Building and Grounds Report - 2025-2026 Annual Report

This past year was a lot of putting out fires. But I would like to start off by highlighting some of the exterior work that has been done, lead by Charlie Fischer. This includes (but certainly is not limited to) removal of some unsightly or unsafe infrastructure (such as fencing along the east side of the building), creation of labyrinth in the lawn, and refreshing the children's play lot on the west side of the RE building.

It takes a lot of cooperation and teamwork to make the church's landscaping look clean and inviting. If you are interested in helping with yard work or landscaping activities, please reach out to Charlie or myself. There are many different ways folks can contribute either in groups or as your time allows.

Flooding in the Alice Warren room is still a concern, but was greatly diminished from past years. We've had multiple various companies look at the parking lot, and there has been unanimous consent that the only way to completely eliminate the issue would involve significant construction and re-surfacing work. We continue to work on economical ways to reduce or eliminate flooding events, but at some point in the coming years a complete replacement of the parking lot should be considered.

Due to the age of our buildings, Rev. Beth is recommending a Property Condition Assessment be performed so we can identify and prioritize areas where our church and RE infrastructure either needs to be addressed or is nearing end-of-life. This is costly but will help us plan capital expenditures over both the short (2-3 years) and long term. Along with the parking lot, we know that tuckpointing, chimney removal, and upgrading several systems (such as the church water heater or refrigerator) will be required, and this will help us prioritize that work.

We have had challenges with the air conditioning units in the church building. Work has been performed throughout the year to make the units in the church itself more dependable, which has so far shown promise. Software updates have also allowed us to resume remote operation and timer settings, which has been excellent. Finally, we have been working to repair the splitters in the living room; unfortunately, this work requires us to re-engage with an installment contractor, which has caused delays.

Speaking of the living room, the condition of that carpeting has become untenable. Cleaning costs have increased even as the carpeting has continued to degrade, and we are at a point where replacement can no longer be considered an optional or future expense. We are planning to have that replaced in the coming fiscal year. We are looking into replacement of the stage and sanctuary flooring as well; due to the expected cost we are going to prioritize work in a way that will allow us to budget and plan in a fiscally responsible manner.

Several upgrades to the AV system for church services were completed this year, and Randy (who leads ARC and installed most of the system) has plans to continue upgrading components throughout the next year. Hopefully this has been noticed in the form of more dependable sound and YouTube services. We are also working on upgrading the microphones, which would include a second wireless belt pack and wireless microphone. This should not only improve our Sunday services, but other events we have in the church building.

Replacement of lighting in various rooms of the RE building was scheduled, but cancelled as other maintenance costs increased. We plan to restart that project this fiscal year. We are also working on replacement of the computers for staff, which are all running multiple generations of Windows behind and have begun to create operational and security risks.

Given the age of our buildings, we are planning to have a Property Condition Assessment done. It is costly but worth doing professionally given the age of our property. More to come on this as we discern our way forward with this.

Finally, in an effort to reduce costs, I would like to investigate replacement of our church telephone system with a VOiP or virtual office communications system (such as Teams). If anybody has experience with selecting and/or implementing these kinds of systems and would be willing to share your time and knowledge, please let me know.

Submitted by Gene Schafer