



## ***“FORWARD IN FAITH”***

### **A Case Statement to Build a New Sanctuary for Shepherd of the Prairie Lutheran Church, Huntley, IL**

October 6, 2015

#### **I. SOTP Lutheran Congregation Votes to Build its Second Building: a New Wing with a Large Multi-Purpose Room**

On May 3, 2015, our congregation voted to build a wing on our church with a large multipurpose room, and requested the Congregational Council to arrange for the architectural plans and capital appeal that would be required to accomplish this addition. On August 17 the Congregational Council mailed a case statement to the congregation for the “Forward in Faith” Appeal, reminding the congregation of the urgent need for more space. Just about every aspect of our ministry is currently overcrowded: children’s VBS, confirmation and other youth programs, bell and vocal choir rehearsal areas, office space, festival worship services, and the parking lot.

The case statement recognized that we have a need for a larger, more dedicated worship space, and obliquely acknowledged that some members would prefer that this campaign be for that sanctuary. But it argued that our most pressing need was for a new wing with a large multi-purpose room, because it would give us the space that we need for expanded ministries, as well as doubling as a temporary worship space for large festival services.

The clear implication of this plan, however, was that the \$3.5 Million that we needed to retire our \$500K debt and build the \$3 Million addition would be followed as soon as possible by the greatest appeal of all, to build a new sanctuary. In fact, the central argument of the case statement was that the current campaign for the wing with the large multi-purpose room was the most important campaign for anyone who wanted a new sanctuary. We would never be able to build a new sanctuary if our debt was out of control. So the only way to insure that we’d be able

to build a new sanctuary soon would be to stretch as much as possible for the campaign to build the new wing with the large multi-purpose room.

## **II. Church Council Listens to Congregation & Discerns A New Path to Achieve its Same Vision**

With the guidance of Shepherd of the Prairie's Building Team, the Congregational Council hired Groth Design Group to begin developing plans. The Council also began working with RSI, a stewardship firm, to advise us with our capital appeal. The appeal's leadership team was trained on August 24 and 25. The congregation was invited to a Visioning Worship led by Paul Baribeau of the Groth Design Group on August 18. This was followed up by Paul spending an entire day visiting and listening to leaders in the congregation about the future growth of Shepherd of the Prairie. On September 10, Paul reported back preliminary findings and ideas to the Building Team.

During all of this the Building Team and Congregation Council started hearing doubts and reservations about the project from various members. When they shared what they were hearing with each other they realized that they were dealing with more than a few concerned members. There seemed to be a broad unanimity, particularly surrounding two issues:

**First**, many members expressed a deep weariness about the prospect of following up the current \$3.5 Million campaign to build a multi-purpose wing with yet another, much greater appeal to build a sanctuary. Even with great generosity from the congregation, it was not hard to imagine that 12-15 years of capital appeals would be required to fund the two additions, and that would be on top of the 7 years of appeals that the congregation had already conducted to fund our original building! Members raised concern that this was too much. Priorities needed to be established.

**Second**, there was a strong feeling amongst many members that a new sanctuary was the first priority, if the current sanctuary could be reconfigured to provide the extra ministry space that the wing with the large multipurpose room was meant to provide. Not only are festival worship services packed, it's now common for normal Sundays to be packed. Nothing is more important than worship for our church's witness and growth. We need a larger, more attractive, more permanent sanctuary now. This sentiment was reinforced by the architect's observations about the deficiencies of the current worship space: its location prevents the expansion that will be required for the new sanctuary and its HVAC system is disturbingly loud. In the architect's opinion the best location for the new sanctuary is on the very same spot that the church had intended to build the new wing, because it will create a much more impressive and inviting presence from the street, and because it will be much more accessible from the expanded parking that is planned.

Realizing that many members preferred this new direction and that most of the other members would probably choose it if they were given the option, and most importantly, believing that this new direction was the best way to advance SOTP's ministry, the church council met on Sept 21 and voted to recommend that the congregation accept the revised plan.

Since our congregation's constitution requires that the congregation be given 30 days' notice before voting on such a matter, the earliest date the Council could call this congregational meeting is Sunday, October 25, and so it has called a congregational meeting on that date, following the 10:45 a.m. worship service. But since shutting down the appeal until that date would require shifting the appeal to winter of 2016, and since this would result in a great loss of momentum and excitement, the council has chosen to continue the appeal with the new project on the original schedule, unless the congregation decides to bring a halt to this approach on October 25.

### **III. The Sanctuary Project will Achieve the Benefits of the New Wing /Multi-Purpose Room Project and Add a New Sanctuary.**

The original appeal project was approved because of the church's desperate need for more ministry space. The council is proposing this revised project with the full belief that this repurposing of the current building and the additional spaces associated with the new sanctuary will adequately meet every ministry need addressed in the original case statement plus provide us with a new sanctuary and gathering area.

Under capacity **VBS** space will be solved with additional classroom potential in the new fellowship space created within the former worship center.

Under capacity **ministry** space, in particular for the youth and music groups, will be solved with more dedicated youth space in the former worship space, gathering area, and office areas.

Under capacity **office** space will be solved with new expanded offices.

Under capacity **music rehearsal** space will be solved with better music areas within the new worship center, better storage for music near the worship center, storage dedicated for music near the worship, and more classrooms near the worship center that might serve for warm-up before worship.

Under capacity **worship** space. This is the most obvious need that will be solved with the new plan. The sanctuary will seat 350-400 (with additional overflow capacity of 100) as opposed to our current 225.

Under capacity **storage** areas will be solved with storage areas in new classrooms, provisions for quilt and craft storage in the former youth office, and possibly storage in a basement shared with mechanical equipment.

Under capacity **parking** will be solved with the identical parking plan associated with the original plan.

#### **IV. The Cost for the New Plan and our Call to Commitment**

The **good news** is that our congregation will only be asked to contribute to a single building effort instead of two building efforts. This is the last building project that the congregation will be asked to contribute to for a long time. Our string of uninterrupted capital appeals since 2003 will come to a much sooner end when we finish paying for the sanctuary, or cut its debt down far enough that we can absorb the remaining debt in a long term mortgage that doesn't put undue pressure on our annual operating budget.

The **challenge** is that the sanctuary project will cost more than the new wing/large multipurpose room project. We're working as rapidly as possible to develop a reliable cost figure, but early estimates from our architect and construction manager indicate that the costs to build a new sanctuary, gathering space, office spaces and classroom spaces will be \$4.5 - \$5.0 million. These estimates are based on very early and incomplete conceptual drawings. As we move toward more detailed and complete plans, both the Architect and the Construction Manager will work diligently to try to find ways to reduce this cost. We are optimistic that these costs could be reduced.

Though this is a large increase from our original plan, the cost 6-9 years from now would be significantly more due to increasing building and interest costs. Further, by building the new sanctuary now we will create both the presence and the capacity to continue to attract new members who will contribute to the cost of this project.

While it is unlikely that we can raise enough funds in a single three year campaign to fund this entire project, it is crucial that we raise as much of it as possible. It is also crucial that those who are able make a lump sum contribution as opposed to spreading it over the three years. This will enable us to fund a greater portion of the construction costs ourselves, limiting the amount we will need to borrow and the associated interest costs.

This is an ambitious undertaking but we feel strongly that this is where God is leading us. It will require every household in our church praying and sacrificing as much as possible for this capital appeal. Our dollars will never have the power to reduce our long term costs as much as they do in this initial campaign.

**So we invite and challenge every member who loves the Lord and loves Shepherd of the Prairie Lutheran Church to pray, *“Dear Lord, What would you do through me to achieve your vision for our church. Help me discern a sacrifice that is meaningful and joyful.”***