

Sanctuary Enhancement and Accessibility Committee

Submitted by: Janice Smith

Restoring the sanctuary using the vision of 1837 congregation with the mission of 2027 in mind.

As Old First looks to our 300th Anniversary in 2027, the Elders have asked our group to oversee the renovation of the Sanctuary. This is an especially good time to envision our dreams and prepare a work plan, because the Sanctuary is not being used for this long period. Think of the congregation returning to a renewed Sanctuary after the pandemic!

If approved by the congregation, the work would begin as soon as we can get the permits needed and / or the contractors scheduled. The projects in this restoration are:

1. Glass Entry Doors—New glass doors at the front entrance of the Sanctuary, situated behind the historic wooden doors, will give the building a more open and inviting look.
2. Sanctuary Space Upgrades:
 - ❖ Chancel Redesign —Reconfiguration of the front chancel area to provide more useable space and accessibility. These renovations will improve the chancel space for our worship and will also provide better functionality for arts organizations and other outside groups to use the Sanctuary.
 - ❖ Paint --- Walls and ceiling, including adding historic colors to the ceiling to bring out its architectural elements.
 - ❖ Flooring — New wooden floors for the redesigned chancel and the whole Sanctuary to improve the appearance and the sound quality in the worship space.
 - ❖ Reconfigure the pews to arc around the bowed front of the chancel so that worshippers “face each other more” and have more of an experience of being in community. Additional spacing between the pews will provide added knee space.
3. Incorporate remote technology in the Sanctuary so we can worship with people in person and from a distance (online) at the same time in a single service.
4. Attic Ventilation (if we can figure out how to make it affordable) — New attic fan system to improve air circulation, cooling the attic in the summer and helping us bring fresh / cool air into the Sanctuary in the cool months, reducing the load on HVAC system.

There will be needs / opportunities to volunteer, helping us get the Sanctuary ready for work to begin. Please let Devan in the office know if you want to help out.

We hope to start work immediately after the project is approved (in order to get all this done before we can possibly gather in the Sanctuary in person again). This is a complicated project with many steps and details that aren't completely explained here. There is a lot of coordination as the work is interrelated and often needs to be staged, and there is still planning, scheduling, pricing, bidding and prioritizing that needs to be figured out.

We have aimed at having and been successful in having 3 or more bids on each major job in the project. We have been deliberately seeking out businesses owned by people of color and women.

Our hope is to keep "everything" moving and have the renovated Sanctuary finished and ready for use before we can regather.

When we regather, it will be a great big celebration, giving God thanks for getting us past the pandemic and making this Sanctuary upgrade possible and rededicate our sacred space to more ministry in God's name.