



Frequently Asked Questions | March 2021

I: **AMPLIFY♥UU** Project: Need and Timing

Q: Why do we need this project?

A: Here is what we have been told by individuals and groups over the last 2 years as we collected information about the audio-visual system: You said:

1. You couldn't hear the Ministers from the pulpit clearly and crisply or without background noise
2. You couldn't see the visuals or the titles on the projection screen and often the Ministers were shaded
3. You would like livestream that wasn't washed out or had background noise that distorted the sound.

Q: Why do we need an AV booth?

A: The AV Booth is soundproof and will allow AV operators to communicate with one another while not interfering with the service being presented. In addition, the AV booth will be lockable to provide security for all our new equipment.

Q: How does the **AMPLIFY♥UU project fit into the Strategic Plan of the First Unitarian Church of Victoria?**

A: Our strategic plan, developed by the congregation several years ago, identified a number of initiatives needed for the church to survive and prosper in the future. This will help us meet the church's location and outreach objectives with a two-way communication vehicle that also makes our beautiful sanctuary a centerpiece via live streaming. The improvements made through the **AMPLIFY♥UU** project will help attract and retain both new and existing members, while increasing the diversity of the church membership including young families. We believe we can best meet our churches outreach objectives, while providing a quality in-person service experience, by making these technology improvements.

II: **AMPLIFY♥UU** Equipment

Q: Why not implement the **AMPLIFY♥UU project in a phased or staged approach? As funds are available?**

A: The project has 3 broad areas of improvement; video, audio and lighting. Each element is as important as the other, in fact they work synergistically so that the whole project is more than the sum of the individual parts. The contract will also be more efficient and cost effective if all components are bid on at the same time. We imagine having the **AMPLIFY♥UU** project completed by the fall of this year.

Q: What is going to happen with the old audio-visual equipment that is being replaced?

A: We will look at using some of it in our other church facilities including the Lion Hall.



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III: Finances

Q: Why AMPLIFY♥UU now, during a Pandemic?

A: AMPLIFY♥UU is a new name but the AV project began at least two years with many individuals coming together to discuss the needs for our church. Earle Anthony tells us that after the Sanctuary was built, the sound system was bare bones because of budget concerns and it was expected it would subsequently be upgraded, but mostly it never was. He also said that it was known there would be issues with acoustics but felt that it would be best to try it out for a while then make changes. Earle says that AMPLIFY♥UU is long overdue, and he strongly supports it.

Q: What are the church's finances like at this point in time?

A: Due to the generosity of the congregation (both in terms of funds and volunteer time) the church's finances are in good order. Over the past few years there have been surpluses such that at the end of 2020 the general reserve totals more than \$120,000. In addition, there is close to \$300,000 in the Endowment Fund.

Q: How will the annual operating budget be affected in terms of ongoing maintenance and replacement and other costs including human resource costs?

A: It is expected that in the initial 5 years there should be little if any replacement of equipment. A capital reserve will commence in 2022 for the ultimate replacement of equipment, but this isn't expected for 5-10 years. Other operating costs such as electricity and insurance costs are not anticipated to be significant.

In relation to human resource costs, through the last year of COVID, we have acquired skills and awareness about how virtual services can help us reach out. We are building a strong Technical Team to support this implementation with ongoing training. MCSquared, the company with whom we plan to contract, will

arrange extensive training before the new system is launched. Volunteers will be trained to operate the equipment for church functions.

While it is expected that rentals will increase given the quality of the audio-visual equipment available, trained operators will be paid for by the parties renting the facilities.

Q: When can I contribute my Amplify UU capital campaign pledge? Is the donation tax deductible?

A: While it is hoped the majority of the pledged amounts are contributed before the end of this year (2021), the capital campaign will run for 24 months, from May 2021 to April 2023. We realize that everyone's financial circumstances are different and that spreading out the contributions over 24 months (3 tax years) will facilitate the greatest level of participation by the congregation.

Donors will receive a tax slip for the year in which they contribute. You are not required to claim the donation tax credit in the year you make the donation. They can be carried forward for 5 years.

Q: What is it that the congregation will be asked to approve at the special meeting on April 18, 2021?

A: The congregation is being asked to approve the capital campaign to raise funds for the Amplify UU capital project as well as the total related capital expenditure for the project (estimated at \$200,000) and any bridge financing required.

Q: What happens if the capital campaign does not raise quite enough money?

A: The purpose of the feasibility study is to ensure we don't get into that situation. Some donors might be willing to increase their contributions to get us to the goal. Failing that, the congregation would have to decide whether to proceed and contribute more from the general fund, reduce the scope of the project, or cancel it.