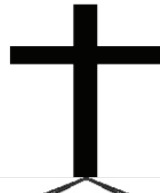


First
Focus



Special
Edition

FORWARD IN FAITH

Why Are We Building? Our Vision

Picture this....

- Rooms for our elementary and middle school children that will allow them to combine classes and break out into groups where faith will be formed and the story of Jesus told on Sundays.
- These same rooms will be shared during the week by a thriving preschool; a space that meets building code standards for rooms with children - 10 rooms
- West wing rooms (currently used by elementary grades) will become available to expand out adult offerings on Sunday mornings for singles, parenting, social ministry forums, and other special interests. (Currently, we have no space for additional morning classes.)
- Our Crib and Crawler Nursery will be relocated to the current Kindergarten room resulting in larger, brighter, more modern space, along with a rest-room. It also locates the nursery closer to an exterior exit and near the children's wing.
- Multi-purpose space for contemporary worship will be available for dramas, large educational gatherings, and fellowship occasions - with acoustics conducive to amplified sounds, projection technology, and lighting suitable for dramas.
- Conversion of our Fellowship Hall to a Welcome Center where ministries can be promoted, Fair Trade items made available, visitors and members welcomed. (This will eliminate congestion in the hallways and create a more positive space to promote ministries.)

How Did We Get Here?

Our History

- 1998- The first Facilities Task Force was formed. George Burfeind was Chairman. The recommendation of this committee were: “We find ourselves at a point in our community life where we need to respond to the blessing with further construction. We need to provide physical space both for those who are currently a part of this community as well as for those who will be future members of this community of faith.”
- 2002 - A second Facilities Task Force was formed. Steve Brinkey was the Chairman. The recommendations from the committee at the time were: “As a minimum, we recommend that a new facility have a large gathering room(s) suitable for contemporary worship with multi-sensory capability, fellowship activities, pre-school and after-school play area and recreational activities for all ages.”
- 2003 - In May the Kairos Study was completed. The recommendation from the Executive report dated May 19, 2003 states, “ There is both great risk and great hope for FLC to build a facility that will support an educational, fellowship, and outreach ministry, allowing the congregation to grow its ministry among all age groups. There is greater risk not to.”
- 2004 - In July a third Facilities Task Group was formed. George Burfeind was the Chairman. Their job was to look at the existing facility and determine needs in order of priority.
- 2007 - In February Cargill Associates was hired to conduct a Feasibility Study. Results of the study were: “ In light of the Pre-Campaign Feasibility Study, Cargill Associates recommends that First Lutheran Church proceed with the plans for a Capital Stewardship Program, the schedule being February 2007 to June 2007. Funding needs were ranked in order of priority. They were: 1: Renovated and Additional Education Space 2: Worship and family Life Center 3: Renovation of Existing Worship Space 4: Welcome Area and Covered Canopy Entrance 5: Gymnasium
- 2007 - In April FLC began a Capital Campaign to raise funds to build a New Building. Results from the initial capital Campaign were \$2,138,515.
- 2007 - Another Building Committee was formed. Bill Heckman was the Chairman. This group selected an architect and began the process of acquiring preliminary drawings.
- 2008 - In November at a Congregational meeting the Congregation agreed to take One More Vote on the Building once the firm bids were in thus being sure that debt did not outweigh the ability of the congregation to repay a loan.

- 2008 - An additional Finish Line Campaign was held to raise additional Capital dollars. An additional \$198,317 was pledged
- 2009 - A final Building Committee was formed. Fred Schmidt is the Chairman. This committee has been working with the architect to create finished drawings. They have also interviewed the builders, received sealed bids and will be making a recommendation to the council on September 24.

Trends At First Lutheran Membership - Attendance – Giving

Membership:*

2000 - 1604 Baptized Members	877 - Confirmed/Communing/Contributing
2009 - 1225 Baptized Members	743 - Confirmed/Communing/Contributing

It is important to note that in 2006 and 2009 the membership rolls were purged and members were removed for inactivity in Communing and Contributing

Attendance:

	8:45	9:00	11:15	6:00
2006 -	141	163	194	45
2007 -	125	177	173	44
2008 -	113	187	164	50
2009 -	114	211	163	61

Prior to 2006 service times changed and service types changed as well.

Giving:*

2000 - \$930,669 Regular Giving to the Budget	\$120,054 Dedicated Giving
2008 - \$981,981 Regular Giving to the Budget	\$82,166 Dedicated Giving

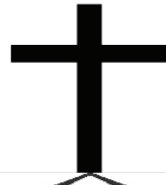
Total Campaign Gifts as of 8/31/09 \$1,470,010

Pledged Gifts - \$1,449,329

Non Pledged Gifts - \$20,681

Total Pledges	\$2,336,832
Anticipated Default	(\$233,683)
Total Expected	\$2,103,149

* Numbers were taken from the Annual Congregational Report.



The Countdown Has Begun

Information Forums

- There will be Eight Information Forums.
- These forums are open to all members of the congregation.
- You will hear a report from the Building Committee regarding the cost of the project
- You will receive information on current trends regarding Membership, Attendance, and Giving
- You will have the opportunity to ask questions and to share opinions.

Forum Times Are:

- Sunday October 4 - 10:00 AM, 11:15 AM, 4:00 PM
- Thursday October 8 - 7:00 PM
- Sunday October 11 - 10:00 AM, 11:15 AM, 4:00 PM
- Tuesday October 13 - 7:00 PM

Congregational Meeting Sunday October 18—10:00 AM

The purpose of this meeting will be to accept the recommendations from the council.

The recommendations are:

- To accept the recommendations from the Building Committee regarding the New Building, the Contractor, the Cost and the Financing needed to complete this project.
- To suspend the bylaws for this one vote reflecting a 2/3 majority vote in the affirmative for the vote to pass. (Currently the bylaws state that a simple majority vote 51% is sufficient for a motion to pass.)

The Congregation Takes the Vote Sunday October 25 At All Services

Each voting* member in attendance at any of the four services will receive a paper ballot. The ballot will read:

- Yes - I am in favor of moving ahead with the New Building
- No - I am not in favor of building at this time.
- All voting* members are asked to vote only one time.
- Absentee ballots will be available in the church office: Sunday October 18 at 11 AM - until Friday October 23 at 5 PM

*A voting member is someone who is confirmed and has contributed and communed in this current or the preceding calendar year.

Building Addition: The Countdown Begins

As you have read elsewhere in this special edition, the vision that emerged from this process ignited our generosity to pledge \$2,336,832. This is a watershed event in our life. It's much more than merely building classrooms and fellowship space. It's what the facilities enable us to do. We cannot simply maintain the status quo and hope to grow and thrive. Either we go forward, grow and expand our mission or we step back. Our current facilities limit us in both space and function. If we want to be a "large, thriving congregation," then this addition opens the door to our future and makes a statement about how we view children, youth and diversity.

We expect that you have questions regarding the building plan. We have tried to anticipate your questions and to provide answers below.

Question #1: What are the next steps in the process? The Building Committee has received bids from 6 construction companies. The Building Committee will meet with the Congregational Council on Thursday, September 24 to make a recommendation with regard to a construction company as well as financing. The good news is that all 6 bids are much less than we had budgeted for at the outset of this process!!! As a result, we anticipate that any related mortgage will be much lower than we had anticipated. We are currently working on a detailed budget for your review. We plan to bring all of this information to the congregation in the schedule laid out in this Special Edition.

Current economic conditions make this a challenging time for many members of our congregation and our community. However, these same economic conditions have created a very favorable bid environment as indicated by the bids we have received. Given that we already have conducted the capital campaign and collected more than 63% of our pledged total, there will never be a better time to build.

Question #2: Will the building cause us to incur additional operating costs over and above the costs of construction and furnishings? Yes. These include the additional costs of insurance, maintenance, and utilities. We have estimated that these additional costs will amount to approximately \$37,000/year.

Moreover, for the reasons set forth in response to Question No. 4 below, we believe it is necessary to plan on adding a second contemporary service on Sunday morning. The new service would be designed to address the gap in our membership for the persons in the 25 - 35 age range. To support two contemporary services every Sunday, we anticipate certain additional costs. These costs include: staff to plan the services, operate the sound board, and put together weekly media to be used in the service. There may also be a cost to pay musicians. We estimate these additional costs will be approximately \$38,000/year.

As a result, we anticipate that the overall cost of fully utilizing the new space will be approximately \$75,000 per year, plus any costs associated with a mortgage. As indicated above, we are working on a detailed budget and hope to provide information regarding our financing costs (if any) on October 4, 2009.

Question #3: Based on our budget performance over the past two years, can we handle the additional budgetary costs described in response to Question No. 2? Only you know how the economy has affected your household and your ability to support both mission and building. Rather than attempting to discern the ability of individuals to contribute, we have gathered data based on the giving of the congregation as a whole. Graphs will be provided to enable members to see giving trends by the congregation over the past 5-10 years. When you review these graphs, you will note that our budget income has dropped over the past 10 years. Most recently, our current budget reflects a reduction of \$62,472 of projected income, compared to the prior year. That is an obvious source of concern, particularly when we are discussing the addition of \$75,000 in annual budgetary costs. Over the same period, however, we have received pledges of \$2,336,832 for the capital campaign. Of that amount, more than \$1.4 million already has been collected. When added to budgetary giving, the past 2 years reflect a 40% increase in giving. In fact, the past 2 years reflect the most generous time in the history of our congregation.

We are optimistic that budgetary giving will increase as many individuals and families complete their building pledges in the next 12 to 24 months. However, there are no guarantees in life. As a congregation, we need to decide whether we are ready to make the commitments necessary to support the new building and bolster our mission and ministry. For example, we need to strengthen our staff through salary support and, when possible, increase the hours for our Children's (currently 25 hrs/wk) and Youth and Family Ministries (currently 32 hrs/wk) Directors. These are two ministries we need to grow as we move into our new facility. We also need to restore items reduced or deleted from last year's Mission Budget.

If we make the decision to go forward, then we need to be ready to increase our budgetary giving. If giving lags, then we will, by necessity, need to reduce our Mission Support to the NC Synod and ELCA until we're able to raise our income level. It's the only place in the budget where we have flexibility for short-term emergency financing. By the time of the informational meetings (October 4, 8, 11 and 13), we will be able to share the precise details of the financial impact of the building on our budget and individual giving.

Question #4: Is the multi-purpose room large enough for our needs? The seating capacity of the multi-purpose room for contemporary worship is 300. Our current attendance at contemporary worship averages 211. Given the excitement associated with a new building a surge in attendance might occur. In that event, the room could easily reach 80% capacity (at 240) rather quickly. Many studies indicate that when seating capacity is 80% occupied, visitors do not feel welcome at church. In the past year, we experienced 8 occasions when the attendance was at or above the 240 mark. September 13, 2009, our attendance was 257 and on September 20, 305. In short, some question whether there is room for people to fit in. For this reason, we believe it is important to plan for a second service when the building is opened. This will give us a seating capacity of 600 for contemporary worship and 480 at 80% capacity. Based on current worship trends, we believe that the new space will give us room to grow for the foreseeable future if we plan on two services.

Question #5: What about our worship trends? As the graphs indicate, traditional worship is declining and contemporary is increasing. The challenge before us is to grow all our services. We need to invite friends, colleagues, neighbors and family members to join us as we gather to worship, learn and serve. As indicated, buildings are not magnets; people, love and ministry are. While the building is important in terms of the ways it can support our mission and ministry, the key to our future is becoming more invitational.

Question #6: Aren't our membership numbers decreasing? Yes, they have declined, but the largest change was due to the decision to remove inactive members from our rolls, especially those who lived out of state. This gives us a truer picture of our congregation. We do have challenges in growing our young single and young married population. As with most mainline denominations, we're growing older. We hope that the new children's classrooms, relocated nursery, contemporary worship space and expanded contemporary worship offerings will help us reverse this trend. That said, even with the new building, membership trends point out the need to change our behavior and become more inviting.

Question #7: Will people come if we build? As indicated above, there are no guarantees in life and it is virtually impossible to develop reliable data on what unidentified people might do in the future if we build the building. In short, we do not know the answer to that with certainty. We do know that many members of the congregation have expressed a preference for a modern worship room capable of supporting a truly contemporary service. We know that many members would prefer to have both traditional services back in the main worship room. We know that there is a desire for contemporary worship at 11:00 from our past experience. Finally, we know that expanding and improving our educational facilities is a source of excitement for many. We certainly hope that the new children's classrooms, relocated nursery, contemporary worship space and expanded contemporary worship offerings will help us attract the younger members we need to ensure the future of the church.

At the heart of all this is the question about inviting: Are we inviting people to come with us to participate in our ministries at First Lutheran? The #1 reason people join a church is because someone they know invited them. How involved and passionate are we about our church and its ministries? Do God's love and our experience of that love in and through this community provide us with hope, encouragement, support, and care? As we listen to the needs of friends and families, do we relate how our church supports and encourages us? While the building can support our mission and ministry, it cannot extend an invitation to anyone. As members we are the magnet, and our faith stories, passion and invitation are what attract others to our church.

Perhaps the most important questions in this situation are:

1. If the new building excites both members who seek truly contemporary services and those who seek a full traditional service experience with organ music, will those same members invite more people to FLC?
2. Will those members who seek improved educational space invite new people to try our new facilities?

We certainly hope so, but we cannot guarantee those results.

Question #8: Why would we want to spend money on bricks and mortar in this economy? Wouldn't our mission be better served by raising money to support Greensboro Urban Ministry or supporting our Synod and ELCA commitment? Another way of stating that question might be: Will we be better able to support both these missions by building and growing a larger base of support? Mission and facility form a polarity the church always needs to manage. Both are important. How much money do we use to support and grow our ministries and how much do we give in support of outreach to others? In an economic downturn, the needs of the poor, under-employed, unemployed, and struggling are ever before us and we need to consider our call to serve the least of those among us. Given that "Eliminating Hunger and Homelessness" is part of our strategic plan, it is not unreasonable to ask whether we are doing enough and whether building makes sense. Does our facility inspire and lead us to invest in these outreach endeavors? What is the right balance between mission and ministry on the one hand, and long term economic commitment on the other? These are all valid questions. The answers are not simple, and reasonable people may differ widely on how best to address these issues. The facts are these:

Our congregation is generous in terms of its benevolence. Our Annual Budget, which supports the bulk of our mission and ministry programs, approaches one million dollars per year. In addition, we have a number of dedicated giving funds that support a variety of specific mission and ministry programs. These are funded by the congregation each year and total giving to these funds has exceeded \$100,000 eight of the past 10 years. Typically, we raise additional funds for the NC Synod through various institutional appeals as well as Disaster Relief and World Hunger efforts. Finally, it is important to remember that we do use our building as a component of both our ministry and outreach. It provides an infrastructure that we use to teach children and adults, provide meaningful worship experiences, supply meeting places for 12-Step Programs and Self-Help groups, and provide space for a host of community events. Thus, the congregation makes a significant annual commitment to mission and ministry.

Admittedly, the construction of a new building is expensive and the decision to invest congregation resources in a building should not be taken lightly. As noted above, our hope is that the new building will allow us to attract a new generation of younger members and to reinvigorate our traditional membership. More than 300 families and individuals have pledged \$2,336,832 to support the new building. The reasons for this overwhelming show of generous support likely vary from person to person and family to family. However, it is clear that at some level, the building plan represents a significant and important vision for those who already have pledged their funds.

While it would be nice if we also had \$2,336,832 to dedicate entirely to hunger and homelessness, the funds pledged have been pledged to a specific purpose---the construction of the building. You should vote for or against the building on its merits, and in accordance with your own views. However, everyone needs to be clear that a vote against the building will not effectively transfer the \$2,336,832 pledged to mission and ministry. As set out in greater detail below, if the building is voted down, each contributor will have the right to withdraw his or her pledge and obtain the return of any funds not already spent in the design phase of the project.

Question #9: What happens if we decide not to build? That's an interesting question. A decision not to build would be a strategic, long term decision. It will affect the future of our congregation in numerous ways:

- It is a decision to remain within the confines of this space for the foreseeable future. Some will see it as a desire not to grow.
- It might lead to combining traditional services given limited resources and space.
- It would necessitate renovations of the current worship space with an attempt to better accommodate both traditional and contemporary worship, and some way of addressing our current facility needs.
- A decision would need to be made about funds already committed. Each donor would have to be contacted. An option would be given to return the donated funds or allow those funds to be used for whatever purpose is agreed upon. Returned donations have negative tax implications for those who were kind enough to give.

The decision to build needs to be an intentional decision about our future and where we see God leading us. We believe that if we are going to continue to be a thriving, large congregation, then the new building and growing a more invitational culture are critical steps to ensure a bright future. If we do not approve the building, we will need to re-assess our strategic vision and chart a new path. Precisely what that path would be is unknown at this time. However, we trust in God that whatever decision is made will be the right one and that we will continue to do God's work together.

Pastor Charlie
Pastor Charlie

Pastor Jay
Pastor Jay



First Lutheran Church
3600 W. Friendly Avenue
Greensboro, NC 27410
www.firstlutheran.com

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Q&A

- **Why are we voting on this again?** - In 2007 the congregation voted to hold a Capital Campaign to raise funds for the purpose of building this building. Preliminary estimates to build the building and maintain it were running around 3.1 million dollars. At a congregational meeting in 2008 the congregation discussed the possibility of voting one final time once we had firm bids from the contractors. We now have those bids and are giving the congregation the chance to vote one final time on this project.
- **How does this meet our strategic purposes?** One strategic purpose is: Teaching Adults, Mentoring Children. The new facilities open up possibilities for more adult offerings on Sunday morning and creating more flexibility for our children's and youth education. It also upgrades our School for Young Children and creates a better learning environment. A second strategic purpose is: Inviting, Welcoming, and Caring for Everyone. The new facility will allow us to convert the existing fellowship hall into a more dedicated welcoming space where we can promote our mission and be together in a more inviting and welcoming fashion between services. A third purpose is: Increasing Shalom. The new facility will solve some existing space issues, create space for fellowship and welcoming others, give us more flexibility in supporting 12 Step Groups, as well as other community meetings or gatherings. A fourth purpose is: Worship as a Way of Life. The facility upgrades our contemporary service through projection, acoustics, stage and seating arrangement. It also permits traditional worshippers to be in a more "traditional" space. We hope this will give rise to what is encountered in our services.
- **What will the impact be on the School for Young Children (SFYC)?** The Property Committee, in consultation with the SFYC, has worked out an agreement to clear an area adjacent to the Friendly Holden Building parking lot, relocate the existing playground equipment during construction, and block off the west drive once the school day has begun. The north entrances from the existing parking lot will be closed during construction and only the entrances on the east and west sides of the church office will be used (by all people). We have also communicated our safety concerns to the contractors.