

Open Forum
November 21, 2004
Long Range Planning Discussion

OPENING STATEMENTS BY DOUG HUCKE:

- We're trying to keep the process open with no secrets and make sure that everybody understands what's going on. The worse thing that could happen in the end is for people to think that it's been manipulated or there's been a secret; that's what we're trying to avoid. One way to do this is to have these open forums and put things in the newsletter.
- The notes from this Open Forum will be typed and put on the desk in the Centrum so that everyone can have access to this information.
- Prayer
- Reminder of process: Long Range Planning (LRP) task force was created at the request of Session, which met for 9-10 months. They came up with the LRP Report. This report is available in the office or on the website under resources/other. This document was adopted by Session and what we're doing is based on this.
- Facilities:
 - 2 builders have come and have given us sketches/ rough drafts about what they would do.
 - The sanctuary a difficult so we have hired an architect who has just recently given us a presentation about what he thinks we can do in terms of making it larger. He gave us some options and we asked him to look at something that makes sense and come back with some dollar figures.
 - Neither of the 2 building contractors have been given the go-ahead to do anything; we are still looking at plans and options.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BUILDING

What did the architects propose?

The architect was charged specifically with looking at the sanctuary. So in terms of the additions of that end or Centrum expansion, his real issue was just enlarging the sanctuary—can we do that? The company that built the current sanctuary was Peoria Metro and they are convinced that you couldn't do that economically and keep the structural integrity of the building because it's a dome. So they suggested three things: One is to knock the back 3 walls out and move them towards the hallway (the ceilings wouldn't be as high; they would be a under-porch sort of thing.) The second option they presented was a balcony in the back, but the building task force came to the conclusion that that's not economically feasible for the number of seats we would get. The third option would be to make a new sanctuary and this area then becomes a large Centrum area and we just push the sanctuary that way (west). We also figured that economically that didn't make much sense.

So the one option we've asked him to look at is knocking down parts of those 3 walls (east walls) and pushing them back. That would create about 101 seats. Another option they talked about is to connect the pews in the front. In other churches, you may have noticed, you don't have a straight shot to the front. If we connect pews, we could gain as much as 40 seats. Those are the 2 options we're looking at.

Bob Lundholm: If they think they can knock the back 3 walls out, why don't they think they can knock the 3 walls out and go forward with that design?

There is a possibility of moving the 1 front wall out and putting the choir in that area and then moving everything forward. That is really being looked at. These sidewalls are not being looked at. We need to ask ourselves if the expense is worth the space?

Jeff Morton: What sort of growth are you looking for? Are you looking for a percent of building space or percent of seats? And what does that do for us for the next 5 years?

There are a couple ways to look at this: in terms of growth-at-large or in terms of growth-of-seating capacity. In terms of growth-at-large we would love to see the sanctuary get to about 500 seats. We may not be able to do that economically. We could always add a service or two and continue to grow that way. Given the size of this lot and the parking and the other issues of the building, we think this can support maxing out at 800 -1000 people per Sunday. To get bigger than that, we'd have to relocate and LRP doesn't want to do that. We would rather enhance the kingdom by starting a new church, a daughter church, than try to accommodate that kind of growth. In other words, we will never be something like Northwoods or Grace Presbyterian because this building can't support it. We will grow in other ways once we get past that point. In terms of capacity, last week we had 360 in the first service and that meant chairs in the back. This room can't seat more than 340 comfortably. We can probably fit another service in on Sunday mornings and if you could pack them all out perfectly, you could get 900 people in here, but it doesn't work that way. Where we are right now, we're averaging 500 for worship so we've got room to grow there. At the rate we are growing for the past 2 years, and if the growth continues, we will be at max capacity in five years (with all the additions).

Rich Kruiswyk: Who is the architect and did you go through a selection process?

Phillip Swaggart & Associates is the firm and the architect's name is Jim Matarelli. The reason we selected him was because he's the architect that's done some other beautiful work in churches in Peoria (St. Thomas) and he's the one hired by United so he has a lot of experience. He's been here and looked at things. He's not doing detail work, just big-picture options.

Ted Fleming: If the extension goes through the back walls, will the Centrum and drive-through move back?

Yes. There would be a new structure built there. Regardless of whether the sanctuary is expanded, the Centrum will be expanded.

Ted Fleming: Have there been any decisions about the Flynn Property?

There have been no decisions made. We had three brokers express an interest in the land. We have people willing to sell it, but there is no buyer yet. We've had three appraisals on the land and we have a pretty good idea of where it's going to go.

Bobbie Prager: When we first started this process, Peoria Metro said that enlarging the sanctuary would be difficult and they were working on the two wings, which would be classrooms, gymnasium, and those things that we know we need. We can get 150 more seats by moving back, connecting the pews in the front and adding another service. The sanctuary is only used on Sunday mornings. The rest of the church is used all week. We are definitely planning on expanding the two wings. In that report was a plan to make the Centrum larger and move the drive-through. Those are the original plans. One of the easiest and probably cheapest is to knock out these back walls and add those pews – that should take care of us for a while.

Yes. That is a good point. We have established an order, a priority. Every part is important, but in terms of how it all takes place, it begins from the outside in, simply because some programs (like the Learning Center) are at maximum capacity and we need more space in order for them to grow. We see new families that come to us through the Learning Center so it's important to keep that ministry thriving. We've used two Sunday school spaces for offices. If you're here on Wednesday evening or Sunday morning, you know we are in dire need of space—functional, useable space.

Chuck Poparad: What was the property appraised for and what do they think we would net?

The first appraisal was a range with the bottom being \$2.7 million. We think that's high. Another appraisal was low at \$585,000. Waldschmit was just under \$2 million (after expenses to do a few improvements).

Ted Fleming: I think the property is sufficiently valuable across the street. I think we should avoid fee structures. I don't know that we need to work with somebody—the property will sell itself. During our renovations, how do we do services?

It is fully our intent to sell the land across the street. However, we're not going to hurry that. We're going to make sure we get what that land is worth. We're going to proceed with our plans here, regardless of whether that land is sold or not. We are going to believe that God will provide. We're going to do this sequentially and we'll be smart about how it's done. We can't help but see God's hand in this and we're not going to try to take over and make bad decisions just because we feel the pressure. When we talk about the gymnasium and that over there (south wing), it will be a self-standing structure so I don't think that will interfere with this space. We're also discussing options for just a classroom wing. The original plan was to take the building straight out, but the architect has suggested that we look at it a little differently. That too will create a mess, but will not affect the space we are currently using. The only time it will be tricky is if we do decide to knock out some walls in here and we'll just handle it then. Even with plastic and other things, we'll still be able to use the sanctuary for services.

Roberta Burns: Do you have a target date set for when this will begin happening?

There are many milestones and we are still waiting to hear about a lot of things. What I do know is in regards to fundraising. We are going to hire professional fundraisers to help us. The decision of who that will be will be made by December 2nd. Waldschmitt is going to get back to us in January. He is going to look for buyers. The architect will be getting back to us at the end of November or beginning of December with some costs and ideas. So all of this is in process. The goal is to do as much construction as possible next summer, but it may not happen that way.

Larry Larsen: It seems to me that the easiest conversion would be to build the new Family Life Center straight out from the one we have and when that's built, convert the existing life center into classrooms.

And that may be the way it goes. It will be built straight out, but between the FLC and the new functional space, it will be storage. It will look like one building, but it will be a shell between the buildings. That way they can build it and continue to use the space and when it's done we can have storage, which we desperately need.

Larry Larsen: What is our existing debt and how fast are we paying it off?

Our existing debt is \$770,000 and we're paying it off fairly quickly. We have a standing policy that when we get a certain amount of money in the building fund, over and above 2 months of payments, we make payments towards capital.

Has Session taken actual vote to sell the property across the street?

Yes, Session has voted to sell the land, but it has not been decided to whom and when..

Judy Helm: I would like to strongly urge that we do not use the FLC for classrooms. I think we really use that space for a gym and gatherings and for the preschool. I think we've grown enough that we should each have our own space and not use it for double purposes. We really need separate facilities.

I think we agree with that. The way that classrooms are designed will have an impact on NLC and it will be designed with them in mind. One of the suggestions made is to make the current storage into classrooms to match what is on the other side of the FLC. That's all on the drawing board, but I agree that it needs to be designated space.

Kwynn Treanor: Growth is a difficult thing to predict. Would this be the final addition? Will this take care of the growth issue?

No. We need to know that ahead of time. Based on projections, in five years we will be at max capacity. The issue is, do we say "That's good enough for the Kingdom, God—we did our part"? I don't think so. So the other option that is part of LRP is to start a new church. A lot of people travel a long way to be here. Maybe we look at some of the places people travel from. We will get to the point, on this property, where we really can't grow any more. We could maybe do something about a sanctuary, but that's our only option as far growth goes.

Brad Finley: With the expansion of the building and more people coming in, I assume we're going to have to expand the parking lot. Are we going to be able to do that without encroaching upon the ball diamonds?

Yes. The first idea of expanding parking is to take the existing parking lot and moving it all the way to Mossville Road. That will be first phase. The next step would be to use the soccer field. The third option (which no one really likes very well) is to move parking to the front of the church, along Knoxville Avenue. One of the options that Session has agreed to is the idea of buying land, very inexpensive land, and improve Sports Ministry by building softball fields somewhere else.

Cheryl Bjerke: Can you explain to me why it's more economically feasible to start working on this church with the structure and the parking and the sports ministry and all of that and then in a short five years build a daughter church as opposed to building a daughter church now and maybe moving the soccer field and other sports ministries over there now.

The idea would be that we would want to reach our potential here, and then as we see that coming down the road, we can be prepared. There are a lot of things that need to go into starting a daughter church. You could do that the other way; it's just not the way we chose to do it because we still have room to grow here.

Paula Jacobs: Are we going to start a new service any time soon?

We are going to start exploring starting a new service real soon. We have started that already to some degree. What we would want to do is on a Sunday morning and then you have to think of all your options (what kind of service do we want it to be, what kind of service makes sense). We will get to the point of really exploring that in January. Then we'll probably come back to the congregation and try to get feedback as best we can. I do think it's coming. The first service is packed. The second service has room to grow. If we start another service, it's not just to make up for space. The new service has to have a point and purpose all it's own. We need to be prepared for whatever kind of service we are called to do.

Kevin Curtin: Any thought given to resurrecting a Saturday evening service?

It's on the table. It will be part of the things we explore in January. If we do it, it won't be like we did it last time. You don't want to just recreate the past.

Ed Dew: Nobody mentioned anything about the kitchen, but I'm sure that any expansion would include a larger kitchen.

One of the options on the table is to create a new kitchen that could service the gymnasium and the FLC. There's also been discussion about keeping the kitchen we have now and making a smaller "warming" kitchen over there. We are aware we will need a new kitchen between the buildings. Where that would go is being looked at.

Rich Krusiwyk: Has there been any consideration to changing the times of the current services to 8:00 and 10:30 to see if that balances them out?

We haven't talked about it in great length. I don't want to change service times. If we're going to add a new service on Sunday mornings, I want to make all the changes at one time. It would be helpful if people who go to the 8:30 service now, go to the 11:00 service. They are the exact same service.

Suzie Sorenson: What are your thoughts on going back to having Sunday school at the exact same time as church?

Bad idea. We don't have the people to man that kind of thing. One of the things in the LRP report is to look for a Children's Ministry Coordinator; that would help. If we add a new service on Sunday morning, that does mean, by default, that Sunday school runs concurrent with a worship service.

Bob Lundholm: I would just like to commend the LRP committee. You guys are doing a good job and deserve a round of applause. I ask that they keep an open mind and don't let people tell you that you can't do something. Explore all options first. Where there's a will, there's a way.

Ron Streitmatter: I was on Session when we bought this land in the late 80's. There was a lot of concern about whether we could do it, whether we could keep moving ahead with the wishes of the Lord. I think we need to keep looking in that direction. Certainly pray over it, but remember we didn't think we could do it 15 years ago, but these are the things we need to keep looking at and considering.

I am convinced that this congregation has no idea what it's capable of. We have a lot of big dreams, but they are all within reach. There are a lot of things that we can be doing that we want to be doing. I am really excited about what's going to be happening in the next five years. Somebody won't like something insignificant (lights, carpet, etc.) but we need to understand that the people who are spending a lot of time on this are thinking through these things and are making good decisions and we need to trust them.

Lynn Schroeder: If we follow God's will, it will happen.

MORE THOUGHTS FROM DOUG

When we think about LRP, we tend to only think about building and land. There is more going on and I want you to know about it. We will be looking at a Capital Campaign next year. We have looked at three qualified professional fundraisers. We have narrowed it down to two. We will make the final selection the first part of December. They will begin immediately, even though a formal campaign won't begin until late winter or early spring. We also talked about a Children's Ministry Coordinator. That is something this church needs. We are accepting resumes; so if you know someone who would be interested in this part time position, let them know.

Kwynn Treanor: Could you explain the fundraisers?

Fundraisers come in with Biblical principles and basically guide us in the process. They become engaged with us as a congregation and how we present this and how we do this in a way that's appropriate for us. There are a lot of milestones and teams that have to be created. We don't know what we're doing and so we're hiring somebody who does so it's done properly and appropriately.

Bobbie Prager: There are a lot of people here that weren't here when we did the fundraising for this church. Fundraising has a bad connotation and that's not what this is. You're not going to have to ask people to go door-to-door selling things. This is an organization that has some thoughts, and they base them Biblically as well, on how to raise the type of money that we need to raise.

Jim Garner: I want to tell a quick story about fundraising. We heard a story about a man who was involved with fundraising. As this man went about raising funds for this church, he had a goal and it was far surpassed by one person. This one person happened to be a lady by the name of Walton (owners of Walmart). They talked to this lady about what they were going to be doing with the money (I believe it was about youth and youth expansion). She said that was where she wanted her money to go and she gave a large check from the Walton family. So it's not about how much, it's about what the passion is and touching hearts. That's what we have to look at with this building, with these ministries, with everything else here—it's about the passion and touching hearts. When we get those kind of people and getting the message out, then God will provide.

Nobody gets excited about raising funds, but having talked to other churches who have gone through it, it's a great time in the life of the church. So let's not be afraid of that.

Other Programs we want to expand or start here:

1. Christian Life Series: Followers Course, Foundations Course, etc.
2. LifeKeys—we have already started this and it will continue and grow.
3. The Great Banquet—People who have gone are really excited about it. That's coming here too.
4. The Learning Center—it's a terrific ministry and we want to expand it.
5. Other programs like evangelism and leadership training. We're not as far along in those, we're still exploring.

Ted Fleming: With all the plans for expansion in the FLC and Learning Center, I think it's great that you're talking to us about this but I assume Stacy and her staff are in the loop.

Stacy Berg is on the team so she comes to all the meetings. She has very concrete ideas about what she wants to see take place.

Reminder: if you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask. You are encouraged to talk to Dan McLaughlin, Mike Shirey or Doug Hucke. If you want to be on the planning process, it's not too late.

Meeting ended with a prayer by Doug.

In His Service,
Karen Ring

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