

January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025

Dear Grace Congregation,

We have exciting news to share! In the spring we had a congregational gathering one evening to update and encourage everyone toward concerted prayer for our search of a new worship space, a search which began a couple years ago. In fact, it may be refreshing or helpful to go back and watch the brief video we compiled for that spring meeting to explain part of our vision and prayer in this endeavor ([www.bit.ly/gracespace24](http://www.bit.ly/gracespace24))



To be clear we do not *need* a church, by God's grace we *are* a church serving Christ's purposes. However, we do desire a space, with greater accessibility and stability, to better facilitate the mission of our church long-term.

With that in mind, we have new reason to pause and praise God with sincere thanksgiving for answered prayer! It appears in God's generous providence, we are being given an opportunity to purchase an entire church facility and property just 1.5 miles away from our current worship location: Church Hill United Methodist Church in Norwell (on the corner of River and Church Street). Our officers are excited to share more of the details about this opportunity and why we believe it is wise that we vote to approve a purchase and sale agreement with them later this month.



For now, we are asking people to join us in praising God while also continuing to seek His will and wisdom. Also, please mark your calendar for these opportunities and important dates:

1. Walk through tour of the Methodist church space and facilities for any who are interested in seeing it first-hand - two options:
  - **Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am**
  - **Sunday, January 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm**
2. Congregational meeting and vote - **Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>** immediately following our normal morning worship service.

We've also composed some answers to some possible questions below along with some initial pictures and details.

By Faith,

Pastor Troy (On Behalf of all our Officers)

## Overview of the Space (see also pictures below)

The whole property is situated on the corner of River Street and Church Street in Norwell (near the Hanover line). The main address is 11 Church St. and there are technically four parcels:

1. **The main sanctuary** – quintessential historic New England structure built in 1850. It has a new roof, new efficient HVAC with heating/AC, and updated fire and electrical work. There is a small parlor annexed off the back along with a single bathroom (built in 1998). Tall windows and loads of light. The sanctuary with balcony can seat a total of around **140 people**. There is a very nice space beneath the sanctuary that is unfinished but has windows, interior and exterior entrance, and plumbing for bathrooms or kitchen - this could potentially function as a cry room/nursery or overflow room of sorts.
2. **Parking lot** - Behind sanctuary, in good working order with approx. 50-60 spots. There are places along the road and adjacent cemetery that could add several more.
3. **Fellowship Center** - Built in 1960, the upstairs has a large vaulted-ceiling fellowship hall with stage (seats approx. **150 people** with folding chairs) with adjacent kitchen, Pastor's study, conference room, bathroom, and much storage. Downstairs offers nursery, two bathrooms, multiple nice classrooms, large room, and storage.
4. **Parsonage** – We don't know much about this yet (we have walk through slated for Saturday Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>) – but it is likely a three bedroom home and has a barn attached – about 3,000 square feet. Seems to be in solid shape based on exterior. There is a new roof on the house and barn. We would likely want to hold on to this for rental income initially and then perhaps take it all down for phase 2 for parking purposes (if we build on to or add a bigger sanctuary).



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

---

### **1. Why again the urgency to find a space when we have good facility to rent?**

The Lutheran Congregation in Hanover, has graciously hosted us and has allowed us to rent their space for our Sunday worship since our beginning over a dozen years ago. All parties agree it is best for the mission and growth of both congregations that we soon move to our own location. We do not want to overstay our welcome.

### **2. How did this opportunity present itself?**

The CH-UMC congregation decided this year to conclude their ministry in 2025 with plans to merge with their sister United Methodist Church in Scituate. The CH-UMC trustees learned, through a friend in the Lutheran congregation, that our congregation was looking for a new home base and were eager to talk with us. They made it abundantly clear that they wanted to see the facilities and property continue to function as a church.

### **3. What is the price and what is including in the purchase?**

This purchase will include three buildings (sanctuary, fellowship center, and parsonage) situated on four parcels of land (approximately 2.4 acres). The trustees of CH-UMC have offered to sell all of this along with internal furnishing (i.e. A/V equipment, pianos, chairs, tables, kitchen supplies and more) for a very generous price of \$500,000. We recognize they chose to forgo listing any of this on the market, which could likely fetch a much greater price/profit through say a real estate developer. Also interesting to note, the tax assessed valuation in the town of Norwell for the land and buildings is over \$2.5 million.

### **5. Can we afford this size purchase?**

Certainly not without God providing through the gifts of His people. We are already seeing God's generosity working through the Methodist congregation. We know there is much more involved than just the initial purchase and we were making budget plans even last fiscal year to improve our giving to be prepared for increased operational costs to occupy our own space. Currently we have a little over \$200k in cash reserves and we do not plan to deplete all of this on the purchase.

We are making plans for a capital campaign to raise funds (this goal is not yet set) and then we'd need to rely upon a lender to help us cover the gap between gifts/pledges and the closing cost. We are confident that we will not have a problem securing a relatively small and fiscally responsible loan or line of credit based on our long giving history and the value of the physical assets. The parsonage we know can provide an additional stream of rental income in the short-term. We hope and pray that God will grow us in generosity and good stewardship such that we work through this purchase and keep our expenses manageable.

### **4. What are some of the potential concerns of this space?**

As mentioned above, we are naturally thinking about the financial responsibilities. Coupled with this, we know there are many *new* demands and duties that accompany owning and operating a church space. We do not want these types of duties to open us up to division or detours from real ministry. We need to keep an attentive eye on whether a new facility might pull us away from the primary mission (making disciples).

Although the buildings are all in sound condition, the location is wonderful, and the price is amazing, we know there is much work and sacrifice necessary on our part as God's people.

Our current congregation's average attendance is 120 people (counting nursery kids and all). So, an obvious concern is worship space in the current sanctuary. We know we need to talk with the town of Norwell's conservation commission because of some wetlands and about other matters related to historic preservation and addition of any structures and/or parking.

#### **5. What are some improvement or expansion ideas?**

We see "Phase 1" as acquiring the property and making initial basic improvements (i.e. painting, face-lift in the kitchen, and small modifications to rooms). The worship space concern could perhaps be addressed in the short-term with meeting for worship in the fellowship hall and then long-term with expansion of the sanctuary (as part of "Phase 2"). We are interested in trying to talk with a land surveyor/engineer and architect to explore options for expansion of the sanctuary. Yes, this may be part of a "Phase 2" – where we need to raise outside funds to do a new expanded sanctuary.

#### **6. What steps are needed before purchasing the property?**

- A. **Congregational walk through** (dates noted above)
- B. **Congregational vote:** According to **PCA Book of Church Order (BCO) 25-8**, our congregation must vote to approve any property purchase, ensuring alignment with our mission and stewardship responsibilities. All communing members are eligible to vote when we hold the congregational meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup>.
- C. **Finalize the Purchase and Sale Agreement (P&S)** – working through legal details we can hopefully have this signed in early February.
- D. **Fundraising**
- E. **Planning for our operation of ministry**
- F. **Close and move in** – July 2025

#### **7. How can I ask questions or share concerns?**

Please reach out to one of our officers or attend the upcoming tours and congregational meeting. Your feedback is vital as we seek God's will together.

\*\*\* Please continue reviewing pictures/details below







## **Fellowship Center Room Sizes**

*(Note: Dimensions taken from Fellowship Center Drawings of the Property Planning Committee by Paul Blanchard, Architect)*

<b><u>Room Description</u></b>	<b><u>Dimensions</u></b>	<b><u>Area</u></b>	<b><u>Notes:</u></b>
Main Hall	35 x 52	1,820	
Stage	14 x 16	224	
Vestibule	9 x 14	126	
Choir Room	9 x 13	117	
Storage Room	9 x 13	117	
Pastor's Study	9 x 20	180	
Church Office	16 x 17	272	
Kitchen	17 x 21	357	
Hallway 1 <sup>st</sup> floor	8 x 20	160	
Toilets 1 <sup>st</sup> floor	6 x 8	48	
<b>TOTAL FIRST FLOOR</b>		<b>3,421</b>	
Large Room	30 x 35	1,050	
Classroom by Stairs (A)	17 x 20	340	
Nursery Room (B)	17 x 17	289	
Rear Classroom (D)	17 x 18	306	
Large Classroom (C)	17 x 22	374	
Lobby & Hallways	16 x 17 + 5 x 33	437	
Toilets	11 x 15	165	
Boiler Room & Storage Areas	9 x 17 + 8 x 12 + 6 x 17	351	
<b>TOTAL GROUND FLOOR</b>		<b>3,307</b>	
<b>TOTAL INTERIOR SPACE</b>		<b>6,728</b>	

Note: Totals are different for first and ground floors due to depth of foundation walls, and additional interior walls on ground floor compared to first floor. Useable floor space varies by 114 square feet.

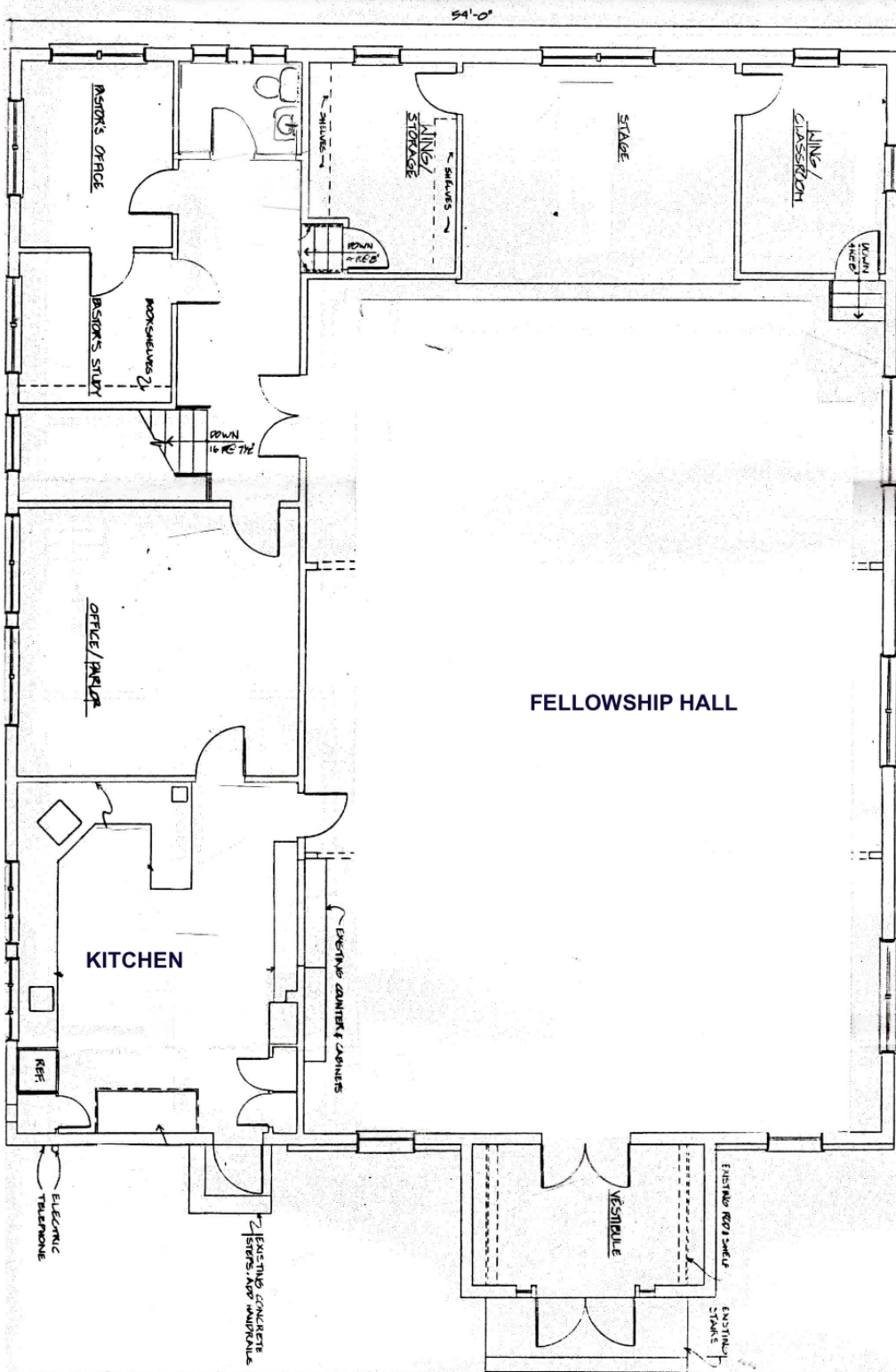


## **Sanctuary Building Dimensions**

*(Note: Dimensions taken from Sanctuary Drawings of the Property Planning Committee  
by Paul Blanchard, Architect)*

<b><u>Room Description</u></b>	<b><u>Dimensions</u></b>	<b><u>Area</u></b>	<b><u>Notes:</u></b>
Sanctuary	34 x 45	1,190	
Choir Loft	8 x 30	240	
Narthex <i>(Excl Closet and Stairs)</i>	6 x 24	144	
Parlor <i>(Excl Closet)</i>	16 x 16	256	
Vestibule	7 x 8	56	
Rest Room	7 x 8	56	
<b>TOTAL FIRST FLOOR</b>		<b>1,942</b>	
Large Room	32 x 34	1,088	
Small Room	16 x 24	384	
Boiler Room	12 x 14	168	
Storage Area	12 x 14	168	
<b>TOTAL GROUND FLOOR</b>		<b>1,808</b>	
<b>TOTAL INTERIOR SPACE</b>		<b>3,750</b>	

Note: Totals are different for first and ground floors due to depth of foundation walls, and excluded spaces such as stairs and closets, plus the choir loft.



CHURCH HILL UNITED

DATE: 21 MAY 88

EXISTING UPPER LEVEL

all

1/4" = 1'-0"

1/4" = 1'-0"

