

QUESTIONS ANYONE?

*This recommendation was not an easy one to arrive at. It took over eighteen months of study, lively debate, prayer, and sleepless nights (Why does the Spirit choose 2 am to talk with us? Maybe that is when He has a captive audience and we listen?). Always present were two criteria – How BEST to continue our Mission of being a “**Community Growing Disciples for Christ**” and the singular purpose put to us by the Council “**To explore, and subsequently to create, a facilities plan that is fiscally feasible to meet the needs of Trinity’s Congregation and regional community, today and in the future.**”*

The following are questions raised during conversations and at the Town Hall Meetings. Please continue to question, discuss, and pray regarding this very important matter before us.

Why do we need to expand? The sanctuary is full only on Christmas and Easter..... Why don't we just add another worship service? Can't we add another Sunday School session or have a “Sunday School” session on a weeknight or after school? How big is *too big*? Will we continue to grow? Why not start a *Mission* congregation or a *Sister* Congregation? Merge with another church and share facilities? Are we going to loose members no matter what the results of the vote are?

- If one studies the information regarding the weekly attendance (available at the narthex table, thru the office, or on the website www.tlcowatonna.org), it is apparent that it is no longer just Christmas and Easter that the sanctuary is full. To add another service on Sunday morning would only add to the congestion in the parking lot and fellowship areas, and ask even more from our pastoral staff. Most, when asked, prefer to attend worship services on Sat/Sunday rather than mid week. “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy”. A Sunday School session at 11:15 was tried some years ago, with very limited success.
- The Task Force did not pursue the creation of a *Mission* or *Sister* congregation. This was not the direction decided by the congregation to be given by the Church Council. Through the study by Lyle Schaller, the Long Range Planning Group, Vision Day, and confirmed by the interviews done by David Kane, the direction was received to arrive at a recommendation for THE congregation, singular. To merge with another congregation would essentially create the “dual-site option” that was resoundingly opposed. Trinity members had, and have, other churches, other *Lutheran* churches, even other *ELCA Lutheran* churches to choose from, yet choose to belong to Trinity. Do we turn them away because we are “getting too big? Trinity is able to provide the variety of programs *because* of our size. It is thru the participation and nurturing in these programs and their ministry that we connect with each other and come together to celebrate and worship. The prayer that is raised is that our congregation seeks God’s guidance and trusts that **His Will** be forthcoming in this vote, whatever the outcome. **God has a plan for the Mission of Trinity Lutheran Church. He and He alone will get us on track with that plan and lead us to the best way to accomplish His mission, because of ourselves, or in spite of ourselves.** We only have to listen to what He is telling each one of us as individuals and vote accordingly. The rest is in His hands.
- Addressing worship services and Sunday School, only addresses two of the issues that point to needed expansion. Youth & adult activities & recreation, fellowship opportunities, office, work space, and storage constraints, accessibility, Nursery School concerns, parking are some of the others. Any single issue may have a resolution, but at what cost to the others. (i.e. We gained much needed room in the narthex but sacrificed offices to do so.) What is the effect on the big picture? And how long will the “fix” last?
- The Task Force was charged to look 20 – 30 years into the future. A daunting task! Will we continue to grow in our mobile society? Where is that crystal ball when you need it? Yes, our society is mobile - by definition that means that people move – to, as well as from - Owatonna and Trinity. We continue to have new member classes with large numbers. Owatonna continues to grow. We can only pray that we continue to do our part in our Mission of “Growing Disciples for Christ”.

Isn't there any way we can make an expansion work on our present site? Shouldn't we have a second opinion on the condition of the existing structure and expansion on this site? Can we expand our present sanctuary? Extend the balcony? Why did we purchase the lots to the east if we now are going to relocate? Can we build on the east lots so that the building cost of matching the existing structure is reduced? Can we have underground parking? Build over parking (Owatonna Inn style)? Parking Ramp? Off-site parking with shuttles? Continue to buy lots to the east for continued expansion, green space, parking? Move the offices and administration off-site (similar to the school system)? Can a new space serve both worship and fellowship functions to lessen the impact on this site? What about our location advantage to the High School and the center of town?

The easy answer to most of those questions could be "Yes". BUT, yes may not satisfy our long term needs!!

- Yes, we could have pursued another opinion on the present condition of our facility, for a price. The assessment we received was done at no cost, was thorough, was reviewed by those most familiar with our facility, and was only one of many reports used to arrive at the recommendation. The report by Knutson Construction is available at the office or on the website
- David Kane has 30 years of experience in working with churches and was hired as an architectural consultant only. He gathered information, formed a needs assessment report, and presented the Task Force and congregation with information. He did not indicate his personal or professional conclusion until the Task Force had arrived at their recommendation and then shared he had come to the same conclusion. Notes on his interviews with staff, commissions, and organizations, along with the Need Assessment Report, are available in the office or on the website.
- The \$180,000 included in the motion is to cover the hiring of professionals to guide us. An architect would produce designs and schematics to answer questions of what the new facility might look like and what it might include. A professional consulting firm would guide us thru the funding process and determine how much financial commitment the congregation is willing to make. These two processes are very interconnected.
- Expanding the sanctuary would be next to impossible, extremely costly, and destroy the very essence of what we would be trying to preserve. If architecturally feasible, extending the balcony would gain only a few seats and further destroy the architectural qualities that make our sanctuary what it is and again be cost prohibitive, to say nothing of what it would do the sound qualities. A combined "Fellowship/Worship" space? What of those occasions where both are used simultaneously or immediately following? Would we have a space that served neither function well?
- Parking – Here may be some "No" answers – It is highly unlikely the city would approve of any parking option except the conventional lot on-grade, especially in our residential neighborhood. If approval was obtained, the price of each stall or construction cost over it more than doubles. Is that how we want to spend our dollars? Shuttle from the High School Lot? Yes, BUT- what about our weather? Young families with several children? Those with mobility challenges? (Back to the BIG picture and addressing *all* the needs).
- The lots to the east – Purchased to keep our options open – so that we even could *consider* expansion here. We currently own only three lots and have an option on two others. The sixth lot we neither own nor have an option to buy. Timing & cost here is critical – How long are we willing to wait for this land to become available and what will the price be then? We really are unable to do *any* expansion until we have *all six* lots. The cost for the 1.7 acres (all six lots) will total about \$900,000 for acquisition only bringing our total site to about 5.5 acres. We could purchase 40 acres for the same \$900,000 value offering expansion possibilities well into the future.
- Continue to purchase lots to the east to expand? The houses (purchased or proposed to purchase) have to be destroyed or removed (\$), the utilities capped and terminated (\$) and the ground brought to grade (\$) before construction can begin. Building on this filled area creates additional challenges for construction. Do we want our education facility across a parking lot from the sanctuary? Families, children, adults, going back and forth across a parking lot in all weather with cars entering and exiting for services? Tunnel, Skyway? Perhaps possible but very costly. A building on the six lots would create a barrier to any possible future development on lots to the east. When, or even if, any of the other properties would become available is a huge unknown and would have to happen from west to east to be of any value – Is that a limitation and gamble we want to take? How many years are we willing to wait? And the cost factor still is in play – lots of dollars for a small parcel with limited expansion for the future.
- Central location and close to the High School – Yes, certainly an advantage now. *But* who can say how "central" it will be 20-30 years from now? Yes, it is an advantage to be close to the High School. *But* could it not be an equal advantage to be closer to the Junior High and Willow Creek – those students who cannot drive but could walk or bike from school to activities? What opportunities does that open up? Many high school students have access to transportation – younger students do not have that option.

- Relocate administrative functions – This was one of the objections vocalized regarding the dual site option. Where would one find the pastors, education director, music and worship coordinator, any one, at any given time? Office building or church? We are back to what was seen as a logistic nightmare and an option that was not viable for a healthy, efficient, use of staff time and effort.
- The houses we currently own were and are an investment in our future. They too have appreciated since purchased and the money from the sale of these properties can be used for the capital campaign.

How can we be expected to vote on this recommendation without knowing where a new site will be? What a new facility would look like? How it will be funded? What will happen to this facility? What is the value of this facility? Is there a market for such a facility? How much of the maintenance and repair costs listed will we have to do anyway? Do we have to comply with codes to sell? To stay?

The handout regarding the motion that will be brought before the congregation addresses the process following the vote. The purpose of the Taskforce was not to design, but only to provide a recommendation and direction for expansion. Yes – it is the dilemma of the chicken and the egg! To pursue a site and design prior to approval of this recommendation would have necessitated substantial expenditures that have been premature and potentially wasted.

- The Task Force studied publicly available maps available at City Hall (showing the city’s future planning, recently sold property, and the selling price) to determine if parcels of land were available that could meet our needs and where they might be. It was established that there are parcels large enough for our needs and with close access to city utility services - not “out in the country”. The Task Force looked at maps only, no site has been selected nor has anyone been approached regarding purchase. Purchase of a site requires, by constitution, congregational approval. The congregation will get to vote to determine where the site will be.
- To retain an architect for design purposes would necessitate first, choosing that architect, and secondly, require a substantial retainer fee. The choice of a particular architect may be different if we are looking at one with particular expertise in new construction or one with substantial experience in remodeling and additions to existing structures. It is difficult to design a facility until a site is determined and restrictions, topography, orientation, road accessibility, etc. etc. are known. Design will be determined with input and approval from the congregation. The congregation will vote as to what the facility will include and look like.
- Funding for this project will ultimately be determined by the congregation. A professional firm, RSI, was retained to act as a consultant in determining our potential as a congregation and help the Task Force and Church Council understand what the scope of the project might be. The retainer fee of \$10,000 was within the constitutional limitations set for Church Council approval. Approval of any further expenditures for this purpose is included in the motion before the congregation.
- The congregation will need to determine the best future use of the existing facility. It will be necessary, by constitution, for the congregation to approve of a sale of the property. Is there a market? Of what value? These are unknowns. Are there possibilities? Yes..... Viable? Another unknown. The architect has advised that should the use of this facility continue as a church (regardless of ownership) many of the code issues will continue to be “grandfathered” in and would not have to be addressed. Once an area is opened up for remodeling or for an addition, (regardless of ownership) that area has to be brought into compliance. For safety reasons, the congregation may choose to consider compliance against the consequences of noncompliance. As a congregation, through the Facilities Commission and Church Council, we would continue to decide which projects we wished to complete as we have in the past.

What will the impact of such a project be on our annual budget items? Staff, programs, benevolence giving? Congregation aging and on fixed incomes..... Always an annual appeal made in December to meet the budget and “be in the black”..... How will funds be raised? What is a realistic expectation of the capabilities of our congregation? Do we have existing funds to help defray the cost?

- First it is important to understand that whether we are at a new location or remain at our existing site, there are many needs that must be met and this will involve capital investment. The chart that has been presented in previous mailings (available at the Narthex table, the office, or on the website) explains what that investment may look like and helps to determine the best value, considering both the initial investment and the long term maintenance and energy costs.

- One measure of the success of a capital campaign is that it has NO effect on the annual budget items, or better yet to have a positive effect! That success is entirely up to this congregation and how we challenge ourselves. Trinity is committed to continuing its programs and supporting its staff. Trinity is committed to increasing its Benevolence giving to 20% of its operating budget. God does not ask equal gifts from everyone as shown in the story of the widows coins (*Mark 12:42-44*). The Bible talks about equal sacrifice, not equal gifts. We are all asked to give as we have been blessed (*1Peter 4:10*), to prioritize our “needs” and “wants” (*Matthew 6:21*) and give accordingly; to have faith and give of our first fruits (*Exodus 23:19*), not what is leftover. THAT is how the project will be funded. Trinity has been richly blessed and has had little or no indebtedness for many years. As we give from a heart filled with gratitude, we move from giving simply to meet the needs of a budget, to giving to what God is doing in and through the church. (*Hebrews 12:28*)
- Another measure of a successful capital campaign is the increased involvement of the disciples of this congregation. Not only with monetary involvement, but with increased participation in worship, personal study, programs, activities, and community. The “life” of the congregation is growing at a fast rate – it is becoming a more active ministry. There will be something for everyone and an opportunity for all who want to be involved.
- Trinity at this time does not have a capital expansion fund with cash available. Trinity does have the three houses that are purchased, paid for, and would be available for sale as would this existing facility. Any sale of real property must, by constitution, be approved by the congregation. Specific use of the funds from that sale would also be determined by the congregation.

What will be included in “Phase One”? What will it look like? How long will that phase be adequate before we have to start Phase Two? ... Why do we need a “gymnasium”? Will it be on one level or multi-level? Will the sanctuary be Round? Contemporary? Look like a sanctuary? Brick/Stone? What? Can architectural elements be moved to the new site? Does the \$8.9 million include land, building, furnishings?

- The congregation will be determining what will be included in Phase I by its financial gifts, by its participation on the various Task Forces and committees that will be established, by its input, and thru future votes. The congregation will determine what the sanctuary will be like. The congregation will determine what shape and form it will have and what it will be made of. The congregation will determine whether it is one level or two. The congregation will determine when, *or if*, there is value in a multi-purpose room that yes, could be used as a gymnasium, but could have multiple functions. The congregation will determine when, *or if*, outdoor playing fields are created. The congregation will determine when, *or if*, there is value in additional facilities such as assisted living or school. BUT WITH THE FORTY ACRES, THE OPTION WILL BE THERE FOR THE CONGREGATION TO DETERMINE. This is only the first of many decisions into which the congregation will be able to have input and the first of several votes that will be necessary. But it is THE first one that must be made before any of the others are possible.
- Congregations are often able to incorporate specific architectural elements into their new facility. This is dependent on the structural feasibility (at both facilities) and the financial feasibility to accomplish the task. In some instances, it may cost far more to transfer an object than to create a new one. Congregational input will be invited on such matters.
- The \$8.9 million is a PRELIMINARY Estimate for the acquisition of land and construction of spaces necessary for a total move to the new site. “Phase I” does not refer to a phase in moving, but to a phase of construction. All elements may not be financially feasible at one time. The congregation will determine what is of the highest priority. The goal is to be able to operate out of one facility. Many of our furnishings will come along with us. The *estimate* does include allowances for fixtures and some furnishings. Yes, there are a lot of unknowns until a site (and actual cost) and design (with actual bids) are proposed and approved by the congregation but no one is asking for a blank check. The constitution requires congregational approval on these matters.
- Clarification on the Diagrams – These are not Designs. This is not what the facility would look like. These are only a tool to show relationships between spaces – Worship space plainly visible from the entrance so there is no question of what we are about - Administrative Offices near the main entrance for welcoming – Gathering areas in close proximity to worship for an easy transition from one to another. etc. They are also a tool to assist in getting a perspective on relative sizes of spaces – both within each facility and earlier between proposals. The congregation will determine Phase I and future development.
- If we are already concerned about how long Phase I will be adequate, then perhaps we should set our goals a little higher!!

How does our current site limit our programs? Do we need these programs? Dare we Dream?

➤ Programs for disciples of **ALL** ages and abilities (0 yrs to 110+ yrs)

- Prenatal and parenting classes for couples and families
- Daycare center for infants and preschoolers
- Expanded Nursery School facilities for 3 & 4 year olds
- After-school day care for elementary age children & programs for Junior High youth
- Young adult & couples recreational activities and interdenominational leagues
- Family Recreation nights – movies, board games, puzzles, sports, crafts, etc.
- Outdoor activity space for picnics, fellowship, family activities.
- Half/full day Senior Care programs
 - physical activities
 - service projects
 - bible studies
 - meals
 - intergenerational interaction with on-site children's programs (i.e. - adopted grandparents, expand mentoring program, teaching/learning of skills and crafts, etc.)

All programs with a ***Christian and Faith-based component*** - This component is vital as our children, our youth, our adults, our seniors, our families are continually surrounded by influences challenging Christian values. Such programs, present and future, can add this important dimension that is not present elsewhere - in facilities accessible to all, including disciples, visitors, and staff that may have physical limitations and challenges.

➤ **Worship Opportunities** -

- Additional worship space for all who wish to come
- Outdoor worship space
- "Cry" room
- Reduced distance to chancel area
- Communion rail accessible to all
- Expansion of drama, puppet, music programs and productions
- Adequate fellowship space for between services
- Facility supportive of the "Six Marks of Discipleship"
- Expansion of small group ministry opportunities

➤ **Education Opportunities** -

- Currently have 37 "classrooms" using every available space including pastors & staff offices, 650 currently enrolled translates to 60 + needed classroom units
- Expanded library and bookstore (currently used often as meeting room limiting use as library)
- Reading, story time area for interaction
- Appropriate storage for curriculum materials (now located in storeroom accessed thru men's restroom)
- Interactive classrooms to take advantage of the multitude of education material and speakers available
- Family Education Hour separate from service times
- Families attending intergenerational Sunday School together
- On-site retreats for youth and adults reducing costs and making these opportunities more affordable and available for all
- Multiple offerings for Adult Education Forum
- Nursery School
 - Safe classrooms and group activity facilities – Not currently in compliance with life/safety code requirements
 - Fenced playground with direct access for toddlers, safety an issue
 - Large muscle activity area for inclement days
 - Music area for 30-40 students
 - Kitchenette
 - Work and office space for instructors
 - Storage for materials, car seats, large toys, etc

- Youth
 - safe and adequate activity and meeting spaces (Yak room and Tower do not have proper exits nor enough room for the number of participants in the programs - Tower room has capacity for 20-30 but as many as 70 -80 attend each week)
 - storage for equipment
 - outdoor recreational opportunities
 - Expanded music and drama opportunities and rehearsal space and storage

➤ **Administrative –**

- Welcoming reception area
- Private, comfortable waiting area for persons waiting to visit with pastor or other staff
- Appropriate counseling spaces for pastors, youth workers, and parish nursing staff
- Office space for the kitchen coordinator who prepares and provides 175 food service events annually and coordinates the volunteers without an office, desk, or telephone
- Storage space for food staples so that bulk buying could cut costs and be more efficient
- Adequate public and private work areas with proximity to office machines
- Appropriate and additional storage near offices
- Noise separation of office machines from offices (very noisy and difficult to use phones)
- Small vault and other locked storage area
- Additional safe storage for maintenance and cleaning supplies located throughout the facility
- Centralized office area (currently located throughout the building – inefficient)
- Multiple flexible sized meeting rooms for numerous activities of varying participation
- Additional storage for robes, music, instruments, drama equipment
- Appropriate rehearsal space for choirs, bell choirs and ensembles

What Are Your Dreams? Dreams for the Future? Where Can They Have An Opportunity To Be Met?

A member of the Long Range Planning Group (Report of April, 2001) said that Trinity is like a farmer who has the ability, seed, and equipment for a 1,000 acre farm, but only has 160 acres to work with.

Consider this analogy:

Once upon a time there was a young couple starting out their life together. They enjoyed a labor of love in caring for their home together, painting, landscaping and adding their unique personalities to the home. They were blessed with a child and had to rethink the use of some of their spaces. Soon they were blessed with another child and remodeled their home as the needs changed. Now a third child was expected and as their children grew in number, stature, and activity level, it became very apparent that the home that once seemed so spacious and worked so well for them as a couple, was now bursting at the seams. The home they dearly loved no longer met their needs nor functioned well for their family. They were faced with an agonizing decision. Would their lot allow them to build a large enough addition to gain the space that their family now needed and continue to serve them well even after the new arrival? Would they have to move and leave behind all that they had done, the trees planted when each child was born, the marks on the door jambs marking their growth? Which investment would serve their family best in the coming years as their family continued to grow and mature? After many talks, weighing the pros and cons of each alternative, and prayer, the family came to a decision together.

Many have “Been there, Done that”. Trinity is our *Faith Family*. **It will remain our *Faith Family*.** We face these same challenges – to look toward the future, to decide how this Family of Faith can BEST go into that future as a “Community Growing Disciples for Christ” together. How BEST can we serve this Family’s needs and prepare for the challenges, needs, and opportunities for the coming generations?

Fifty years ago about 1200 of this same Faith Family agonized over these same concerns. It was not easy for them either. They chose to make a bold leap of faith and finance to come to this cornfield. Who would have known then that their family would triple to 3,770 baptized members in the coming 50 years?

Through our prayers and God’s guidance may our boldness prepare us to serve this continuing Faith Family equally well for the next fifty years and beyond.