



First Unitarian Church of Dallas

Dr. Laurel Hallman, Senior Minister

April 14, 2008

Dear Friends and Members,

Last week the congregation heard that we have received the contractor's bids for our building plan. As you know if you have ever built, added on, renovated, or simply considered such a thing—this is the part where the rubber hits the road. The bids are always more than the original estimate. Always.

But even knowing that, we were stunned when the contractor told us that our \$7. million building project would cost \$11. million—perhaps more.

There are several explanations. Right now Dallas is in the midst of a building boom. No one needs to bid competitively. Transportation and materials costs have risen with the cost of oil. And other reasons.

Some say this 'boom' won't continue and we may be in a better position, moving forward. But bottom line, we need to rethink the timing and the scope of our project.

The Board of Trustees has met, along with the Ministers, the Capital Campaign leaders, the Chart and Compass leaders, and the Facilities Team. You can be proud of your leaders, who have met this challenge with grace and equanimity.

We're going to take some time. No rush. We'll get a second opinion on the costs. We'll talk with neighboring churches about their projects and how they have gone. We'll revisit our plans and the timetable for building.

The needs remain the same. The Chart and Compass 2010 plan is a well-crafted, prudent plan for our future.

Our financial goals remain the same. We will continue our \$9. million goal for our campaign: \$7. million for the building, \$2. million for additional programs.

We have been reminded that our goal never was to build a building—it was to accomplish the ends we had set for ourselves, and we needed a new building to help reach those ends. So we're still keeping our eyes on improving our ability to care for one another, contribute to our larger community, improve our curriculum and our communication, within and outside our church and increase our capacity. (We call them the five C's of our plan.)

In December we will celebrate 109 years of existence in Dallas. Our ancestors were a tenacious bunch. They knew why a church like ours was needed in Dallas. And we know too. It is to help the people who are lost without a chart and compass for their spiritual natures—and because people are bound not only by creeds, but by ignorance, by greed, by social structures that fail to serve the people, by all sorts of limits that diminish the human spirit and endanger our world.

We'll figure out how to manage the building project.

So until you hear otherwise, church will still be held at Preston and Normandy, one block north of Mockingbird, along with all the other activities we enjoy. We'll let you know as soon as new plans take shape.

We will have more time, now, to reach our financial goals. We will have to become more creative about the use of the space we have for worship, classes and activities. This could be very good, after all.

Thank you for your continuing support of our church. We know First Church makes a difference in the lives of our members and friends, in our larger community, and in our denomination because you help make it so.

Faithfully,

*Laurel Hallman
Senior Minister*

*Daniel Kanter
Minister*

*Mike Bierrer
Co-chair
Chart and Compass 2010*

*Janet Tharp
Co-chair
Chart and Compass 2010*