

# Marsh BUILDING REVITALIZATION



## Report of Readiness Study

The Reverend P. William VanderWyden conducted a Readiness Study in June 2012 to discern the congregation's financial preparedness to embark on a Capital Campaign to raise money for long overdue renovations to the Marsh Building. The Marsh Building Renovation Committee conducted tours of the Marsh Building to provide the Readiness Study participants with a full understanding of the conditions existing in the building. Rev. VanderWyden followed up these tours with confidential interviews of each participant and heard their feedback about this prospective project.

On October 16, 2012, Rev. VanderWyden reported his findings to the Church Board. Members of the Deacon Board and the Marsh Building Renovation Committee were also in attendance.

The Church Board had hired Rev. VanderWyden to advise and guide the fundraising effort required for renovating the Marsh Building. Rev. VanderWyden has led more than 150 successful Capital Campaigns, some of which were conducted even in the face of challenging economic conditions. He explained that the congregations he has worked with realized they were involved in God's plan for their church in a tangible way. They realized the truth that they, too, were "born for such a time as this." With this newfound sense of purpose and greater understanding of God's provision, they found their faith stretched, challenged and deepened. They reported that their relationships with God and with others had also been strength-

ened. Rev. VanderWyden noted that congregations often experienced these blessings due to the Capital Campaign process. They often came away from the process with a keener understanding of God's desire for us to be good stewards with all that we have, together with first-hand knowledge of how God faithfully provides.

Rev. VanderWyden reported, based on the Readiness Study and his years of experience, that our family of faith is financially capable of conducting a successful Capital Campaign. He explained his methodology and related some of the participants' feedback. The general consensus was that continued deferral to cure the problems in the Marsh Building makes this renovation project a hot priority. Further, we have a responsibility to remedy the conditions for those who will follow; a legacy sure to bless generations to come.

Drainage issues affecting the Marsh Building require further study and analysis. Findings for this part of the project will be reported when they are available, around the end of next spring. Until then, the Church Board is exploring what steps can be taken to keep this project moving toward fruition. In the meantime, Church Board President Judy Franzen had asked for a show of hands from all those present at the Church Board meeting to ascertain the level of support for this project. By unanimous consent, all agreed that the time for this project has come.

—*The Marsh Building Committee*

# Elder BOARD PROPOSAL

In the last *Spire*, we focused on what an “elder” is and what an Elder Board looks like. Now let’s turn our attention to the questions below.

**Informational meetings** are underway; all are invited. The two remaining (identical) meetings will be held on **Wednesday, Nov. 28** (6:30 p.m., Meetinghouse) and **Sunday, Dec. 2** (10:30 a.m., Worship Room).

Next time we will talk about how moving to an elder model would affect you, and how the church works.

## What are the differences between an Elder Board and our Church Board?

Our current Church Board is defined in the church bylaws. In summary, the Board is made up of 14 members. Two adults and two youth represent the congregation directly, eight committee chairs represent various ministries, and the president and senior minister complete the total. Membership for most positions is two years, with an option to renew for two additional years (deacons are the exception). The Church Board has oversight over all church activities.

An Elder Board is made up of a limited number of people whom the congregation recognizes as the leaders and shepherds of the church. They represent only the congregation and have no direct committee duties. Like the deacons, membership is lifetime, with six individuals from the congregation plus the senior minister being active at any one time. Being an *active* elder is a three-year commitment, with an option to renew for an additional three years, subject to approval by church vote. The Elder Board, like the Church Board, has oversight over all church activities.

## Why should we return to the elder model after using a corporate model for so long (since 1954)?

There are four main reasons:

1. The Elder Model is what Scripture says the organization of the church should be (as discussed in the November *Spire* article).

2. It allows people who are gifted in leadership to be in leadership of the church. Being gifted in a particular ministry doesn’t automatically mean one is gifted in churchwide leadership.
3. It allows people to lead as an elder until they are called to something else, rather than being forced out of leadership every 2-4 years (as required by current bylaws).
4. The current structure is geared toward denominational oversight for a smaller congregation. Our structure and bylaws should reflect that we are an independent congregational church.

## What prompted this?

The Church Board was examining installation of an Administrative Pastor. They discovered that there are omissions, gaps, and several unclear areas in the current bylaws that hindered it, all of which would have to be corrected before moving forward. Part of this was because our bylaws were crafted with our previous relationship to the United Church of Christ (UCC) in mind. The UCC handled various aspects of structure and governance. When our relationship with the UCC changed, the bylaws were never revised to close the gaps that were left in structure and governance.

Several sub-committees were formed to investigate the issues involved. After presentations with the Church Board, pastoral staff and deacons, the final conclusion was to move to an elder model.