

# PROPOSED 2024 CHURCH BUDGET & PATHWAYS FORWARD

A Proposed 2024 Budget was presented by Jason Jacque, Moderator, and Phil Stepanski, Financial Administrator, at the Fall Congregational Meeting on November 26. The church is facing some difficult financial choices next year. Traditionally, our church has operated with an annual budget that included a modest deficit between our revenue and expenses. Over the years, we have managed to address these shortfalls through a combination of generous pledges, careful budgeting, and judicious withdrawals from our savings. However, we now find ourselves in the midst of a perfect storm of financial challenges. Our transition from a long-term pastoral relationship, the loss of Port Pre-School, and the ongoing effects of a post-pandemic world have all contributed. Our savings accounts will no longer be sufficient to cover the Proposed 2024 Budget deficit, leaving us in an extremely vulnerable position. At this time, the budget that was presented represents no significant changes to expenses or to income and has a deficit of \$47,832. While this is unsustainable, we have time to make adjustments before an official budget for 2024 will be voted upon by the congregation on January 28, 2024.

## LET US KNOW HOW YOU WOULD LIKE THE CHURCH TO MOVE FORWARD ON THE BUDGET

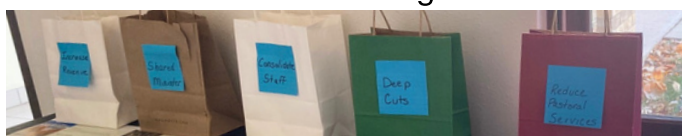
The financial circumstances facing the congregation has led the Executive Team to explore various options to bridge the budget gap. [Click here](#) to view slides that were presented at the Listening Sessions last month. While each of the five current options have its own merits and challenges, none on its own may lead us to a balanced budget, and all of them will require the support and involvement of our congregation:

- 1.) **Increase Revenue:** Focusing on replacing rental income and increasing pledges.
- 2.) **Deep Cuts:** Relying on more volunteers to provide for our congregation.
- 3.) **Staff Consolidation:** Acknowledging that staff provide valuable services but represent a significant payroll expense.
- 4.) **Reduced Pastoral Services:** Transitioning from a full-time to a part-time Pastor, resulting in reduced services.
- 5.) **Shared Ministry:** Reducing costs by sharing a minister with another local UCC congregation.

The Executive Team invites members to look for their table set up by Fellowship Hall to complete slips of paper and place in the “buckets”. A slip of paper includes the following:

- I FULLY SUPPORT this option and hope to see it incorporated into the 2024 budget.
- I HAVE RESERVATIONS about this option, but I could support it for the good of the church community because the benefits outweigh the drawbacks.
- I DO NOT SUPPORT this option - it doesn't align with the direction our church should take.
- I AM VERY OPPOSED to this option and if it is chosen, it will greatly affect my commitment to our church. *\*If you are unable to make it to church, email your feedback to [office@portucc.org](mailto:office@portucc.org)*

We ask for your prayers of wisdom and courage as we navigate these financial challenges together. Your involvement and support are crucial as we work to ensure the continued strength and vitality of our beloved church. The Church Council will use the feedback gathered as they continue to discuss these budget issues at their next monthly meeting on December 14.



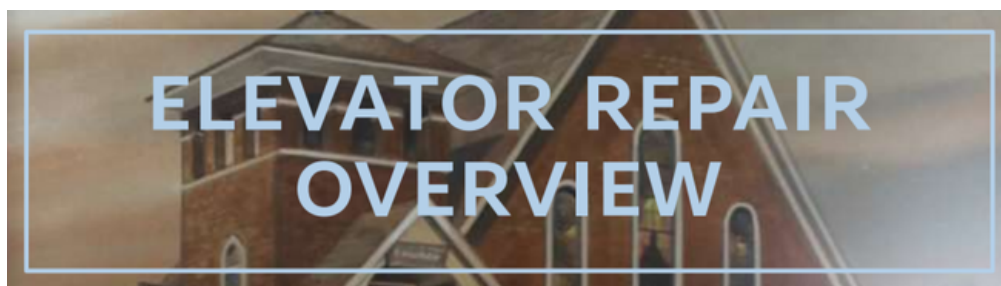
## CONGREGATION VOTES TO APPROVE ELEVATOR REPAIRS

At the Fall Congregational Meeting on November 26 the congregation voted to move forward with a proposal put together by the Property Team to repair the church elevator. The proposal is to contract with MEI Elevator to remove the broken hydraulic jack and replace it. While this may seem like a straightforward project, there are several variables that remain unknown until MEI begins their work and will affect our costs. In careful conversation and consideration with MEI, the Property Team has prepared for expenses that reflect the worst-case scenario, while hoping for the best. Fortunately, the church has received a generous, anonymous financial gift of \$32,000 from one of our church families that will be enough to cover the initial downpayment and first-year financing costs we face as we take out a loan to pay for the repairs.

As discussed during several Listening Sessions held in November and during the Congregational Meeting, the worst-case scenario cost would be \$111,205 and would involve having to redrill the hole in which the hydraulic jack is placed at maximum expense, plus cost overruns of 15%. This would require the church to take out a loan in the amount of \$79,205, with a cost to the church of \$595 loan payment per month in a 30-year/8.5% rate. A more likely scenario is closer to a total repair cost of \$87,779 with the church needing to take a \$55,800 loan and paying \$419 per month to repay.

With the congregation's affirmative vote on the proposal, the Property Team will be able to sign a contract with MEI on December 1 and avoid cost increases due to inflation and rising hourly labor rates. The production and delivery of the hydraulic jack will take an estimated 10 to 12 weeks and require about two weeks of onsite work. A loan will be secured through the United Church of Christ Cornerstone Fund (where we received the loan for window/bell tower repairs during the pandemic). Further updates will be made as new information becomes available.

We are so appreciative to the Property Team: Bill Bond, Joe Mueller, Gary Tackes and Claude Zimmerman, for all their work on this project. They have had an extremely busy year between the power surge damaging so many pieces of equipment in March, the "Making All Things New: Phase One" Campaign in June and July, and the elevator repair work that started in September. This has been a difficult time for the church with our building, but it would have been an impossible time without their faithful work on our behalf - thank you!



[Click here](#) for the Elevator Repair Overview presented at the Fall Congregational Meeting.

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE - “Because of YOU our Church Changes Lives”

Everyday our church is changing lives. Because of our members and friends at work in our community helping at the Food Pantry, Family Promise, or in the dozens of other community groups you are involved; our church is changing lives. Because of folks like you responding with love to their neighbors who need a helping hand; our church is changing lives. Because of the encouraging word you receive on a Sunday morning, or in a Bible study, or at choir rehearsal, or a service project, or read about in the newsletter; our church is changing lives. So much of the work of our church is made possible because of the financial support we receive from the pledges and offerings you generously provide.

Thank you to all those who have already responded to this year’s Stewardship Campaign. We are grateful for the pledges coming into the church through the Sunday morning offering plates, dropped off at the office, arriving in the mail or submitted online. If you have not already filled out a pledge card, please do so at your earliest convenience. It is so helpful and encouraging to have those pledges coming in so we can plan for the new year. Our church depends upon the wonderful generosity of our members and friends to keep our ministry strong! We would love to have all the pledges back to the Church by December 10. The Stewardship Team will be making calls later this month to gently remind folks to return their pledge. As of November 30, we have received 28 pledges for a total of \$62,151. Last year 94 pledges were received.

Thank you to Jodi Cowen, Jason Jacque, Bev Mueller, and Tyfani Ulicki for serving as the Stewardship Team this year. Thank you also to Craig Modahl, Louise Mollinger, David Franks, and Jodi Cowen for providing testimonials about their love for our congregation and the important role our church plays in their lives.

### Ways TO COMPLETE YOUR PLEDGE

#### Send In The Mail

Print out the **Pledge Form** and send to the church

#### Complete Form at Church

There are extra forms available in the hallway outside Fellowship Hall



Visit our **Stewardship Page** for more information.