

Welcome!

First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn is a joyful, loving, religious community that inspires and empowers people to grow spiritually, care for one another, and work for social justice and stewardship of the earth.

FIRST UNITARIAN
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
BR  **KLYN**
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

Getting Started

- Declaration of Quorum
- Call to Order
- Opening Words
- Meeting Rules
- Agenda:
 - Introducing New Staff
 - GA Delegate Vote
 - Treasury & Stewardship Update
 - Proposal for Ministry
 - Special Nominating Committee Update
 - Website Update
 - Facilities Update



Meeting Rules

We will take questions and comments from the sanctuary first and then from members online.

- Members will have the opportunity to ask *clarifying* questions after the motion is made.
- Once the motion is made and seconded, comments will be limited to 2 minutes
- We will alternate comments in favor of the motion with comments against the motion
- The budget motion is not amendable

Online participants:

- For clarifying questions, please type your question in the chat box
- For Comments in favor of the motion type “for” in the chat box
- For Comments against the motion, type “against” in the chat box
- For Points of Order, type “Point of Order” in the chat box
- Please avoid online cross chat.

Right Relations Covenant

We are mindful that, as individuals and members of this spiritual community, we are each accountable for our words, deeds, and behavior. Therefore, whenever we worship, work together, or relate to one another, we agree to follow the following behavior covenant. I will strive to:

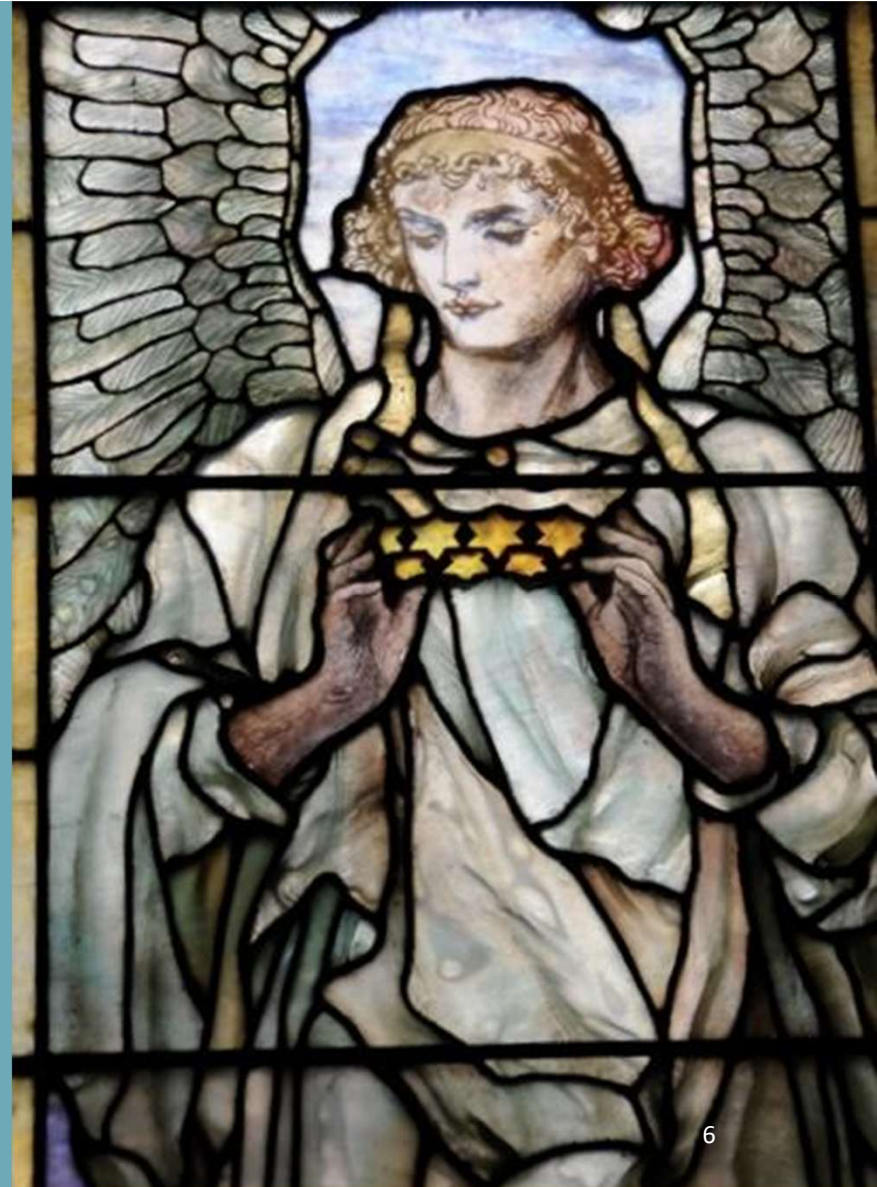
- Respect and cherish diversities of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual and/or affectional orientation, identity/gender expression, age, ability, beliefs and ideas.
- Assume good intentions. Trust in and speak well of one another. Give the benefit of the doubt. Examine my own intentions.
- Foster an environment of compassion, generosity, fellowship, and creativity. Smile and be welcoming. Share in the responsibilities of congregational life. Actively support the congregation's activities, and pledge financial support.

Right Relations Covenant

- Express appreciation and gratitude for the rich variety of gifts and talents shared among us. Empower others.
- Speak the truth as I experience it with kindness, care, and respect.
- Make decisions democratically through agreed-upon processes. Promote fairness and decency. Speak out against injustice.
- Face others directly in agreement or disagreement. Act with respect and humility when I disagree with others.
- Be mindful that words and actions may cause unintended pain.
- Seek out understanding and wisdom in the presence of conflict. Resolve conflicts through intentional compromise and collaboration and, when necessary, request mediation. Understand that sometimes it is necessary to take "no" for an answer. Be forgiving.
- Practice self-care.

Today's Agenda

- Introducing New Staff
- GA Delegate Vote
- Treasury & Stewardship Update
- Proposal for Ministry
- Special Nominating Committee Update
- Website Update
- Facilities Update



Introducing New Staff

Welcome, New Staff Members!

- **Tyrone Davis, Jr.** is the *Membership Coordinator*. He makes the announcements on Sunday mornings, runs new member classes, greets newcomers, maintains the membership database.
- **John McKeown** is the *Building Engineer*. He meets with inspectors and does all the hands-on work that an old building needs, from plumbing to painting.
- **Cassandra Narcisse** has her own bookkeeping business and has added us to her roster. She now takes care of anything and everything money- and benefits-related at First U: payroll, accounting, bills, pledges, etc.
- **Sean Sellers** is the high school youth group coordinator. Sean provides support by recruiting adult mentors, making sure the youth have the supplies they need in order to accomplish their projects, and accompanying them on their annual service project trip to West Virginia.
- **Becky Huffman** is the *Interim RE (Religious Education) Coordinator*. She makes sure the wheels don't come off the Religious Education bus!

GA Delegates

Topher Soltys

I grew up at the First Unitarian Universalist congregation of Wilmington, Delaware, where I served as the youth group's liaison to the RE committee and was on the Board.

I have attended Star Island since 1992, working there from 2005 to 2010 and serving on the board since 2021. I started attending First U Brooklyn regularly in 2022 and I sing in the choir most Sundays.



NANCY RUSSELL



I have been a member of First U since 1995. I joined because the values of Unitarianism reflected my own, especially the commitment to social justice and the focus on the here and now rather than the hereafter. In my early years I was a member of the religious education committee where I organized and led craft workshops with the children. Singing in the choir has been the highlight of my church involvement. I sang in the choir for many years under the directorship of Bill Peek and am still singing with Adam Podd.

I am currently a member of the Social Justice Committee and serve on the board of the Women's Leadership Alliance as secretary. I have tried to offer my sewing talents to benefit the church. I made a commemorative quilt for Fred Wooden when he left the congregation and donated a series of quilting lessons at a church auction which brought \$800 to the church. I made the stoles, approximately 30, that the choir uses when we robe up for special performances.

Luke Messina

Unitarian Universalism is my chosen faith because I believe in deep values driven community, a safe and free spiritual journey, and being around others taking direct action to make the world a better place. I have been a member of the First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn since 2018. I have been involved with different queer community groups and initiatives, congregational community outreach, the Men's Group, and the Connections Committee here.

In 2025, I had the honor of being elected to the congregation's Board of Trustees, and will serve in that role until 2028. I try to carry my UU values with me in my personal and professional life. I am a civil servant working on voting rights and accessibility, advocacy and research on criminal legal reform and mental health, among other issues.



Matt Billman

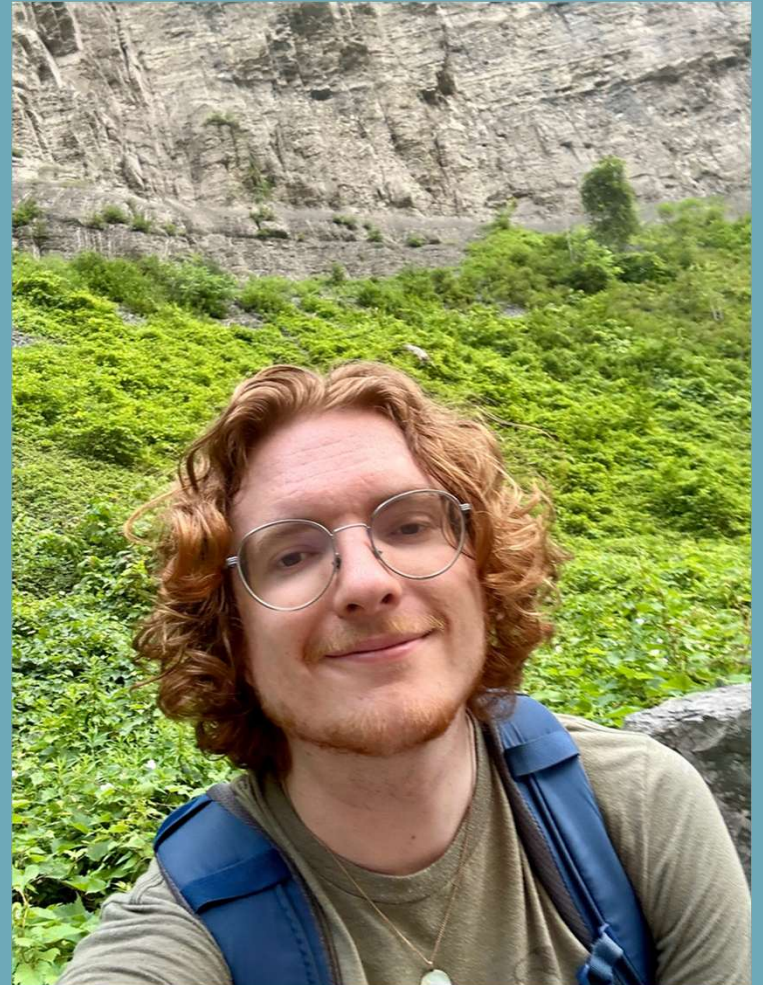


I have been a member of First U, Brooklyn for nearly five years, where I'm often seen singing in the choir or working with Brooklyn Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East (BUUJME). I am a singer and software engineer with a passion for building creative community.

Robbie Economou

I'm a lifelong Unitarian Universalist. I attended the Community Unitarian Universalist Congregation of White Plains throughout my childhood. I am very passionate about building community and creating safe spaces for people to achieve their own growth towards self-actualization and spiritual understanding. I have worked to support this individual development for youth in my years of work as a Counselor at UU summer camp Unirondack and now as a Religious Education teacher here at First U Brooklyn.

I also have worked hard to build young adult UU community with First U's YAM group and with the Northeast group YAOC. I'm really passionate about justice work and activism, which has guided my career focused on anti-hunger work. I am currently the manager for New Jersey's Good Food Bucks program, which is a statewide SNAP-doubling program that discounts the price of fruits and vegetables for families with SNAP.



Treasury & Stewardship Update

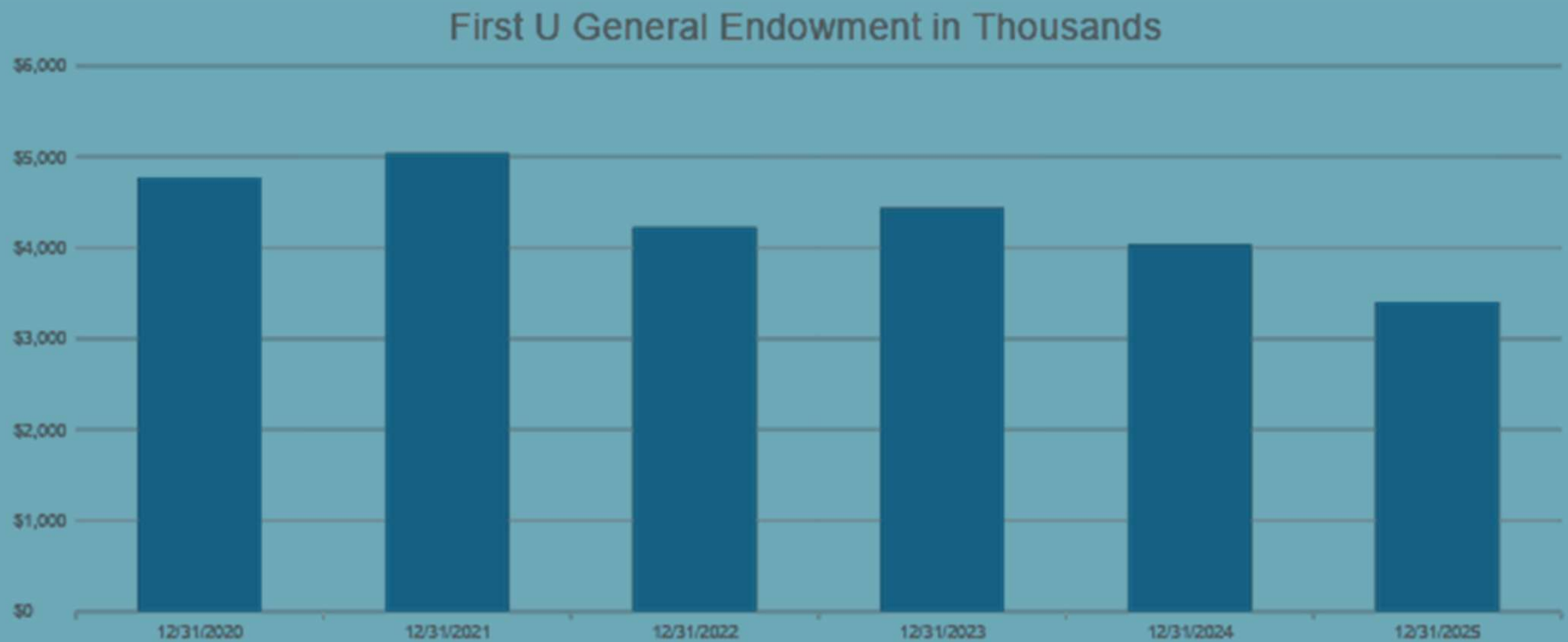
FY25-26 Operating Budget thru Jan 31

	Actual	Budget
Revenue	\$680,000	\$640,000
Expense	\$719,000	\$760,000
Net before Draw	(\$39,000)	(\$120,000)
Endowment Draw	\$39,000	\$101,000
Net	\$0	(\$19,000)

FY25-26 Capital Budget thru Jan 31

	Actual	Budget
Revenue	\$ 27,000	\$ 22,000
Expense - Facade	\$346,000	\$390,000
Expense – Fire Alarm Sys & Other	\$133,000	\$ 10,500
Total Expense	\$449,000	\$400,500
Net/Endowment Draw	(\$422,000)	(\$378,500)

First Unitarian General Endowment History



Stewardship update

By the numbers:

- 8 core members on the Stewardship team + Micah/Tyrone/Vicki (*266.67% more leaders to connect with!*)
- 15 events (plus a kick off and closing - *33% more fun!*) - 45 days (of a **new** way of bringing people together)
- 100% focus on making this fun (and successful for our congregation) - 220+ sparks to Light Our Fire (that's you!)
- 320k-360k (stretch goals and beautiful activities)
- 365+ days of reaping the benefits

Special Nominating Committee Update

Rachel Stark, Rita Pearl, Patrick Gunn, Michael Alcott, & Octavia Findley

Review of Transition Team's Work

Cottage Meetings

Visioning First U's Future

- Attended by 9 members, led by Cara Haft, with help from Amanda Almond & Rev. Micah
- What we love about First U
- How we could imagine it changing, growing

Collaboration & Equity: Who Does What Around Here?

- Led by Paul Freitag, Amanda Almond, Amit Mehta, and Cara Haft
- Shared interim staffing plan
- Explored flow chart of roles at FUUB
- Resulted in actionable ideas

Cottage Meetings

First U's Financial Capacity

- 40 congregants attended
- Impact of facade repairs on endowment & operating revenue
- Ministerial & lay-staff models
- Themes
 - What does a sustainable draw look like right now?
 - Staffing model: temporary vs. long term
 - Addressing undercompensation
 - Ministerial model, in light of finances

World Cafe - Coming up on March 8th!

- Tour of First U
- Talking to staff about what they do

Proposal for Ministry



Board's Recommendation on Ministry

After much research — interviewing a dozen pairs of co-ministers, working with the Transition Team to better understand our community needs and goals, and considering the financial investment that we are in the process of making on the facade — the Board is recommending that we continue with the senior minister model that we have been enjoying for many years. It's healthy and useful to reflect on our processes from time to time, and we're glad we gave this one our attention and consideration.

Ultimately, we would like to propose a vote to affirm our recommendation: which is to pursue the senior minister model for our upcoming search.

Website Update



Website Update

A team has been formed to build on the work already done and get the new site launched.

Current focus is deciding what pages we need.

Soon we'll be reaching out to members of the congregation to contribute content.

You can share any thoughts with this form:

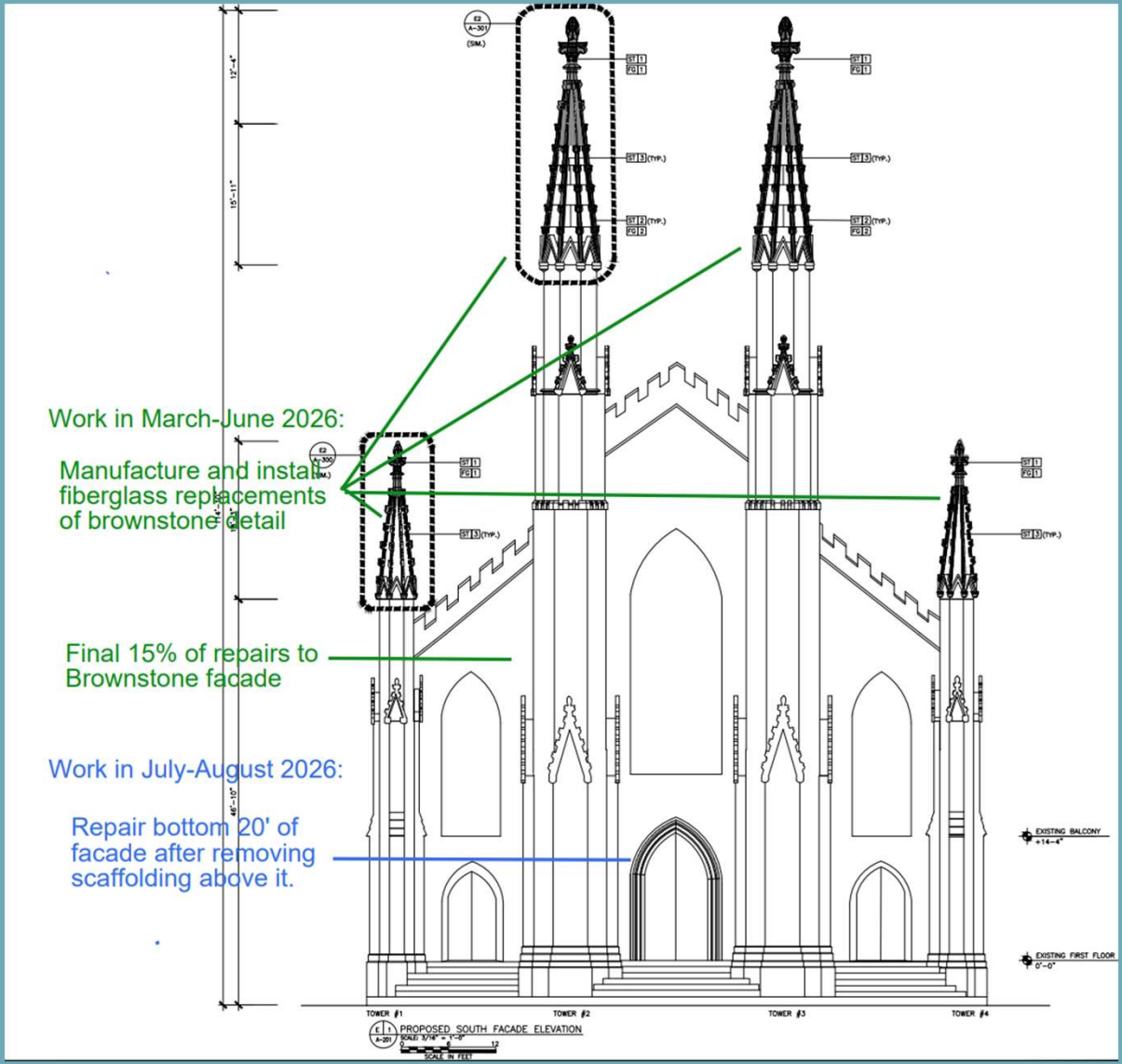
<https://forms.gle/GZxUicngiTgmSF2i6>

or use this QR code



Facilities Update





Work in March-June 2026:

Manufacture and install fiberglass replacements of brownstone detail

Final 15% of repairs to Brownstone facade

Work in July-August 2026:

Repair bottom 20' of facade after removing scaffolding above it.

TOWER #1 TOWER #2 TOWER #3 TOWER #4
 PROPOSED SOUTH FACADE ELEVATION
 SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"
 SCALE IN FEET

Facade Repairs: Expenditures

\$1.8 million – Summer 2021 thru 02/18/2026

\$1.1 million – 02/19/2026 thru completion (08/31/2026)

\$2.9 million – Total

Masonry contractors have a long lag between performing work and invoicing First U.

Undercroft Sound Paneling

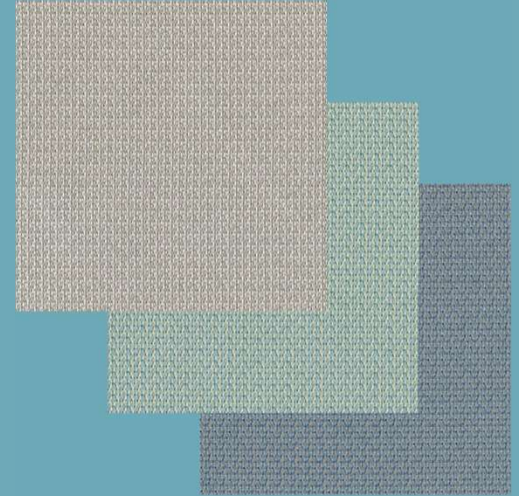
Full sound treatment is beyond our current budget, and should ideally be paired with a larger renovation project.

Project goals:

- Reduce noise levels to make conversation more comfortable during coffee hour and events
- Project should be able to be executed by volunteers with readily available building materials

Next Steps:

- Initial set of 12 panels to assess effectiveness
- Panels arrayed throughout room to dampen noise reflecting from walls
- Panels will be wrapped in fabric that will bring attractive colors into the space





Thank you!