



# GROWING OUR LEGACY

*First Unitarian Church of Oakland Capital Campaign 2008*

# THE HISTORY OF THIS BUILDING



Our congregation's history dates from 1869, when Laurentine Hamilton, a Presbyterian minister, was convicted of heresy for espousing liberal religious views. He and many of his congregation formed The Hamilton Free Church, which flourished until his death in 1882. In 1886, Charles A. Wendte reorganized the church as The First Unitarian Church of Oakland.

In 1891, our building opened. In the 1970s, it was designated a landmark by the city, state and nation.



Twenty years later, when architects began designing the Federal Building in downtown Oakland, they looked to our church and its tower for inspiration. Take a look. You'll see that the roofline of the Federal Building mimics that of our tower.



Throughout its history, First Unitarian Church of Oakland has been a place of great spiritual and historical significance. We welcomed Swami Vivekananda to our pulpit in 1900. Isadora Duncan danced her debut in Wendte Hall. William Howard Taft (then the sitting U.S. President) addressed our congregation in 1912. Writer Jack London attended church here and was married in Hamilton Hall. In 1945, the church hosted some of the organizing meetings for the United Nations. And the Starr King School for the Ministry was founded at our church.

In 1995, working with Architect Jim Goring, the church adopted a Master Plan for renovation and rehabilitation of our structures, keeping in mind the need for seismic retrofitting. In 1999, we completed the renovation of the East Wing (administrative offices and classrooms) and Wendte Hall. In addition to adding space and cosmetic and functional changes, the renovation brought these areas into compliance with current Oakland and California standards for earthquake protection.

Renovation of Hamilton Hall is our next step.



# THE BEAUTY OF HAMILTON HALL

Step inside Hamilton Hall and look around. Really look. Did you first notice the stunning stained glass windows? Perhaps it was the dramatic arch of redwood trusses that caught your eye. Or the detailed, ornate woodwork — from cornice moldings to the handsomely decorated pulpit from which many illustrious orators have spoken. Each of the beautiful architectural features could stand alone as a work of art. But the sanctuary's real beauty — and its awesome power — comes from combining these elements, creating a truly magnificent whole.

Our congregation is a lot like Hamilton Hall. Each of us is a functional, beautiful piece of a greater whole. We are diverse in our backgrounds, beliefs, interests, ages, abilities and talents, and we are all enriched by our participation in our church. We took many paths to arrive at First Unitarian — and we look to our congregation for many different things. Here we have found a community where we support each other in joy and sorrow, explore ideas, worship together, help our children grow to be moral and ethical people, celebrate life transitions, participate in social activities, and work to make our neighborhood and world a better place.



*The vision of the Sower patiently planting seeds returns me to the core of my faith. I am reminded that intentions planted with care may remain dormant for a time, but that they will grow at their own pace, if allowed to blossom.*

SUSAN CONRAD

# WHY WE NEED TO DO THIS

Hamilton Hall is more than 100 years old and was built of unreinforced masonry — brick held together with mortar, but without any steel reinforcing rods. Buildings of this type are especially vulnerable to earthquake damage and collapse. The city of Oakland could, at any time, order us to stop using the sanctuary.

We must bring our sanctuary into compliance with current standards. We must assure that people worshipping in our space are safe. And we must help preserve this structure so that 100 years from now, our liberal religious faith will still have a home at 14<sup>th</sup> and Castro, a home in this historic and living building.

In addition to increasing safety, we hope to update a number of interior aspects of Hamilton Hall including the foundation, electrical, fire protection, sound proofing, and chancel or stage configuration.

This summer, we reviewed our plans with architects and structural engineering firms to determine how to lower the costs of the project while still reaching the safety level we require. With a new design from Murphy Burr Curry, we are now ready to move forward.



# GOALS



Together, we have identified the goals this building project will address:

Our new design builds on existing structural elements in Hamilton Hall, especially the old growth redwood arches to help support the building despite movement caused by an earthquake.

- ▶ There will be **significant reinforcement**, using steel and carbon fiber reinforced plastic.
- ▶ The work will involve **significant strengthening** of the external brick and stonework, as well as **repairing and strengthening the roof**.
- ▶ We will include non-structural work such as fire sprinklers, electrical, lighting and heating upgrades, and gutters and downspouts to **help protect the building**.
- ▶ Consistent with recommendations of our Worship Council, we hope to also
  - Reconfigure the chancel
  - Improve accessibility
  - Improve soundproofing
- ▶ The new design allows for **reinstallation of our pipe organ** in the future.

*I look to First Unitarian as a safe space/ community for me and my daughters to learn and grow. For me, the grandeur and loveliness of our sanctuary reinforces the importance and holiness of our time there together.*  
 JODIE MATHIES



*The vision of the Sower reminds us that it is we, the congregation, who are empowered and – yes – required to use our nurtured strengths to work the fields, to sow the seeds of peace and justice.*  
 BEV SMRHA

Our financial goal for this campaign — \$2.0 million — is definitely a stretch. You may recall that last year, the architectural plans required that we plan to complete the work in two phases, each costing about \$2.0 million, probably spread over 10 years. The projections in the financial feasibility study conducted by our UUA consultant last Spring were based on the gifts a sample of people were thinking of contributing at that time. It showed we were likely to raise no more than 1.2 million.

But we did not let that large gap discourage us for long. A team of dedicated members got involved. First, we found a way to lower the total cost of the project from \$4.0 million to \$2.3 million, without doing a second phase, while still meeting our goal of creating a safe building. And next, a number of members committed to contributing significantly larger sums to the campaign to help close the gap. So, while raising \$2 million will certainly be a stretch, we know that, by making that stretch, we can reach our objective of finally having our beloved Hamilton Hall safe and easier to use.

Now — with our energy, creativity, and resolve focused — imagine how we will strengthen and fulfill our community, our spirituality, and our responsibility in new and exciting ways!

# COST BREAKDOWN

The costs below are based on the work being done in 2009, and are professional estimates. They include contingencies, design and overhead, as well as permits, materials, and labor.

<b>Structural costs</b> <i>(includes strengthening, patching)</i>	\$1,250,000	54.3%
<b>Masonry restoration, window &amp; door repairs</b>	\$561,000	24.4%
<b>Amenities</b> <i>(chancel, Wendte Hall doors, ramp, e.g.)</i>	\$374,000	16.3%
<b>Roofing</b>	\$115,000	5.0%
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$2,300,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

## What Will Our Legacy Be?

We have so much to be proud of here at First Unitarian. We are doing a good job of welcoming people to our church, we support each other well, we have great ministers, we do amazing social justice work, we nurture and support our children, we are building a radically inclusive community, and we've achieved UUA Welcoming Congregation status. Our sanctuary, Hamilton Hall, is the heart of this community. It provides us a quiet place for reflection, a place to honor the passages of our lives — child dedications, weddings, commitment ceremonies, and memorials. It allows us all to gather in common spirit weekly. And it offers us a place of beauty, a place that fills us with awe.

Our congregation is growing — we have more than 500 adults and children. Our 393 adult members bring our membership roles to the highest level in 20 years! We are excited to share all the good things

about First Unitarian with our newcomers. Now it's our turn to step forward and make a safe home for people in our community who are Unitarian Universalists but don't realize it yet, just as our congregation's founders did for us in 1891.

Like them, we are making a leap of faith.

Our commitment, our efforts will help assure this historic and welcoming church will be here for another century. We have benefited from our founders' vision and resolve. What we protect and build now will stand as a testament to our conviction of the important role our congregation and our liberal religion play in our community and the world. Hamilton Hall will shelter generations to come as they worship, celebrate, mourn, learn, grow, play, and work together.

This is our legacy. This is our future.



*When I sit in Hamilton Hall, I remember the first time I ever sat there, on a Christmas Eve, and the world felt instantly calm and peaceful, and I've felt that way ever since when I walk through its doors.*

CHRIS SUTHERLAND



*First Unitarian Church of Oakland is an important part of my retirement plan. I will be investing in the building to ensure that this community will be there to give me spiritual and community nourishment just as I am investing in stocks to ensure that I will have food to give me physical nourishment.*

LAILA IBRAHIM

# WHAT WILL IT TAKE?

# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CHAIR'S MESSAGE



*I started attending our church in 1987. Hamilton Hall, our sanctuary, is where I have laughed and cried, sung and prayed, listened and talked. It is a beautiful home. I cannot imagine my life without it!*

MARY FORAN

Many of us will make the biggest charitable contributions in our lives for this campaign. Some of us will pay our pledges in monthly installments over a five year period beginning in 2008. Some will choose to give stock or other

assets. Working with our UUA consultant, Martha Easter-Wells, we have identified the approximate distribution of gifts that it will take for us to reach our goal. Please refer to the gift table below.

GIVING CATEGORY	GIFT RANGE	# OF GIFTS	TOTAL FROM RANGE
Prophets of Vision	\$200,000 or more	1	\$200,000
Founders of Faith	\$100,000-199,999	2	\$250,000
Gatherers of Spirit	\$80,000-99,999	4	\$340,000
Sowers of Hope	\$40,000-79,999	7	\$350,000
Growers of Love	\$15,000-39,999	10	\$250,000
Rays of Light	\$7,500-14,999	20	\$220,000
Waters of Life	\$5,000-7,499	25	\$150,000
Winds of Change	\$3,000-4,999	35	\$140,000
Seeds of Progress	Up to \$2,999	Many	\$100,000
<b>TOTAL GIFTS</b>		<b>Many</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>



*From the first time I walked into the Sanctuary I was home. It was the right place for me, filled with people I have come to love and respect.*

JAY ROLLER



We all have different abilities to contribute to this campaign. Gifts of all sizes are important. The big gifts typically start a campaign off, and the smaller ones bring it to a successful close. Those who can complete their pledges early are encouraged to do so. Early pledge payments reduce the borrowing costs and give us more money for the renovation.



*The German poet Goethe wrote that "architecture is frozen music." I think of this often, as I play, sing or conduct, looking up into the grand, arched redwood ceiling.*

KIM RANKIN,  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

*Dear Congregants of First Unitarian Oakland,*

The Capital Campaign to renew our beloved sanctuary for this and future generations is about to be fully underway!

The Capital Campaign Committee has been working for many months to prepare the campaign to be at this stage, and we certainly have a deep feeling for the importance of this work. Many of you, however, are now making serious room in your minds, hearts, and spirits for this question for the first time, amid all the other exciting and transforming work our congregation is doing. Thank you for joining with us now to consider how we might achieve this great goal together.

In the near future, a fellow congregant will be asking you to consider making a generous gift to the Capital Campaign. When I imagine myself asking someone for a gift that will require them to stretch, I feel slightly nervous about it. But it's not the financial impact that makes me nervous. I'm aware that in making the kind of gift we will be asking for, the givers will be taking themselves to a place of deeper relationship with — and commitment to — our beloved community. Making a commitment to community is a profoundly spiritual act, a potentially life-transforming act. Asking someone to do this should make me nervous!

At the same time, I have faith that the members of this congregation are ready, and even anxious, to rededicate themselves to this community. So I'm feeling more excited and inspired than nervous when I contemplate doing some visiting and asking. I think most of us love to have a chance to talk one-on-one with someone about what this community means to us.

My hope is that when you are visited and asked, and when you, in turn, visit and ask, that you take the opportunity to appreciate how truly good it is that so many wonderful people are dedicating themselves to each other, to our larger community, and to our future.

Dan Goss  
Chair, Capital Campaign Committee



# IN GRATITUDE

First of all, we thank you. We thank you now, knowing you are really listening to our appeal. That you will examine your finances — and your heart — and will give as generously as you are able.

And we thank the Capital Campaign Committee for all the work they have done – and will continue to do through this effort. We would not be where we are without them.

Dan Goss, *Chair*

Roxie Kellam, *Co-Treasurer*

Renee Harper, *Lead Gifts*

Gail Schulz, *Co-Treasurer*

Jane Voytek, *Lead Gifts*

Linda Probert Sanford, *Event*

Dick Bailey, *General Gifts*

Jay Roller, *Outreach*

Bob Hood, *General Gifts*

Lisa Fry, *Communications*

The Hamilton Hall Renovation Committee has put in endless hours working with architects, engineers, and our Executive Team. We are very grateful for their time and their considerable expertise.

Gail Schulz, *Co-Chair*

Diane Olson

Glen Dahlbacka, *Co-Chair*

Joan Poulter

Dick Bailey

Bob Schulz

Jim Gardner

Malcolm Talcott

Andrew Lee

Debra Temple

Veronica Martin

We also thank all our volunteer Visitors who will meet with members and friends in their homes in the coming weeks to answer questions, share stories, and facilitate pledging to this campaign.

And we thank our able and dedicated staff for their support as we move forward with this project.

Each of us is a functional, beautiful piece of a greater whole. Each of us will nourish this community with our gifts. Each of us will grow our legacy . . . together.

*Printed on 50% recycled paper with 30% post-consumer content*

*Photography: Richard Dixon, Grace Ferguson, David Fry Graphic Design: UU member Steve Caramia*

---

**First Unitarian Church of Oakland**

685 14<sup>th</sup> Street Oakland, California 94612

510-893-6129