

[church letterhead]

To the Members and Friends of Plymouth Congregational Church,

As you know, on May 25, 2015, the Trustees of Plymouth Congregational Church signed a contract with Verizon to allow the installation of a cell antenna inside the church steeple. The Trustees acted with the approval of the congregation as expressed in a vote on the matter at an all-church meeting on April 19, 2015. In taking this step, four considerations guided our decision.

One, the presence of a cell antenna at this site in Belmont will benefit the community. Belmont Center and the Winnbrook and Pleasant Street areas are notorious as a “dead zone” for cell service. Yet every year, not just in Belmont but across the U.S., the use of wireless communication skyrockets. As more people come to rely mostly—some, even solely—on cell phones, having adequate infrastructure in our town to support such growth is a critical concern, not just for personal convenience and private commerce, but also for public safety. The steeple of Plymouth Church, because of its location and height, provides an ideal spot for a concealed cell antenna that will improve local cell service.

Two, the presence of an antenna inside the steeple poses no undue safety risks to those in or around the building—to the congregation, to building users, or to our neighbors. The Trustees and the Cell Antenna Committee have done extensive due diligence in this regard, individually and as a group, with Verizon, and with independent consultants recently engaged by the church. We are fully confident that the radio frequency (RF) emissions coming from a cell antenna placed inside the church steeple will be well below the limits of exposure to RF emissions set by the Federal Communications Commission. Complete copies of the scientific studies containing full details of the data, including consultant David Maxson’s “Radio Emissions from Proposed Facility at 582 Pleasant Street, Belmont, Massachusetts,” are available in the Church Office during normal weekday hours and on Sundays when we gather for worship.

Three, the installation of the cell antenna will cause no change whatever in the outward appearance of the steeple, nor in any of the original wood, metal or brick materials that make it up. Once the installation is complete it will be impossible to tell from the outside that the steeple contains a cell antenna—except that in the process the steeple will get a fresh coat of paint.

Four, Plymouth Church will receive regular payments from Verizon in return for use of the space inside the steeple. (Verizon will also pay to install, maintain, and if necessary, to remove the equipment.) These regular payments will supplement the congregation’s own giving to help extend the church’s ongoing ministries in Belmont, in New England and farther afield.

Last week Verizon submitted to the Belmont Town Planning Board a revised application for a cell antenna construction permit which had been modified in light both of the Board’s comments and of concerns expressed by some of the church’s neighbors about certain aspects of the original application. The new design does away with the need for air conditioning equipment and thus with any noise such equipment might cause. Moreover, the new design calls for no externally visible changes to the exterior of the present building nor any need to replace the original wooden louvers with fiberglass.

We are well aware that there is opposition from some of the church’s neighbors to our decision to install a cell antenna in the steeple. We are hopeful that Verizon’s new design

addresses all of the concerns over which the church has control and that the project can move forward. We believe that when it is completed, this project will be beneficial to the entire community.

As a Congregational church, we govern ourselves; and we, all of us in the congregation, are jointly responsible for the decisions we make. As a community of faith, we take seriously the effects on ourselves and our neighbors that these congregational decisions may have. Throughout this process we have attempted to follow Christ's teaching "to go the second mile" (Matt. 5:41).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me, Rev. Joe Zarro, Chet Messer, or one of the members of Cell Tower Committee.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph A. Greene". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Joseph A. Greene, Moderator

Chet Messer, Chair, Board of Trustees

Karen Donelan, Myron Kassaraba, Ron Haska, Holly Stratford, Cell Antenna Committee Members