



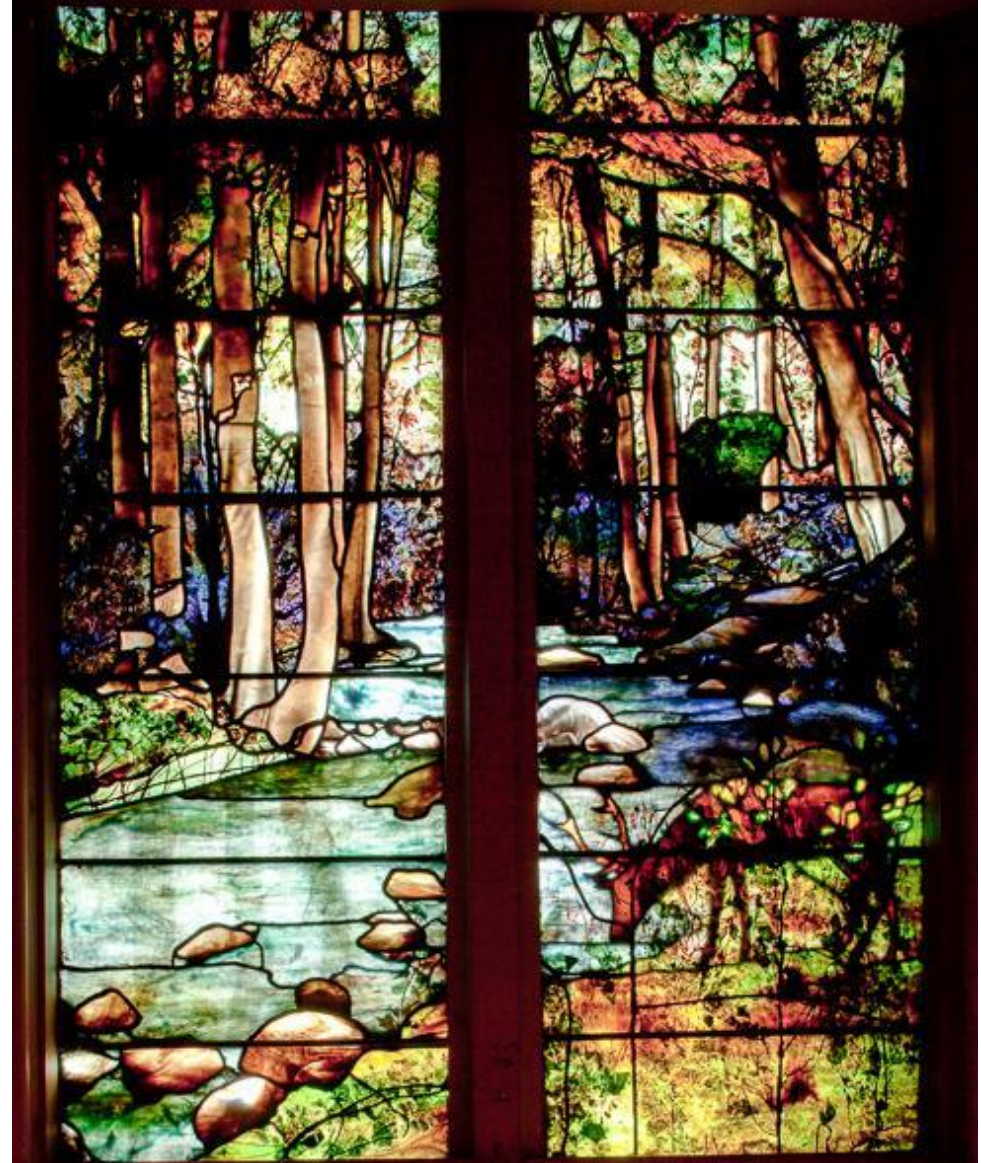
Welcome!

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:
 - Stewardship
 - Budget
 - Special Nominating Committee
 - Search Committee (New Members & Update)
 - New Board Members
 - New LDC Members
 - Upcoming Slate of Officers
 - Summer Worship Committee
 - Update on the DRE
 - Yvonne's Ordination
 - Facade/Facilities
 - Accessibility



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

- Stewardship
- Budget
- Special Nominating Committee
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Treasury & Stewardship Update

Stewardship

2026-2027 Stewardship Campaign Overview

- **Theme:** "Lighting Our Fire" (Launched March 1)
- **New Reveal Strategy:** Pledging was intentionally delayed until Week 5 to build momentum for a successful "Fire" poster board reveal recognizing donors.
- **Kindling Gatherings:** 15 families hosted events (50% increase from last year with dinners, game nights, and Zoom sessions) over 7 weeks to foster connection. We had offers of more events than we had staff/team members to cover!
- **'Auxiliary' Help:** Utilized the skills of private sector fundraising experts and data crunchers who are friends/members of the congregation to build a successful strategy.
- **Closing Celebration:** Concluded the campaign with a well-attended Pie Party and raffle in the chapel.

Financial Wins! (and Challenges)

- **Total Pledged (To Date): \$300,284** (up from \$268,000 at this time last year!).
- **Increased Generosity:** Returning pledges are up **10.85%**, and the average individual pledge increased by **14%**.
- **The Challenge:** We are currently facing a 19% drop in participation from previously pledged members.
- **Looking Ahead:** Historically we are short of 'goal' at end of May, by ~\$60k, which means we are... right on track for our bold \$360k goal.

Strategic Next Steps

- **Year-Round Engagement Opportunities:** Hosting regular "Kindling Gatherings" (or similar) year-round for deeper community connection and reminders of why we're here together.
- **Structural Improvements:** Collaborating with leadership to optimize deadlines to allow for better 'next year' fiscal budget planning, and to provide further education for the congregation to answer more questions. (i.e. why? why now? why at all?)
- **Team Expansion:** Starting the planning process earlier next year and expanding the team using "core" and "auxiliary" member roles. Could this be you?
- **The Mandate:** Feedback has been incredibly positive, so we're going to do more of the same next year!

Big Thank You!

- **Committee:** Lee Pardee, Erin Hopkins, Rick Smigielski, Sarah Karstaedt, Tracie Morris, and Peggy Schubert.
- **Board Liaison:** Vicki Antonini
- **Auxiliary Members:** Justin Manalad, Drew Descourouez
- **All of the Kindling Gathering Hosts (and those who offered to host)**
- **To all of you!**

BUDGET

CURRENT YEAR UPDATE

CURRENT FISCAL YEAR OPERATING BUDGET THRU 4/30/26

	Budget	Actual	%
Revenues	\$ 914,000	\$ 969,000	104%
Expenses	\$1,086,000	\$1,054,000	97%

\$85,000 difference funded by sustainable draw from endowment.

At this rate we will draw \$102,000 by the end of the fiscal year, \$71,000 less than budgeted. The Board recommends using some of these savings to pre-pay some FY26-27 expenses.

CURRENT FISCAL YEAR CAPITAL BUDGET THRU 4/30/26

	Budget	Actual
Revenues	\$ 33,000	\$ 39,000
Expenses	\$573,000	\$714,000

\$675,000 difference funded from capital fund and endowment.

Proposed Operating Budget Fiscal Year 2026-2027



Assumptions and Decisions the Board Made for the FY26-27 Budget

Revenue Increases/(Decreases)

Pledges	\$10,000
Rent	30,000
Fundraising	(6,000)

Net Revenue Increase

\$ 46,000

Assumptions and Decisions the Board Made for the FY26-27 Budget

Expense Increases/(Decreases)

Salary raises and COLAs	\$ 50,000
New bookkeeper	40,000
Search Committee	15,000
Savings from Tyrone, John, new DRE	(103,000)
Other Expenses	42,000

Net Expense Increase

\$44,000

REVENUE

	Proposed
PLEDGES	\$ 340,000
OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS	93,000
RENTS	617,000
FUNDRAISING AND PROGRAMS	75,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,125,000

EXPENSES

	Proposed
WORSHIP AND MUSIC	\$ 306,000
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	153,000
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE	65,500
FACILITIES	534,000
ADMINISTRATION	194,500
DENOMINATIONAL/SHARE THE PLATE	36,500
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$1,289,500

THE BOTTOM LINE

TOTAL REVENUES	\$1,125,000
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TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,289,500
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NET	(\$164,500)
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SUSTAINABLE DRAW	\$ 80,000
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TRANSITIONAL DRAW	\$ 84,500
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Motion to Approve the FY26-27 Operating Budget

Moved that the congregation approves the proposed FY26-27 operating budget of \$1,289,500 which includes a sustainable draw on the endowment of \$80,000 and a transitional draw of \$84,500.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION



PROPOSED CAPITAL BUDGET



EXPENSES

Project	Cost
Façade Restoration	\$440,000
Façade Restoration - Repayment of Line of Credit Principal and Interest	\$75,000
Chapel Interior Repair and Painting	\$20,000
Kitchen Electric Upgrade and New Stove	\$20,000
Garden Restoration	\$3,000
Total	\$558,000

REVENUE

General Endowment	\$515,000
Capital Reserve Fund	\$43,000
Total	\$558,000

Endowment Condition

- We have spent \$2,300,000 on the façade, roof & windows.
- Over past 5 years endowment has declined \$1,600,000.
- We have received over \$200,000 in bequests which have helped to maintain the endowment.
- We will spend \$440,000 more next year to complete the façade project plus \$75,000 for repaying the line of credit.
- No other major capital projects in the near future.

Replenishing the Endowment

- Step 1 – A celebratory party/fundraiser when the façade project is completed and the scaffolding gone.
- Step 2 – A capital campaign. The timing of this will be set by the board in consultation with our new minister and with consideration of First Unitarian's upcoming 200th birthday in 2033.

Motion to Approve the FY26-27 Capital Budget

Moved that the congregation approves the proposed FY26-27 capital budget of \$558,000.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION



Special Nominating Committee Update

After many months of announcements, applications, and interviews for the Ministerial Search Committee, we know you're eager to learn who will be representing the congregation in our search for a settled minister—and here is the final slate! On behalf of the Special Nominating Committee (Mike Alcott, Octavia Findley, Patrick Gunn, Rita Pearl, and Rachel Stark), we are thrilled to share the proposed slate for the committee.

Before we get to the names, though, the Special Nominating Committee wants to express just how impressed they were with the many, many applicants they interviewed. The breadth of skill, level of professionalism, and obvious depth of commitment represented in this congregation has never been more apparent, and selecting a group of seven from so many incredibly qualified applicants was no easy task. The final selection was based on creating a specific balance of skills, personalities, and congregational representation to serve the needs of this particular search—and the committee is enormously grateful to both the chosen Ministerial Search Committee members and the many other applicants who showed their readiness and excitement to serve.



Brian Bauhs (he/him) has been attending First Unitarian Brooklyn since 2019 and formally signed the membership book in 2025. He is an active participant in the Men's Group.

Brian serves as Chief Nurse Anesthetist at the New York Veterans Administration Medical Center. He and his husband, Chris Bannon, live in Bay Ridge.

“I'm both excited and humbled by the chance to listen deeply to our congregation — to discern what we need and hope for — and to participate in calling a minister whose leadership will guide us to flourish and leave a meaningful, lasting mark on the broader community we serve.”

In his spare time, Brian is an avid woodworker and musician.



Vonda Brunsting (she/her) has been a member of First U for over 20 years and has served in leadership roles on everything from the Soup Ministry to the Board of Trustees. She raised her children in the RE program and has spent many happy hours in worship services and on committees such as the Immigrant Solidarity Committee, the Unifair team, and the Women's Leadership Alliance. She is honored to be nominated for the Ministerial Search Committee and looks forward to working on behalf of and alongside the congregation.

Outside of First U, Vonda has worked for two decades at the intersection of social justice and finance at the Harvard Law School Center for Labor and a Just Economy, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and the Industrial Areas Foundation.



Jenifer Leigh (she/her) is honored and excited to be nominated to the search committee. She has been attending First U since 2017 and singing in the choir for just as long, becoming a member in 2020. She served on the intern committees of Tasha Brownfield and Rachel Schmitt.

Jenifer sees working on the committee as a great way to give back to the church now and in the future. She looks forward to listening to what the congregation is looking for in a new minister and working together with the rest of the committee to find the right person to lead First U.



Sarah Morgan (she/her) has been a member of First U for more than 15 years. During that time, she has participated in covenant groups, Seder dinners, the Auction, Unifair, the stewardship campaign, the Food Justice Ministry, and the Twenties & Thirties group (for which she is tragically no longer eligible). She has served as the Clerk of the Congregation twice and has two kids, ages 8 and 4, in RE. Outside of church, she works in nonprofit fundraising for the Natural Resources Defense Council. First U is a very important part of her life and her family's life, and she is excited to help find a minister who can lead the church into its next chapter.



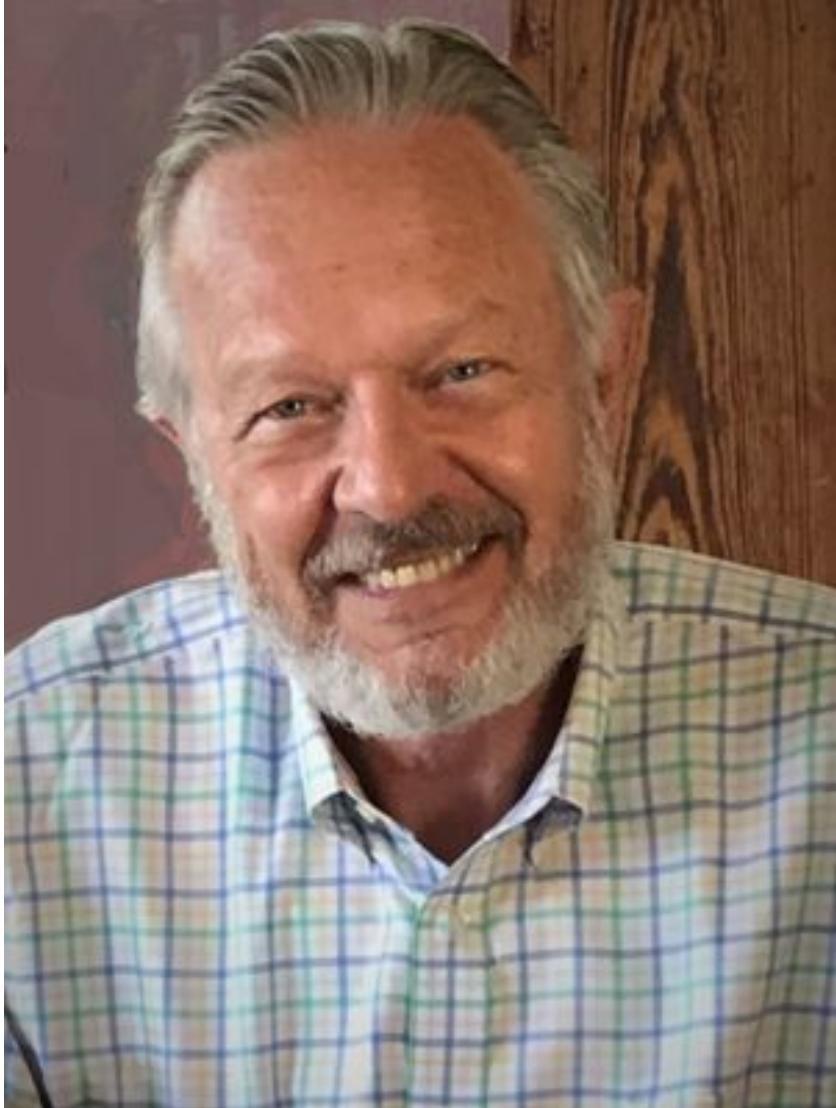
Rick Smigielski (he/him) works as a filmmaker and teacher and lives in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn.

Before joining the First Unitarian Congregation of Brooklyn, he was a member of All Souls, where his two sons gave their coming-of-age statements. Rick enjoys politics, photography, and film. He is currently trying to learn Spanish.

“I am honored to have my name put forward for membership on the Ministerial Search Committee.”



For **Jae Walsh** (they/them), First U has become a deeply meaningful spiritual home, and they are honored to serve on the Ministerial Search Committee. Jae brings experience in nonprofit leadership, including work in operations, finance, hiring, strategic planning, data analysis, and governance, informed by both their full-time professional role and their service as a board chair outside of this congregation. That perspective is complemented by Jae's background in social work, which shapes how they listen, collaborate, and support group processes. They care deeply about helping to guide a search that is thoughtful, inclusive, and responsive to the needs and hopes of our community—one that truly reflects who we are and who we are becoming.



Along with his wife, Carolyn Ellis, **Lake Wise** (he/him) has attended First Unitarian for 30 years and seen two of his grandchildren dedicated in the sanctuary. Lake and Carolyn have both served on Congregational committees, as Treasurer, and in Carolyn's case as President of the Board. Lake's other experience includes years as a litigator, City civil servant, business advisor and executive. He is now retired.

Lake believes that this Congregation has been a beacon of liberal religion for almost two hundred years because we are willing to change, to take up the hard questions, to challenge and inspire each other, and to embrace as part of our community everyone of any age, race, or identity who wants to join with us.

New Board Members



He's been a member since 2000 although started attending in 1999. Belonged to 3 other UU congregations over the years and previously been on the FUUB board and a number of committees including stewardship for a number of years in a row. Robert was also on the search committee for Patrick O'Neil back in 2006. In all, he's been involved off and on in major aspects of our congregational matters for 26 years. He looks forward to serving on the board again during this time of transition.

New LDC Members

Officers 2026 - 2027

Summer Worship Committee

DRE Update



ELIZABETH ANN TERRY

Welcome! Our NEW Director of Religious Education comes to us with a long history of work and volunteerism in the UU world. She lives with her wife in the Upper West Side.

Elizabeth Ann is thrilled to be joining the First U community!

We will hold a welcome lunch for Elizabeth Ann on September 13th after Ingathering!

Yvonne's Ordination

Congratulations, Yvonne!

The ordination is schedule for June 6th, followed by a champagne toast in the chapel.

Facilities Update



Thru Sep 2026:
Manufacture & deliver fiberglass
replacements of brownstone detail.

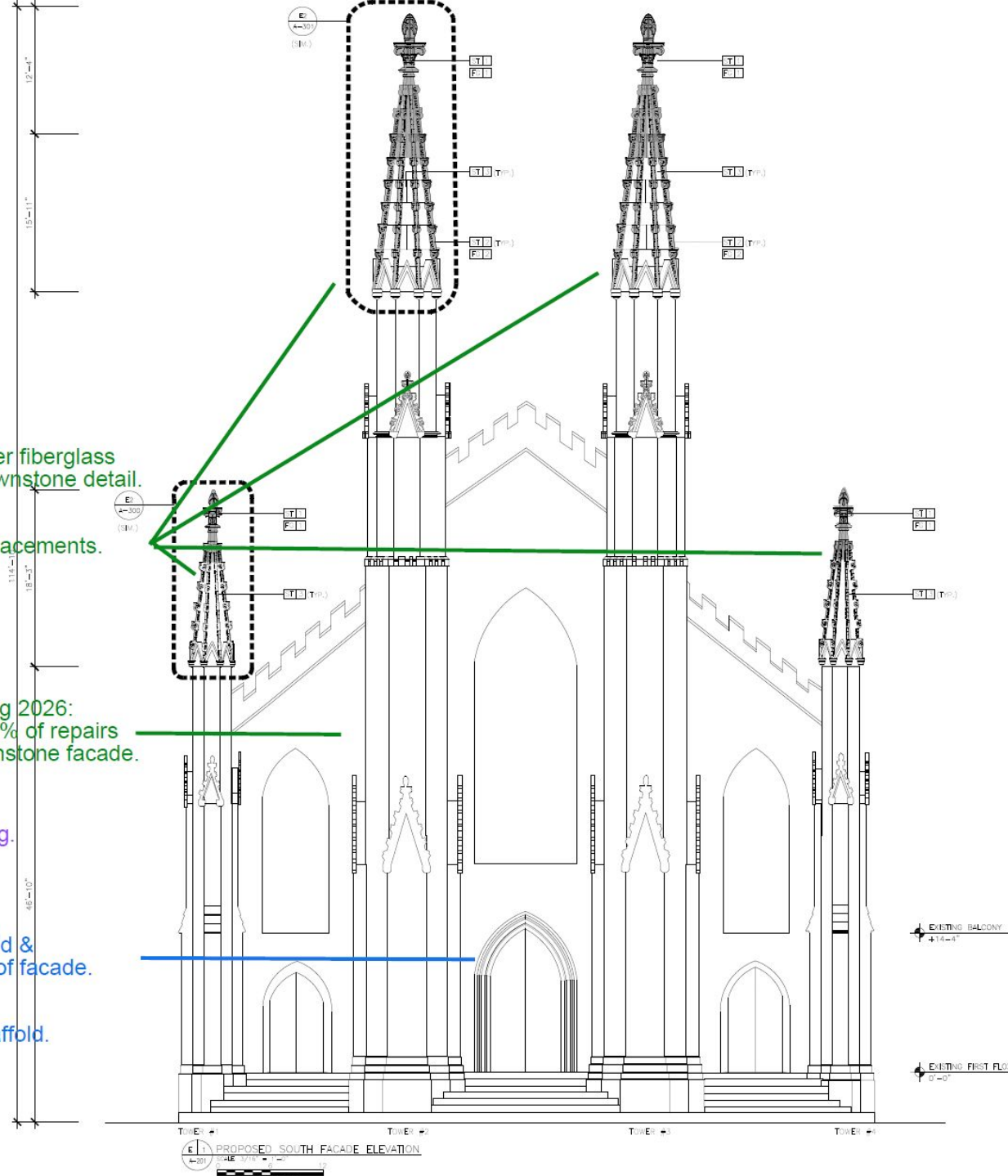
Jun - Oct 2026:
Install fiberglass replacements.

Thru Aug 2026:
Final 10% of repairs
to brownstone facade.

Nov 2026:
Remove all scaffolding.

Apr - Aug 2027:
Erect short scaffold &
repair bottom 15' of facade.

Aug 2027:
Remove short scaffold.



Facade Repairs: Expenditures

\$2.1 million - Summer 2021 through 05/10/2026

\$0.4 million - Remainder of FY 2025 - 2026

\$0.4 million - FY 2026 - 2027

\$2.9 million - Total

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

Accessibility



Thank you!