

The Disciple

The Good News of St. John soars like an eagle!

*St. John's United Church of Christ
Allentown, Pennsylvania*

Special Edition: Step-By Step Building Update

During the month of November many of us participate in a tradition of stating what we are grateful for. Our Thanksgiving holiday prompts us to think about the incredible blessings that we have received throughout the year as we enter the season of advent. This year, St. John's United Church of Christ has a great deal to be thankful for! Over the last two years we have been researching and discussing the possibilities of having a capital campaign. There were zoom meetings, in-person meetings at the church, and a long list of goals which we shared on May 13 of 2024.

In July of 2025 we decided to try something different. There were a number of essential building renovations that needed to be done. Some of these projects made the building safer, some of them made the building more accessible, and some of these projects would bring new possibilities for our congregation and our wider community. We realized that each one of these projects is important to our goal of ministry in the heart of the city! Pastor Becky worked with the church Elders to devise a plan to accomplish each one of these projects step-by-step. Like any good journey, you take it one step at a time!

The project that we are currently working on in our **Step-By-Step Essentials Plan** is replacing and repairing lights in the sanctuary. This one step is essentially broken down into two steps. The first step is rewiring and replacing the lights that point at the large stained-glass depiction of Jesus that shines out toward 6th street. With this first project, we will rewire these lights with more energy efficient LED fixtures. This project is estimated to cost \$2,159.

The second project in this step is to replace the lightbulbs in the hanging light fixtures in the sanctuary. As of right now, there are two light fixtures that need to be rewired and repaired. The estimated cost of this project will be \$6,540. When the electricians begin replacing the lightbulbs, they may encounter further lighting fixtures that need to be rewired. Each one of the lightbulbs overhead in our sanctuary is 750 W, that is one horsepower! Overtime, the heat and use from these bulbs can dry out some of the wiring, and pose a safety hazard. Through these repairs we will complete a twofold process of making our sanctuary safer, and making it brighter! The lightbulbs for this project were found by Alex Cloak, thank you Alex!

There was a discussion about whether or not we could replace the overhead lighting with LEDs as well. In our research we determined that at this point in time, it is not feasible to install LED lights that would be able to dim. This is most definitely a project that will remain on our radar for future planning.



In this image, you can see the lighting fixtures as viewed from our balcony. The photo in the bottom left hand corner is an image of one of the fixtures that needs to be rewired. The image on the bottom right is a photo of the size of the light bulbs as compared to our pastor's head.

Project Costs and Money Raised

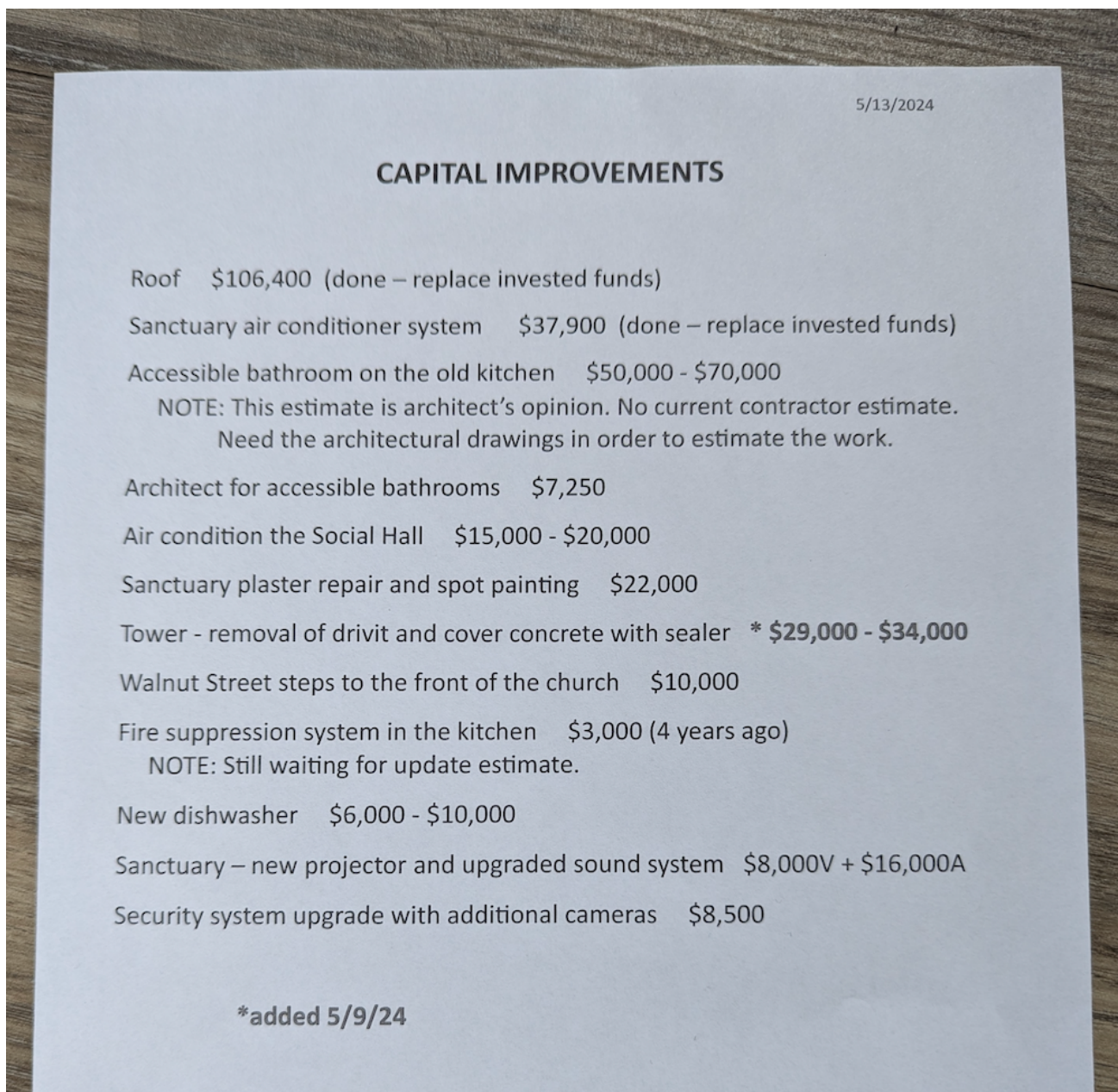
Project	Cost	Amount Paid Off
Roof Replacement	\$108,050	\$25,000 (owe \$83,000)
Sanctuary AC System	\$37,900	\$37,900
Sanctuary Plaster Repair & Painting	\$22,000	\$22,000
Steps at the corner of Walnut St. and 6 th St.	\$10,000, but accomplished by volunteer work!	All!
Tower- Removal of Dryvit and Sealing pillars	\$32,850	\$32,850
Architect Plans for Handicap Bathroom	\$7,250	\$7,250
Replacement of Stained-Glass lighting great hall	\$2,159	
Rewire and Replace Sanctuary lighting	\$6,540	

We have already addressed most of our big-ticket safety items. One of the biggest projects was replacing the roof. While replacing this key item, we also replaced the sanctuary AC system, which had begun to leak Freon and was no longer functioning with any regularity. The leaking roof had caused some damage to plaster and paint in the sanctuary itself. These repairs were made over last summer.

The steps at the corner of 6th Street and Walnut Street were repaired by Barney Cook. Thank you so much Barney for your shared knowledge and time! The large metal grates covering the drain between our parking lot and 6th Street also needed to be replaced. Barney Cook and Al Cloak Took measurements, ordered the parts, and replaced these grates with corrugated metal. Thank you so much Barney and Al for your hard work!

One of the other large projects that we completed were repairs to our tower. Our Bell tower and the large white pillars out front were covered in dryvit, which had been installed during the 1960s and had begun to fall down in large patches. The repairs required the removal of the drive, and for the tower and pillars to be sealed with paint.

In the image below, you will see the document that was handed out at our congregational meeting in May of 2024. You will notice that there are 12 total items listed. It was determined by the Fellowship Committee that the new dishwasher was no longer an item that they were interested in, bringing our list down to 11 items.



Additionally, you will notice that the last listed item is a security system upgrade with additional cameras. Pastor Becky and Cassidy Bell completed and submitted a grant proposal and were awarded the funds to complete this project. Thank you very much to Pastor Becky and Cassidy Bell for your hard work!

With the removal of the dishwasher and the security system, that brings our total wish list Down to 10 items, six of which have been completed!

I would now like to address the rest of the items on the list, and include the additions to our wish list that have since been added. The first item that I would like to talk about is the accessible bathroom. We communicated with an architect and paid \$7,250 to have blueprint schematics drawn up so that when we get to building the accessible bathroom, we have all of the information required to begin the project. One of the additional unexpected projects is the need to replace the flooring in the social hall. Once we complete the work in the handicap accessible bathroom, we will need to repair the damage to the floor at that entryway into the bathroom area, as well as replace the flooring in the rest of the social hall, which overtime has become cracked and damaged. At that time, we will also assess the possibility of putting the air conditioning in the social hall.

Next, I would like to talk about the fire suppression system in the kitchen. One of the hopes and dreams that the Fellowship Committee has for our space is to get our kitchen certified. This certification would allow us to do larger community fundraisers and community meals. Having a fire suppression system in the kitchen Will not only help with this certification process, but it will also provide additional safety to the individuals using our kitchen. This project was last estimated to cost \$3,000.

Finally, one of the larger items that we hope to accomplish in our step-by-step building renovations is the addition of Solar panels to our roof. This was a project that was proposed by the Green Team. Consistory members as well as Building and Property Committee members were invited to attend an informational session about the solar panels.

Conclusion

I hope that you have enjoyed the special edition of *The Disciple*! None of this would be possible without each and every one of you! It is because of your knowledge, hard work, and dedication that these essential projects are being completed. Thank you all for your donated time! Thank you all for sharing your incredible talents! And thank you so much for your financial generosity! Let us boldly go forth so that we might continue to accomplish God's ministry in the heart of the city!

-Respectfully submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser

Please consider making a donation today! Donations can be mailed in, placed in a marked blue pew envelope, or you can donate online! Visit our website for more information at <https://stjohnsuccallentown.org/> Or call the church office if you have any questions.

“The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8