



HOUSE OF HOPE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

July 14, 2025

Dear Members of the House of Hope Presbyterian Church:

We are writing to inform you of the recent action that our Session and Board of Trustees have taken. House of Hope leadership has voted to sell the Summit Avenue parking lot, located on the corner of Summit Avenue and Grotto Street. Over the past five years, three task forces were authorized by Session to review the property and its uses. Each task force was made up of a diverse set of congregational voices and various members from our Session, Trustees, Deacons, and Staff. Through thoughtful conversation and study, these task forces discerned that House of Hope has enough parking spaces in the Portland Ave. and Holly Ave. parking lots to meet our current and future needs. The Summit parking lot in its current state requires a large investment to be repaired and maintained. After much discussion, the decision has been made to sell this property.

In 2021, there was extensive work by the first task force resulting in a comprehensive Parking Lot Report. The 2021 report offered a brief history of the lot:

- The property consists of 6 platted lots. Five are 40 feet wide and the sixth is 60 feet wide. They are 250 feet deep.
- The four westerly lots were acquired through tax forfeiture in 1948. The other two lots were purchased in 1953.
- There was a residence built in 1892 located on the four westerly lots. The house was razed in 1938. We do not have further information on prior structures on the easterly two lots.
- The property has been a parking lot since at least 1953.

The parking lot was leased to Mitchell Hamline School of Law from 2000 to 2023. The tenant was responsible for all expenses. Unfortunately, in 2022 the law school did not renew that lease. This imposes a responsibility on the church that is burdensome.

Building on the exploratory report of the first task force, the second task force met bi-weekly September through November of 2023. A consultant, Sara Joy Proppe, from Proximity Project worked alongside the task force to consider and study the idea of shared property ownership, selling to a particular future owner or developer which would align with mission goals of the church, and maintaining sole ownership. Perceived risks, liabilities, investment expenses and the capacity of the church staff and

congregation to take responsibility for the property oversight and management were all evaluated. It was determined that having House of Hope maintain sole ownership and responsibility for the parking lot property in its current form or in a future redevelopment was not in the best interest of the church.

The third task force met October 2024 through February 2025. They reviewed the work of the first and second task forces, evaluating many of the same considerations. Updated presentations from Ms. Proppe were obtained as well as from a local real estate agent familiar with the neighborhood. This task force further discussed the necessity of bringing the parking lot up to code with ecological minded planting and water runoff management, the current need and expense of repairing potholes, resurfacing and relining the parking spots. Additionally, there is the annual ongoing maintenance, including snow removal costs, security coverage, and insurance needed for the property. The consensus reached by this task force was the best use of the property is to sell it at the market rate for housing development.

The third task force's recommendation to sell the parking lot was brought before the Trustees and Session. After robust discussions, both the Trustees and Session voted to put the parking lot up for sale through a real estate agent. Reports from our task forces are available to review in the church office, or on our website under "Things to Know" on our homepage.

The actual sale of the property will take some months and will be contingent on approval from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area and you, the congregation. The Trustees will be handling the listing of the property and negotiating the details of the sale. When there is an offer, the acceptance of that offer must then pass through the Trustees, the Session, and a congregational vote. For the purposes of that vote, a congregational meeting will be called once final negotiations and Session has approved the sale. The Presbytery will review the sale after our congregational vote.

While the Trustees pursue the sale there will be an Enrichment Hour to share more information and answer questions regarding this initiative. Should you have questions in the meantime, please contact, Thomas Radio (Tradio@felhaber.com), Trustees President, or Michelle Freyholtz (MichelleF@hohchurch.org), Director of Administration.

Please look to the Enews or direct communication for updates.

Sincerely,



Thomas Radio  
Trustees President

Lynn Stein  
Clerk of Session

Michelle Freyholtz  
Director of Administration

Rev. Dr. E. Scott Jones  
Senior Pastor/Head of Staff