

Questions and Answers about the Construction Projects #2

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING – AUGUST 26, 2018

Life Worship Center 10:45 a.m.

Below are answers to some additional questions that were raised by attendees at the Information Session on Sunday the 19th:

Q: What is the form of the proposed motion?

A: Below is the draft wording for the proposed motion to be voted on Sunday, August 26

Move to approve expending funds for two construction projects:

1. The Office Expansion and Remodel project up to \$350,000 plus any additional contributions received for the project; and
2. The Life Worship Center Remodeling project up to \$900,000 or the total of designated funds already available plus any additional designated gifts received.

Neither General Fund monies nor EVERY.ONE. capital appeal funds will be used for either project nor will any indebtedness be incurred to complete the projects.

Q: How are these two projects being planned and what will be the nature of the oversight?

A: When the EVERY.ONE. capital appeal was completed, the appeal leadership team made recommendations to the Church Council for the allocation of the appeal funds. The congregation's top priorities discerned from the focus group meetings and personal appeal team visits were: Children's Ministry, debt reduction, and signage. The funds allocated for these expenditures are reflected in the Capital Appeal Summary mailed last week. Note: The two projects being voted on at this meeting are NOT part of the capital appeal.

At that time the Church Council appointed five members to the "Capital Appeal Construction Project Oversight Team". They are Kurt Beenen (chair), Gary Pribyl, Deb Becker, Greg Voss & Chris Lindell. Their assignment was enlarged to include these two non-appeal funded projects as well. They have met regularly over the past year providing advice and guidance to the project planning teams.

Q: Who are we using to design and build the remodeling work to be done in the Life Worship Center?

A: The consulting firm that designed the audio, video and lighting systems was CCI Solutions of the Olympia, Washington area. They are one of the top firms in the country for church worship design. The team leader is originally from Cedar Rapids and has successfully worked with several churches in eastern Iowa. They met with pastors and staff last year to determine needed updates to the Life Worship Center and will provide the equipment and the installation of the speakers, LED screen, stage lighting and possibly house lighting if funds are available.

Rinderknecht Construction who constructed our original building in 1999 and the addition in 2011 has been advising us and providing cost estimates for both projects. Nelson Electric who did the electrical work on the 2011 addition has provided the cost estimate for the electrical needs in the Life Worship Center as a subcontractor to Rinderknecht. The Life WC Project Planning Team, together with the Oversight Team, will evaluate the possibility of approaching an alternative contractor for cost savings.

Q: How will the new audio system improve the sound issues in the Life Worship Center?

A: When CCI Solutions was on-site here in August 2017, they methodically measured and mapped the spaces in Life. The new audio system will feature an array of speakers in the center front of the room, angled differently than the current speakers; additional speakers will be mounted above the stadium seating on the sides of the room; and small speakers will be placed under the balcony. The sound design will decrease the extremes of the patchy inconsistent sound we have now – it shows that the volume will vary by as little as 3 decibels between different areas of the room. This precision will make it much easier to control the overall sound quality and volume used in contemporary worship.

Q: How will the timing and phases of the work in Life Worship Center be determined?

A: The work that will be done in Life Worship Center will be determined by the money available. The CCI Solutions design for the space allows us to complete different pieces of the project, in separate phases over time, as funds are available. At this point, we are proposing to install the new audio system, install an 18 x 10-foot LED video screen for song lyrics and various other visual needs, expand the stage platform and install drapes behind it, and remount/replace many of the stage lights with LED's.

This work will require substantial scaffolding for the electrical and control wiring needed. Large future savings could be realized by also installing new house lights now – because the scaffolding will not have to re-erected and the electrical contractor can work efficiently by doing everything at one time.

Rinderknecht's most recent cost estimates, depending on the scope of work done, range from \$730,000 to \$850,000. We are asking for approval of \$900,000 for the project anticipating potential equipment price increases, contingencies, and possible cost increases when bidding takes place.

The church received two bequests from former members' estates and in cooperation with the St. Mark's Foundation, these funds have been designated for updates in Life Worship Center. We have also received some designated donations and pledges earmarked for the Life Worship Center and will use the \$40,000 proceeds from the sale of the original organ. The monies available for the Life Worship Center project totaled \$314,000 at the end of 2017. At the 2018 Annual Meeting expenditures up to that amount were approved.

Additional designated donations are needed to begin the Life Worship Center project. Our current confirmed funding including the bequests and designated pledges is \$514,000.

Q: Why are we finishing the new office space at this time?

A: There are several reasons that support completing a portion of the office space that was designed but not finished in 2011, due to cost cuts. Including:

- 1) Our congregation is currently searching for a new senior pastor. A refreshed and enlarged office space will convey a great working environment for pastors and staff. As St. Mark's ministries and staff have grown along with the congregation over the last 19 years, very little has been changed in the office since the original building was completed in 1999.
- 2) The current four open staff cubicles are very noisy and lack privacy for telephone calls and conversation. It is very difficult to focus with all the activity taking place in the reception area and the workroom noise. These four staff will be relocated into small individual offices created by dividing two existing pastors' offices in half. To reduce construction costs we anticipate that the existing cubicles will remain as is and will provide volunteer workspace – where none is currently available.

- 3) Two finance staff are working in an equipment/storage room. The wall between this space and the existing cramped workroom will be removed and more work surfaces and storage created.
- 4) The size of the current senior pastor's office will be reduced substantially by adding a hallway through the south end of it. Two finance or administrative staff will share the remaining space. Hiring of another part-time administrative employee is planned in the staff budget for 2019 and will also need work space.
- 5) Most of the original telephone and computer network cables and switches from original 1999 spaces will be replaced and relocated as part of the project.

For more details of the office project, please refer to the draft of the proposed floor plan. Completing the new offices in the expansion space is the first phase of the project. The proposed remodeling and changes in the existing office spaces will be completed only if funds are available.

Q: Who are we planning to use as a contractor for the Office Expansion & Remodeling?

A: The original rough estimate to finish the offices and construct an attached shop building that Pastor Perry used in his discussions last December was \$651,000. As more detailed estimates were obtained from Rinderknecht – the costs rose by more than 50%. Therefore, the office project scope has been substantially reduced and the proposed building addition has been eliminated at this time.

We are planning to use Local Remodeling Services (St. Mark's member, Bryce Marolf's company) for the office project. Their work in the Children's Ministry area has been good quality and they have been flexible regarding scheduling and design changes throughout that project. A time and materials contract with Local Remodeling Service will provide significant savings on the expansion portion of the office project. A St. Mark's construction manager, who will oversee the progress and communicate with the contractor, will be recruited.

Q: What about the area currently being used as workshop/storage space?

A: The area in the northeast corner of the unfinished space which has been used as a workshop and men's work team storage area will become offices as originally designed in 2011; much of the remaining open space (approximately 1/3) will remain as shared storage at this time. Some worship set design and building will take place during the week in the front area of Life Worship Center behind the draperies (after the sacristy areas are redone), some in the remaining reduced north storage area, and possibly offsite.

Possible future construction of a smaller, more utilitarian and less costly storage building (than what the architect originally drew) on the edge of the church property has been proposed.

Q: How is the Children's Ministry project (funded by the EVERY.ONE. capital appeal) progressing?

A: The remodeling of the children's area in the lower level is progressing well and the rooms will be ready for use in September for Sunday Morning and Wednesday Night Children's Ministry. Painting of the rooms and hallways in a new color scheme has been done, carpet installation begins in a few days and new colorful child size furniture arrived today! Some finishing details will still need to be completed in the coming weeks - an Open House is planned for the beginning of November. The \$300,000 budget is being closely monitored by Pam Schulz, our Director of Children's Ministry and the project team.