

**First Church in Jamaica Plain, Unitarian Universalist
Henderson Foundation Grant Application Narrative
For Window Restoration Project, April 24, 2021**

This narrative is organized using the lettering and headings from the Foundation's application guidelines.

d. Project description including specifics of proposed project.

Three windows in the main sanctuary of the Church exhibit deflection, lead fatigue and water penetration through the lead matrix where the old waterproofing compound has dried out, leaving voids between the glass and the lead. These windows will be removed and completely re-lead. The windows will be removed from their frames and the openings temporarily enclosed with painted plywood. The windows will be transported to the restoration studio, photographed and documented with rubbings, and then completely dismantled. Each piece of glass will be cleaned, and any cracked pieces will be preserved and repaired with copper foil or silicone edge-gluing. The windows will be re-lead using a lead similar in size and profile to the original, then will be soldered and waterproofed on both sides. New copper tie wires will be attached to the windows at every support bar line. The windows will be delivered to the Church, reinstalled in their respective location and the perimeters sealed with silicone sealant.

e. Description of entire project if requested amount is part of larger project.

This project is part of a larger restoration of the Church in response to an Exterior Envelope Conditions Assessment and Master Plan the Church commissioned from Spencer, Sullivan & Vogt (SSV) at the end of 2020. The Church plans to conduct a capital campaign starting in 2021 and combine those funds with MPPF, CPA and Henderson grants, to replace the sanctuary roof while restoring and reinforcing the sanctuary roof trusses. Ensuring that the sanctuary windows are sound and not leaking is a critical part of protecting the sanctuary structure.

f. Significance of proposal project to the community and the city of Boston.

The church stands at the historic, cultural, and civic center of Jamaica Plain. It began as the Congregational Society of the Third Parish of Roxbury in 1769 and is listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places. The current 1853 church was designed by architect Nathaniel Bradlee in the English Gothic Revival style. The church tower and sanctuary face the Soldiers' Monument (1871), framing the Jamaica Plain Monument Square National Register Historic District. These three windows are visible from Centre and Eliot Streets, and preserving them will protect the sanctuary and the historic fabric of the neighborhood.

Beyond its historical significance, our building contributes to the cohesion and vitality of the Jamaica Plain area. It currently helps our neighborhood provide for the hungry, educate our

community about racism, empower children through the arts, facilitate AA meetings, give LGBTQ+ people social space, and address climate change. The sanctuary provides space for local artisans to market their wares at crafts fairs during the holidays and spring. The sanctuary is one of the few large meeting spaces centrally located in Jamaica Plain and has frequently hosted large community gatherings on numerous topics of social concern. A congregant-run, grassroots food pantry serves 65 people twice-monthly. During the pandemic, our food pantry has had to suspend normal operations, and is cooperating with another pantry to coordinate food distribution in the area. They use the sanctuary as a large cool storage facility for thousands of pounds of food. During normal times, the church's food pantry stores food in the side pews nearest the sanctuary windows, so making the windows water-tight is critical to supporting that operation.

Critically, this project is part of a larger restoration, as described above, designed to repair several major building systems that are at the end of their useful life. The Church is doing all it can to maintain the building as a place of religious service with full access to the community. Without immediate efforts to restore the building to a point at which consistent maintenance is possible, as described below, we may lose it to residential gentrification.

g. Schedule

We are prepared to begin this window restoration project immediately after the grant is awarded. The stained-glass conservator, Serpentino Stained Glass Studio, has already assessed the building's windows and provided a cost estimate for their restoration. The anticipated timeframe for the project, including removal and transportation of the windows to Serpentino's workshop, off-site restoration, and re-installation, is eight weeks.

i. Anticipated completion date of project overall, and/or specific project element for which funds are being requested.

The phased restoration of the First Church is to be executed in accordance with the availability of funds. Several high-priority repairs were identified in SSV's 2021 report, which will address critical deficiencies at masonry and window openings.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) is currently reviewing an application for an MPPF grant to address masonry concerns. As required by MHC, that portion of the project must be completed and closed out by June 30, 2022. As mentioned above, we anticipate eight weeks for the stained-glass restoration. Assuming the grant from the Henderson Foundation is awarded in early July, the windows should be fully restored and in-place by early September.

The Church will be applying to the Community Preservation Act program for support in replacing the sanctuary and restoring the parish hall roofs.

The lowest priority deficiencies identified in the report will naturally be among the last addressed. Such repairs include comprehensive replacement of shingle siding and selective repointing of stone walls. As recommended in the report, these measures should be executed within ten years, according to availability of funds.

ii. If you are awarded a grant, indicate how soon after an award you will begin to incur costs for your project.

SSV's designer fees will be invoiced monthly. As such, our earliest costs will be incurred approximately one month after award of the grant. We anticipate that Serpentino will invoice 100% at project closeout, approximately eight weeks after award.

h. Plan for maintenance and maintenance funding (submit a copy of the maintenance plan if available).

The Master Plan conducted by SSV, which is attached to this application, includes a detailed Cyclical Maintenance Plan on pages 87 - 89. The estimated annual maintenance budget is \$11,833, with a recommended sinking fund of \$40,964 per year as a set-aside for future capital replacement projects. The church has a lease arrangement with a mobile phone provider to house telecom equipment in our tower, so there is a consistent income stream that can easily fund the maintenance budget and a portion of the sinking fund.

k. Indicate how the contribution of the Henderson Foundation will be credited for the project, in media and other acknowledgements, both during the work phase and following project completion. Please include information about permanent recognition if applicable.

The Church will post signage on its lawn or perimeter fence acknowledging the Henderson Foundation's support of the window project, with a description of the project and its schedule. The Church will publish the grant award and progress reports in its weekly newsletter, post them on its website page dedicated to the Church restoration project, and issue press releases at key points in the project to local Jamaica Plain media organs such as the Gazette and the Jamaica Plain News. Finally, the Church will place a plaque inside the sanctuary under or near each replaced window with agreed upon language along the lines of "This window was restored in 2021 through the generosity of the Henderson Foundation."

l. Indicate any public approvals your project has received or is pending.

Not applicable.

m. Please detail whether you own the property or building where the project is to take place.

The Church's building is owned by the Trust for the First Congregational Society of Jamaica Plain (Unitarian). See attached deed. The purposes of the Trust are to "conserve, carry forward and advance the religious traditions and purposes of the First Congregational Society of Jamaica Plain, a Unitarian Church; to support public worship and religious instruction in the name of the Church and if possible at the Church building at the corner of Eliot and Centre Streets, Jamaica Plain." The Trust joins in and fully supports this grant application.

n. Indicate any previous grants your organization or project has received from the Henderson Foundation.

Front church tower window restoration: \$77,510

Side church tower window and original church tower clock restoration: \$72,910

Note that the First Church is grandfathered as a 501(c)(3) organization. We have attached our current documentation of tax-exempt status from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.