



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the major components of this campaign?

Our current needs and opportunities are organized into 3 general clusters. First, following the completion of energy audits and other research, we are upgrading our facilities by leveraging better technologies and government subsidies to reduce our carbon footprint and save money. Second, certain aspects of our facilities are in critical need of care and maintenance. For example, our parking lot and some of our stairway entrances to the church are crumbling and becoming unsafe. A complete list of capital projects can be found on the church's website (stjohnsnorthfield.org). Finally, we have selected 4 local benevolence projects to support and collaborate with some of our not-for-profit partners. We have developed a specific document so people can learn more about these benevolence initiatives.

How were our capital projects selected and approved?

Our church council tasked various boards with identifying immediate- and long-term needs for our facilities. Concurrently, other members had been pursuing the potential installation of a solar array for the church. The council reviewed a range of requests and selected those that they felt were most necessary, or which offered immediate rewards to our church and the environment. The collective project list was presented at special congregational meeting in August 2023 and the congregation voted overwhelmingly to initiate a capital campaign to help ensure the success of these initiatives.

Why are these important to St. John's now?

Some of these needs, such as tuckpointing and driveway repair, represent ongoing structural upkeep that any facility would require. They have simply worn down or worn out and need to be replaced. Some others, such as air exchangers, are also in need of replacement, but we have the chance to greatly reduce both our costs and impact on the environment. Finally, new federal subsidies are reducing the costs for non-profit organizations like St. John's to invest in renewable energy projects like the solar array.

What's the payback time for the energy-efficient items?

Our most conservative projections, which assume low rates of inflation (and thus, low increases in energy costs) and the minimum estimates for cost savings, suggest that these projects will pay for themselves in about 8 years. If inflation creeps higher, or if they meet average cost-savings expectations, our payoff time will be reduced accordingly. The operational budget will see immediate savings as energy efficient projects are implemented. Our most recent energy-saving initiative – the installation of on-demand hot water heaters – saved us approximately \$6,000 in 2023.

What are the expected lifespans of these additions and what will it cost to maintain them?

For most of these projects we are reinvesting in our existing physical plant with once or twice in a generation projects. We should expect lifespans consistent with what we have seen in the past whether that's for parking lot replacement, roofing, tuckpointing, or other capital improvements. In some circumstances, because of technology improvements, lifespans will increase. As an example, low-energy equipment such as on-demand water heaters, have a longer projected lifespan than what they replaced because they are used less frequently. The solar array is warrantied for 25 years; to be conservative we have built a budget around a 20-year model. Additionally, because we plan to raise all of the money for these capital projects at the front end, we will have the opportunity to invest the cost savings in our mission as soon as they are realized without having to reach the "payback" threshold.

What happens when the solar array reaches the end of its life expectancy?

As is true with any roofing installation process we choose, we anticipate that in the next 25-30 years we will need to replace the solar array much like traditional roofing materials. While it is difficult to estimate what replacement costs will be by the middle of the 21st century, we have chosen to deploy a system that sits on the roof, rather than one that is bolted to it, which will reduce both maintenance and removal expenses. The technology continues to advance.

For example, recycling and recovery will potentially provide some payback like cardboard recycling does in today's environment. To remain on the conservative side, we are anticipating that removal costs could be in the \$20,000 - \$25,000 range still making the decision to "go solar" financially wise when the removal costs are stacked up against the 25-30 year cost savings.

What is the risk of storm damage to the solar array?

The risk of storm damage to a roof hosting a solar array is limited. According to research conducted by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory – falling under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Energy – the probability of hail breaking solar panels is less than five percent. Additionally, the increased cost of insurance due to adding solar array is currently less than \$500 per year for our facility and St. John's has already factored in the increased insurance costs to ensure we are safeguarded against that particular risk. The risks will be further minimized for us because there will be no penetration of the building or roofing structure during installation. The entire array will sit atop the roof as opposed to being bolted into the building.

Why do we need new parking lots and steps?

The primary reason is safety. There are places where the asphalt and cement is crumbling, which creates a risk for our members and visitors ... especially those who are aging or facing physical handicaps. Additionally, these projects will give us an opportunity to consider further environmentally friendly strategies like water run-off and drainage systems that will not only keep our property safe, but also improve our environmental impact at the same time.

Do we really need a new dishwasher and range for the kitchen?

Yes we do. These appliances are coming to the end of their effective lives. As we replace these essential components to our kitchen, we will also benefit from new energy-efficient models for both a dishwasher and induction kitchen range that will, at once, save us money and reduce our negative impact on the environment. Furthermore, newer models of these appliances are safer to use and especially given the numbers of people who will put our kitchen to use, safety is a major concern. Again, as with the on-demand water heaters, we anticipate significant cost savings by moving to more modern equipment.

Why do our Sunday School rooms need floors replaced?

It seems like only yesterday that our Sunday School rooms were added with the addition of St. John's Hall. But that addition was completed in 2002, and youth are not easy on flooring. For the health and safety of our children, it is time to replace that flooring to provide our youth with the safest and most comfortable experience possible.

It seems like tuckpointing is always on our project list. What is it and will it ever be completed?

Tuckpointing, which is the process of repairing mortar between bricks and repairing mortar joints, helps keep our building attractive and safeguards the building for leakage and drainage issues. Without ongoing tuckpointing our building will deteriorate and it would become both unsafe and inordinately expensive to repair if left unattended. Additionally, keeping the outside of our building looking nice makes it more welcoming to visitors and guests and reflects upon the welcoming spirit we wish to convey inside our church walls.

What are heat exchangers and air-handling improvements and why do we need them?

Heat exchangers transfer energy from one fluid or gas to another without mixing the 2 substances. They conserve energy because they don't rely on complex mechanical and air-chilling processes to function effectively. As integral parts of comfort and process heating and cooling applications, heat exchangers perform efficiently and effortlessly for years with proper maintenance. It too early in the process to know how much savings we can achieve with the proper heat exchangers, but we anticipate that it will not only improve our impact on the environment, but also save us money much like the on-demand water heaters.

How is the campaign being funded?

A team of dedicated volunteers, perhaps including you, will do all the work required to complete this campaign. All professional and personal time is being donated by St. John's members as well as any out-of-pocket expenses such as printing and postage. This means that every dollar you give will go directly to the sustainability and benevolence commitments, ensuring that we extend our mission as a Christian congregation as far as we possibly can.

What additional information did you glean before making your decisions?

The St. John's staff and a dedicated group of volunteers aggressively researched our options for everything from a solar array to parking lot replacment. We also researched options related to the other items outlined in the case statement for this campaign to arrive at our decisions. Potential options not identified here, were ultimately set aside for a variety of reasons related to costs, feability, return on investment and maximizing the positive impact on our world. Following a comprehensive energy audit, our experts identified more than \$21,250 in annual savings with a payback of 6-1/2 years through air handling and thermostat improvements. With wise investments of your capital dollars, when we add up all of the initiatives, we anticipate carbon savings that will save enough coal that would fill up all of St. John's Hall, wall-to-wall and floor to ceiling! In other words, our positive impact on our environment will be noteworthy and long-lasting as we care for God's creation.

What are some ways I can give?

Your commitment can be made using cash, stock, property, retirement account Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs), or other ways your financial advisor might recommend. Every gift, no matter its form or scope, is important and will go directly to meeting the needs of St. John's or its benevolence partners. If you have a donor-advised fund, we recognize that you cannot make a formal pledge. However, if you could give us some sense of what you plan to give that would greatly aid us in our planning.

How long will I have to fulfill my pledge?

We are asking participants to consider making a three-year commitment to Sustaining Grace. The campaign will conclude at the end of 2026. If it is possible for you to meet your pledge sooner, St. John's will be able to invest more quickly in the energy-saving components of the campaign. Many people are committing to a three-year pledge at a specified dollar amount per year. We will continue to receive both pledged and unpledged funds to address our physical needs and opportunities for benevolence throughout the three-year period.

What are the organizations we are supporting with our benevolence from this campaign?

The organizations designated to receive benevolence funds from St. John's through the Sustaining Grace campaign are Habitat of Rice County, Healthy Community Initiative, Laura Baker Services Association, and Ruth's House. There is a separate brochure created for the campaign that provides additional information on what is being funded for each of these high-caliber local nonprofits. In addition to these four grants, many other worthy organizations were considered and may still receive grants based upon the campaign's ultimate performance.

What happens if we surpass our goal?

The Benevolence & Social Concerns Board and Church Council are charged with extending our generosity into the greater community. The Beneveloence and Social Concerns Board will recommend additional grants if 10 percent of the total proceeds raised from Sustaining Grace exceed the currently designated grants. Any additional benevolence dollars above and beyond what is already planned will be directed by the Council based upon recommendations from the Benevolence Board. Additionally, the Church Council regularly considers potential capital projects that require attention in and around our facilities. Excess funds raised in the Sustaining Grace initiative will be directed by the Council to further advance our sustainability efforts.

How can I learn more about the campaign?

To learn more, we invite you to reach out to any of the co-chairs of the Sustaining Grace Campaign Committee:

Cheryl Buck, Co-Chair

Daniel Edwins, Co-Chair

Jeff McLaughlin, Co-Chair

Ruthie Neuger, Co-Chair

Dave Neuger, Co-Chair

Pastor Pam Fickenscher, Senior Pastor



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