A Report to the Churches of the New Hampshire Conference  
The New Hampshire Conference Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee

Background . . . . . .

The CCEC offers this report and commends its adoption by the delegates of local churches at the Annual Meeting of the Gathered New Hampshire Conference on Saturday, October 22, 2016.

In early 2015, a task force of the Board of Directors was convened to assess the need for a capital campaign in the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ (NHUCC). The task force accomplished its purpose, issuing a report to the Board of Directors on April 18, 2015, and then moved more deeply into a visioning process. In the spring of 2016, a Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee (CCEC) was appointed by the Board of Directors to build on the foundation laid by the task force.

The CCEC met diligently over the summer for prayer and study. The most recent capital campaign was considered as a backdrop for the committee’s work. It reviewed current funding needs. The CCEC entered into a preliminary conversation with a consultant who has extensive experience with such campaigns in United Church of Christ congregations and conferences. The CCEC also interviewed various leaders in Conference programs, including the Rev. Mollie Landers Hatt, Director of Outdoor Ministries, and the Rev. Gray Fitzgerald, Chair of Justice and Witness Ministry.

Considering What Has Been . . . . .

The previous capital campaign, Bicentennial Fund, Building from Strength . . . Building to Serve Our Local Churches, was conducted 1996-1999 in anticipation of the Conference’s 200th anniversary in 2001. That campaign was designed to generate $950,000 (Minimum Goal) to $1,400,000 (Challenge Goal). The good that was accomplished from this effort still continues into the present. The campaign enabled the churches of the Conference to have a part in the Make a Difference Campaign of the national setting of the United Church of Christ. The campaign also allowed us to establish a Revolving Loan Fund for Local Churches, which has assisted congregations by providing low-interest loans for new construction or renovation projects. It also created a fund for Lay Leadership Development and for Authorized Ministers Continuing Education. This fund provides grants from which many have benefitted in the past decade. The Bicentennial Fund also had a technology component that assisted in developing more robust electronic communication.
Assessing What Is . . . . . .

Our Revised NHCUCC Mission Income & Spending Plan for 2016 projects expenditures of $1,118,839. This is used to support our ministry with the 135 local congregations of the NHCUCC, as well as to support our wider United Church of Christ in national and global settings. We currently have five major revenue streams that provide funding. These are Our Church’s Wider Mission Basic Support (59.2%), Association Fellowship Dues (14.4%), Friends of the NHCUCC Annual Appeal (2.3%), Investment Income (17.3%), Rental Income (6.8%). We need to consider how to enhance and add other revenue streams. A successful capital campaign is often the catalyst for increased generosity in a church and has an energizing effect for years to come.

The CCEC is also aware of the impact that the NHCUCC has on our local churches and associations through Search and Call in times of pastoral transition, Prepared to Serve workshops, staff support for Association Committees on Church & Ministry, continuing education and development for Authorized Ministers, and various opportunities to provide resources and counsel. The NHCUCC connects us in covenant with the wider United Church of Christ and the ecumenical church.

Over the past several years, we have been made aware of unmet capital needs at Horton Center on Pine Mountain as well as at the Pembroke Conference Center. These expenses cannot be borne by the current operating budget and the five major revenue streams. The CCEC received detailed reports about the present needs that may be satisfied by a capital campaign.

In the final analysis, the CCEC believes that the NHCUCC is about the ministry and mission that flows to the local churches. We believe this is the time for partnering in faithful funding of the ministries and mission of the churches. A capital campaign, enthusiastically engaged and supported, will have a significant, positive impact on the life of each local church in the NHCUCC. It may inspire local churches to consider their own revenue streams and to enhance and broaden them. We seek to address the changing need of the living Church of Jesus Christ through this campaign.

Imagining What Yet Might Be . . . . . .

So the CCEC invites you, the member churches of the NHCUCC to consider the “How Much More” of the gospel. This is not an imperative that leaves us weary or exhausted because our resources seem so small and diminished; but, rather, this is an invitation that inspires us to consider the generosity that is possible because our God is a generous God.

Imagine “How Much More” your local church might be if . . .

- An endowed fund were established to underwrite ministerial salaries in vital churches in the NHCUCC.

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Horton Center were updated to provide comfortable infirmary space when needed by sick campers, as well as allow for a longer program year for campers and church retreats.

The Pembroke Conference Center were equipped with solar panels to protect the environment and generate electricity to meet our own needs.

The Justice and Witness Ministry of our Conference had funding from endowment resources to continue to proclaim our Christian faith in the public square.

Christian Formation Ministry had scholarship resources from endowed funds to assist your church’s children and youth in their faith development.

Funding were available for technology upgrades in local churches, Horton Center, and the Pembroke Conference Center.

Imagine “How Much More” God may be calling your church to be and to become today and in the times yet to come.

An Invitation to Share Your Ideas and Questions . . . . . .

The CCEC realizes that this work is but a beginning, not a conclusion. The ideas and input from our congregations will lead us to a larger understanding of the ministry and mission that is needed as the future emerges. We invite your comments and questions. We ask you to help us enlarge the vision and to join us in imagining “How Much More” God might be inspiring us to become as disciples together in Jesus Christ. To connect with this work, please send your thoughts to Rev. Gary Schulte, gschulte@nhucc.org, your Conference Minister. He will make sure these are received by the group that succeeds the CCEC in developing this campaign.

Moving Forward in Faith . . . . . .

Approval of this report by the Gathered Conference at the 215th Annual Meeting on October 22, 2016, will authorize the Board of Directors to (1) establish a Capital Campaign Committee, (2) retain a consultant, and (3) proceed with planning a campaign on behalf of the churches of the Conference.

Authorization to initiate a capital campaign will require an enabling vote of the Gathered Conference of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ in a regular or a duly called special meeting.

Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee Members . . . . . .

Warren Bouton, Neal Cass, Robert Grabill, Douglas Hatfield, Deborah Knowlton, Gary Schulte, Laura Sevigny, Richard Slater, Arthur Urie

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