



King Avenue United Methodist Church

Preliminary Case for Support

Our Mission

The mission of King Avenue United Methodist Church (KAUMC) is to invite, welcome and honor all people and nurture them to grow in service to Christ

Our Vision

We are a community of servants called by God's reconciling grace to open doors of sanctuary, to create new avenues of ministry, to equip Christians for discipleship, and to lead reconciling ministries.

Our History Inspires Our Future

For one hundred thirty years, King Avenue United Methodist Church has focused on faith, hope, and building community through Christ's love. The congregation faced tremendous adversity early on: in August of 1918, its 14-year old building burned to the ground, in October of 1918 the influenza pandemic ravaged Columbus, closing church and schools, and that same month two of the more than 170 members serving in World War I died. The faith and resolve of its worshippers did not waver and the magnificent place of worship we enjoy today was rebuilt by 1922 with one significant addition. The new building included a stunning stained glass window commemorating the sacrifice of those who fought in the Great War and bearing witness to the promise of eternal life in Christ. The highest panes of the window inscribed the values that brought victory and would guide the church's future—mercy, fidelity, service, peace, and piety. In the worst of times, the people of this church had faith in the future and invested in rebuilding to shape a hopeful new day. Today, we, too, face adversity and uncertainty in our world and denomination and have an opportunity to demonstrate our faith in God's vision of a more just, loving, and inclusive world. Strong reconciling people and vital congregations are needed now more than ever. If not King Avenue Church, then who will it be? We must continue to invest in our future.

King Avenue Church actually began as a Sunday School to serve children, the next generation of the Church. Almost immediately, its leaders reached beyond physical walls: they were the first to assume a significant ministry to students at The Ohio State University. In the late 1990s KAUMC was one of the first churches to welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex people unconditionally. Today, our growing ministries with children and youth provide solid

spiritual foundations for LGBTQI families and all individuals and families who treasure an inclusive Christian community. King Avenue Church's worship attendance ranks in the top 25 of churches in the West Ohio Conference. King Avenue is also estimated to have the largest attendance amongst United Methodist urban churches. We are now preparing to serve the next generation as a reconciling and inclusive United Methodist Church.

When the current building was completed, it was the largest Protestant denominational center in Columbus and the largest in the West Ohio Conference. The congregation has placed great importance on the care of their spiritual home as evidenced by numerous decorative improvements and building repairs made over the decades, and the structural additions in 1958 that included the chapel and west parlor, the choir room, and classrooms. The last major renovation to the Church took place in 2007 and included the installation of the John-Paul Buzard Opus 36 Organ and the restoration of the bell tower. The reconfiguration of the chancel to accommodate the organ also provided improved accessibility and the flexibility to host and stage a wide variety of events. While countless improvements and repairs have been required in the interim, the last significant changes to KAUMC occurred more than 12 years ago.

To continue providing a facility that each day welcomes members, constituents and visitors through a multitude of programs and services, we are called upon now to consider a comprehensive \$2,000,000 fundraising campaign to support our building and our ministries. Through this campaign, we seek to serve more effectively our diverse and growing congregation and community, ensuring that KAUMC remains a vibrant hub that welcomes all people, and a witness to the reconciling love of God.

Honoring and Nurturing All People

Baptisms, weddings and funerals are of course special celebrations and commemorations of life's milestones that we mark at King Avenue Church. We fulfill our mission not only through weekly and special services but also through a dynamic series of social and spiritual interactions that last year touched more than 5,000 people. Our on-site ministries include:

Children, Youth and Families. We believe that, regardless of age, all people should experience worship with their brothers and sisters in Christ. Our ministries provide faith formation activities appropriate to every stage of life.

Ohio State University Students. With its close proximity to The Ohio State University, KAUMC embraces close connections with students as part of our community.

Young Adults. The KAUMC community of people in their 20s and 30s is a diverse and inclusive group united by a desire to connect more deeply with one another, beyond the traditional worship service.

Adults. Drop-in classes or extended sessions are offered on such varied topics as forgiveness, parenting, medical ethics, and how Christians can engage with other faith

traditions. Affinity groups share a love of softball, literature, food or prayer.

United Methodist Women. Part of the largest denominational faith organization for women in the United States, King Avenue Church's UMW group celebrates fellowship and mission, and raises funds in support of social welfare organizations in central Ohio and beyond.

Spectrum LGBTQI Fellowship. This ministry promotes solidarity among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) persons and allies. It embraces a wide range of fellowship, advocacy, service and worship events, from the "Coming Out with God" group to our Church's participation in the annual AIDS Walk and PRIDE Parade. Today, the Church is 40 percent LGBTQI and serves as a welcoming and accepting spiritual center for its diverse families.

Theatre and Drama. Since 2003 the King Avenue Players have provided quality entertainment, community outreach, Christian fellowship and worship enhancement.

Art Gallery. Solo and group shows celebrate the talents of the Church congregation through an annual schedule of exhibits.

Music. Music at KAUMC has been important since the very beginning. Choirs, bell choirs, instrumentalists, and small vocal and instrumental ensembles enable us to come together and express our love for each other and our faith through music. Guest performers such as the Capital Pride Band and the Columbus Gay Men's Chorus also perform at the Church, offering diverse musical expressions.

Unaffiliated groups supporting those struggling with substance abuse or addiction also find a regular home at KAUMC. In any given month, as many as 100 different worship services, group meetings and community gatherings fill every available space. Additionally, King Avenue Church is a critical mission partner to ministry programs that serve thousands of individuals each year at sites locally and internationally, including an orphanage in Piedras Negras, Mexico.

Preserving Our Home, Strengthening Our Future

At King Avenue United Methodist Church, we continually strive to build a welcoming community based on the tenets of Christian faith. Part of this involves the maintenance of the beautiful historic church we use for our ministry and worship. However, most of our facility has not seen any major upgrades since 2007, which were funded by our last major capital campaign in 2006. Additionally, technology has dramatically changed the structure and delivery of organized religious services. At a time when our society appears more divided than ever before, the need to provide Christian experiences to underserved communities is of paramount importance. We have reached the inescapable conclusion that, in order to build upon our strengths and our fellowship, now is the time to consider seriously the implementation of this major comprehensive fundraising campaign.

Embracing the Future through a Comprehensive Campaign

The leadership of KAUMC, in consultation with numerous committees, architects, and funding professionals, has concluded that essential capital repairs and maintenance will cost \$1,000,000 and the expansion of ministries will cost \$1,000,000. The proposed combined goal of \$2,000,000 also includes initial funding for the staff required to launch and oversee expanded ministerial services.

Preserving our Spiritual Home - \$1,000,000 for Restoration and Repair

The recent completion of the repair and restoration work on the beautiful historic dome that graces our worship services taught us the importance – and the significant expense – of securing the structural integrity of our stained glass features throughout the Church. This work is not only integral to preserving the glory of KAUMC’s place of worship; it is also an issue critical to public safety. Throughout the building, the lead channels holding the stained glass have deteriorated, and they must be removed and stored until the glass and structural supports are repaired. Equally pressing are the multitude of emergent building repairs required to enable us to serve Christ through our facility. It is no longer cost effective to repair our boiler and, along with some parts of our HVAC and other systems, it must be replaced. Storm windows for the remaining stained glass are necessary to prevent further deterioration, add to the comfort of those who come to the Church, and decrease our utility costs. The original building needs tuck pointing to avoid future – and much more expensive – masonry repairs. These renovations and improvements will allow us to use our building more effectively and efficiently for offices, meeting spaces, and in support of our ministries.

Expanding Our Ministries: \$1,000,000 for Technology and Increased Outreach

When our current building was completed in 1922, it was considered state-of-the-art in terms of technology. That description can no longer be ascribed to King Avenue Church. While our message of Christ’s inclusive love is well-received, it is not reaching all those it can and should. Further, we are no longer unique in our message of inclusiveness; there are now other churches that are attracting those who might be drawn to our services. Installation of a hearing loop in the sanctuary will bring our sound system into the next generation of assisted hearing devices and will greatly improve our accessibility for those with hearing impairments. Screens will allow staff to integrate creative resources into worship, communicating more effectively with a visual generation. Confronting the COVID-19 shut-down prompted the church to purchase equipment to Live-stream worship services, a first step to reach those who are unable to attend in person: the elderly or homebound, those who are out of town or who no longer live in central Ohio. The initial months of our foray into virtual worship have proved that it can be an entryway for potential members who prefer to make a virtual visit before committing to attend. Additional technology will allow us to engage online participants and to encourage their involvement in online Christian community, learning, and serving. Technology also creates the possibility for worship and learning “the King Avenue way” at multiple sites. This expansion will require expenditures for cameras, computers, software, and staff to develop and maintain the online community.

Because KAUMC was one of the first churches to welcome all people, many groups have made us their home including support groups; neighborhood, family, and campus groups; and arts groups. During a normal week, an estimated 300 people who are not affiliated with King Avenue Church use our building. During December, that number swells to more than 1,000 people. While unaffiliated attendees regard us warmly, we need to move beyond our role as a space provider and connect with those entering our building. This expansion of ministries, particularly for support and 12-step groups, should be seen as a new church initiated *within* our building, and would require additional staff leadership.

While our church continues to attract young adults, teens, and families, the core of our membership is aging. As persons age, they tend to turn to family for support. However, this familial option is not always available to the elderly, especially for persons who are distant from their families. King Avenue Church proposes to expand its health and wellness ministry to provide connections to legal, medical, and social services. We could also create day time ministries to enable older persons to stay in their homes (where they would prefer to be) for a longer period of time. This specialized ministry could be accomplished through a designated staff person charged with creating and advancing agency partnerships and collaborations. Ministry expansion with elderly persons will likely need to include improvements to our accessibility at building entrances, and in restrooms and meeting spaces.

A successful comprehensive campaign will enable us to add to the vibrancy of our ministries, more actively support the communities we serve, and ensure that our magnificent building remains a center for worship, service, learning, and inclusive fellowship for years to come. With God's help and our best efforts, we can achieve our vision of tomorrow's King Avenue United Methodist Church.

