

Long Range Planning Committee
Notes from Meeting: January 12, 2011

Present: Brett Park, Stacey Park, Bob Kelly, Linda Kelly, Charlie Rigsby, John Barcroft, Kaye Bernard, Loyd Swope, Mike Hays, Larry Jones, Jim Halsell, Terri Chadick, Jeremy Pate, Lowell Grisham, Suzanne Stoner

The meeting focused on discovering what questions we need to ask next to have a clearer picture of our situation.

We have thus far focused mostly on the stress of crowding in the worship space. There are other needs that we need to study.

What is the classroom situation for all of our education ministries – children, youth and adults? What needs do we have for staff offices? What are the current real needs of all of the programs at St. Paul's? What are the anticipated needs of our current programs?

How can we think flexibly about the use of space? We tend not to have rooms that are used only one hour a week on Sunday, and we want to plan and design space that will be functional throughout the week.

We need to be aware of some of the secondary effects of overcrowding. For example, if too many kids from different ages are crowded into the same room, what impact does that make on the younger ones, the more sensitive, and special needs children? How does discipline become more difficult with larger numbers of children in various venues?

We would like to study all of our programs and ministries and ask what would be the ideal environment and support for each ministry? After we know what we need now, then we can ask what might be anticipated for growth in each program. Once we have a sense of the current ideal and some room for expansion, then we can ask "what's possible?"

We noted that the Library is frequently booked and is used for many different functions. Do we need more rooms like that?

Bret articulated something that found resonance among others in the meeting. He said that he was experiencing a degree of anxiety and discomfort as we proceed in our conversations. He doesn't have a sense of direction or resolution. It feels so up-in-the-air, and he can't see a comforting path. There is some experience of dilemma as we look at problems that we don't seem to have a compelling or satisfactory answer for. There is some tension living in that state as we continue to explore together.

We discussed the possibility of exploring using neighboring buildings. Kaye told of a congregation that bought several nearby houses and created very functional space. What

about our neighborhood? Are there properties that might be for sale or rent that could be functional for our uses? We mentioned Marshall Carlisle's former office, the Hathcock Building, and the former First Federal Building that John and Amelia Eldridge have turned into condos (a 3000 foot space is for sale there). It might be that neighboring properties could allow us to transition into new space before we settle on a design for permanent building on our property.

Jeremy mentioned that the city has some reservations about churches that purchase neighboring houses only to tear them town and build something in their place. There has been some negative community reaction to the projects at Central Methodist and First Baptist.

We asked, Can some of our staff have offices that might also function as classrooms or meeting spaces? (Laura Wilkins' office now serves multiple purposes.)

Jim Halsell said that friends of the parish Bill Schreckhise and Janine Parry have offered their expertise to help us create and interpret a survey should we need one. That offer was very gratefully received. We don't see that we are at a place where we have enough information to create questions for a survey, but we hope to talk to Bill and Janine to ask for some guidance. Jim will help facilitate that conversation.

We asked about various questions that might open our imaginations for possible improvements. "Where are the toilets?" a visitor might wonder. We need one in the Narthex and in the Sacristy. What do other churches have that we don't? A Parlor or Bride's Room would be useful. We are not very handicapped accessible. It is often crowded and intimidating for people to enter worship, especially near the starting time of the service. Ministers, acolytes, and choir can create bottlenecks in what is a very tiny Narthex and Bookstore. People tend to enter from wherever the parking is. How might we imagine our future parking and peoples' access from there? Only a relatively few people find parking that is convenient to the church's front door.

We talked about the simultaneous service for the overflow from the 4:00 Christmas Eve service. Are there ways to make such a service attractive and successful? Reviews from Christmas Eve were generally positive. Can we explore using the Parish Hall for worship on Sunday morning?

We want to learn from the upcoming census data. We need the best demographic information about projected growth. If we were able to accurately define our current programs' ideal needs and then have dependable data about projected growth, we would be better able to plan for space needs for the foreseeable future.

The city used a slogan for their 2025 project: "It's not a question IF we're going to grow, it's HOW we're going to grow."

Plans:

1. We need to identify all of the stakeholders in our ministries – staff, program leaders, participants. Suzanne and Loyd are going to work up a good list.
2. We want to interview these stakeholders to hear what their current needs are and what their future needs might be. (This is something we did before the *Raise the Roof* campaign.) Stacey, Kaye and Lowell are going to work on creating questions for interviews with various stakeholders.
3. Bob and Terri said they would look into neighboring sites that might have potential for our use, either as rental or purchased property.

We'll send emails to the committee about these three items as the sub-groups work on them.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 9, 2011 at noon.