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Business

Epic Church plans to purchase $15 million Union Square building

The move would mark the church's fifth home since its founding in 2010.



Pastor Ben Pilgreen plans to move his congregation into a bigger sanctuary in Union Square. | Amanda Andrade-Rhoades/The Standard



By **Zara Stone**
Tech Culture Reporter

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One hopeful new Union Square tenant is betting that the city's economic resurgence could be paired with a spiritual comeback. Pastor Ben Pilgreen of Epic Church in SoMa has emailed his flock that the organization has "officially entered the process to purchase our future church home at 491 Post Street."

The building, with 40-foot ceilings and a 1,000-seat sanctuary, is listed for $15 million.

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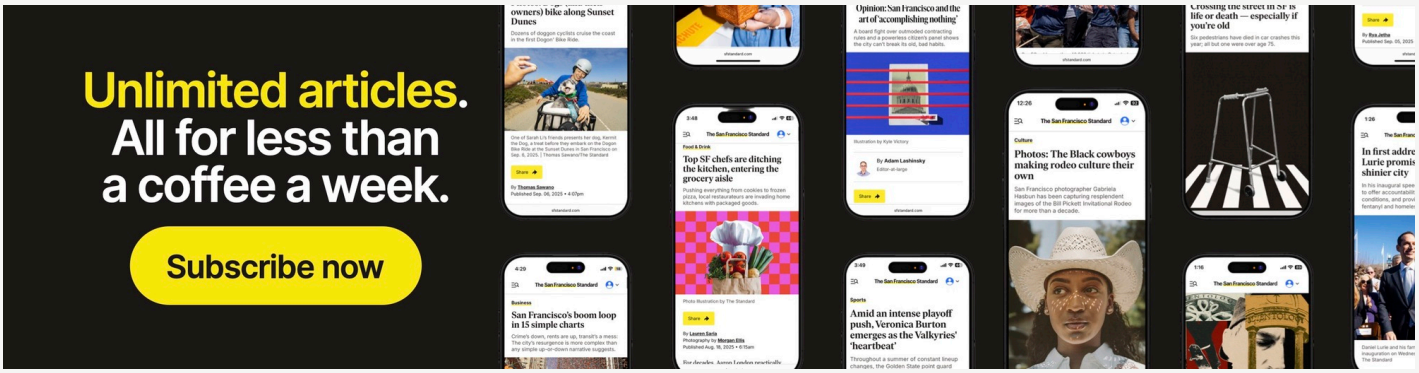

The move would mark Epic's fifth home since the nondenominational church's founding in 2010. It also shakes up the narrative of San Francisco as an especially secular city.

Since its first meetings, held at the W Hotel, Epic Church has grown in congregants and in footprint. It moved into a 6,000-square-foot space on Howard Street in 2011, then to a basement at 250 Stevenson St. around 2014. In 2023, the church purchased 414 Brannan, a 20,000-square-foot building in SoMa, for $12 million for use as its base of operations.



491 Post St. | Courtesy Google Streetview

The Post Street building, which is more than double that size, was built in 1913 as the First Congregational Church. It was designed by the Reid Brothers, the architects behind the Fairmont Hotel and Oakland's Grand Lake Theatre. The classical revival building has large arched windows, fluted columns, and decorative cornices.

The Academy of Art purchased the building in 2001 and used it as a student auditorium. The art school is divesting from the property as part of a broader push to shrink its real estate portfolio due to declining attendance.

Pilgreen said the purchase is a necessary step for advancing Epic's presence in the city. The church is beloved by techies and counts billionaire couple Trae and Michelle

Stephens among its congregants. “A lot more people seem to be exploring faith [and] are more comfortable talking about faith if they have it,” Pilgreen said.

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Some 1,700 people attended Easter services at the church; 100 were forced into an overflow section. “Even on normal Sundays, we’ve been feeling the strain,” Pilgreen said.

Epic entered into a purchase agreement for the property in April and is in the due diligence process.

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The new space will serve “to expand our kids and students ministries, foster community, and deepen our impact in the city for generations to come,” Pilgreen said.

“We are walking through this prayerfully.”

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Zara Stone

Tech Culture Reporter · Contact

Zara Stone is a seasoned tech culture reporter covering AI, business, and longevity.

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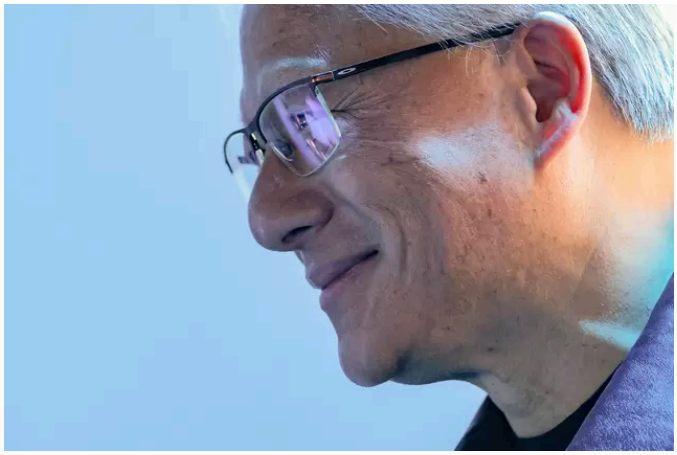

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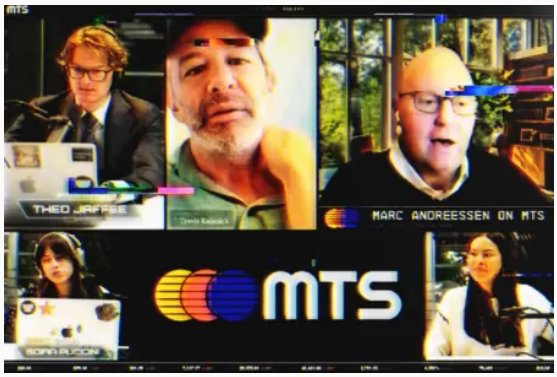

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