



Whoever you are and wherever you are in life's journey, you are welcome in this Church.

Long-Range Plan

"Even more important than Academy or schools was the Church. It ranked next to the town itself in the attention devoted to it and in the pervasive sweep of its influence; indeed it was often difficult to distinguish between town and Church. As a cultural influence it exercised far-reaching sway, controlling not merely religious life but also the moral and social and at times even the political attitudes of the citizens."

—From Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town by Ernest Bogart

Overview

This document was prepared by Church Planning Committee during 2022–23 and is our first-ever effort at reviewing how the Church operates, the changes impacting our work in recent years, and where we are going. It provides the reader with information about how we make plans, what we think are the notable strengths and weaknesses of the Church, and what we want to accomplish in the spiritual realm and for the greater Peacham community.

As we make progress and as the Church and the greater Peacham community change in coming years, we hope to continuously seek feedback—supportive and critical—about our plans, and to update periodically.

Prepared by the Church Planning Committee
Adopted by the Peacham Congregational Church Council
June 2023 (Updated May 2026)

Contents

Summary of Priority Actions for 2023	3
Introduction to the Plan.....	5
Church Planning Committee	5
Purposes of the Plan.....	6
Elements of the Plan.....	6
1. Vision and Mission of the Church	6
2. Core Values of Church	6
3. Church/Meetinghouse Governance	6
4. Church Organization.....	7
5. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Church	8
6. Long-Term Goals and Actions	10
A. Goals for Church as a Religious Institution	12
B. Goals for Meetinghouse Facilities, Use and Maintenance	14
C. Goals for Community Service and Missions	19
Appendices.....	23

Summary of Priority Actions for 2023

As a result of Church Council discussion of this Plan, a list of “Very High Priority” actions to be undertaken this calendar year are indicated below. Details of each are presented later in this Plan document.

Major Goal A: Church as Religious Institution

- A.1.a. Focus on Continuation of Christian Worship on Sunday and Incorporate Interfaith Elements
- A.1.b. Expand Roster of Speakers to Speak/Preach at Lay Worship Services
- A.2.a. Continue to Publicize the Recently Clarified Associate Member Category
- A.2.b. Meet with Community Members, Including Young Families, to Understand Their Interest in the Church and Its Meetinghouse
- A.3.a. Further Develop Year-End Fund-Raising Program
- A.3.b. Develop and Advertise a Legacy Program

Major Goal B: Meetinghouse Facilities, Use and Management

- B.1.a. Update Long-Range Plan
- B.2.a. Refine Design for Addition to Building
- B.2.b. Develop Plans for Improved Egress from the Sanctuary
- B.4.b. Develop List of Meetinghouse’s Needs for Space
- B.4.c. Determine Whether to Initiate a Multi-Year Capital Campaign
- B.4.d. Continue to Pursue Available Grants and Donations
- B.4.e. Develop a Protocol for Use of the Meetinghouse
- B.5.c. Repair Church Bell Deck in the Steeple
- B.5.e. Repair and Restore Historic Features of the Meetinghouse and Improve Safety, Comfort and User Experience with Particular Regard to the Sanctuary, Social Hall and Kitchen
- B.6.a. Assess Issues and Problems to be Addressed in Kitchen
- B.6.c. In Preparation for an Overhaul of the Entire Kitchen, Conduct an Inventory of All That is in the Kitchen Now
- B.6.d. Design a New Kitchen in the Physical Context of a New Annex to the Building

Major Goal C: Community Service and Mission

- C.5.a. Assess Current Missions and Identify New Ones

2026 Updates

Much of the material in following sections is retained from the 2023 original, as the content remains pertinent and informative. Minor editorial updates have been made.

Where 2023 plans have been accomplished, or where 2026 plans are new or diverge from goals expressed in 2023, these changes are clearly noted.

Introduction to the Plan

The Peacham Congregational Church, a Vermont nonprofit corporation, has served its community since 1795 and continues to be a center for spiritual support and community building. History teaches us that change is necessary in order to maintain our mission to serve and provide spiritual support to the community, and this document is meant to guide the Church as it moves forward in service to its congregation and the Peacham community.

This Long-Range Plan, which will be updated annually, includes all of the Church's goals for the Church – as a Religious Institution; Meetinghouse Facilities, Use and Management; and Community Service and Missions – and the actions to implement those goals. However, it lacks some detail about specific tasks, who is responsible for those tasks, scheduling, needed resources, and criteria for evaluating accomplishments. These details have been updated in the work plans adopted by the Church Council, Deacons, Business Committee and the Planning Committee after the revised Plan was adopted by the Church Council in 2024.

Church Planning Committee

The Peacham Congregational Church Planning Committee was established in early 2020. One of its principal charges was to develop a long-range plan for the Church (Plan). The committee meets monthly and has assembled this proposed update to its 2021 and 2022 Plans. In addition to the committee and ex-officio members, there are four observers, three of whom are next-door neighbors of the Meetinghouse.

Members of the Planning Committee 2023

Barry Lawson, Chair
Carolyn Deasy
Stephen Engle

Sharon Fuehrer
Marilyn Magnus
Nancy Toney

Anita Vann

Patty Gardner, Church Administrator, Ex-officio
John Marshall, Church Council President, Ex-officio
Bruce Westcott, Church Treasurer, Ex-officio

Mary Daly, Observer
Sarah Lydon, Observer

Nancy Louise Saidi, Observer
Katherine Siner, Observer

Update: In 2026, the Church Council deferred appointment of a Planning Committee pending review and an update of the Plan by three Council members: John Marshall, Bruce Westcott and Rick Witt. This Plan update reflects the results of that review.

Purposes of the Plan

This Plan will help guide the implementation of priority actions the Church will take going forward from 2026. Hopefully, it will also introduce the congregation and community to the planning process and invite involvement in it. Like all plans, this one will be flexible, updated as necessary with changing priorities, challenges and opportunities. The Planning Committee must annually review and update the Plan, and Church officers should be familiar with it and consult it in developing work plans to ensure that decisions are consistent with the Plan. Without this monitoring function, the Plan loses its efficacy, and the Church loses its important guide to the future.

Elements of the Plan

How the Plan is structured:

- 1) Vision and Mission of the Church
- 2) Core Values of the Church as a religious institution
- 3) Church/Meetinghouse Governance
- 4) Church Organization
- 5) Church's Strengths and Weaknesses
- 6) Long-Term Goals and Actions

1. Vision and Mission of the Church

Vision: The Church/Meetinghouse is a dynamic and thriving house of worship and community gathering place that is an integral part of the greater Peacham community.

Mission: Members of the Peacham Congregational Church will walk together to serve our community, support its spiritual needs, and maintain the Meetinghouse as a gathering place in which spiritual, civic, cultural, educational and social activities important to the community take place.

2. Core Values of Church

The Peacham Congregational Church is open to all regardless of faith. We believe in the importance of the Church as a house of traditional worship for Congregationalists, as well as worship and activities by other faiths. We welcome as members anyone who supports the Church and its core values. Some of our members subscribe to the Church's Statement of Faith and Covenant (see Appendix A), but the Church welcomes all to join us. The Church includes as voting members Associate Members (who do not necessarily subscribe to the Statement of Faith and Covenant) and believes strongly that the Meetinghouse is integral to the Peacham community and should be maintained as a gathering place for all regardless of faith.

3. Church/Meetinghouse Governance

As provided in the Church's Constitution and Bylaws and consistent with longstanding Congregational practice, the Church's members, including Associate Members, have ultimate authority over the Church and its Meetinghouse. Members elect, directly or

indirectly, the Council (which serves as the Church's board of directors); Officers; Deacons; and the Business Committee to act on the membership's behalf.

All actions by these committees and officers are subject to the members' oversight and authority. The Bylaws allow five or more members to petition the Clerk to call a special meeting of the membership to modify or revoke any action or decision made on behalf of the Church by the Council.

The Peacham Congregational Church is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)-3 non-profit, tax-exempt corporation. The Church Council acts as the Board of Directors.

The Business Committee presents the proposed Operating Budget and a Capital Budget for consideration and adoption by the voting Church membership each year. Elements of this Plan that require financial resources will be reflected in those budgets, as resources are available.

The Meetinghouse is a community resource and the Church welcomes community members to provide input into decisions made on behalf of the Meetinghouse, its maintenance, and its use as a community venue for a variety of functions beyond those tied specifically to the Church as a religious institution.

4. Church Organization

The Church operates using a collaborative governance structure wherein the membership directly elects four officers (see below) and a member-at-large to serve on the Church Council. The Members and Associate Members also elect officers, auditors and the Business Committee members. The chair and one member of each committee also serve as Council members. Members call the Pastor and elect Deacons.

Responsibilities for the governance of the Church are divided among four groups as follows:

- The **Church Council** serves, in essence, as the board of directors;
- The **Officers** are vested with day-to-day management. They include Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer and Collector, who have the responsibilities inherent in their titles;
- The **Deacons** have an oversight role for the Church's religious program, and the Pastor has day-to-day responsibility for the Church's ministry; and
- The **Business Committee** handles the Church's business, finance, and maintenance and use of the Meetinghouse and appoints the Church Administrator(s) and outside individuals to help guide the maintenance of the Meetinghouse.

The Deacons and Business Committee appoint and oversee most of the Church's committees and individual positions. The Church Council appoints the Planning Committee. Appendix B is an organizational chart that illustrates this collaborative governance structure.

5. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Church

In preparing this plan, the Planning Committee assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the Church to help identify long-range goals and actions the Church needs to take to reinforce and to build upon the Church's strengths and to address its weaknesses. These are not listed in any particular order.

Strengths

- **Iconic Building** – Iconic, beautiful building that is the physical centerpiece of the town, recognized and admired in the region.
- **Historical Background** – The building and membership have a storied background as integral parts of the Peacham community and broader region.
- **Large Capacity Venue** – Sanctuary holds up to 300 persons, with built-in sound system. Although the new Peacham Children's Center uses the ground floor of the Meetinghouse during weekdays, the Social Hall is available for meetings, meals and other activities on weekends, evenings and occasional weekdays. For the past several years, for example, the Town has used the Meetinghouse's Social Hall as the site of the annual town and school district meetings and the accompanying Town Meeting luncheon. The kitchen is used for preparing and cooking meals for small and large groups.
- **Peacham Children's Center** – A day-care facility hosted at the Meetinghouse for young children in Peacham and neighboring towns and that underwrote such investments as new heating and sewage systems for the Meetinghouse.
- **Initial Discussion With Community Leaders about Major Capital Campaign Positive** – A feasibility study with Church and community members supports the notion of a major campaign to address the extension and improvements to the Meetinghouse.
- **Talented Members Support Dual Missions** – A welcoming and caring Church membership includes talented individuals to lead the Church and support its dual missions of supporting the spiritual needs of the community and maintaining the Meetinghouse as a gathering place for all regardless of faith.
- **Preservation Fund** – This endowment fund accepts donations, including legacy gifts, and annual withdrawals from the fund provide for maintenance, preservation, repair and improvements of the Meetinghouse and organ. Recent additions to the Fund have heightened the financial capability to meet long-term maintenance goals. The Vermont Community Foundation, with assistance of a small advisory committee (comprised of Church and non-Church members), manages the Fund, and the committee approves and oversees withdrawals from the Fund and monitors Fund expenditures by the Church.
- **Endowment Fund** – The Church also has an unrestricted cash reserve, which is managed like an endowment, that provides financial resources for capital projects, including matching funds and operating expenses, as well as other expenditures by

the Church to support its ministry, community service and missions. A local bank and the Business Committee and Treasurer of the Church manage this Fund.

- **Grants** – The Church has been successful in obtaining grants to make improvements to the building. These initiatives are integral ingredients of the Capital program of the Church/Meetinghouse.
- **Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals** – The Church offers a venue and support for these ceremonies and is cooperating with a neighbor to host receptions and common events.
- **Lectures & Concerts** – The Meetinghouse is the focal point for secular activities in the community, like Town and other meetings, lectures, concerts, life celebrations and other events.
- **Music** – Music worship and other musical events are supported by talented leaders, singers and musicians, as well as by excellent pianos, an historic organ and the popular carillon.
- **Prior Planning and Analysis** – A thoughtful Transition Plan (2019) and the Draft Long-Range Plan considered by the Church Council in 2021 and 2022 provide a foundation for the current updated Long-Range Plan, as do several and periodic professional analyses and assessments of the Meetinghouse.

Weaknesses

- **High Maintenance Costs** – Low-efficiency heating system for the sanctuary; cleaning, maintenance, and repairs of old building. Steps have been taken since 2023 to overcome some of these deficiencies, but work remains.
- **Safety of Building** – The Meetinghouse needs safer egress in cases of emergency, especially from the second-floor sanctuary
- **Small, Aging Membership** – A limited number of Church members and Associate Members are available for volunteer positions. It also constrains the missions we can pursue and inhibits effectiveness of committees. No membership recruitment program for either new Members or new Associate Members in place.
- **Limited Available Funds** – With a small membership and limited non-member support, the Church is stretched to maintain basic services plus undertake important building and outreach programs. Operating expenses have often been greater than operating revenues. Fees for the use of the Meetinghouse do not fully cover the costs associated with such use. There is a need for more fund-raising and strategies that increase operating revenues to help cover this shortfall.
- **Insufficient Communication with Community** – Many in the community are not sufficiently aware or take advantage of opportunities to use the Meetinghouse for meetings and meals, and to participate in missions. Residents should become more aware of the historical role of the Church in the community and region. There may also be potential conflicts to address between religious and secular interests, and the Church needs to communicate better that the Meetinghouse (and Church) are

open to all and for secular activities (e.g., concerts, meals, programs, meetings) of a wide-ranging nature. Perhaps a guide or handbook on the use of the Meetinghouse and its kitchen would facilitate the use by other organizations.

- **Insufficient Parking** – Given the capacity of the building for large events, on-site parking is sometimes inadequate and requires parking around the village that can inconvenience neighboring residents. The apparent need to expand the Meetinghouse footprint for much needed interior space may further reduce the current capacity of the parking area on site.
- **Fair Handicap Access** – There is no elevator in the building, only an outdated stair lift and no handicap-accessible means for walking from the sanctuary to ground floor without stepping outside. There are no second-floor restroom facilities.
- **No Spiritual Connections Outside Church** – There is no formal pastoral program offered by the Church, but the Church has begun to take advantage of opportunities to collaborate with other Churches and faiths, for instance, to hold non-Sunday worship programs, in or outside the Church. More may occur over time.
- **Church Funds (and Missions) Not Sufficiently Advertised** – The Church has designated funds and opportunities for giving of which community members and visitors should be made aware.
- **Lack of Children's Programs** – With no Sunday School, the Church is missing an opportunity to interact with the community's youth. Fun and secular activities, such as the new Children's Center, however, represent a solid start toward a more direct interest in the youth of the community and use of the Meetinghouse by them.
- **Community Support for Building** – The Church should communicate current needs and the opportunities for community support for the Meetinghouse's expansion and preservation. With no Grange Hall, full gymnasium, or large-capacity Town Hall, the Town depends on the Church to host many community functions, and these are important opportunities to raise community awareness and the funds necessary to maintain the capacity to serve and host these functions.
- **Lack of Space for Storage and Mid-week Meetings** – Accommodating the Peacham Children's Center reduced the capacity in the Meetinghouse's ground floor for storage and other activities, especially during weekdays.

6. Long-Term Goals and Actions

The following goals are presented in three categories:

- A. **Church as Religious Institution**
- B. **Meetinghouse Facilities, Use and Management**
- C. **Community Service and Missions**

The following Objectives (1–6), and Actions (a–e) have been assigned priorities based on the relative perceived need for immediacy of action.

Very High	To be addressed in the current year, and the necessary resources are or will be available. In some cases, an action may be funded that only develops a needed design or strategy for moving forward on a major program in the future.
High	Scheduled to be done in the next two years but may be dependent on procuring necessary funding.
Medium	Definitely considered important to the Church and/or Meetinghouse, but can be delayed for at least one to two years unless needed funding becomes available that must be used within a definite time frame.
Low	On the Church's "radar screen," but given higher priorities, this action may be put off for three or more years unless resources become available earlier.

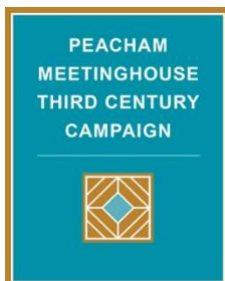
Status of Proposed Actions

In setting recommended priorities the Planning Committee consulted with the Business Committee, Treasurer, and Pastor and with the many individuals who were interviewed or commented on this Plan's drafts. After a comprehensive review of proposed actions and a review in 2026 undertaken by the Council, this plan represents the latest considerations and decisions by the Church.

It is important to distinguish between the ranking of priorities in the updated Plan and the resource allocation discussed at the Council meetings. Some actions may be only medium in priority but will be worked on this year if there is commitment and/or funding. Other high priorities may not make this year's work plans because of resource limitations on volunteer time and/or funding.

Additionally, the membership at the Annual Meeting in March and congregants at open Council meetings have identified three actions that will be given special emphasis in 2023:

1. conduct a search to identify prospects and call a settled Pastor;
2. grow the membership of as well as community participation in Church and Meetinghouse activities; and
3. undertake to fund a Third Century Campaign to finance needed preservation work on and improvements to the Meetinghouse through construction of an Annex.



Update: The Church made progress on nearly all of the eight priorities first established in 2023, including assessment and expansion of missions, establishing a framework for legacy giving, developing a protocol and calendar for scheduling and use of the

Meetinghouse (including a new Meetinghouse website), support for an Agrarian Society, and improving communications and community outreach (such as by sponsoring free community suppers); although the Church did not implement a visitation program and has deferred its development and implementation until 2027. All of these remain priorities and require continued attention and support. Having in mind resources, however, the Council determined that the Church's top priorities for 2026 will be to search for pastoral leadership, grow membership and community support, and finance Meetinghouse improvements, including construction of an Annex financed by the Third Century Campaign capital fund.

The purpose of the Council and all committees adopting 2026 work or action plans is to include ongoing work items and add those we have decided are top priorities for this year and for which sufficient volunteer commitments and/or funding exists.

For each of the Action items identified in the plan, its Status for the current year (after Church Council deliberation and decision) is noted.

A. Goals for Church as a Religious Institution

1. Maintain Mainstream Christian Worship in Sunday Services. Church will also offer special Christian services as well as interfaith services and activities.

a. Action: Focus on a Continuation of Christian Worship on Sunday and Incorporate Interfaith Elements. *This includes lay participation in services as well as an interfaith focus and activities (as indicated in A.1.b and A.1.c). In addition, Church will offer special services, such as Maundy Thursday, Christmas Eve, Communion; offer periodic new approaches to Christian worship and themed special services, such as St. Francis Blessing of the Animals; and work with the congregation to increase the Church's visibility in and participation and support from the community.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Ongoing**

Update: *The Church is presently without a settled Pastor and as a first priority will search for a new Pastor this year.*

b. Action: While Searching for a Called Pastor, Expand Roster of Speakers to Speak/Preach at Lay Worship Services. *The lay service coordinator organizes and leads the regular Church service on the last Sunday of each month, often supplemented by guest speakers. It is important to engage the Deacons, other Church leaders, and the congregation in identifying candidates for speaking on spiritual themes at these services.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Ongoing**

Update: *The Church has expanded its roster of guest pastors and speakers who lead most services each month, and Deacons and other Church members also provide messages and/or lead also services regularly.*

c. Action: Offer Periodic Interfaith Services and Events. *The Church will as resources permit hold interfaith services and events at times other than Sunday morning, and, with the Deacons, will explore the role the Church could play in being a spiritual gathering place for people of other faith traditions and spiritual beliefs.*

Priority: **Medium**

Status: **Approved for implementation.**

2. Grow the Church's Membership and Its Community Support. Recruit new members, Associate Members and non-member supporters, including families, to increase community participation in Church services, governance and other decisions.

***Update:** The Church has amended its Constitution/Statement of Faith to state that the Church is Open and Affirming.*

a. Action: Continue to Publicize the Recently Clarified Associate Member Category. *The purpose is to increase both membership and community participation in the Church's mission to serve the community and preserve the Meetinghouse for use by all regardless of faith. This includes community volunteers independent of full or associate membership in the Church. This action must be more aggressively publicized throughout the community and is related to Action C.1.d.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Ongoing**

b. Action: Meet with Community Members, Including Young Families, to Understand Their Interest in the Church and Its Meetinghouse.

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Approved for implementation.**

3. Strengthen the Financial Foundation. Increase attention to the financial condition of the Church's Ministry through the year-end Annual Appeal and a variety of other initiatives throughout the year.

a. Action: Further Develop Year-End Fund-Raising Program. *Each fall, the Church will reach out for financial support for the following year's planned missions and religious activities. Moreover, there are a number of other initiatives (e.g., Memory Tree, missions and fund-raising dinners) that can and do contribute to the Church's annual revenues.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Ongoing**

b. Action: Develop and Advertise a Legacy Program. *One key to a successful and sustainable fund-raising program is to encourage members and others to realize the benefits of including the Church/Meetinghouse in their wills and estate planning. A legacy program will be designed, promulgated and managed to a high standard. Resulting bequests will be directed to support either or both the ministerial program of the Church and the two endowment-like programs (Endowment and Preservation Fund).*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **In Process (brochure and promotion strategy required).**

4. Enhance Coordination Among Church Committees. The Church has many committees, sometimes with inter-related purposes and membership. It is beneficial for all to periodically exchange information, suggestions and work tasks to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the committees.

a. Action: Reduce the Number of Committees and Clarify Their Functions.

With a limited number of people available to serve, committees need to consolidate their responsibilities to eliminate overlap and respect the time limitations of volunteers.

Priority: **High**

Status: **Ongoing**

***Update:** The Church has reduced the number of committees and meetings and adopted Delegation Policies to make decisions between meetings.*

b. Action: Seek Collaboration Among the Council's Working Group of

Chairpersons. *This will encourage the cooperation from each committee in exchange of information and ideas. This group should meet informally, but regularly (e.g., bi-monthly) to help coordinate actions among committees and staff and keep responsible parties aware of work being done by others.*

Priority: **High**

Status: **Effected through monthly open meetings (third Sunday) and quarterly open Council meetings.**

B. Goals for Meetinghouse Facilities, Use and Maintenance

1. Improve the Building. Improve safety of the Meetinghouse, especially access and egress (e.g., fire exit stairs, operation of exit doors, an elevator); clean; fix and replace what's worn or out-of-date; preserve belfry; maintain a visually attractive, welcoming venue for visitors.

a. Action: Update Long-Range Plan. *The annually updated Plan will serve as a guide to actions and budget allocations in the hope that no action would be undertaken that is inconsistent with any element of the adopted Plan.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **In process.**

b. Action: Update Structural Conditions Reports Regularly. *Every two to three years, hire professional assessments of the integrity of the building and its historical features, as well as its operating systems and facilities. (The current Assessment will be found in Appendix C.) These are key to keeping current on the status of the building and for setting priorities for capital improvements.*

Priority: **High**

Status: **Approved for implementation, as needed.**

2. Consider Modifying the Building for Added Space and Safety.

a. Action: Refine Design for Addition to Building. *Additional space may be needed for storage, a second-floor bathroom, installation of a lift or elevator to ease access for handicapped person and others, and meeting rooms for existing and future Church activities. The Church should select an option based on other Meetinghouse and Church experiences and its own evaluation and identify associated costs and possible sources of funding as part of its implementation of the Third Century Fund campaign.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Design work underway.**

b. Action: Develop Plans for Improved Egress from the Sanctuary. *This is related directly to the addition being considered action B.3.a (above). The priority is very high because it is a public safety issue, but the coming year would be used to plan the most cost-effective way to improve egress to and from the Sanctuary*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Design work and permitting underway.**

3. Improve Energy Efficiency and Conservation in the Meetinghouse.

a. Action: Insulate the Roof. *Now that the vermiculite has been removed from the ceiling of the sanctuary, the next logical step in terms of comfort and energy efficiency is to replace the vermiculite with more appropriate insulation having consideration for the historic importance of the Meetinghouse attic and roof.*

Priority: **Medium**

Status: **2026 – Completed (except for rear wall, pending construction of an Annex).**

b. Action: Insulate the Walls of the Meetinghouse. *To complete the process of improving energy efficiency in the building, the Church should insulate the rear wall (pending outcome of action to add an Annex) and tighten some other areas of the building, such as windows and doorways. Much of this work would be part of the planned Annex to the existing building that will be financed by the Third Century Campaign fund.*

Priority: **High**

Status: **Significant insulation of the building has been achieved, but its rear remains uninsulated and would be insulated through construction of the planned Annex. Should the Annex not be built within three years, the existing rear wall should be fully insulated, as has been done in the front and side walls.**

c. Action: Analyze and Modify, as Appropriate, the Meetinghouse's Heating System and Choice of Fuels. *Energy audits have shown that considerable work is needed to improve comfort and remove and replace or upgrade inefficient systems for heating and water usage.*

Priority: **Low**

Status: **System renovations required to accommodate the Children's Center were made in 2021; no action anticipated.**

4. Continue to Advertise and Promote the Preservation Fund and Unrestricted Support for the Church, and Complete a Feasibility Assessment of a Capital Campaign That Will Include Fundraising for the Preservation Fund. This program will identify and estimate the cost of specific, long-term improvements needed for the maintenance and renovation of the Meetinghouse. Each year the Business Committee will review and update this infrastructure plan and submit a capital budget for consideration by the membership at the Church's Annual Meeting.

a. Action: Evaluate and Further Upgrade Furniture and Equipment. *Given space and storage limitations, and to accommodate a variety of new Church-based missions, the rotating use of Social Hall space shared with the Children's Center, new lighter weight furniture and equipment is appropriate.*

Priority: **High**

Status: **Approved for implementation. New tables and chairs adequate for about one-half of the Social Hall's capacity were purchased in 2024. Further upgrades should be compatible with any plans for an Annex, including storage.**

b. Action: Develop List of Meetinghouse's Needs for Space. *This will require a new Annex to the building, and designs for such an addition are being finalized. This would be a major component of Phases II and III. The Children's Center uses most of the ground floor of the Meetinghouse. Accommodating the Center has required re-thinking space usage. Assessments are being undertaken of specific needs for weekday meeting space; storage of chairs, tables; rummage sale goods; display areas; and large functions requiring extensive seating once served by the ground floor space.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Underway through a special committee.**

c. Action: Determine Whether to Initiate a Multi-Year Capital Campaign. *The Church has formed, with community membership, a joint committee to help the Church raise funds for its approved Capital budget and help it to decide whether to initiate a capital campaign. This decision is being informed through intensive deliberations including those with an experienced fund-raising professional. It may also require paid staff to manage the campaign and assessment of the enthusiasm and availability of some Church members to be actively involved.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Silent fundraising campaign underway.**

Update: *The Church has received a \$130,000 tax-credit grant that must be matched to support installation of an elevator as well as electrical and plumbing work required for the planned Annex, which **must be constructed by September 2028** to secure the tax credits. This requires final-design work and the filing of permit applications*

required by the Town and State before sufficient funding is in hand to facilitate a decision by the Church to proceed with the core improvements planned as part of the Annex.

d. Continue to Pursue Available Grants and Donations. *Follow up on the successful search for funds in recent years and use available funds creatively to identify opportunities for matching money and challenge grants. In addition, pursue the initiative to seek advice and coordination among granting institutions for the capital campaign if undertaken.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Underway; the Church will apply for an additional grant.**

e. Develop a Protocol for Use of the Meetinghouse. *The Church will develop a protocol for scheduling Church and community activities in the Meetinghouse, making necessary preparations therefor, including for rearranging of Meetinghouse furniture and facilities before and restoration of the Meetinghouse to pre-activity condition after the activity, a cost-based, suggested-fee schedule for use of the Meetinghouse, and 'how to' checklists/manual explaining how to use Meetinghouse facilities to heat, light and secure the activity space and/or use the kitchen and other facilities if required.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Completed**

5. Recognize and Leverage the Historical Character of Meetinghouse. Suggestions range from inviting Peacham Historical Association from helping to collect and display memorabilia to hosting tours of the Church.

a. Action: Publicize Historical Significance of Building. *The history of the Church should be well documented. Its iconic character is increasingly an attraction and should be more effectively celebrated and advertised.*

Priority: **High**

Status: **Ongoing**

Update: *The Church will participate in Peacham's 250th Celebration, an opportunity to celebrate and promote the important role of the Meetinghouse and Church in Peacham's history.*

b. Action: Design and Implement a Historic Display in the Meetinghouse. *Given the significance of the Meetinghouse's history, a place to publicize this history within the building is good for both members and visitors.*

Priority: **Medium**

Status: **No action anticipated.**

c. Action: Repair Church Bell Deck in the Steeple. *This action has been recommended in Adam King's recent Assessment of high priority issues (see Appendix D) for the Church to address.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Substantially completed.**

***Update:** The Finial (at the very top of the steeple) is rotten, and plans for its replacement in 2026 are in place.*

d. Action: Repair and Update Organ. *An organ expert strongly recommends a new complete solid state switching system for the entire organ. This would eliminate some current problems, and more importantly, such a system will facilitate making future organ repairs.*

Priority: **High**

Status: **No action anticipated.**

e. Action: Repair and Restore Historic Features of the Meetinghouse and Improve Safety, Comfort and User Experience with Particular Regard to the Sanctuary, Social Hall and Kitchen.

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Approved for implementation as part of the Third Century Campaign capital funding**

6. Develop and Implement a Plan for Renovating the Kitchen.

a. Action: Assess Issues and Problems to be Addressed in Kitchen. *Appoint a planning subcommittee to discuss and report on the issues we need to address. Based on their report, consult a kitchen specialist to design appropriate changes to the current facilities.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Underway through a special committee.**

b. Action: Integrate fund-raising for kitchen with other fund-raising efforts. *Integrate kitchen renovations in fundraising plans for the probable construction of an annex; access to and egress from the building, including the sanctuary; and a new entrance into the kitchen. Look for opportunities to purchase new equipment and appliances as part of the kitchen renovation work.*

Priority: **High**

Status: **Underway; the Third Century Campaign includes funding improvements to the kitchen space.**

c. Action: In Preparation for an Overhaul of the Entire Kitchen, Conduct an Inventory of All That is in the Kitchen Now. *This would also entail analysis of the appliances, cabinets, pots and pans, dishes and silverware that would be needed in the future, perhaps reducing the need for as much storage as currently exists.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Completed through the work of a special committee.**

d. Design a New Kitchen in the Physical Context of a New Annex to the Building. *The new design would be thorough and integrated into the design for the new Annex. One objective is to have a facility that will service the Church and Meetinghouse for years to come, the Meetinghouse's third century, ideally one that is "certified" and be available for rent and use by outside organizations.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Underway through a special committee.**

7. Develop Short- and Long-term Exterior Site Plans for the Church Property.

a. Action: Identify and Address Key Community Issues. *Organize discussions with Church neighbors and the Town concerning major issues that require coordinated action. These include, but are not limited to, parking, signage, water management (drainage), and traffic flow.*

Priority: **Medium**

Status: **No action anticipated immediately, but some of these issues will be addressed in the Development Review Board's review of a zoning application for the Annex.**

b. Action: Develop a Short-term Site Plan. *Continue a process already underway to provide for an expanded childcare play yard; parking for Church, day-care and other users; a new picnic area; and appropriate, updated for the Annex entrance, egress and vehicular turn-around areas to accommodate the day-care program during the weekdays.*

Priority: **High**

Status: **Underway as part of the Annex's final design.**

c. Action: Develop a Long-term Site Plan. *This will integrate the short-term plan with needed improvements to the landscaping, drainage system, and adjustment to property lines, as appropriate.*

Priority: **Medium**

Status: **No action anticipated.**

d. Action: A Site Plan Should be Adopted and Presented to the Town's Development Review Board. *A site plan has been prepared and serves as an interim plan for the Meetinghouse footprint and accessory uses of the exterior of the building. Finalized property boundaries and easements will be included in the Site Plan.*

Priority: **Medium**

Status: **No immediate action anticipated, but as part of zoning applications for a second storage shed and a second application for the planned Third Century Campaign Annex, a partial site plan will be presented to the Board.**

C. Goals for Community Service and Missions

1. Reach Out-Bring In. Increase efforts to engage the wider community in Church-related events, both religious and secular.

a. Action: Develop Outreach Program for Bringing Community into Building. *Enhance the Church website. Use and update the Plan to address recruiting new volunteers and initiating new activities. Make the Church a more integral part of people's lives through local missions and other services to the community and region.*

Priority: **High**

Status: **No formal program planned, but the Church has held many events and activities that bring the community into the Meetinghouse, such as community suppers and special concerts.**

b. Action: Consider Youth Program(s). *Appoint the Bylaws-required Education Committee to discuss and coordinate with parent strategies to attract and serve some of the community's social needs (e.g., music, games, informal gatherings). Pastor (with the support of the Deacons) will implement outreach opportunities to engage younger individuals and families in Peacham with Church activities. This could include assessing the interest in a values-based and/or mission-based youth program at the Church.*

Priority: **Medium**

Status: **No action anticipated.**

c. Action: Host Public Meetings, Focus Groups and Interviews to Solicit More Community Input for the Long-Range Plan. *Helpful input includes suggestions on possible expansion plans for the Meetinghouse, fund-raising, including capital campaigns, and the Church's missions.*

Priority: **High**

Status: **Approved for consideration during public phase of the Third Century Campaign capital funding.**

d. Action: Create and Implement a Visitation Program in the Community. *Many members of the Peacham community would appreciate and benefit from occasional, perhaps even regular visits to check on their needs and welfare. The Church will develop and train a team of members (and non-members) to offer home visits, working in conjunction Aging Well in Peacham, the regional Council of Aging and Rural Edge's SASH program.*

Priority: **Medium**

Status: **Implementation of program deferred until 2027.**

e. Action: Consider the Creation of a "Green" Initiative Such as a Peacham Agrarian Society to Encourage Community Members to be More Involved and Supportive of Town's Natural Environment. *Joining with existing groups (e.g., NOFA-VT, the local farmers market, help build an environmental constituency in Peacham and promote a more active locavore movement.*

Priority: **High**

Status: **Ongoing; several Agrarian Society events held in the Meetinghouse.**

2. Hold More Social Events Featuring Food and/or Music. Past experience has demonstrated the allure of food and music for enjoyment and social interaction.

a. Action: Sponsor or Co-sponsor More Social Events to Involve Townspeople. *Sponsor meals (breakfasts, dinners, picnics) and monthly potluck dinners with a theme, and attract youth. Musical concerts are popular and take advantage of the Church's ideal venue for performances. Field trips such as crop*

walks and other outings beyond the Meetinghouse may attract a new audience.

Priority: **High**

Status: **Ongoing; several additional suppers, participation in Winter Carnival (breakfast) and the Fourth of July (strawberry shortcake) are examples.**

3. Become a Tourist Destination.

a. Action: Develop Opportunities for Hospitality. *Consider providing overnight accommodations for bikers; develop wedding and other major event planning services for using the Church, or help identify other venues for the same.*

Priority: **Low**

Status: **No action anticipated**

4. Offer Adult Learning Opportunities.

a. Action: Organize Programs for Adults. *Outside the context of worship, offer reading/discussion groups, films and adult learning opportunities to Church members and the broader community. Consider periodic events in cooperation with the Peacham Library and others.*

Priority: **Medium**

Status: **Approved for implementation as opportunities appear.**

5. Expand Missions.

a. Action: Assess Current Missions and Identify New Ones. *It is suggested that the Church support four greater-than-Peacham-area organizations (one per calendar quarter) as additional outreach missions.*

Priority: **Very High**

Status: **Underway through Mission Committee with congregant input.**

b. Action: Identify and Pursue Missions with Greater Member Involvement. *Build on the Church's current missions to find some that are more hands-on (e.g., volunteering at the Vermont Foodbank) to engage Church members and non-members. Consider organizing travel missions to specific sites (e.g., in Canada), hosting an antique show and sale and other creative community events.*

Priority: **High**

Status: **Mission Committee is evaluating with congregant input.**

c. Action: Host and/or Sponsor Church-related Conferences and Meetings with other Churches. *Create opportunities to join with other religious and faith institutions to share resources, inspiration and concerns.*

Priority: **Medium**

Status: **No action anticipated.**

d. Action: Consider the Feasibility of Using the Meetinghouse as a Community Emergency Shelter. *The Town of Peacham is taking the initiative to prepare for the*

need for emergency shelters. The Meetinghouse might be outfitted to accommodate such use as a possible mission, and Church members will evaluate the future viability of participating in this community program.

Priority: **Medium**

Status: **Participate in periodic review of Peacham LEMP (Local Emergency Management Plan) – see Town website.**

Appendices

APPENDIX A – Statement of Faith and Covenant from Church Constitution (Revised 2020)

FAITH. The guiding principles of our Members' common Faith are embodied in the following "Statement of Faith:"

We believe in God
Whose love is the source of all life
And the desire of our lives,
Whose love was given a human face
In Jesus of Nazareth
And whose love, defeating even death by crucifixion,
Is our glorious promise of freedom.
Therefore, though we are sometimes fearful
And full of doubt,
In God we trust;
And, in the name of Jesus the Christ,
We commit ourselves, in the service of others,
To seek justice and to live in peace,
To care for the earth
And to share in the commonwealth
Of God's goodness,
To live in the freedom of forgiveness
And the power of the Spirit of Love,
And in the company of the faithful
So to be the Church,
By living our faith through spirit and action.
For the glory of God.

Peacham Congregational Church is an open and affirming congregation, welcoming all who earnestly seek faith and fellowship in Christ to share in the life, leadership, ministry, membership, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings and joys of our Church.

We invite and welcome into our community persons of every age, race, ability, economic and social status, nationality, faith background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital standing and family structure.

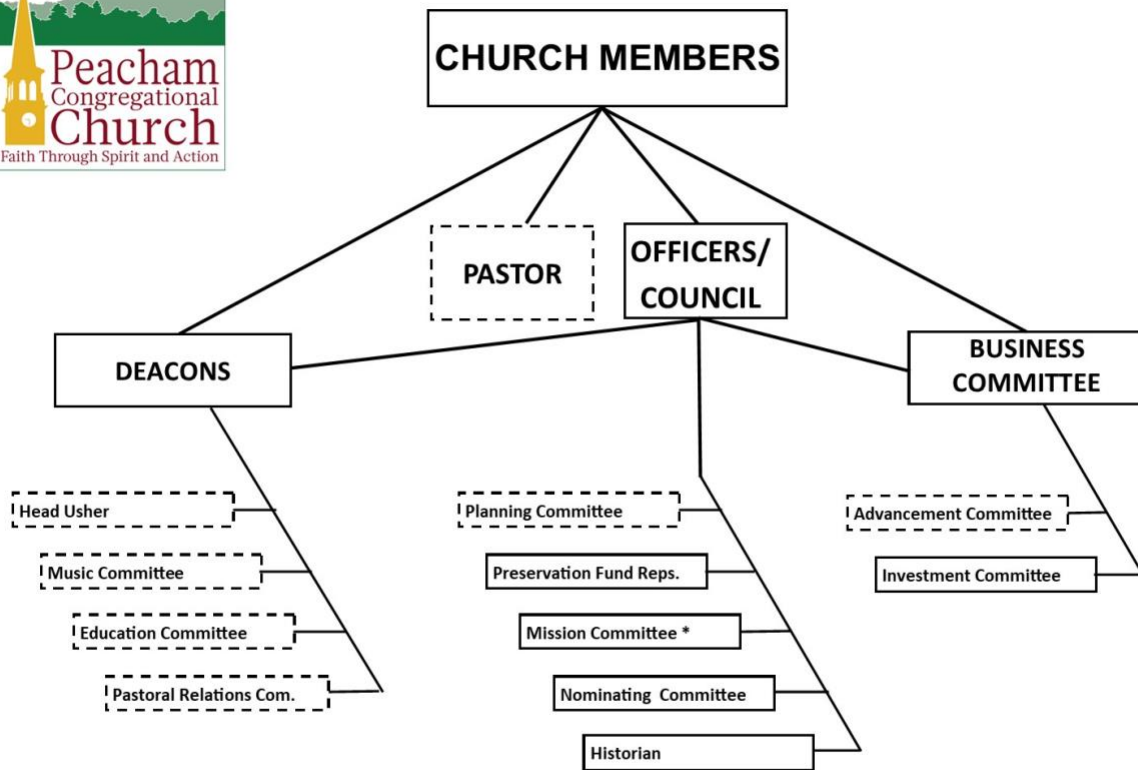
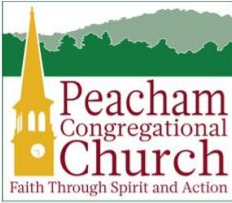
We recognize that when all people in our communities are living in their truest identities, with God's peace and justice upholding them, we are all lifted up, and God is glorified.

COVENANT: The Church's Members covenant with each other as follows:

"We covenant to live with God in accordance with God's Holy Will walking with our fellow Church members and friends in Christian love."

APPENDIX B – Organizational Diagram – Peacham Congregational Church

PEACHAM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION DIAGRAM



Note: Dashed lines indicate position and committees which are currently vacant or unappointed. They may become active following publication of this graphic.

* Mission Committee consists of the Deacons, as committee of the whole.

June 2026

APPENDIX C – Summary of Report on ADA-compliant Egress Options (2020)

This report was prepared for the Church to consider public safety improvements regarding emergency egress from the Church, in particular from the sanctuary, which has a capacity of nearly 300 persons. The full report includes several possible architectural designs and drawings that can be viewed upon request. The Preservation Trust of Vermont supported the preparation of this report, undertaken by William Gallup of Waterbury, Vermont.

Based on this preliminary building configuration assessment, I developed what I consider to be the most viable design solutions to (1) modify the building to allow for ADA compliant access to the 1st and 2nd floors and possibly the stage, (2) create a gracious and code complaint stair between the floors that will also serve as a second exit from the upper level, (3) create an ADA complaint Unisex Restroom to as the building does not have an accessible restroom.

Design Option A – New Accessible Entry with ADA compliant Restroom and LULA Elevator

After evaluating the existing floor plan layout it became apparent that there is not a location within the existing building where a vertical lift or LULA elevator could comfortably be situated. The most viable location for a lift or LULA is in a new addition at the back of the building on the east side of the existing back wing. An addition at this location can also incorporate a new stair that can serve as a second exit from the upper floor which would be a significant life safety improvement and is likely to be required by the VT Division of Life Safety; if you add onto the building.

There is also adequate room at this east, back gable, location of the building to incorporate a new ADA compliant Unisex Restroom into the addition. An accessible restroom will be required by the VT Access Code if the building is modified to accommodate a new use or the building is enlarged with a new addition.

Design Option A illustrates how a 3-Stop LULA elevator with front and back elevator doors could provide access from the Lower Floor to both the Upper Floor and Choir Stage. Making the stage accessible via a LULA elevator would allow disabled Speakers, Singers and Musicians to make presentations from the stage.

An estimate of what it would cost to construct the building improvements included in Design Option A is attached to this report. The cost to implement Design Option A is estimated to be \$433,694.

The budgets provided are preliminary and are only intended to give you some sense of the probable cost to proceed with either accessibility design option. Before you pursue any specific project, I recommend that you have a local builder do an independent estimate of the cost of the project, or scope, you are most interested in.

Design Option B – New Accessible Entry with ADA compliant Restroom and Vertical Lift

Design Option B illustrates how a 2-Stop Vertical Lift, situated in the same location as the LULA Elevator in Option A, could provide access from the Lower Floor to just the Upper Floor. Making the stage accessible is not a requirement of the VT Access Code, as noted earlier in this report, so you have the option to avoid that additional expense if you so desire. A 2-stop vertical lift is less expensive than a 3-stop LULA Elevator as it does not require an elevator equipment room and a lift can be located in an open well in lieu of an enclosed shaft.

An estimate of what it would cost to construct the building improvements included in Design Option B is attached to this report. The cost to implement Design Option B is estimated to be \$385,739.

Pros and Cons of each Design Option

A LULA elevator has the advantage of functioning much like a typical commercial elevator. It has an enclosed hoist way, call buttons and sliding elevator doors, similar to a standard elevator. People are therefore more likely to understand how to operate a LULA than they are likely to understand how to operate a vertical lift.

A Vertical Lift has the advantage of transporting users in an open well exposed to the room's natural daylight. This can be more pleasant than riding within an enclosed elevator car. A lift is also between \$35,000 to \$40,000 less costly to incorporate into the Project than a LULA.

Update: Many needs and issues raised in this 2020 assessment have been addressed. As part of the Third Century Campaign, work is currently going forward in planning a building Annex which will include one or more ADA-compliant lavatories. Due to cost and engineering considerations, installation of an elevator is unlikely, but incorporation of a lift or LULA is certain.

APPENDIX D – Conditions Assessment Report (2020)

The Conditions Assessment Report (November 2020) provides an excellent tour of the Meetinghouse structure, including historical notes of interest and importance, as well as a discussion of several potential issues for the Church to address. They are summarized below with relative priorities and rough estimates of expected costs, as of 2020. Readers are encouraged to read the full Report. The Preservation Trust of Vermont supported the preparation of this report, undertaken by Adam King of Arcadia Restorations in Northfield, Vermont.

Summary of Repair Findings and Costs for Planning Purposes: The below items are those found which merit attention at this time. Costs are only rough estimates, and are reckoned conservatively for planning purposes. Any work commissioned should be subject to more detailed and specific quotes generated by qualified practitioners:

1. High Priority
 - A. Bell Deck
 - a. Full restoration (rigging, crane work, restoration, refitting): \$30–35,000
 - b. Maintenance (repair and repaint millwork and stud walls): \$5–10,000
 - B. Southeast Door
 - a. Reset/replace steps: \$5,000
 - b. Replace handrail: \$2,500
 - c. Inspect awning truss rods: \$1,500
 - d. Jack awning roof to level, support with tightened truss rod
 - i. If old truss rods may be adjusted: \$3,000
 - ii. If new hardware must be retrofitted: \$4,500
 - iii. If truss rods must be replaced: \$7,5–10,000
 - iv. If posts must be installed: \$5–10,000
 - e. Improve roof water shedding properties: \$3–5,000
2. Medium Priority
 - A. Repoint brickwork at northeast and southeast ends of the Church: \$5–10,000
 - B. Re-set rear access ramp posts to plumb: \$2–5,000
 - C. Re-set canted basement framing post: \$3–5,000
 - D. Install dehumidification system in utility room: \$2–4,000
 - E. Inspect east eave crown molding: \$1,500
 - F. Restore rear stair hall window: \$2,000
 - G. Replace damaged clapboards; touch up paint at basement level: \$5–7,000
3. Low Priority
 - A. Repaint vestibule window interiors: \$500
 - B. Grade front lawn and re-set granite curbs: \$3,000
 - C. Strip and repair main entry doors: \$4–6,000
 - D. Repaint & weather strip east secondary entrance door: \$2–4,000
 - E. School room door hardware repair: \$1,000
 - F. Blower room vestibule door, sill replace, repaint & weather strip: \$3,500

4. Future Restoration Projects

- A. Demolish drop ceiling in ladies' parlor: \$3,000
- B. Demolish pastor's office; restore apse: \$15–20,000

Update: Many needs and issues raised in this 2020 assessment have been addressed as part of Meetinghouse maintenance, renovation, and historic preservation work in the years 2020-2025. As part of the Third Century Campaign, work is currently going forward in planning a building Annex. In addition, some of the tasks mentioned in this list can be addressed when a long-term maintenance budget is formulated and evaluated by the Business Committee.

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