

Join us as we grow with God!

By Brother Don Wolfgang, Senior Pastor

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

Our new mission statement as agreed upon by the Vision Team invigorates our life together and guides our decisions: **Pathfinder Church exists to make Kingdom disciples of Jesus Christ, for the transformation of the world.** Along with that mission statement we have three primary areas of focus, which have not changed — **Worship, Connect, Serve.**

Born from the three focus areas, we developed five strategic goals to guide our life together:



- **Focus on Small Group Ministry**
- **Effective intergenerational, family-focused ministry**
- **Effective children and youth ministries to educate with a Christian worldview and support spiritual development**
- **Leverage Montessori and Before/After School Programs as a primary community outreach ministry**
- **Place a higher focus on Portage-area community outreach**

While all but the new mission statement pre-date my tenure as pastor, I whole-heartedly support these goals and focus areas.

Starting with our Strategic Building Plan of 2008, we have come to recognize that some aspects of our facility are barriers to us living out our mission and goals together. We have already witnessed the significant improvements to the Sanctuary as delineated in the plan. But here are some of the continuing issues: New parents do not like taking their babies to the lower floors for nursery; our greeting and fellowship areas are crowded on Sunday mornings, prohibiting us from proper fellowship and mingling; visitors feel uncomfortable; we have very limited Restrooms available on our first floor; we have 2,800 square feet of under-utilized space on the lower floor of the Education Wing, which cannot be used by the Montessori School or Before/After School program because it doesn't meet state licensing code requirements; and, we have several spaces that do not have air conditioning, making them difficult to use in the summer months.

All these reasons have led us to once again begin looking at how to make our facilities better support our strategic goals. As I have already told you in previous letters, the Church Council authorized the formation of both a Building Team and Capital Campaign Team to investigate moving forward with the strategic building plan previously approved by the church body. That is why you are receiving this newsletter.

Finally, with a project such as this we are governed by the United Methodist Book of Discipline, paragraph 2544. We must get approval from the Church Conference of our church consisting of every member of our church over the age of 18. (See meeting details at left.)

We have an amazing opportunity to further the Kingdom of God right here at Pathfinder Church. I personally support this endeavor with great anticipation of the future of our church. Will you join us as we grow with God?

Ever in His Service,
Brother Don

SAVE
THESE
DATES

**November 5th
10:30 a.m. or Noon**

The proposed revised building plan will be presented. The Building Team will be available to provide details and answer questions. Meetings will be held in the Gymnasium.

**November 19th
5 p.m. meeting
Dinner to follow**

A Called Church Conference will be held to vote on the revised building plan and capital campaign plans. A Thanksgiving dinner will follow the meeting. More details regarding the dinner will follow.

Congregation expresses support for building project

By Jeff Susor, Praxis Nonprofit Strategies

I want to thank the nearly 125 individuals who shared their thoughts in September and early October about the church, its facilities, proposed renovations, and potential support as the congregation considers the possibility of a capital campaign to fund building improvements. The results of the planning study were presented at a special meeting of the Church Council on October 24th.

The Building Team is proposing a single project focused primarily on the main floor gathering space and the Education Wing. Respondents saw those areas as critical to the life and ministries of the church and largely recognized current challenges, such as limited Restrooms, crowding before and after worship, and the remoteness of the Nursery. Eighty-five percent of people supported the idea of investing to improve those areas.

While people support improving these two areas, there was some skepticism about the impact of the current shortcomings. Only one-third saw the state of the building as rising to the level of being a barrier to ministry; however, when asked if updating facilities would better equip our church to serve our community and live out our mission, 73 percent agreed. In general, people described these as appropriate levels of care to maintain and modernize the building and better support the work already underway at Pathfinder.

Assuming leaders have a good plan for improvements, is now the right time to move forward with a fundraising and building project?

One of two questions I had at the outset of the project related to timing. Assuming leaders have a good plan for improvements, is now the right time to actually move forward with a fundraising and building project? While churches might not normally undertake a project like this in the second year under a new minister, three-quarters of respondents supported the idea of a 2018 capital campaign, and I agree this timing makes sense in Pathfinder's circumstance. These are priorities that were originally adopted by the congregation five years ago and they were only put on temporary hold to prioritize a successful leadership transition. The original needs remain and are as important now as they were in 2011.

The second question was whether undertaking a project of the scope being proposed without incurring long-term debt would be within reach for Pathfinder. Ninety-three percent of respondents said they would personally make a gift to help fund this project. Forty-three households, representing 15 percent of current contributors, offered an estimate of the level of support they intended to provide. The estimated giving from that group ranged between \$278,130-\$325,030, including 25 gifts of \$5,000 or more. Based on the breadth and level of financial support, I believe a fundraising goal near or somewhat above \$1 million should be attainable.



by the numbers

Do you believe our first phase of improvements from 2012 (Sanctuary, roof, parking lot) has been impactful and served our congregation well?

Agree – 86%
Disagree – 3%

Do you believe remodeling and upgrading the church facility would help to equip our church to serve our community and better live out our mission?

Agree – 73%
Disagree – 4%

How supportive would you be of a congregation decision to commit resources to the following projects?

Education Wing – 85%
Asbury/Kitchenette/
Restrooms – 86%

Would you personally be willing to financially support a building project for Pathfinder Church?

Yes – 93%
No – 7%

The background of our

Revised Church Building Plan

By Building Team Co-Chairs Marshall Beachler & Ron Stoll

Our Building Team has been working over the past six months to develop a new comprehensive church building plan to address the following **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**:

- **Resolve the major interior building issues and deficiencies**
- **Update the interior appearance in a large portion of the building**
- **Optimize the functionality of the entire building**
- **Enhance the safety and security features of the building**



The revised building plan, to be presented at the Congregation Meeting on November 5th, is focused on supporting the achievement of our church's strategic ministry priorities articulated by Brother Don in this newsletter, as well as anticipated future building needs.

The prior strategic building plan was used as a framework for the development of the revised building plan. The new plan incorporates the major building modifications needed into a single comprehensive building project, rather than follow the multi-phased approach taken under the prior strategic building plan developed in 2011.

During the team's review and evaluation of the project components included under the strategic building plan, it became apparent that significant changes should be made to certain project components to improve the functionality and utilization of the first floor areas, as well as to achieve cost efficiencies in the renovation process.

The MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS included under the revised building plan are as follows:

- **Relocation of the Nursery to the first floor of the Education Wing**
- **Improved security throughout Education Wing and at key entrances**
- **Changes throughout the Education Wing to meet building code requirements and State of Michigan childcare regulations**
- **Expansion of all Restroom facilities on the first floor**
- **Expansion of the Narthex/Asbury area to provide a more welcoming and functional fellowship space**
- **Modernization and enlargement of the Kitchenette facility on the first floor**
- **Installation of air conditioning in multiple first floor areas, relocated Wesley Room, and lower level of the Education Wing**
- **Complete renovation and rebuild of the elevator**

This summary highlights the major enhancements to be included under the proposed revised building plan. The Building Team is excited and energized at the prospect of making these significant improvements to our church building. We look forward to reviewing and discussing the complete building plan recommendation with everyone on November 5th.



Why do we consider building improvements a priority now?

Pathfinder is in a unique position among churches. With no debt, stable financial resources, and strong pastoral and lay leadership, we are committed to renewing our outreach to the community. Our current facility hinders our ability to meet the diverse needs of members and to extend hospitality to newcomers.

How does this project compare to the 2012 building plan?

Rather than the previous multi-phased approach, the proposed plan is a more comprehensive design to address primary structural challenges and alleviate the need for significant building-related fundraising for the foreseeable future. We are not saying we'll have a flood of visitors/new members simply because of more restrooms or improved security for children, and of course we won't be a fundamentally different church. However, we believe this plan will make it easier to connect with visitors and each other, while improving the comfort and convenience for all age groups.

How will we fund this project? How is a capital campaign different from our regular giving?

We are proposing a capital campaign to fund this construction project. A capital campaign seeks to raise money for a special project above and beyond our regular giving. Unlike regular giving, which supports the annual operations/missions budget, gifts to a capital campaign are generally paid over multiple years. If approved by the congregation, we intend to ask members of our church family to consider a three-year capital pledge and to maintain regular giving at the same level.

We value our intergenerational church and respect that each life stage brings financial challenges and opportunities. As a Bible-based congregation, we invite each person/family to seek God's will and discernment to guide decisions for your financial support.

In Our Own Words...

Representative quotes from the 125 people who participated in the building survey

First impressions are so important. We may not want to believe that the look for our building impacts people's choices, but that's the reality.

People spend most of their time in worship, and the things we did in the Sanctuary are leaps and bounds ahead of where they were. We hit the nail on the head by starting there.

These changes are necessary if we're going to attract a younger generation. Appearance matters. This is a step the church really needs to take. The climate control in this building is a nightmare. You need to occasionally update things. All of these things seem positive to me.

Moving the Nursery near the Sanctuary is a must if we want to be able to reach young families. The current Kitchenette and Restrooms are a physical roadblock. I would like to see a more open space there, so we can connect with each other without it feeling crowded. And all age groups want more Restrooms. The Kitchenette is simply sad.

My only concern is the amount of money you're talking about. That sounds like a lot. I would want a good understanding of the plan and where every penny of that budget was going. I want to make sure we stay disciplined in our budget. If you're asking people to sacrifice, I need to know you are using that money with care. Are we in a good spot economically to handle this? What happens if you only receive half of the money you thought you needed? Are you planning for contingencies?

The gathering space is the priority from my perspective. That would give us a much better feel of community. The area around the Sanctuary is very congested. Swapping the Nursery is a good idea, but it doesn't impact me personally. None of these seem like bad things. I like the idea of putting dead space to use for us.

This is overdue. I think it will create a sense of excitement. I like the idea of changes that will benefit a large group of people.