

## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE – Input Forum Questions

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**Accessibility:** Will an elevator be part of the renovation?

- An elevator will be installed to provide access to all three levels of the building. The size and weight limit figures are not yet available. This is in Phase 2 of the June 5<sup>th</sup> plan.

**Bathrooms:** How many stalls and will there be a shower?

- The intent is to increase capacity; the concept currently shows an additional plumbing fixture in each restroom to what we currently have. Whether or not there will be a shower is yet to be determined

**Chancel:** Will there be enough storage?

- There should be more than we currently have.

Will the Chancel have an exterior entry/exit?

- Yes, through new fire-well stairs to be built just west of the current set of stairs.

What are the plans for lighting?

- Sanctuary lighting is scheduled to be replaced as part of the building maintenance in Phase 1 of the June 5<sup>th</sup> plan.

What are the plans for electric and sound system?

- Upgrades will occur as funds allow.

We did not see the altar or communion table on the plan.

- The altar and/or communion table will be in front of the Choir; and the cross will remain in place.

**Design:** It appears the design takes up more space than we have.

- The project will be within our property lines and city setback lines.

What is the space “behind” the Schoolfield Room?

- The Schoolfield Room will be in a new space south of its current location.

Can we see details relating to the flood plain?

- A flood plain map will be exhibited in the foyer.

After seeing the plans, there still seems to be many questions.

- Remember, these are concept plans; input from the congregation is still needed.

Is this proposal too grand?

- It meets the needs that the congregation has identified during the past three years of planning.

Isn't there an imbalance of where the money is being spent; i.e., too little on the sanctuary and too much on the other spaces?

- The “other spaces” are used much more than the sanctuary.

Would we be designing and building for ourselves, or for those who come later?

- If you can picture yourself in these new and revitalized spaces it would be for us and for those who come later.

Can all our current projects continue?

- That is certainly the plan.

What areas will be used for brides and grooms?

- The choir room, rest rooms, new conference rooms under the sanctuary, etc.

**Ecology:** What green elements and energy efficiency aspects are being considered?

- The Green Team, BTF and MSKTD Architects will be working together to do this.

Are grants available for green aspects, i.e., solar heating, other power sources?

- We are looking into the possibility.

Is it possible to install a green roof on the new Fellowship Hall?

- We are looking into this possibility.

Where will the rain run-off go from the two flat roofs?

- We'll see about the cost to reuse it for flushing toilets or other options.

**Education Wing/Weekday Children's Ministry:** What improvements are planned for the Education Wing?

- New windows are in the Trustees' 5-10 year plan. So far, overhead lights have all been replaced with energy efficient T-8 fixtures and bulbs

Will access to the Education Wing or playground be changed?

- Both will remain the same.

How will security be addressed for Weekday Children's Ministry?

- We will work to provide what is necessary.

Will there be a large play room for the pre-school?

- Fellowship Hall can be used for a portion of the day.

How will the pre-school entrance be affected or accommodated during construction?

- This will become the primary entrance during construction of the new lobby. It will be required to remain accessible and safe.

**Entry:** Won't the high ceiling make the Entry an "unwelcome" environment?

- The new height should make it more open, full of daylight, and welcoming.

Regarding the wheelchair ramp – will that be a dangerous place for children to jump from?

- Remember these are conceptual plans. All safety issues will be fully addressed.

How will the new entry and pergola affect light coming into the sanctuary and will it have a solid covering?

- It should not affect the natural light coming into the sanctuary; the covering design will be discussed.

When new people come on Sundays, how will they know where to go? Will the information desk be staffed on Sunday mornings?

- A prominent welcome center is planned along with necessary signage.

Could the cross be larger and higher, more indicative of our being a Methodist church, and could there be a steeple?

- Those ideas could be discussed and considered.

Will we get a new sign?

- Yes, plans call for a new sign.

During weekdays, how will visitors know where to enter? Will the second entrance be inviting?

- New signage and prominence of the entrance is planned.

Is the turnaround of sufficient radius for large cars or limos?

- Yes, the space is planned to be sufficient.

Can the new entryway accommodate the live Nativity with the new drive?

- We will figure out a way to do it.

Is the meeting area going to have a coffeehouse feel? How many tables? High vs. low?

- The plans for this area are not yet finalized.

**Fellowship Hall:** With offices downstairs, how will users access a locked Fellowship Hall during the weekdays?

- Those in office will be able to monitor the other entrance using cameras and a remote locking system

Could the new Fellowship Hall double as a gym?

- Perhaps.

Where can we hold small dinners, like funeral dinners for 30-40, etc.? Fellowship Hall is too big.

- In the new Schoolfield Room.

It appears that the new Fellowship Hall has no storage for Weekday Children's Ministry and equipment.

- We will work to provide what is necessary.

Fellowship Hall will hold 300 – is the jump to 40 more people enough?

- We are limited by cost and space; however, seating at round tables in a spacious, high ceilinged room without pillars is the plan.

If a new Fellowship Hall is built, are mechanicals of sufficient size?

- The Trustees are looking at the need to increase our electrical service to handle a new chiller, etc. A new electrical panel will be placed in a different location in the current mechanical room. A ventilation system will need to be added, and the heating equipment will need to be augmented.

**Finance:** Can we get a loan from the Conference?

- We will do better with a bank.

What will the percentage of a loan be?

- This is yet to be determined.

How can we afford the project?

- With gifts, pledges and a loan. By phasing the project it will be easier to afford.

What will be requested of each giving unit?

- To give sacrificially and with great joy. We figure the estimate of income over three years based on the number of active, giving families in Epworth. Pledges for each phase would be paid over three years.

How much debt do we have currently?

- About \$110,000.

What length of loan is available?

- This is yet to be determined. We would hope to only need a short-term construction loan for each Phase so work could begin before all pledges were collected.

How many new members do we need to support the debt?

- Our current members will do this project. New folks will always be welcome to join us.

What is the cost of the whole project?

- The projected cost is 2.9 million dollars. By phasing the project the overall costs increase due to additional financing costs as well as adding the facility maintenance into each phase. Total costs can be seen from the Epworth web site blog and the June 5<sup>th</sup> presentation.

If we can't reach our budgets, are we going to have to borrow money?

- We should not borrow money to operate the church's ministries.

What are the implications if we don't make our payments?

- Pay the late fees or re-negotiate the loan.

Can we realistically afford more maintenance and repair costs?

- We are including 5% of any building moneys received into a Maintenance Escrow account to help prevent some of the problems recently seen.

Can we support this project with our congregation having changed from higher income to middle/lower income families, together with an older congregation with many on fixed incomes?

- Employed and fixed-income people are and can be generous.

How easy will it be for us to borrow the needed money?

- If we do our part as a congregation, then we should be able to borrow the rest. Phasing the project will hopefully reduce long-term debt requirements.

Is the \$600,000 maintenance amount included in the \$2.9 million?

- It is all covered in the phased plan presented on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

Are we considering “out of the box” funding, i.e., fundraisers, building rentals, etc.?

- We are considering some of these things. Our fish fry income has supported our Ministry Fund these past two years. We are looking into all sorts of funding opportunities.

How much needs to be pledged to move forward on the project?

- We will need almost \$1.2 million pledged for Phase 1 based on the June 5<sup>th</sup> presentation.

How many years will it take to pay for it?

- Pledges will be paid over three years; a mortgage term is not yet known.

Are any grants available?

- Yes, there is a matching grant available to help with fundraising costs. Other opportunities for grants will be evaluated.

Should we raise the entire \$2.9 million first, before starting any building?

- If we delay building while we wait to collect all building dollars, the donors may eventually lose interest and we might not be able to build much of anything.

There is concern about the method used to raise the funds.

- Your gift will be yours, and no one will visit you for dollars.

It would be good to see a few leaders make a financial commitment up front.

- It would be good to see all of us make a sacrificial commitment to our church.

How will a loan of this size impact the church?

- We will have to honor our personal and Church commitments and run a tight ship for a while.

Will this debt impact sermons, making us focus on money?

- We should focus on making ourselves better givers and neighbors and better children of our loving God. If we do that, our response will be generous and we won't have to focus on dollars.

During this forum, the group felt small and it made the monetary commitment feel a bit daunting.

- We had 160 people at our first two input forums on Jan. 23, 2011; if the excitement that most of us felt translates into positive action, we shall be even more blessed.

Epworth as a community must not be abandoned for the bricks and mortar of capital improvements.

- If we do this we can expand our community and become even closer to each other.

Taking on debt is scary; should we really take this on?

- We as a church have carried debt for a long time; and most of us have purchased homes, autos, etc. using debt. At this time we only owe about \$110,000.
- Few churches are built without incurring debt.

Will building costs rise? Insurance rates? Utilities?

- Over time, costs do tend to rise. Insurance rates vary, but we will be bringing the renovation and new spaces up to current building codes which could reduce our rates. By becoming “greener” we should have lower utilities.

What is Epworth's history for turning pledges into real dollars?

- Our pledge payments historically have been very high.

Won't cost overruns make for more debt?

- It's a possibility, and we should have a contingency fund.

We are highly skeptical. The projection that we could get three-year pledges in the amount of \$800,000 to \$1,600,000 is a pretty wide gap, even before we think about borrowing another million dollars.

- With giving at a sacrificial level, we should get \$1,200,000 in pledges. By phasing the project as explained in the June 5<sup>th</sup> presentation, the long-term debt will be reduced.

Can you clarify what will be needed for maintenance, in addition to the remodeling costs?

- \$600,000 is needed for maintenance. An additional \$2.9 million is needed for the remodeling and new construction. This increases some with the phasing project as proposed on June 5<sup>th</sup> due to spanning a longer period of time.

How accurate are the estimates?

- The architects assure us of their accuracy; they are as accurate as they can be at this time.

Didn't we just pay off a property?

- We have been paying ahead of time on the debts on the 65<sup>th</sup> St. and Dover properties; and the Galloway property just sold.

Will the church be used as collateral, and could we lose it?

- That is a remote possibility. Phasing reduces this even more with no long-term debt.

Will the structure of the loan allow for prepayments?

- We have done that in the past and intend to do so in the future.

**Fish Fry:** How will the proposed plan affect the fish fry? Will the youth group's drive-thru be able to work with the new site? Will the kitchen area be able to service the time constraints, and needs of moving food, etc.? We would like to see a large kitchen upstairs as well to facilitate large groups.

- We hope to use the two large proposed classrooms, just in front of our current basement kitchen, to store supplies, do desserts and bread fish. We would go down the corridor and out the new doors in the new stairwell. The drive-thru would be just about where it is now. The cost of a large, new kitchen upstairs would depend on having extra money to pay for it.

**Kitchen:** Will there be a commercial-grade gas stove and a window in the upstairs kitchen?

- All building codes will be complied with. The exact design is undecided.

Will the walkway from the kitchen exit be hard-surfaced?

- This idea will be discussed.

Will there be a kitchen near Fellowship Hall?

- Yes, it will adjoin it.

If there is only a basement kitchen, won't the fish fry odors disturb the office staff?

- The tantalizing aromas wafting from the kitchen will likely drive the staff to distraction!

If a new kitchen is built beside the new Fellowship Hall, how will dinners be served?

- Either through a serving window, a buffet, wait-staff or perhaps all of the above.

**Maintenance:** What happens to operating costs? I'd like to see the numbers.

- The existing building will get upgraded windows and mechanical systems, both yielding greater efficiency. The new construction will have a tighter envelope with better insulation, and will require additional energy to condition the added capacity.

Can we have a roof structure with self-maintaining systems, i.e., gutters, etc.?

- The architects will be asked about this possibility during the detailed design phases.

**Membership:** How can we promote growth when attendance is trending downward?

- It may not look like we want, but most churches are having the same challenges. Also, we have a task force at work on this challenge, expected to kick off after Rev. Hoopes gets on-board.

Since we don't fill our sanctuary now, is the project too large and long-range?

- Filling the sanctuary is just one issue. We use the heck out of the rest of our building and most of it needs a major update. We desperately need a new Fellowship Hall.

How quickly could we outgrow this plan and add more services if needed?

- We can add more services now, and we could have services in the new Fellowship Hall.

Is it worth doing anything beyond basic upgrades in view of declining membership?

- Just fixing the problems with band-aids will probably lead to a rapid decline in the energy and numbers at Epworth.

Can we learn from other Methodist churches that are growing?

- We are applying for a grant and can go to seminars to see what we can do here in our neighborhood.

Is there a church we could merge with?

- It could be considered, but both churches would have to be excited and willing. At this time, no congregation has been identified as a possibility.

Do the demographics support our ability to grow?

- Yes, they do.

**Offices:** Having the offices downstairs will interfere with weekly activities; who will watch the door?

- There will be a camera and a remote lock system.

Is the basement a good place for the offices?

- It will work with the expanded windows and lighting.

How will we protect the offices if the basement floods?

- There are ways to shelter the building from water in the event of a flood.

**Parking:** Will we lose significant parking spaces?

- Of 157 existing parking spaces, we lose 21.

Having adequate parking is sometimes a problem. Could parking be added on the 65<sup>th</sup> St. land?

- We do park at 65<sup>th</sup> St. now for the fish fry. To build a hard-surfaced parking lot, we would need a zoning permit.

The plan shows one entrance/exit. Could we add one on 65<sup>th</sup> St.?

- Good idea.

**Process:** The floor plan seems inaccurate. How can we feel secure with going ahead without finalized plans?

- Remember, this is a conceptual plan right now. The architects will develop working plans for the contractors while working with the Epworth building committee, once formed.

How will we be kept informed? Could there be a corner of the ECHO dedicated to project updates?

- Yes, that is the plan.

Who will hire and approve sub-contractors?

- The project delivery method will likely include a General Contractor or a Construction Manager. An Epworth building committee will work closely with whichever is chosen.

Who will make the decision to go ahead with a building project?

- A church conference or a charge conference will decide if we go ahead with the proposed plan.

Because of pastoral change this summer, is this a good time for this project?

- Our consultant tells us that churches do just as well even with changes in their midst.

Most important: are we a strong enough church to start and finish this project?

- Yes, it is doable. It is up to us.

Will we be open during construction?

- Yes. We'll find a way to make it work.

Where will we have worship while construction goes on?

- Hopefully we'll remain in our sanctuary.

**Sanctuary:** To open up more worship space, could we hold two services simultaneously?

- Yes, but parking could become a concern.

What is the plan for the side windows?

- To install new, clear, energy efficient windows, which are included in Phase 1 of the June 5<sup>th</sup> plan.

What will the seating capacity be when new seating is installed?

- About the same. We don't sit as close to our pew neighbors as we did years ago.

Can a sound booth be placed up above at the back of the sanctuary?

- No, because there are heating and air conditioning runs in the overhang at the rear of our sanctuary.

Is the cry room necessary?

- For some moms and dads, it is a blessing not to have their child fussing in a worship service.

Is there a way to make the sanctuary plan more flexible, i.e., use as a fellowship hall?

- We could remove the pews and use individual seats; however we could not fit as many people for meals and we wouldn't have an adjoining kitchen.

How will the sanctuary be updated?

- The first few rows will be individual seats. All windows, the fire stairwell and the sacristy will be new. The chancel will be redone and a ramp will go up to the main chancel level. We are also looking at new lighting.

Will there be a new exit from the northeast corner of the sanctuary

- No, only at the current south and northwest.

Will there be a distinct chapel?

- That is not in the concept, but will need to be considered as we move toward final design.

**Schoolfield Room:** Where will the Schoolfield Room be?

- It will be just south of its current space, in a new area.

**Security:** Can the sanctuary level be closed and the offices open?

- Yes. There will be a camera and a remote lock release.

Where will the entrance to the office area be?

- A door will be located at the northeast corner of the new east bump-out (north end of sanctuary).

**Small Groups:** It appears that some small group space is lost. Where will all the groups meet?

- We are working on this: we currently have eight adult SS classes; however, the conceptual design seems to allow for six rooms.

**Staffing:** Will we increase the size of the staff?

- It is unlikely.