



**UNITY RENAISSANCE
CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA**
Potential and Possibility Study

Presented in August 2018 by

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OBSERVATIONS:

- Unity Renaissance (UR) has accomplished some amazing things in the past three years. The completion of Phase 0 occurred along with the addition of new chairs, solar panels and live streaming technology. All of this and almost \$400,000 in the bank for the next phase of building.
- The spirit of the people is contagious. From three years ago, there is more confidence and excitement about both what is occurring and greater expectancy of things to come.
- The income has more than doubled in the past three years with the people giving in excess of \$1.8 million for mission and facility expansion. This is beyond remarkable and places the center in the upper 5% of all churches/centers, relative to capital campaign receipts compared to typical annual income, in the USA in the past 10 years.
- Paula is one of the top communicators in the faith community. Her ability is impacting lives. The streaming of the weekend experience will take UR to another level of reaching persons. The beauty of the current space is a perfect setting to launch this next chapter of impact.
- Paula is loved and respected by the people. She has woven herself in the fabric of many lives. Her love for people, UR and the message Spirit has placed within her is an inspiration to uncounted persons.
- The people are ready to build the Educational Space. The Café/Fellowship Space is needed and would offer more dynamics for ministry including a more causal place for Sunday Services since streaming is now available. Many churches are reaching a different audience or persons willing to come to a Café but not enter a more organized space. It would open up numerous opportunities for more classes and fellowship.
- UR must do a better job of celebrating the giving and accomplishments of the facility expansion moving forward. It feels like a great secret that giving has doubled in three years.
- A fear exists amongst some about UR building the educational wing. This has occurred due to lack of continuous communication about Breakthrough. Many were not aware of the almost \$400,000 expected balance by the end of 2018 in the Breakthrough Fund and marked for Phase 1 (Educational Wing). This lack of communication created unnecessary fear about completion of the next phase(s) of the facilities plan. Additional (much needed) projects such as the chairs, solar system and live streaming, were perceived as taking precedent over the educational wing. The need for communication about the vision of the education wing did not seem a priority. While this fear is only a perception amongst a few

and such rings from only a few voices; these well-meaning voices have created some level of mistrust.

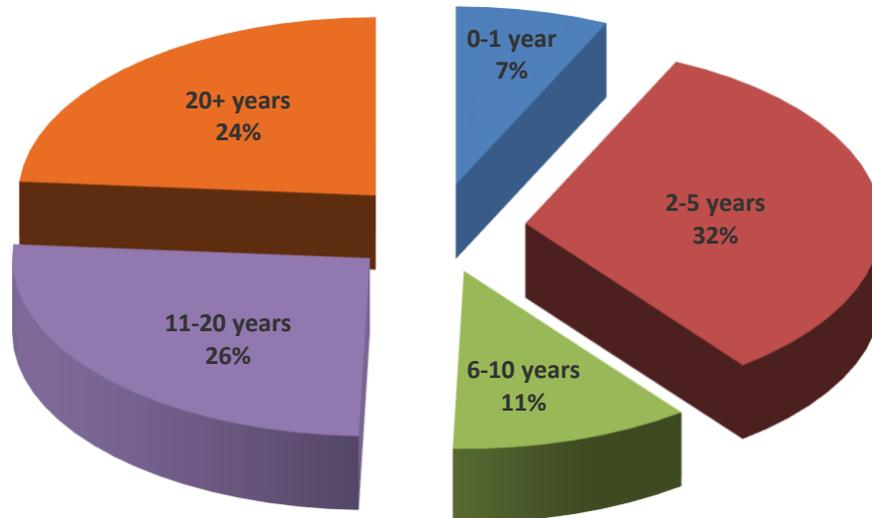
- The regular giving to UR has remained steady in the past three years. While some are alarmed, the typical ebbs and flows of ongoing giving is reality during a capital campaign. While I would love to see this area increase, there is no evidence of a significant amount of persons moving their giving to Breakthrough from ongoing love offerings. To repeat, the overall giving is overwhelming. In three years, there will be greater opportunity to expand the general giving once the capital improvements are accomplished. This is normal and not something of great alarm at this point in the giving history of UR.
- UR is ready and excited about moving forward with the next building phase and campaign.

SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This survey resulted in **101** participant responses and the valuable feedback shared below. This is an encouraging response from the congregants. Horizons expected 50 respondents based on the size of the congregation. We applaud the excellent involvement in this process.

1. How long have you been attending Unity Renaissance??

- 7 – 0-1 year
- 33 – 2-5 years
- 11 – 6-10 years
- 26 – 11-20 years
- 24 – Over 20 years
- 0 – No response

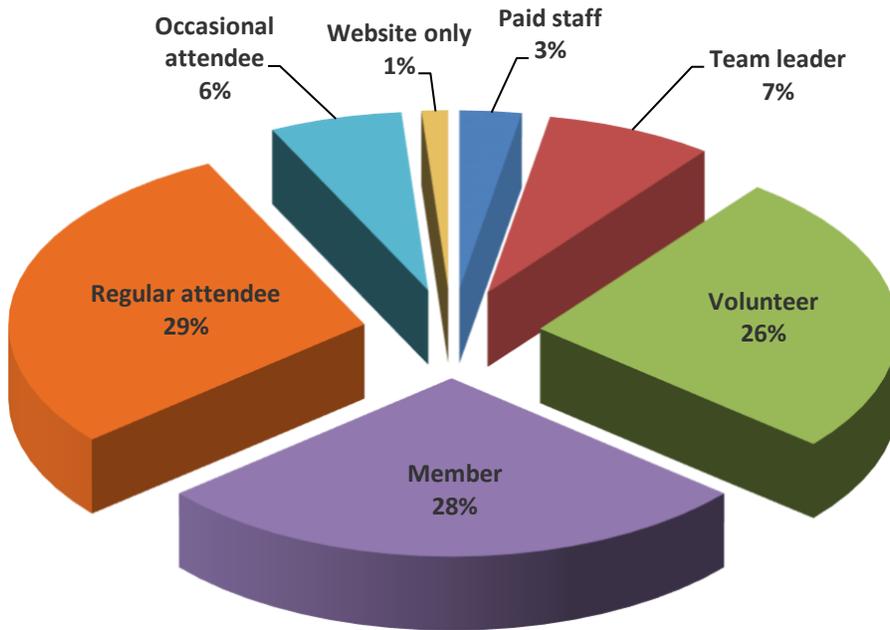


Analysis:

It is thrilling to see 39% of the respondents have come to Unity Renaissance in the past few years.

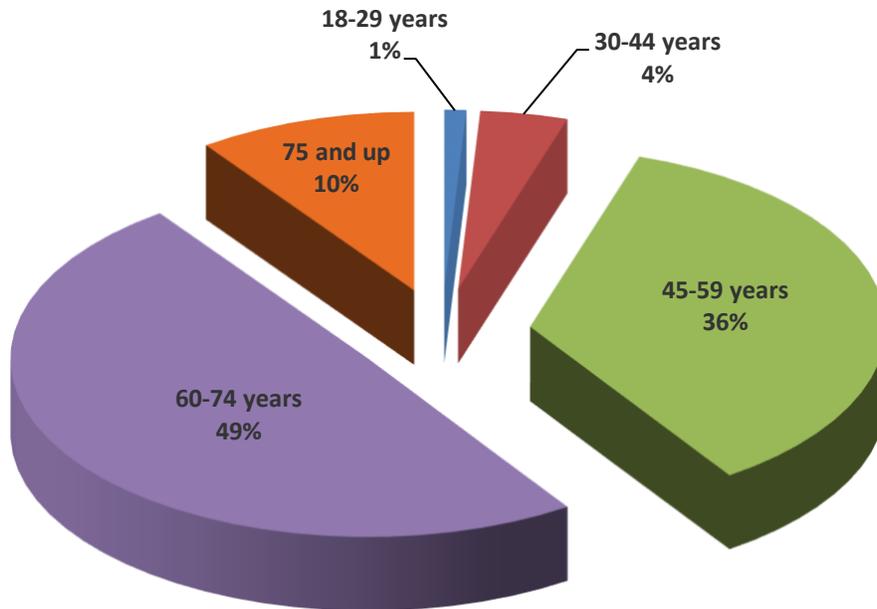
2. Describe your involvement at Unity Renaissance: (Check all that apply)

- 7 – Paid staff
- 19 – Team leader
- 64 – Volunteer
- 69 – Member
- 72 – Regular attendee
- 15 – Occasional attendee
- 3 – Website only
- 0 – No response



3. Please indicate your age range:

- 1 – 18-29
- 4 – 30-44
- 36 – 45-59
- 50 – 60-74
- 10 – 75 and up
- 0 – No response

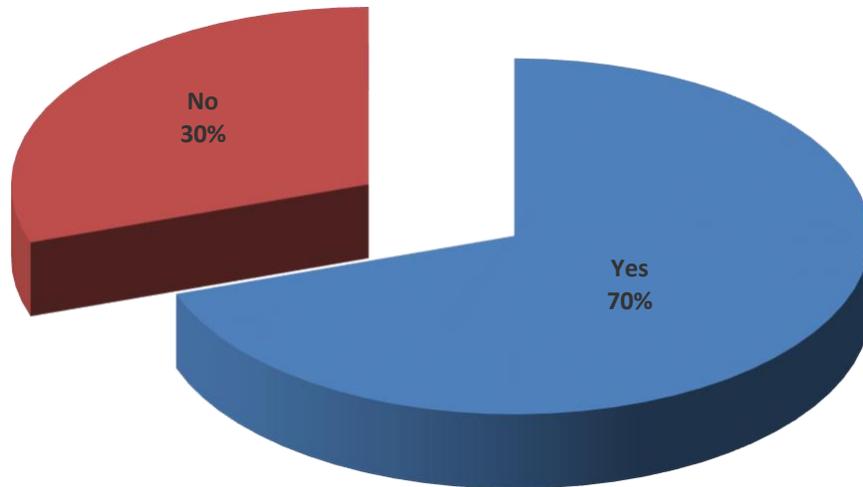


Analysis:

85% of those responding are in the 45-74 age range. This age group typically has the greater resources to invest in the ministry.

4. Did you make a financial gift to the BREAKTHROUGH campaign (which funded the new roof, remodeled sanctuary, and new HVAC system)?

- 69 – Yes
- 30 – No
- 2 – No response



Analysis;

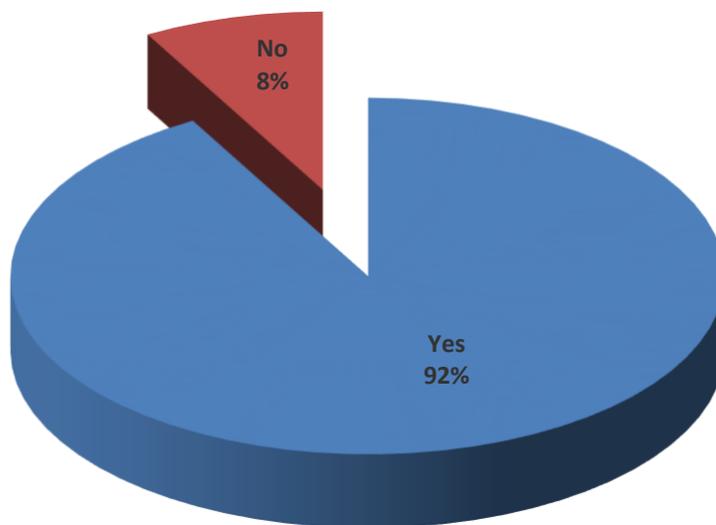
The 30% not giving to Breakthrough offers a potential of new givers in the next campaign.

5. Do you support Unity Renaissance moving forward with a fall initiative to secure the funding for new classrooms, a larger kitchen, additional bathrooms, a multipurpose area and a café/bookstore?

90 – Yes

8 – No

3 – No response

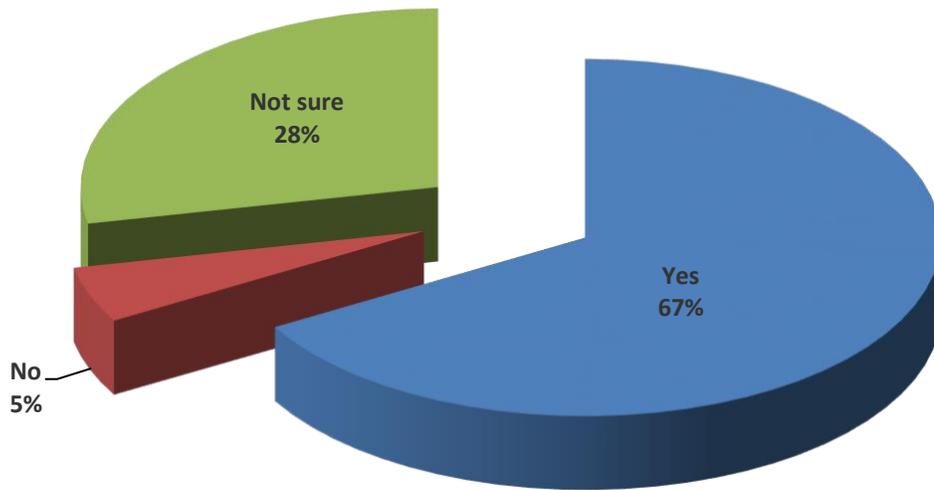


Analysis:

An overwhelming response in the positive to move forward in this journey.

6. If this spiritual community moves forward with a new three-year funding initiative to build the additional educational and gathering space (plus other facility needs) will you prayerfully consider giving your financial support?

- 66 – Yes
- 5 – No
- 28 – Not sure
- 2 – No response

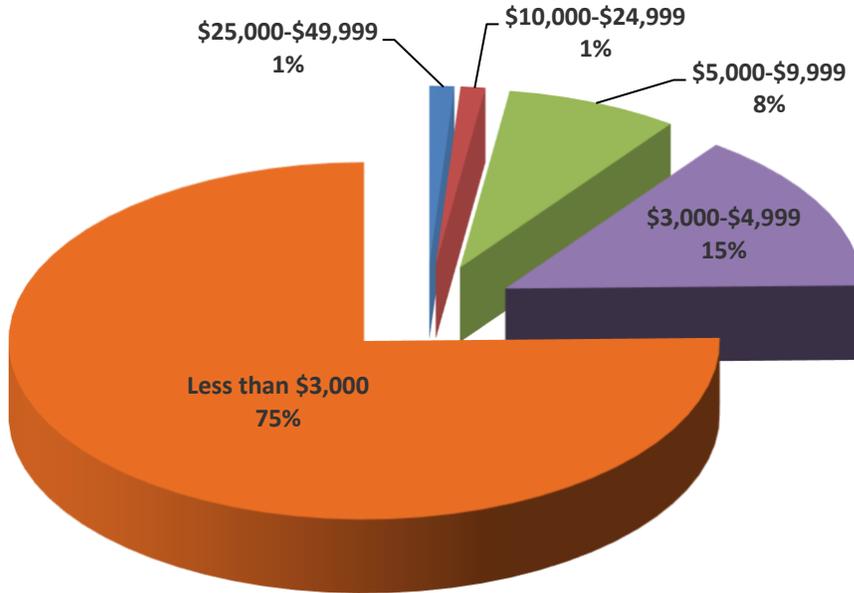


Analysis:

95% of those responding will consider a gift for the next campaign. Since 39% of the respondents are new to Unity Renaissance (last five years), this opens up new opportunities for giving.

7. If you were completing a pledge card for a capital campaign today, what range of financial commitment to the campaign might you consider?

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 0 – \$100,000+ | 0 – \$50,000-\$99,999 |
| 1 – \$25,000-\$49,999 | 1 – \$10,000-\$24,999 |
| 7 – \$5,000-\$9,999 | 13 – \$3,000-\$4,999 |
| 67 – Less than \$3,000 | 12 – No response |

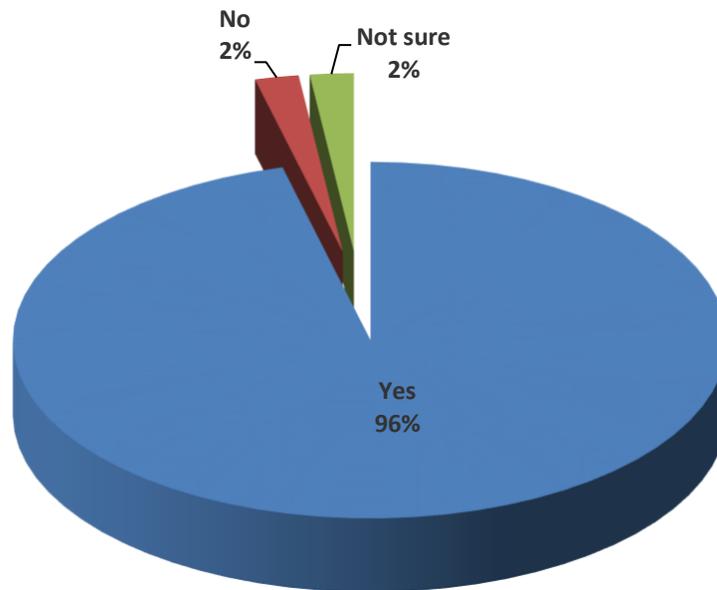


Analysis:

Our recommendations will address these responses. 90% gave a range of giving. This is another very positive response, and typically, persons grow in the actual giving during the campaign journey.

8. Do you support Unity Renaissance’s mission to “Transform lives that transform the world”?

- 97 – Yes
- 2 – No
- 2 – Not sure
- 0 – No response

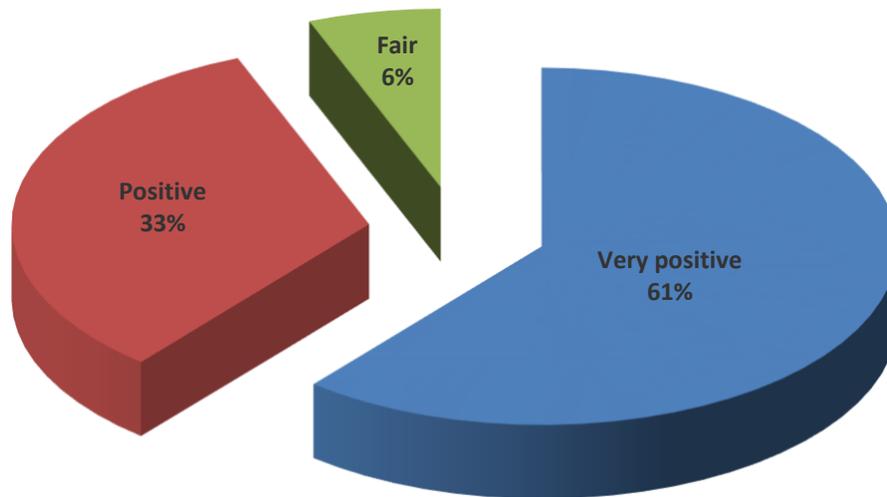


Analysis:

These answers show an overwhelming support for the mission of Unity Renaissance.

9. Please describe your perception of the current overall spirit and environment at Unity Renaissance?

- 61 – Very positive
- 33 – Positive
- 6 – Fair
- 0 – Poor
- 1 – No response



Analysis:

94% believe Unity Renaissance is healthy and the fellowship is having a positive impact.

10. Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey. What questions or comments do you have regarding this project? Share other input with us here:

Representative Comments:

Regarding question number 9: I often feel like there are things we can do to fulfill our mission moment by moment, but because our focus is so much on things looking a certain way, we miss out on making the difference we can make. For example: Live streaming. We could have started where we were, with what we had, and impacted any number of people years ago. Instead we put off maximizing our mission to get the system that we felt we needed to do the job, which strictly speaking wasn't necessary. Feeding the hungry. The conversation has been, our kitchen isn't big enough, so we do nothing, waiting instead until we get the right size kitchen. Again for me, a missed opportunity to serve people. There are other examples besides the aforementioned ones, to me, that highlight what I see as either us 1) wanting/ needing things to look a certain way before we serve, fulfill our mission and/ or 2) focusing on things rather than people. I am reminded of Matthew 25:14, the story of the talents. During these times I feel like we bury our talents, instead of doing the uttermost with them.

It is vital for us to go forward with this expansion for the growing spiritual community. It is now or it will be along time coming.

Would an early childhood education program be considered in a new, expanded facility, and possibly a Unity School (K-to 5th start)?

Will the congregation's questions generated by this survey be published (anonymously) with corresponding answers from the board for all to see? Phase 0 cost significantly more than the original estimate. Did we incorporate Lessons Learned into phases one and two or should we expect the actual cost to be significantly higher than the shown 1.3 million? How many people will the cafe / bookstore hold? Can it be used as a fellowship hall until a cafe is viable? Does the current estimate for Phase 2, the cafe / bookstore, include the bar area and plumbing? The current plan to have the book store items in movable shelving or kiosks seems like a lot of work for the bookstore personnel. Would it make more sense to keep the bookstore in an enclosed lockable space?

The amount I am pledging for the expansion is in addition to my giving to the "operation" of Unity Renaissance.

It is my sense that we are moving prematurely and need to continue to expand our consciousness and community outreach. In addition, we may benefit from a stronger, more personal social media presence/campaign.

The team leaders haven't been gathered together or leveraged as a group in several years. This could be the vehicle that brings/joins us back together, reinforces the core of UR, while offering solid energy to the campaign.

Pleased to be back attending service what I can

Connect more personally and intentionally with new visitors

I love this Spiritual Center and all involved.

Rev Paula and Richard are outstanding stewards of our mission.

More recognition of importance of volunteers to keep things running. Thus may encourage others to step up. (Maybe)

My experience is that it is difficult to break in to the Unity church community. This is not a criticism, I think other churches have the same issue. It can be difficult to develop friendships, mostly because the existing members already have close relationships with each other. I have thought about it a lot but I'm not sure how to correct the situation.

I love Unity Renaissance. I am leery of another capital campaign. I pledged, and have been fulfilling, a sizable contribution from the first campaign. I thought more was going to be done with money from that drive. I expected the kitchen and bathrooms to be complete. I expected to at least have concrete plans for the expansion. I am not sure about committing any more money for a campaign.

I am living on Social Security and I am considering leaving VB so I am not able to make any commitment. What about parking? Best wishes for the improvements.

I think a smaller project would be more viable, churches are losing members all over the country.

I don't like the continual requests for money and struggle around around giving to the Breakthrough Campaign after hearing of struggles to meet the operations budget, cutback on employees and hours and lack of insurance for our minister. When I began attending URC I appreciated the weekly bulletin update around the mortgage payoff rate. I'd like to see that type of communication going forward. I agree with expanding the kitchen and bathrooms but struggle to visualize other expansion goals in comparison to the operations budget.

I used to live close by and wish that were still true. When I make it back I always feel welcome and glad to feel the wonderful loving vibe from the people there.

Biggest questions is exactly what are we raising money for and what are the costs?

I think that the children are the future and that they should have been and still should be priority. Not a new sanctuary first - but the future is in the youth.

Comment: In conversations with other members and congregants, the perception and feeling is that the first campaign was supposed to fund the new education wing. We were told it was a cornerstone goal of the first campaign. So what changed? There is a lot of weariness and negativity around asking for more money from us again.

I wish I could contribute more. I look you seeing these community dreams come true.

We are not sure funding for the shell of the café/bookstore is necessary at this time. We also do not feel there is enough understanding amongst us about the complexity, work and cost of running a café.

A needed expansion to continue to realize the mission and vision of UR. With this expansion we could have a bigger impact on the community

A while back I increased my commitment to the capital campaign. What happened? Please explain why I am now being asked to give more.

I don't have a lot of financial freedom to contribute a lot but will support as I can

So excited to see the positive progression of the Purpose of Renaissance coming into fulfillment. Truly a sanctuary of all the people. Soon we will see all our dreams coming to Life!

Thanks for all Unity Renaissance has done for this community and me.

I'm simply overwhelmed with the love, passion, kindness & GUIDANCE my family and I have received while attending this wonderful Church. I was forced to attend church as a child so I

was conditioned to believe in my "I AM" in the traditional Babtist ways. This Church has truly changed my life. UNITY RENAISSANCE is Perfectly Pure.

Handicapped accessibility is of prime importance. Also, perhaps an alcove with places to hang coats and a shelf for leaving hats.

None. I am excited about our future!

I shared very generously during first campaign in lump sums about 35,000. Not sure I am willing to repeat that as I am retired.

not sure cafe is important -- multipurpose area could work. The lobby could work. kitchen, restrooms and classrooms important issues.

Haven't attended recently. With growth of congregation, intimacy lost. Don't particularly like music.

If the first Breakthrough did not complete the goals, then how do I know that the second will? Get all the costs and estimates before presenting the pipe dream to the congregation .We were told this before and here we are again needing more money.

I do not have any questions but I do have a suggestion. Open a thrift store and build the church!

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Review the recommendations about generosity in the report offered in our first study. The ongoing weekend presentational moments for the “love offering” would greatly add to the needed cultural shift for a greater generosity culture. Cultural shifts take time, patience and persistence. I would love to review these with Paula and the board.
2. We believe a second campaign will yield a financial range of \$400,000-\$600,000. This are not easy targets yet can be attained by UR with an energetic and harmonious people.
3. A building team should offer opportunity for persons (each weekend in September) to have questions answered. We recommend a room be available for this team and communication to the congregation about this open time for any and all questions to be answered. Notes should be taken at each meeting. The questions asked placed in a Q&A document and made available to the congregation in October. This allows for transparency in an environment where answers to questions can be discussed in the right listening environment.
4. Begin immediately enlisting the campaign team.
5. The goals for the campaign should be presented in narrative format in the following manner:
 - a. Giving \$300,000 will allow UR to?
 - b. Giving \$600,000 will allow UR to?
 - c. Giving \$900,000 will allow UR to?
 - d. Names could be given to each level: (Examples: Foundational Goal, Challenge Goal, Beyond Goal?)
6. The campaign calendar will be finalized with Paula and Campaign leadership with a Celebration Sunday in mid November.
7. Communication about the case (what are we building and costs) must be often and with the same message.
8. A prayer team must begin immediately offering opportunity for visioning and spiritual foundation. We must be reminded this is about Spirit moving each person in his or her generosity journey. “Giving is what Spirit wants for us, not from us!”

Thank you for your trust. We will walk with you in this successful journey.

Let's get started!

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