



STAR OF BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

Q&A Synopsis from *The Next Step* Information Gatherings

What is the timeframe for expanding our facilities? The aggressive timeframe that was discussed in January 2017 had us breaking ground in spring 2018 in hopes of taking occupancy of the classrooms the following autumn. As we began the process for the Consensus-Building phase, it became apparent that it would be most beneficial to slow the process and push back the completion of the project by at least one year.

Our capital-raising campaign is loosely scheduled for the 2018 Lenten season. Soon afterward, a Building Committee would need to be formed who would then select a general contractor. That takes some time. Then, drawings need to be completed by the selected general contractor. Thus, a ground breaking is likely to be moved out to possibly the autumn of 2018.

The plans that you have seen are substantially larger (in total square footage) than what we had originally considered 15 years ago (which was simply a 1-story structure built on a slab). Having said that, the new plans are still within the original footprint –because of a proposed 2-story addition.

Has a firm been hired to take surveys, and get feedback within the congregation? At a special Voters' Meeting in July 2017, approval was given to retain The James Company for conducting a "Consensus- Building" process. Included in these services are the creation of a brochure (which you have seen), one-on-one interviews of thirty Star families, and gathering certain key data via written & online surveys. As of now, your church & school leadership are reviewing their final report.

Currently, we are considering if (subject to Voter approval) The James Company will also be retained to assist us in conducting a Capital-Raising Campaign – rather than attempting to do it ourselves. While their fee for this process is substantial they have exhibited a high level of expertise in the over 1,600 capital campaigns they have conducted over the years – including 61 campaigns with WELS churches and schools (including Wisconsin Lutheran High School).

What is the goal for the Capital Campaign? For the entire project, we have heard estimates as high as \$3.5 million. However, there might be several tools that we could use in terms of financing such a project. For example: We might consider restructuring our existing debt and incorporating additional borrowings to help pay for the new expansion project. Ideally the Capital-Raising Campaign will be able to pay for the entire project without needing to borrow additional funds. Still another option would be to phase the entire project over time. We might also be able to save substantial dollars by asking our trades-people members for their assistance. The James Company has told us that, in their experience, a capital campaign will raise about 95% of what is initially pledged.

What about our current debt? We primarily have member loans which now totals about \$1.5 million. Thrivent was paid-off some years ago. Still, we need to continue to whittle down our existing debt. When our church was built in 2004, our total debt was around \$2.6 million.

Why do we need additional classrooms? For the past few years, our school principal reports that on the first day of registration, our morning 4K class is already filled for the upcoming school year! An expansion allows for one more preschool classroom which would allow us to serve a total of 80 preschoolers. At this time, we have no more space for this ministry. The proposed expansion would allow Star to bring the existing basement-level classrooms up to ground level – which, in turn, allows us to continue our excellence in education while simultaneously expanding our congregational ministries (teens, seniors, small Bible study rooms, maybe a music room, etc.) Additional meeting & storage rooms would also become available – and we really could use those additional meeting rooms.

What about a 2-year old program? There is demand for such a ministry and we have talked about it but we simply don't have the space available at this time.

We have 230 students now, what is the capacity for taking on new students with an addition? One of our goals is to relocate the lower level classrooms up to on-grade. We then work on increasing excellence and maximizing our classrooms. We have the capacity to grow to 25 students per grade K-8, plus 80 preschoolers.

This expansion would also allow us to serve the members of our congregation who may not have students in the school. **The proposed project is a ministry expansion, not just a school expansion.** We want to serve the entire church and school with the Gospel. This will enable us to better do that.

What about a space for the teens? The room that is now Extended Care used to be the teen room. In the proposed plan, that would become their room again. To have that space for them again, of course, would be wonderful.

Do we need to acquire some land from our neighbor to our south? On June 6, 2017, we met with the Pastor of the Baptist church together with several of their elders. We discussed the possibility of Star purchasing some of their property – their driveway is about 60 feet from our lot line. The conversation was casual in nature but they did seem to be open to the general concept. However, after checking with our architect, it was determined that, even if we could purchase all 60 feet (and that's debatable), our only benefit from such a purchase would be to simply enlarge our playground area. It would not provide a larger "footprint" for a new building project. For now, we haven't pursued this idea any further.

What about our parking lot? We know it needs repair and will be working on that next spring. As for the number of parking spots, that won't change with a facilities expansion.