

## TOWN HALL MEETING 2021

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We have updated the FAQ based on questions we received during the Town Hall. Additional questions and areas with updated information have been marked with yellow headings.

### WHY WOULD WE CONSIDER SELLING THE SANCTUARY AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY CENTER?

The Vision Team has recommended that the best way to move St. Paul's vision forward is by investing in our ministry and missions, rather than using our resources to maintain excess square footage. The money we currently pay for mortgage and utilities would free up \$141,000 per year. Imagine how even a portion of these funds could be used to increase our outreach witness, ministry programs and ways to reach people for Jesus. We would no longer be spending money to support a building but instead, building hearts in people for Jesus Christ!

### WHY NOW?

COVID-19 has accelerated financial issues that we have been facing for some time. These existing trends have been occurring for over ten years. COVID-19 only accelerated the existing issues.

#### From 2007-2019

- Pledged and non-pledged giving reduced by \$700,000 or 40%
- Clergy and Staff Expenses reduced by 37% as we went from 5 to 2 clergy and 19 to 11.5 staff members.
- Trustee Building Expenses cannot be significantly reduced without reducing the amount of square footage we have to maintain.

#### In 2021

- 2021 pledges are reduced by more than \$80,000 and 20 pledges
- We need financial reserves for emergencies and replacing capital items like AC units, elevator, or other major repairs.

**Selling the Sanctuary corner will eliminate mortgage payments (\$53,647 annually) and reduce building related expenses (\$87,549 annually). This would be a savings of \$141,196 annually.**

### HOW WILL SELLING THE SANCTUARY AND CMC HELP US BECOME DEBT FREE?

Becoming debt free has been a goal for 30 years. In 2019 our leadership began a plan to reduce facility ownership and pay down our debt with the proceeds from the sale of the church parsonage and corner lot (the old farm store/open arms). Because of this decision, we have successfully reduced our building debt from \$1,833,000 to \$762,717 in a little over a year. After reamortizing our remaining balance, we have lowered our monthly payment on the buildings from \$11,664 to \$4,470 per month, which is a savings of \$7,194 per month or \$86,088 per year. **We are recommending that we use the sales proceeds of the sanctuary and Children's Ministry Center properties to pay off the remaining balance of our debt and to become debt free.**

### WHAT ARE THE OPERATING COSTS INVOLVED WITH THE BUILDINGS?

We currently spend over \$87,000 per year to pay for the monthly operating expenses of the sanctuary and Children's Ministry Center facilities. Any large-scale repairs needed to maintain the aging building are additional costs on top of this average. Before the pandemic, our sanctuary was used just under seven hours per week (including Sunday services, weddings, funerals.) See next page for a chart detailing the operating costs on our remaining properties.

## ANNUAL OPERATING COST 2018 & 2019

	Sanctuary & Preschool	CLEC
2018	\$86,776	\$138,282
2019	\$88,323	\$136,319
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$87,549</b>	<b>\$137,301</b>

## BUILDING SIZES

Sanctuary & Preschool	CLEC
<b>36,675</b>	<b>53,487</b>

## WHAT MAINTENANCE ISSUES NEED TO BE ADDRESSED?

- The sanctuary and Children’s Ministry Center have ongoing problems with roof leaks, which has been determined to be caused by a design flaw in the roof. It would likely require removal and reengineering of the entire roof.
- We have found active termites in the rear of the sanctuary, as well as in the columns throughout the interior. An inspection by a termite company recommends tenting the entire campus (the buildings are all attached) which can range from **\$35,000-60,000 plus on-going annual treatments.**
- The Children’s Ministry Center is not ADA compliant. Access to the second floor is only available through a narrow set of stairs that is difficult for those with limited mobility. To become ADA compliant we would need to install an elevator. Our current bids show installation of an elevator would cost between **\$50,000 and \$150,000** depending on weight limit.
- Other repairs costs adding up to about **\$10,000** include AC units and wood/water damage.

**COSTS OF MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS WILL TOTAL \$100K TO \$200K, NOT INCLUDING THE COST TO RE-ENGINEER THE ROOF.**

## WHY NOT SELL THE CLEC INSTEAD?

### THE CLEC IS MULTI-PURPOSE

The Sanctuary is a single-use space for worship, but the CLEC is multi-purpose and can house many other ministries and events in addition to worship. The LuAnne Willey Fellowship Hall can be used for worship, fellowship meals, Handi events, large presentations etc. The gym is used for basketball, Student Ministry, summer camp, and outreach like the Jubilee, Christmas and Thanksgiving for Pinellas, Jumpstart, Meal Packing, etc.

### THE CLEC IS NEWER

17 years newer than Sanctuary. 29 years newer than the building housing preschool. The younger age of the building is part of why it has less current maintenance needs than the sanctuary.

### THE CLEC IS USED MORE OFTEN

The Sanctuary is used about 68 days per year for worship, funerals, etc. The CLEC is used at least 250 days per year. See list at right.

### THE CLEC ALSO HAS:

- Better kitchen
- More meeting and classroom space
- Elevator

### CLEC USAGE

(DAYS PER YEAR)

- Office - 200 days
- Gym - 250 days
- Basketball - 165 days
- Student Min - 42 days
- Summer camp - 40 days
- Jumpstart - 30 days
- Jubilee, Thanksgiving, Meal Packing, Xmas - 8 days
- Luanne Willey Fellowship Hall - 100 days per year excluding Sunday worship

## HOW CAN WE WORSHIP WITHOUT THE SANCTUARY?

The pandemic has been a powerful reminder that worship is a spiritual act of being in the presence of God. We see in scripture that this is not something that is done solely in a building, and we have experienced this ourselves during 2020. God is everywhere; therefore worship can happen anywhere.

During the pandemic we have been gathering for in person worship in the CLEC instead of the sanctuary. This decision was made in part due to the size of the lobby, bathrooms and convenience to our children and student ministry spaces. The LuAnne Willey Fellowship Hall has been repainted and upgraded with new energy efficient LED lights (through a generous donation from a St. Paul family). Our worship together in the hall still contains the sacred symbols of worship, powerful praise music led by Dr. Robert Williams and Alison Van Duyne, and the messages from our pastors that help us grow in faith. Once we are no longer bound by social distancing guidelines, we will be able to seat about 800 in the CLEC worship space. The parking lots located on the CLEC campus will need to have the parking blocks set to maximize the number of cars, but the building is otherwise ready for when we are able to move to full capacity.

In addition, we have been able to use technology to worship online and reach people we would never have reached if we were solely using a building to worship the Lord. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, said, *“The world is my parish.”* In the twenty-first century it is apparent that worship is not bound solely within the walls of buildings. We are committed to making our online worship ministry a priority and expanding our virtual footprint, even after we are through the pandemic.

## CHURCHES ARE MOVING TO ONLINE WORSHIP

Experts like Carey Nieuwhof and Thom Rainer predict that a major trend for growing churches going forward will be that the majority of attendees are no longer in the building, but engaging online and worshipping at home or in small group gatherings called microsites. Nieuwhof’s prediction is that in the future, instead of using online ministry to bring people into the building, pastors will use the building to reach people online.

## WHAT ABOUT OUR SPECIAL MEMORIES AND CONNECTION TO THE SANCTUARY?

Your clergy and lay leadership have been praying over this possibility for some time. We know how emotional this decision is, and how hard it is to think about letting the sanctuary building go. We all treasure the memories of weddings, baptisms, worship services and funerals held there. All of these will remain part of our life no matter which building we are in. We will continue to celebrate and honor our past, as well as welcome our future.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO SON KISSED PRESCHOOL?

Our Vision Team is working to review the sustainability of the school and its impact on the church and our community.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO THE MEMORY GARDEN LOCATED OUTSIDE THE SANCTUARY?

Our Board of Trustees has made the commitment to respectfully and sacredly move the cremains from the sanctuary plot and to the Christian Life Enrichment Center. The Trustees will make provision to create a special area on the CLEC property for a columbarium to individually house the cremains. Families will also have the option to reclaim their beloved’s cremains and relocate them if they choose. All persons who have loved ones already in the memorial garden at St Paul will have the opportunity for their cremains to be joined with their beloved in the columbarium after their death. Current persons with reservations will also be innued into the columbarium. We will not be adding any new reservations beyond those already made.

## **ARE WE FAILING AS A CHURCH?**

No. We are not failing as a church. We are working to position ourselves for sustainability and a long future. Nationally, the trend is that ministry is becoming more about personal connections and outreach, and less about sustaining brick and mortar. Reducing our footprint so that we can increase our ministry and outreach in the community, and accommodate a larger virtual presence, would place us in line with the direction churches are heading nationwide. Freeing ourselves from maintaining aging buildings, which have on-going maintenance troubles, will position our church for a healthy and strong financial future. In fact, our hope is that having less space to maintain will allow us to do even more in the way of missions and ministry and that our church will have an even greater impact on our community and beyond. This could include new partnerships in food distribution, deeper partnerships with local schools and working with our local governments to improve justice issues at the heart of Jesus Christ.

## **HOW WILL A DECISION BE MADE WHETHER TO SELL THE PROPERTIES?**

Our Town Hall meetings were an opportunity to present the vision for our future, provide information, and allow for questions and answers. A decision of this magnitude requires multiple meetings so that we can share information and receive feedback. This is a difficult decision, and we do not take it lightly. Your clergy and lay leadership have been asking the Holy Spirit for more than a year to lead us toward a future that will honor stewardship and ministry for decades to come.

In matters of property sale (and acquisition) our church polity requires a properly called Church Conference with at least ten days advance notice. Members in good standing are invited to come, hear the presentation, ask questions, and ultimately vote. Now that the Town Hall Meetings are concluded, the next step would be for Pastor Bob to call for a Church Conference date to be set. The congregation will be notified and the meeting will be conducted with a vote on the proposed resolution.