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### Pamphlet; Capital Improvement Campaign; 1955-03-14

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March 14, 1955



*Forward With Faith*

**THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH**

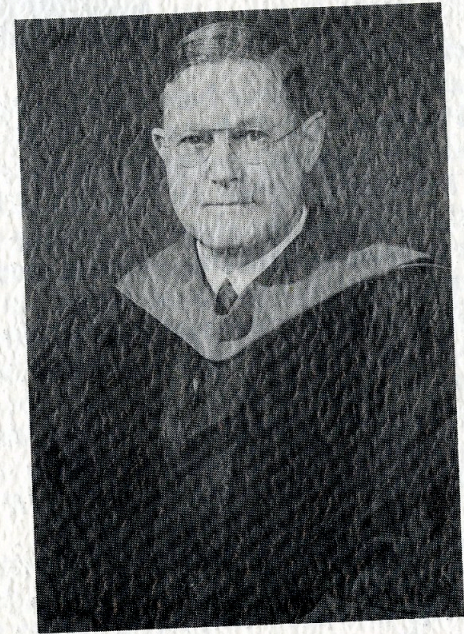
NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK

1955

## *Our Beloved First Minister*

whom we will Honor in the New Development

*The pages that follow will open the gates of a new life to us as Unitarians and fellow religious liberals, and a vision of our responsibility for the future of our Church. It presents a challenge for tomorrow. This booklet is affectionately dedicated to the men and women of this congregation who, remembering the devotion and sacrificial spirit, as well as vision, of the founders, established this liberal Church in 1920, and shortly thereafter erected the present building. We today, through our vision and faithfulness, as well as through our generous giving, may fulfill the intentions of the founders, and in our generation give a worthy witness to the faith that is in us.*



THE REV. BRUCE SWIFT, D.D.

## *A Message*

*From*

*Our Minister*



Dear Members and Friends:

For the last two years we have been developing the plans for the Church Building Program. On February 13, 1955 a special Church meeting authorized the establishment of the Development Fund to carry forward the building program and capital gift canvass in order to retire the existing debts on the church building and mortgage.

It was further agreed to hold this canvass along with the usual Every Member Canvass in the month of March, and to include the United Unitarian Appeal. The plan was overwhelmingly adopted.

Our minimum needs are \$44,000.00 for the building program. The current expense budget is \$11,100.00.

Where is the money coming from? It will come from us, as we search our hearts that we may give responsibly, according to our ability. We know this can be done for we have seen other churches do it.

We will do it in a typical Unitarian way, by putting the question to each of us, as an individual, to give devoted thought to the realistic gift he can make to a great cause, and for his inner satisfaction.

The time is ripe. The church is in the strongest position it has even been. Our membership has increased 25% in two and a half years, and our church school enrollment has tripled. We have resolved—for the first time in our history—to pay off the church debt, and we have adopted overwhelmingly a plan to develop the church edifice, based on the principles of "Simplicity, Usefulness, and Beauty".

Let us go forward—in faith, adding our bricks to the structure as the expression of the ideals of our lives!

Faithfully yours,

*George N. Marshall*

GEORGE N. MARSHALL

## The Unitarian churches are founded upon

*Individual freedom of belief*

*Discipleship to advancing truth*

*The democratic process in human relations*

*Universal brotherhood, undivided by nation, race or creed, and*

*Allegiance to the cause of a united world community*

## *Our Affirmation*

Affirming the need for a "free church in a free society", Unitarians are committed to a larger interpretation of religion in which as fellow seekers, we seek "to serve the best and highest that we know in an atmosphere of freedom, fellowship, and truth". Thus bound by this common purpose, "Unitarians hold in a Unity of Spirit a Diversity of Convictions," as together we search for the light. To this common cause we invite all those who would join with us as we seek to build "A modern religion for modern minds".

"Had the doctrines of Jesus been preached always as pure as they came from his lips, the whole civilized world would now have been Christian. I rejoice that in this blessed country of free enquiry and belief, which has surrendered its creed and conscience to neither kings nor priests, the genuine doctrine of one only God is reviving, and I trust that there is not a young man now living in the United States who will not die a Unitarian."

"The population of my neighborhood is too slender, and is too much divided into other sects to maintain any one preacher well. I must therefore be contented to be a Unitarian by myself."

—THOMAS JEFFERSON, correspondence with DR. BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE  
Monticello, 1822, 1825

## Our Program Needs

For thirty-five years our church has been a source of necessary strength for the entire community. For the first time in over three decades we are going to make substantial improvements in the facilities and financial position of the church. The Building Survey Committee has spent over two years developing the plan. The architectural plan has been overwhelmingly endorsed by the entire church membership. The proposed rooms off of the stage area are desperately needed. The church school growth shows no sign of slackening, and we can expect it to increase at an accelerated rate.

The new design for the front of the church auditorium gives us an opportunity to create for a more stately and yet simple church interior. The new lighting and redecoration will give us a well-ordered, soothing, and comfortable house of worship.

It will remain what we have always been proud of possessing, a simple structure in which all men may feel at home, and where "no man will be a stranger".

The auditorium front will continue to serve as a rostrum for forums, institutes, and concerts.

The unused stage area will be converted into a two-floor classroom unit. There will be a large social room, with accordion door partitions. New toilet facilities and a fire-escape will be added.

It will become a modern church structure, serving our needs today and tomorrow.

The retirement of the twenty-one year old building debt and the parsonage mortgage will save yearly payments of \$1,800.00, freeing current funds for current program, and take the strain off of us in future years for incessant requests for funds.

The United Unitarian Appeal will be included for the three year period, so that by supporting this program now, we will be freed of future demands.

The OPPORTUNITY now afforded, for the first time since the church was built in 1923, gives to us, the present worshipers, a chance to add our stone to the building, to build into the structure our sense of purpose and meaning, to give evidence that we not only are inheritors, but are creators. We are now called upon to pledge and to contribute to the utmost that an inspiring example will be set not only for the community, but for those who follow us, that the liberal testament to religious values may grow with each generation in our city. There is no other church, no other structure, no other fellowship of people which means so much in our lives, and we should seize the opportunity with tenacious dedication to not alone build for our needs but for our ideals and their expression.

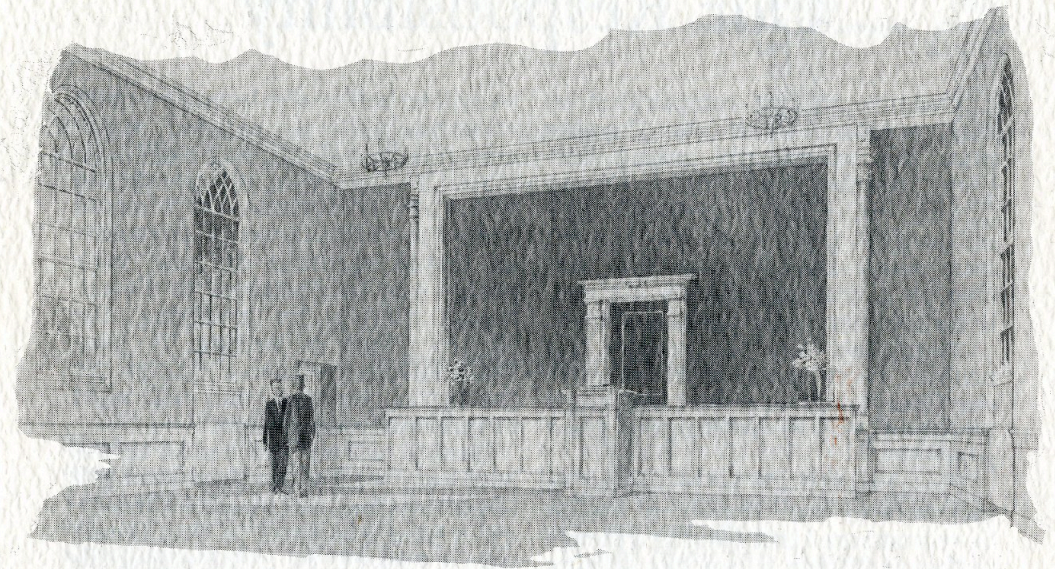
THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK is the outgrowth of several earlier beginnings of religious liberals to form a religious society compatible with the spirit of liberalism in religion, and to bring the impact of the religious liberal to bear upon the life of the city. No enduring fellowship was established in this community, until the existing movement was definitely organized, under the leadership of the Reverend Bruce Swift, D.D.

On October 17, 1920 the church was formally organized, and the following week the officers were elected, the constitution adopted, and the following charter members were listed:

Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Baker, Miss Vera Baker, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob P. Billett, Miss Margaret Billett, Mrs. Hattie Berry, Mr. and Mrs. Adin B. Chase, Mr. Earl H. Chase, Mr. A. L. Clark, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Critchett, Mr. Arch R. Cumming, Mrs. Walter M. Fickes, Mr. and Mrs. Karl F. Hutzell, Mr. and Mrs. J. Allen Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Kincaid, Mr. Orin Kincaid, Dr. and Mrs. Frederick Leighton, Mrs. Winifred H. Maxwell, Mr. Benjamin E. Morris, Miss Dorcas Perkins, Mr. Benjamin Perkins, Mr. Elliott M. Sergeant, Dr. and Mrs. Bruce Swift, and Mrs. Addie Yorke.

Others, such as Mr. and Mrs. Donald Auman, Mr. and Mrs. George Cooley, Mrs. Ingeborg Popp, and Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Wills have been associated with it from very early times, as was the late Charles Vaughn, whose memory lives on.

Ministers of the church have been Dr. Bruce Swift, 1920-26; Rev. Robert B. Day, 1926-45; Rev. Charles A. Engvall, 1945-51; Dr. Bruce Swift, interim, 1951-52; Rev. George N. Marshall, 1952—.



PROPOSED NEW INTERIOR

A Bruce Swift Memorial and a Founders Fund have been created to "enshrine the past in the present."

# Type and Scope of Our Canvass

In order to obtain our Canvass objective of "More Givers Who Are Better Givers," it has been agreed that we will conduct between now and the Victory Dinner:

An organized intensive

individual face-to-face solicitation in the homes for pledges payable weekly . . . . . beginning . . April 3, 1955 . .

**Organized** solicitation will be limited to member-families, prospective church members, parents of Sunday School children, and any other persons and families who consider themselves affiliated with, or use, our Church, but who are not technically members.

**The intensive** aspect of this canvass means that we will concentrate our efforts to obtain pledges from those families during an intensive 5-day solicitation period.

**Individual face-to-face solicitation** means that a sufficient number of our churchmen will be enlisted, organized, and qualified as canvassers to visit and solicit each family of the Church individually and privately in the homes. There will be no solicitation in groups or meetings—nor will any solicitations be conducted by mail.

**150 weekly pledges** will be a basic requirement of this canvass. Families pledging more than \$1,500 may consider semi-annual or annual payments, but all families pledging \$1,500 or less will be encouraged to use the 150-week pledge payment method. Contributions and even initial cash payments on pledges will be discouraged during the canvass period.

## Our Responsibility

There is nothing complicated or high pressure about our Canvass plan. We are simply asking that every member and friend of the Church set aside a generous and meaningful portion of his income each week and that he give the Church a true priority on his contributions during that period of time.

About the time you receive this booklet, every family affiliated with our Church will be visited and given an opportunity to invest in this great program.

Pledge cards will be presented to members of our Church. It should be remembered that making a pledge in this campaign is not like signing a note for the amount subscribed. We are simply asking that you indicate on the pledge card how much you feel you will be able to give weekly. By thinking in weekly amounts instead of the total amount

we will be better able to make a more substantial gift.

IF YOUR FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE, or if you should suffer any misfortune which would make the continuation of payments an undue hardship on you, your pledge may be decreased or discontinued simply by notifying the Church office in writing. If your financial circumstances change for the better, we hope you will want to increase your pledge.

Until a present generation family has made at least one sacrificial gift to the development of some Church, every time a member of that family uses a Church, he is increasing his indebtedness to an earlier generation and has not met his full obligation to build for the needs of his day.

Entrusted with a great tradition, enjoying a great fellowship, we face our day of Christian Responsibility.

# Our Giving Can Be of Two Kinds:

A **TOKEN GIFT** is one which is so small that it has only a **NEGATIVE IMPACT** upon the Giver. . . . .

A **SACRIFICIAL GIFT** is one which is large enough to have a **POSITIVE SPIRITUAL IMPACT** upon the Giver and cannot be paid at one time. . . . .

## It Is Easy to Give Weekly!

Weekly, regular contributions are inducive of a great effort and a more active interest. This chart will help you to decide your contributions:

Weekly (based on 150 weeks)	Total Pledge
\$66.67	\$10,000
50.00	7,500
40.00	6,000
33.33	5,000
25.00	3,750
20.00	3,000
15.00	2,250
10.00	1,500
8.00	1,200
5.00	750
3.00	450
2.00	300

## Tax Advantages

The Income Tax Act provides individuals an allowance for charitable donations up to 30% of net income. The tax consequence of your giving will vary, depending upon the rate applicable to the highest bracket of your taxable income.

For example: If the highest tax rate applicable to the family man's income is 25 percent, the actual cost of a gift is reduced to three-quarters

of the total amount paid. If the highest applicable tax rate is 50 percent, then the actual cost of a gift to the Church is reduced to one-half of the total amount given.

If you study this feature as it applies in your own income tax circumstance, you will be surprised to find how much more you can give because of this income tax allowance feature.

## *What Is Our Part ?*

A religious Standard of Giving begins with approximately \$2.00 per week for each \$1,000.00 of annual income. Such a standard calls for SACRIFICIAL commitment, by which we mean that one will have to face REALISTICALLY his share, and obligation, to do more than merely a "token gift". Church giving must be more than incidental giving, for apart from the church's need there stands the need of the individual for commitment and for participation in a larger life.

Because this is a Building Fund, a "Once-in-a-lifetime" canvass, in addition to the current expense canvass, many with capital resources are able to give more than this. This type of giving calls for strength of will and courage to sacrifice.

Invariably this kind of giving strengthens faith and brings the kind of interest that permits a church to grow and render greater service.

This "Realistic Giving results in a pledge for a larger amount than we thought would be possible for us. In this Canvass our pledge should be the largest amount ever given.

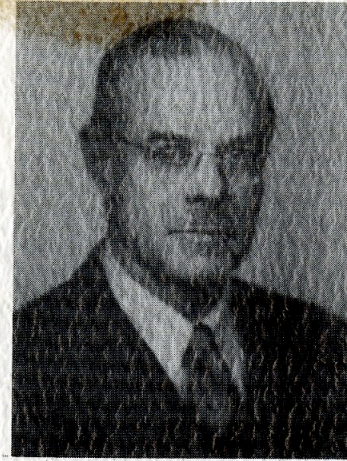
To complete this Canvass, the Church needs each one of us even as we need the CHURCH. It needs our prayers, our assistance, our energies, and our financial aid. Our pledges will complete our objectives and express our gratitude for a heritage of free faith, and our concern for the work of the liberal church.

### OUR REAL GOAL

With Faithful Dedication  
A Realistic Pledge  
From Every Family

### MY PLEDGE SHOULD BE

One determined after a dedicated self-appraisal.  
One that brings an inner conviction of satisfaction.  
One about which I can talk to others without apology.



A. M. Hamann  
Campaign Chairman

