we are not alone on the path to understanding God. In worship, study, and fellowship, we celebrate our understanding of life in the Spirit, working for justice and serving as stewards of God's wondrous creation."

Sixth membership today stands at 208, a healthy number compared to some area Presbyterian churches. Impressively, over half of its members attend worship each week, which is uncharacteristic of many other Presbyterian congregations. The church location remains accessible to those who can walk or take the bus, but approximately a quarter of church members come from 10 or more miles away to worship. Clearly Sixth creates a special environment that addresses an important need not met by other churches. Most excitingly, Sixth membership continues to grow at a time when the Presbyterian denomination faces declining membership overall. From 2014 to 2017, we welcomed 40 new members. Also in 2017, the congregation of nearby Greenfield Presbyterian Church approached Sixth about merging congregations, and five of our new members were the result of this event.

The sanctuary of the building is central to the life of Sixth. Worship there is infused with scripture, thought-provoking sermons, and a rich tradition of music that includes a 30-member choir, comprised almost exclusively of church members and led by our long-standing and immensely talented music director, Gail Luley. Children also play an important role in worship, participating in each service by lighting the peace candle

and pouring water into the baptismal font. The “Time for Children” enriches everyone’s experience, and ensures that our youngest members become familiar with scripture, its interpretation, and the relevance of Jesus’ teachings to their lives.



Sanctuary Decorated for Christmas 2017

Sixth continues to attract young families and benefits from the skills and care of Christian Education Director Jenny Newman. Over the past several years, the number of children attending Sunday School has grown from 17 in 2013 to 28 in 2017. At least 10 families with children have joined our family since 2013, and there are at least four non-member families with children who attend regularly. All this growth means that Sunday School classes for children fill our second floor and the basement Ridinger Room. In addition to supervising Sunday School and the children’s participation in worship, Jenny also coordinates and oversees mission trips, youth group activities, confirmation classes, vacation Bible school, and other activities.

Since Rev. Kolb’s arrival, the church has developed new Sunday School programming for adults and has strengthened its presence in the community, helping the church to remain responsive to needs around us. Programs reflect faithful commitments to peacemaking, justice and advocacy, and environmental stewardship. Examples of Sixth’s work in the community include:

- Membership in the Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network, which has played a major role in successfully advocating for positive social change, including healthy, safe environments and a living wage;
- Designation as an Earth Care Congregation, recognizing our efforts to incorporate sustainable behaviors at every level of our communal life;
- Creation of a Gun Safety Committee to discuss ways that our congregation, working with others, can inform policymakers about the need to curb gun use in an increasingly violent culture; and
- Help extended to those in need through: yearly CROP Walks against hunger, the Lazarus Fund, and distribution of meals and supplies to the homeless.

These activities – and others – bring members of Sixth church into conversation with each other and with community members from across western Pennsylvania. Each program organized by our Church and Community Committee draws between 20 and 50 participants to our building, with many attendees coming from outside the congregation.

Why a Capital Campaign? Why now?

Sixth needs to make important decisions with regard to our facility. Our church is growing and filling the sanctuary each Sunday. Indeed, every room in our church sees regular use. Annual contributions make possible most of Sixth's activities, supplemented by funds from the draw on our current church endowment (\$730,684) and revenue from a contract with Verizon Wireless.

Sixth has always been a place where we receive God's grace. We fulfill the spiritual needs of many with energetic members called by their faith to do God's work – promoting social justice, advancing peace, ensuring environmental stewardship, and seeking the inclusion of all. Members of Sixth Church meet within our building to make a difference in their lives and in the lives of others around them. As Jenny Newman said in a recent Children's Sermon, "This is God's House. We need to take care of the building and the people inside the building so that they can take care of people outside the church."

We want to continue this "momentum for good," especially at a time when so much in our world appears self-centered, acrimonious, and divisive. Worshipers come to Sixth seeking a spiritual shelter and inspiration from Christ's teaching as they navigate our uncertain times. Sixth is a special place in a world of "relentless" secularity, according to Rev. Kolb. And sometimes a church home needs to be renovated if we want to build a community, continue our mission, and walk humbly with God.

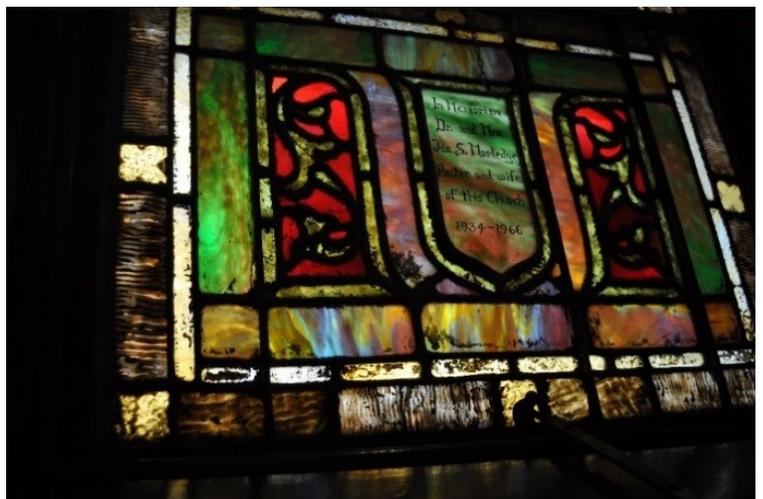
Historically, Sixth has struggled with the problem of deferred maintenance, often choosing to focus on mission giving instead of interior painting, for example. Yet the building and mission are intimately connected, as evidenced above. Over the past several years, Sixth has made a number of significant and much-needed repairs, such as installing new front steps and replacing the roof. In the last two years alone, we have used our annual House budget, together with a one-time surplus of \$60,000, to address several urgent problems – replacing the sewer line to prevent flooding in the kitchen and Ridinger Room, repairing our furnace system to ensure that we have adequate heat in the winter, and painting the exterior wood window frames, which were in danger of rotting. Repairs to the furnace, replacement of lights with new LED fixtures, and the installation of two new sets of doors also have improved our energy efficiency. The House Committee's modest annual allotment of \$12,000 must cover routine maintenance and emergency needs. For example, we may draw upon this budget in future years for repairs of exterior concrete, ironwork, and roof masonry to prevent future roof leaks. We also have applied to the Pittsburgh History and Landmark Foundation for a \$10,000 grant to cover costs associated with the roof masonry. Nonetheless, our annual budget and a building endowment of \$353,143 are simply inadequate to address a series of important needs now facing the church.

Repairs in Need of Substantial Funding

Several sizable projects, if addressed, would make our church home vastly more accessible, welcoming, and structurally sound, thereby creating the very environment we desire to continue our ministry and mission. We have sought quotes for these projects, and the details follow.

Sanctuary Windows: Large and beautiful, our seven windows cast a warm light within the sanctuary. Several windows recognize early church leaders – ministers and elders – through inscriptions at their base. Our church windows are central to creating the special place in which we worship. Our stain-glass windows suffer from cracks, a buildup of dirt and, most alarmingly, buckling where the leading between the glass is weak. Leading between the glass panels typically disintegrates after 100 years, and our windows are now 115 years old. While it is difficult to say when the windows will fail, it is certain that they will.

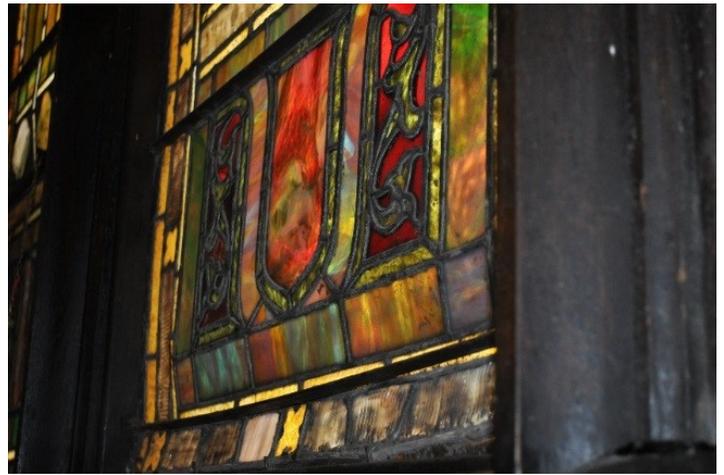
Repairing the windows is estimated to cost \$250,000.



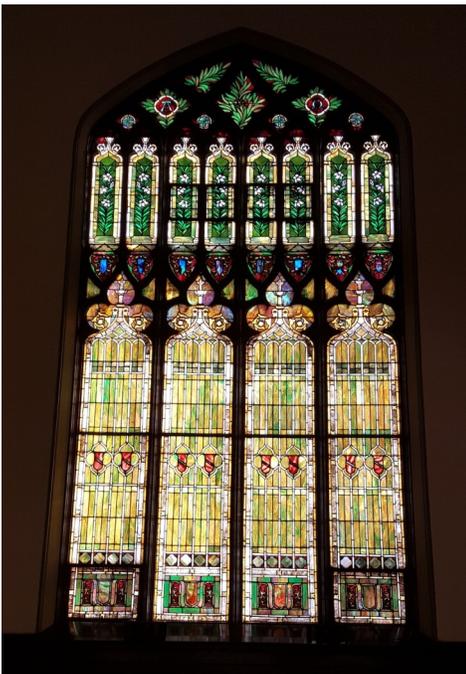
Example of Dirt Buildup



Example of Cracks



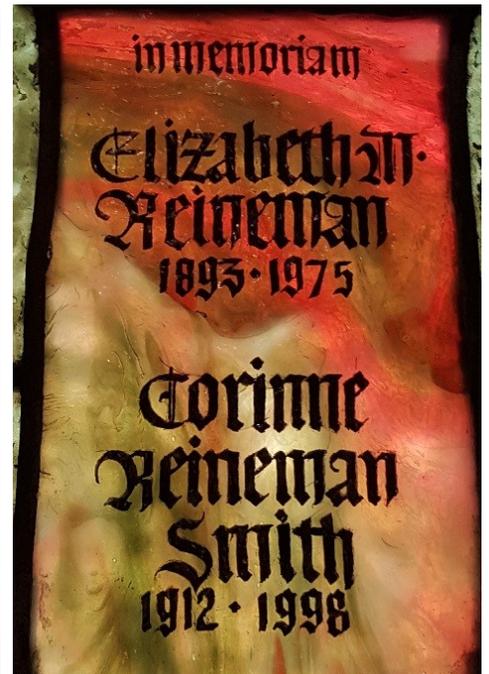
Example of Window Buckling



West-Facing Sanctuary Window



Inscription in Memoriam of a Former Pastor



Inscription Memorializing Church Leaders

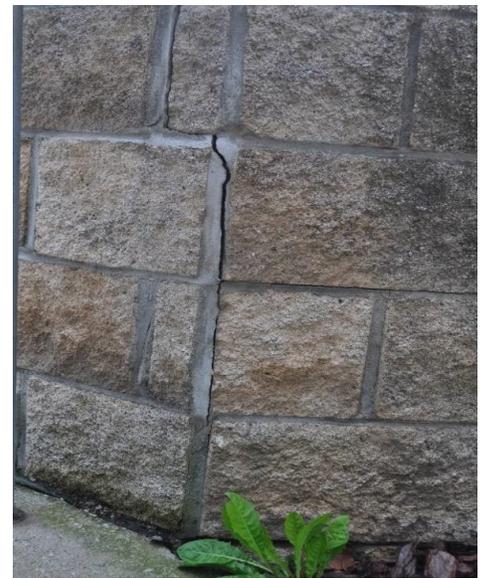
Repair of our sanctuary windows would entail considerable work.

1. The window 'sets' will be done one at a time. In the Sanctuary we have four two-lancet windows, two four-lancet windows, and one five-lancet window in the rear.
2. The two-lancet windows will each take about a year to finish. *All together, we may be looking at a seven- to eight-year project.*
3. The following process will be used for each window:
 - a. Photos will be taken of the windows in place.
 - b. Scaffolding will be erected in front and possibly also outside the window (the protective covering may need to be removed).
 - c. The windows will be removed from the major steel framing units, which remain in place.
 - d. The opening will be closed temporarily with wood or used plexiglass.
 - e. At the studio, rubbings will be made of each section, noting dimensions, lead size, and any severely broken glass pieces.
 - f. The windows will be completely disassembled.
 - g. Each piece of glass will be individually cleaned.
 - h. Severely broken pieces will be replaced with similar glass, with the closest match possible.
 - i. The panels will be reassembled with new lead. Simple cracked pieces will be fixed with lead line.

- j. Lead joints will be soldered on both sides.
- k. Metal framework will be sanded and repainted, and repaired where necessary.
- l. Both surfaces will be weatherproofed.
- m. New steel flat brace bars will be installed and attached to glass with copper wires.
- n. Scaffolding will be reinstalled, and then the glass paneling will be reinstalled.

Handicapped Accessibility: Sixth Church seeks to be fully inclusive to those individuals and families who use wheelchairs, walkers, or other assistive technology. We want to ensure that those who come to participate in church life are able to do so. Updates would include repairs to our exterior handicap ramp. We also would seek to add a stair climber to access the second floor, and a second-floor bathroom upgrade to make it handicapped-accessible. **The estimated cost of these renovations is approximately \$50,000.**

Our outside handicap ramp was built in the late 1990s, and it is made of textured concrete block. Over the years, salt on the surface has dissolved some of the concrete blocks, and structural cracks run down the outside of the ramp. To ensure the structural integrity of the ramp, we need to remove and replace two damaged cement blocks on the ramp wall with new block. We also need to cut out and repair cracked joints. Finally, we will need to recaulk in places where necessary.

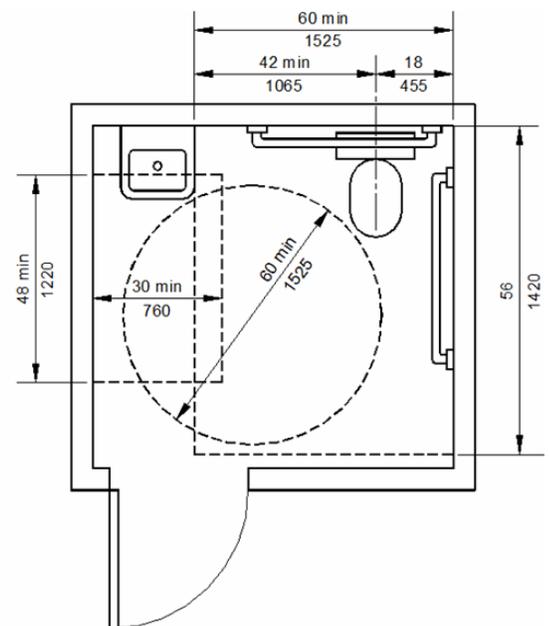


Concrete Failure on Outside Ramp (upper left), Cracking In Blocks of Exterior Handicap Ramp (upper right), Current Stair Climber on East Stairway (lower left), A Guide for Accessible Bathroom Design (lower right)

A stair climber leading from the basement to the first floor currently allows those with mobility issues to attend events in the Ridinger Room. We would seek to install a stair climber on the west staircase to the second floor, covering two flights and one landing. In this way, we can accommodate children, parents, and teachers with accessibility needs.



We would like to renovate the bathroom in the second floor hallway. This would require removing, repositioning, and adding fixtures where necessary to allow handicap access. We want to consider children especially in a redesign. Additional repairs would include new opening hardware for the door, replastering, and painting as needed.



Interior finishes: Over several decades, Sixth Church has experienced roof leaking and repeated flooding in the basement. Considerable water damage throughout the church has caused bubbling and loose or missing plaster. The resulting appearance creates the impression that the church is falling apart! **The cost for repairs, including re-plastering and painting, is estimated to be \$60,000.**



Water Damage to Murray Ave. Entrance



Damage to Interior Window Casement

Damage shown in these images is due to problems with our roof. Replaced in 2011, the roof was subsequently inspected and found to be improperly installed, resulting in problems on many walls within the church. One of the issues that needs continual monitoring is the function of our gutters, especially in winter when freezing can cause ice dams that subsequently lead to interior wall plaster bubbling and peeling. The roof was repaired in 2016 and continues to be maintained; repairs to water-damaged areas remain to be done. Completing the significant plastering and repainting needed is important not only for aesthetic reasons. Unless we have repaired walls, there is no way to know whether new problems with the gutters and roof are causing additional damage.

One of the most challenging areas to re-plaster and paint is the sanctuary itself. While we have made exterior repairs to the roof and gutters, we will need to repair the coping – the mortar between the top layer of stones that cap the walls and the stones below. Once our coping is fixed, the significant interior damage to the sanctuary ceiling and walls will need to be repaired. Destroyed areas will need to be re-plastered and repainted. The expense for these projects is considerable given that we need to erect scaffolding to complete the work.



Water Damage to Sanctuary Ceiling



Water Damage to Sanctuary Walls



Damaged Wall Baseboard in the Kitchen Area



Water Damage to a Main Kitchen Window Well

Sixth Church uses its kitchen frequently, at least several times a month, and it makes this space available for use by a number of community groups. Repeated flooding due to sewer line problems and wall damage from a leaking roof have left the kitchen walls and window wells very damaged.

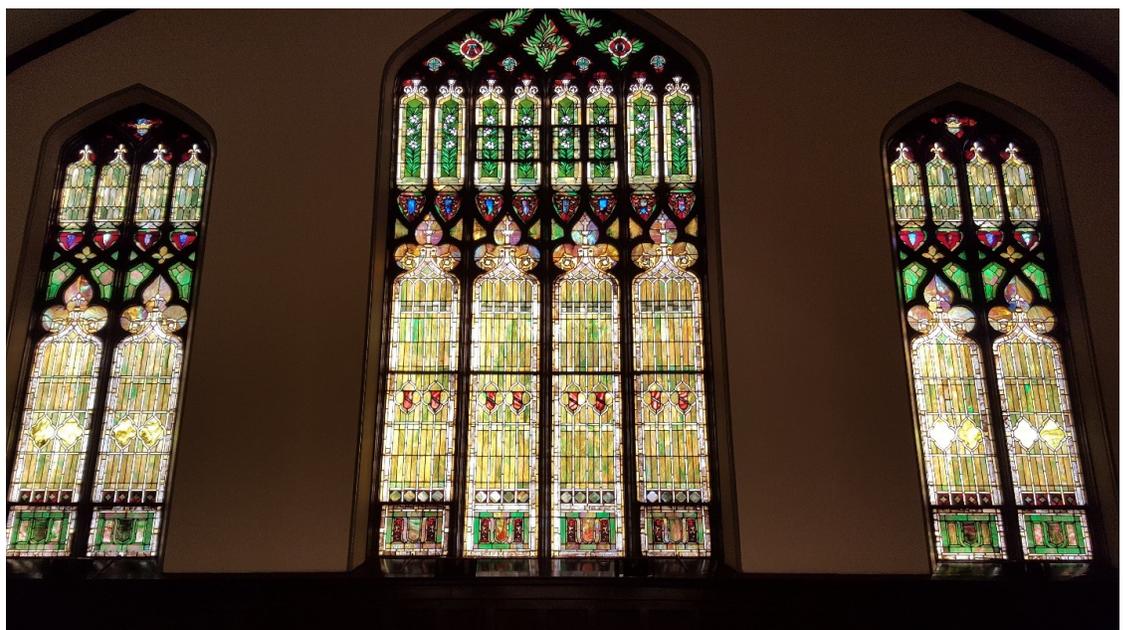
While we are able to use the kitchen overall, its appearance is very poor and unhygienic. Significant repairs to the window wells in the main kitchen will also need to be made for these areas to be fully useable.

A Commitment to the Future of Sixth Presbyterian Church

Addressing the problems outlined above would improve the structure, appearance, and function of our church home and, ultimately, provide the space needed to carry out our mission and ministry. We could choose to defer these projects, leaving them for a future generation to manage. But Session believes that our congregation, with its current body of leaders, is well-positioned to address these needs now through a capital campaign. In keeping with Sixth Church’s dedication to mission, we would ask our Church and Community Committee to direct \$20,000 of the capital campaign funds toward activities aligned with our mission.

A Capital Campaign Planning Committee is now updating members of the congregation on church repairs done to date and repairs that, once completed, will make the church more accessible, structurally sound, and welcoming. In conjunction with Church Campaign Services, we will be reaching out to members and friends of Sixth – by web survey and in some cases in person – to determine the feasibility of moving forward with the capital repairs described above.

Our building on the corner of Forbes and Murray is a vital home to the Sixth Church family and is central to our ability to serve a larger community. Session hopes that, together, the congregation will make an important and significant commitment to preserve our church structure for the current membership and for generations to come.



The beautiful sanctuary windows of Sixth Presbyterian Church

**Sixth Presbyterian Church Campaign Q&As
February 2018**

What is our campaign feasibility study timeline? How will we determine if we can move forward with a capital campaign?

The following activities will take place over the next two months, after which time we should be in a good position to determine whether we could successfully launch an effective capital campaign:

January 28	Continental Breakfast for the Case for Support
February 1-15	Consultant Interviews
February 16-28	Congregation-Wide Online Survey for the Case for Support
March Session Meeting	Final Report of the Feasibility Study from Church Campaign Services

If we move ahead with a campaign and don't raise the full amount, what will happen? How will we prioritize the work that needs to be done?

In the event that Sixth Church would not raise the full \$380,000, Session would be asked to review what money has been pledged and then decide which projects are in greatest need of addressing.

How did we arrive at the cost estimates for the repairs?

Our House Chair Leslie Kaplan secured multiple bids on each project. The Case for Support is the culmination of over a year's work of securing bids and talking to multiple contractors.

If the work takes seven years, why do we need to collect money over three years? What would we do with the funds in the meantime?

The window restoration may take up to seven years because of the size and complexity of the job. The other projects would be completed in a timelier manner. Collecting the money over three years would position us to negotiate repair contracts and lock in fees that would be expected to increase if we waited longer. Funds collected would be held in the church's money market account to accrue interest until they were needed. Any extra money generated over time would apply to cost overruns or be added to the Building Endowment.

Why haven't we considered replacing the sanctuary windows with clear glass?

We did not consider replacing the stained-glass windows with clear glass for several compelling reasons. First and foremost, removing the stained glass would irrevocably damage the architectural character of our sanctuary. Removal would also erase part of our congregation's history, as we would lose several panes with inscriptions honoring church leaders with important historical ties to Sixth. From a practical standpoint, replacing the sanctuary windows with clear glass would let in so much light that we would need to install shutters or other window treatments. Another practical consideration is that replacing the stained glass with clear windows

would cost virtually the same as renovating the existing stained glass. Finally, for all the reasons just stated, we believe that replacing the stained glass would be enormously controversial within our congregation.

Why would we apportion \$20,000 for use by the Church and Community Committee? How would the committee use the funds?

Traditionally, church fundraising campaigns have allocated part of the funds to mission. Given Sixth Presbyterian's strong commitment to mission, Session voted to designate \$20,000 of the proposed capital campaign to the Church and Community Committee over a three-year period. This committee would be responsible for deciding how best to use the funds in the context of our guiding principles to advance peacemaking, social justice, and stewardship of the earth. Recommendations by the Church and Community committee would be subject to the final approval of Session.

Could I designate my gift to one of the repairs?

While we would encourage pledges to go into a general purpose fund, the Church would honor contributions designated toward one of the three areas outlined in the Case for Support.

Why wouldn't we use the endowment to take care of the renovations?

The Church's endowment of \$754,719 is divided into three funds: Building, Mission and Special Projects. Each year, we take a draw from our Building Endowment (current value at \$363,514). This draw, which is 4% of a five-year rolling average, is typically around \$12,000. It is the source of the 'Repair and Contractors' budget line item and is used for all routine maintenance costs and emergency repairs. Cashing out a large part of this endowment would damage our ability to respond to emergencies (like roof leaks) and even routine maintenance like furnace inspections.

Does the church have a history in raising funds for capital projects?

The church has raised funds previously for important capital projects. In the mid-1990s funds were raised to install the handicapped ramp and renovate the kitchen. In 2002, we initiated a capital campaign to purchase a new organ. We raised \$53,000 of a total \$198,000 needed and, due to a generous bequest, were able to complete this work. In 2010, we raised about \$60,000 for a roof costing \$131,077. We financed the difference through the Building Endowment. The current proposed campaign would be the largest in Sixth Church's history.