



FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH *of*  
CHATTANOOGA

Pastor Letters of Endorsement  
for the Master Plan & the  
Capital Campaign



## From Rev. Randy Nabors, Pastor of Missions

Dear First Pres Family,

I am not someone who has been focused on buildings. I have heard from others that they are never excited about building programs when that money could be spent on ministry. I think it would be fair for anyone to look at my life and ministry as a church planter, pastor, missionary, and movement leader, and see that I have always focused on ministry (evangelism, mercy to the poor, community development, the training of leaders). I am not bragging about it; it is simply what my passion and energy has been invested in. I always think we can do more, should spend more, and should step out on faith to do so.

When I came to First Presbyterian and found out we were going to engage in a building program, I had to examine if it was something I could support. Some of the questions I asked were:

1. Are we a church that is reaching out to the lost and community or are we simply trying to make a greater name for ourselves?
2. Do we really need to do this?
3. If we do this, will we stop or slow down our outreach and passion for missions?
4. If we do this, will we increase our ability to make an impact and do effective ministry in this city?
5. If we do this, will we be generous enough to help people in harder places have money to have facilities for their ministries?

I am glad to be part of this effort because the answers I came up with, and which I am determined to make happen, are:

1. Yes, we are more and more reaching out to the lost and ministering to people in the community.

2. Yes, we need to do this because these buildings and facilities desperately need repair and attention. We can make them better, more attractive, and more useful for ministry. These facilities are a launching pad to reach, equip and send out God's servants for the kingdom of God and the glory of God.
3. No, we are not going to slow down or lower our ministry budgets, but by the Lord's grace we hope to increase them. This will take faith and commitment, but I am determined, as far as I am able, to have vision, not money, drive this train.
4. Yes, I believe we can make our facility more effective to reach people in this city, university students, and the poor. I believe God is bringing more and more people into our church, and we must have the agility to receive, help, and train them.
5. Yes, as I have challenged our leaders not to be satisfied until we take some of this money raised and use it in imaginative ways to help other churches in other countries have new or improved facilities to reach more and more people. Simply because of this conversation, we have impacted other churches to begin a process to put a financial structure together to help churches in the United Kingdom have access to money to acquire or renovate buildings for ministry. This has already surpassed what I suggested. Glory be to God!

May the Lord guide each of us in our conscience and our faith in the challenge ahead of us.

Randy Nabors



## From Rev. Dr. Richard G. Cain, Senior Assistant Pastor

Dear Church Family at First Pres,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for our church's capital campaign to build new facilities and refurbish some of our old facilities. For the past 40 years, I have seen firsthand the gospel witness and powerful impact our church has had on our community and world in its unwavering commitment to biblical authority, gospel proclamation, and loving fellowship.

Oswald J. Smith, a renowned Canadian pastor, author, and missionary statesman, emphasized the importance of a strong local ministry as a foundation for effective global outreach. He said: "The light that shines farthest shines brightest at home." Basically, our impact on the world is most powerful when it begins with a strong, vibrant ministry in our immediate community. Rebuilding and refurbishing our facilities will facilitate this for generations to come.

The current facilities, while having served the congregation well over the years, are now in need of significant expansion and renovation to continue meeting the needs of our congregation. The proposed new facilities will not only provide a more welcoming and functional space for us, but they will also enhance our ability to offer vital programs and services that facilitate our mission statement: spiritual development, relational connection, and missional engagement.

Why are buildings and architecture important? Shouldn't we just settle for what we have and give all our monies to missions around the world? John Ruskin writes about one of the central roles of architecture and buildings like ours:

*"The ambition of the old Babel builders was well directed for this world: there are but two strong conquerors of the forgetfulness of men, Poetry and Architecture; and the latter in some sort includes the former, and is mightier in its reality..."*

The buildings that we presently enjoy, especially our sanctuary and fellowship hall, were built to serve as conquerors of our spiritual amnesia. We are prone to forget our Lord and to forget what we are to be about as church. Even our buildings speak to us about what we are to do here and what we value as God's people. When you engage personally with this campaign, you

are helping the generations coming behind to remember our covenant Lord who has promised to build His church and to cause her to prevail against all the forces of death and hell. This sounds like an enterprise worthy of your life, your prayers, and your financial investment.

First Pres has been a cornerstone of our community for 184 years, providing a place for individuals and families to come together for worship, fellowship, and service. The new facilities will allow us to expand our impact for the gospel even further, ensuring that we can continue to be a source of life, hope, encouragement, and inspiration for generations to come.

I wholeheartedly endorse our capital campaign and encourage you to join in supporting this vital initiative. Investing in our church's future is an investment in the future of our entire community and our world. Together, we can ensure that our church continues to be a beacon of gospel light and hope for all.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this important project.

Sincerely,

Richard G. Cain



## From Rev. Dr. Gabriel N.E. Fluhrer, Senior Pastor

Dear Church Family,

Three years ago this month (August, 2024), God called us to First Presbyterian Church. It's hard for Callie and me to believe the time has flown so quickly! Since our arrival, I have witnessed so many special moments on our campus. From our Sunday morning services, to our Midweek fellowship gatherings, to our Missions Conferences, to the day in, day out rhythm of working in the Tower Building, I often stop to thank the Lord for the amazing spaces He has provided us. Because I am on campus a lot, I also see the need to steward our resources well. To that end, it is apparent that our historic buildings require essential renovations, and we are launching a capital campaign to address these needs.

A dedicated team, chaired by Pete Austin, III, and co-chaired by Mike Kramer, along with Brenda Drennan, Christy Dyer-Gultom, Mitch Everhart, Skip Pond, Tom Snow, and Kim White, has been working with consultants The Canaan Group and Rardin + Carroll Architects to chart the best path forward. I am so grateful for their efforts and look forward to seeing how their proposed new spaces, repairs, and renovations will foster the growth of our ministries.

I wholeheartedly endorse this campaign and believe it is a crucial step to best fulfill what God has called us to do in terms of ministry and stewardship. I invite each of you to consider prayerfully how you can contribute. I have been involved, to a greater or lesser degree, throughout most of the Master Planning process and now with the Capital Campaign. I have been impressed by how much input these groups received, coupled with the dedication to ministry and stewardship evidenced by the hundreds of our church members who have worked on these two projects.

With so much work by so many people, I am confident that, with God's guidance, we can ensure our church remains a vibrant, welcoming, and spiritually enriching place. Thank you for your continued faithfulness and commitment to our church!

By Grace Alone,

Gabe