

6/4/2006 Congregational Meeting

DRAFT (pending approval at next congregational meeting)

1. Call to Order

Liz called the meeting to order at 12:05pm, read from a hymn, and led us in prayer. Brian Kelly, the clerk, is keeping minutes. Daryl Knoblock will be helping out with Robert's Rules.

2. Presentation of Council recommendation to the congregation – Marge Norskog and Larry McCulloch

Marge and the congregation thanked council for their service. Marge then reviewed the actions of the project priorities committee.

First, Marge reviewed the path to the present point. The strategic planning committee developed a Strategic Plan which was approved in 2004. The long range planning committee was formed to develop the master plan which was approved. Next, the capital campaign exploratory committee was formed and a capital campaign was voted on and passed. Then the project priorities committee developed a priorities list for item to spend the capital campaign money on and was approved unanimously by council. The building committee will go into further detail on actions.

The assumptions for the project priorities committee were that the entire master plan would eventually be completed. The parsonage is not an effective long term space for admin or education.

Marge then reviewed the priority items from the handout – renovation, sanctuary, parking and landscaping, admin wing (up to here spends all capital campaign money, but the committee decided that this wasn't far enough), west wing (also included in this recommendation). The remaining items would be for future improvements.

Larry presented the details of the council recommendation. Renovation includes roofs and furnaces, etc. The sanctuary would be upgraded. More parking and landscaping would be added to meet city regulations. The building committee will work to include and save as many existing trees as possible. The parsonage is not affected by this proposal.

Larry reviewed the fully funded plan (option 1), which includes the above items and the admin wing. Option 2 (recommended) includes all of option 1 and the "west wing" (choir/adult ed space).

Doing the admin wing, frees up three rooms (nursery, pre-school and a youth room) in the north wing and one of the eastern rooms. By adding the west wing, we add accessible restrooms, an adult ed forum/choir room, we free another east room for youth and free up a north room for adult ed.

The recommended option does not include the fellowship hall, the bump out in the sanctuary, a north wing stage, the columbarium, the added adult ed rooms in the existing fellowship hall, a main north entrance, and no changes to the parsonage. If the building committee comes in under budget (there is a lot of margin), we would add a kitchenette and restroom by the fireside and youth rooms, sanctuary overflow with doors and moveable seating, and renovation of east restrooms.

Larry then reviewed the differences between option 1 and 2 from the handout.

Roger Smith asked about which east room is being used by the choir - they are using the northern one. Roger thought that the choir couldn't use the combined adult ed room. Larry said that the choir folks would warm up in the sanctuary so it would be available for adult ed.

Dean Wallace commented that doing the admin wing, you don't need to heat other areas of the church when not in use.

Liz reminded people that this time is for questions, opinions and comments would come later.

Kaki Woods asked about the removal of flooring, is mitigation costs for asbestos included – Larry said yes.

Larry next talked about the loans. A construction loan happens for both options. This is an interest only line of credit to do construction while contributions are coming in. At the end of construction, the balance goes to a normal P&I payment loan. Both of these loans come from the UCC Cornerstone Fund which lends to UCC churches and camps and all profits go back into the UCC. We have \$1,586,000 (after the endowment and organ) pledged. We need a \$680,000 balance before the loan for construction – we could start in Spring. The loan is 7.5%, 3 year ARM with 6% cap on loan and a 30 year amortization schedule. Option 2 total cost is \$2.15 million. Larry then showed a cash flow estimate graph from the handout. Construction costs assume 4 equal payments over a year. We would prepay the loan and set aside money for P&I through 2009 on the \$705,000 balance. We could do a second capital campaign for \$765,000 to pay off the loan. We could raise more for more improvements (like the fellowship hall).

Jim Heaton asked about the mortgage rate, is 7.5% a little high. Larry said it is a competitive commercial rate. One other bank looked at was .25% less with more fees. Jim asked if there were other perks. Larry said there are no fees, points or prepay fees. There is an appraisal required.

Robert Burns what index the rates will be attached to. Larry wasn't positive, but it was one of the government set rates (10 year T-bills?). It is not predictable what the rate will be. It will not go up or down by more than 2% in 3 years.

Chuck Cairns asked about building the fellowship hall with a larger capital campaign. We would owe \$765,000 after three years just to pay off loan. The fellowship hall is about \$900,000 right now. To build this, we would need another \$1.6 million campaign to do this. Chuck doesn't feel we could raise this much in a second campaign.

Larry then showed some examples of what payments would be depending on what a second capital campaign would raise. If we raised nothing, we would owe \$656,000 after the campaign, and our monthly payment would be \$4,586 (at 7.5%) which is 12.5% of today's monthly budget. He also compared numbers for a fourth year of same contributions for current capital campaign (raising \$440,000), and also showed raising \$200,000.

Larry said we will have a second capital campaign if we want to complete master plan. Larry also showed estimates of raising construction costs (5% over the next few years is reasonable). So if we did option 1 and did the west wing in 4 years it would be about the same amount of money (\$2,322,000 vs \$2,326,000) as doing option 2 now – raising construction costs versus paying interest now. Plus we would have the strategic benefit of having the west wing 4 years earlier.

Larry said that we are acknowledging that we will need another campaign now, we are not committing a personal amount now. Some will give now, but not later, and some will give later but not now. Stewardship is sum of time talent and money – consider giving in all the ways that you can. We should consider what is best for Plymouth.

Larry opened for understanding questions. Don Heyse said that much of the material is not in the handout. Larry can provide hard copies of the slides to anyone.

Les Fraley asked about moving the trash to the NE corner. Hal said that it would be moved to an area by the north room.

Sarah Lollar asked if we vote for option 2, but think that should be the end of our building program – are we voting for continuing on to the fellowship hall? Larry said we are only voting now for the things explicitly in option 2. Any future spending would require another congregational meeting.

3. Motion from Council

Liz read through the motion from the handout.

Be it resolved that the Plymouth Congregational Church UCC Building Committee will immediately begin to implement Option 2, (a partial implementation of the Master Plan) with a maximum budget of \$2,150,000.

- **FURTHERMORE**, if we can complete Option 2 for less than \$2,150,000, the Building Committee will be instructed to complete the following, in priority order:
 - Add kitchenette and restroom in East Wing (for Fireside Room/Youth Rooms)
 - Install doors, moveable seating at the back (north) of the sanctuary for overflow
 - Renovate existing restrooms (along east side of sanctuary)

- **FURTHERMORE**, we also agree to hold a second capital campaign of about \$765,000 (43% of our previous campaign) because Option 2 costs more than our initial campaign commitments.

We acknowledge that approving this option means (a) a second campaign is required to pay off the resulting debt starting in 2010 for three years or (b) the inclusion in the annual budget of payments of approximately \$4,900 per month starting in early 2009 (or some reduced combination of a and b).

- **FURTHERMORE**, additional parts of the master plan (e.g., new fellowship hall, modifications to the existing fellowship hall) may be funded by future capital campaigns or by increasing the size of the debt reduction campaign mentioned above.

JoAn Bjarko from Stewardship committee moved that the congregation adopt the church council's recommendation for the church building program as worded in the handout and read by Liz McGrew.

Jenny Weller seconded.

Liz asked people to ask questions from the front mic, and state your name and limit speaking time to 3 minutes. Anna Robinson will track time. Liz will also ask the capital campaign and project priorities (Larry and Marge) for points of factual clarification. Two people may combine their 3 minutes of time. If there is an amendment made, it must be done from mic. The final vote will be paper ballot for only members. If anyone calls the question, we would need 80% yea vote to call the question.

Jim Hazen is a new member and missed out on the preliminary procedures. Jim is a longtime participant in UCC procedures. Jim said that all of us together are wiser than individually. A group vote is a reliable ascertainment of what God wants. Jim is distressed by the chart on page 2. The master plan was approved by Council in 2005, but there was not a congregational vote of approval for the master plan. If the congregation didn't vote to approve, we should vote on that before this.

John Smith said that he knew what the master plan covered after 3.5 years of preparation. As a congregation, we raised money to support this. John said we are committing everyone for a \$750,000 debt. John said that most don't know if they will be able to support that debt so he can't support this.

Mary Montaine said she has no problem with the first 2 furthermores, but has problem with the 3rd one. Future improvements would need congregational vote per Larry but that is not mentioned in the motion. This part of the resolution needs to be amended or dropped.

Marge Norskog said that in reply to Jim there was no vote by the congregation.

Jim Greuel thanked everyone for hard work. Jim said the needs of world and this community are great. We should give to endeavors that best promotes his works. Is option 2 high on that list? Jim is concerned with 2nd capital campaign. The first one was completed at great spiritual cost. The focus for a long time was on the capital campaign

which overshadowed aspects of being Christian. We seem to have lost our focus. Jim has hard time for supporting plans for 2nd campaign.

Bill Tucker said that once we have decided that we all go forth and support whatever is decided. Bill proposed an amendment. Bill moves to replaces option 2 with option 1 (a fully funded), and replace 2.15 million with 1.432 million and deleting 2nd and third furthermores.

“I move to amend the motion by replacing “Option 2” with “Option 1” by replacing the budget amount of \$2,150,000 with \$1,432,000, by modifying priorities, and by deleting the second and third “FURTHERMORE” clauses. There will be no mortgage loan under this option. The intention of this amendment is to spend no more than the pledged amount.

The motion shall now read as follows:

Be it resolved that the Plymouth Congregational Church UCC Building Committee will immediately begin to implement Option 1, (a fully-funded debt-free partial implementation of the Proposed Master Plan) with a maximum budget of \$1,432,000.

Furthermore, if we can complete Option 1 for less than \$1,432,000, the Building Committee will be instructed to complete the following, in priority order:

1. Install windowed doors and movable seating at the back (north) of the sanctuary for overflow
2. Renovate existing restrooms (along east side of sanctuary)
3. Renovate existing kitchen”

Bob Burns seconded.

Liz said we will have discussion on amendment and then voice vote with a paper vote if result is unclear.

Chuck Cairns asked if we could have a paper vote rather than a voice vote because of the emotion involved. The moderator would decide that. Daryl said that anyone can appeal the decision of the chair.

Marilee Long spoke against the amendment. Marilee said it took a long time to find Plymouth. She wants others to easily find us. She has done a ton for social concerns here. She wants this church to grow and be a bigger voice in community. One way to do this is to be physically bigger. This is an opportunity for us to grow and have more impact. She recommends option 2.

Cinda Blessing said that many people have been working hard for a long time. We have elected and appointed people to represent us. We have had a lot of opportunity for input. Information was available readily. Cinda does the choir music sorting. Adding the west wing would help the choir greatly. Option one doesn't address need for space. Cinda

loves trees but lots have been cut down for existing space. Cinda urges a vote for future – option 2.

Daryl Knoblock spoke about the strategic planning process. They figured out what vision for church was. Consensus is hard to reach – church vs evangelism vs charity. Consensus did come on a size of 450 member church. The master plan helps support the vision of 450 members (some growth and then focus outward after that – new church growth). Option 2 leads toward this vision well for the future. Daryl would not support the amendment.

George Theodore presented a vision of the future for the congregation in future years in 2016. We could accommodate all of our programs and use facilities for outreach. We can contribute to future campaigns.

Bill Tucker was glad option 2 was presented – it shows how committed are we. He is against taking on debt with an uncertain future. We should save up for the future. Bill wants Plymouth as a resource not a potential burden. Hal and adult ed are big draws for growth. Voting for this amendment is for debt free.

Sue Flynn is relatively new member. They have moved around a lot. Nearly all churches had capital campaigns. Plymouth is exciting since it is growing and does lots of cool stuff. In order to grow we need to do option 2. Option 2 will encourage growth and forward our mission.

Jenny Weller is against the amendment. She thanked all those who put in effort in the planning process and trusts in their council. Her faith calls her to take risks. She thinks we should do this.

Don Heyse supports the amendment. Option 1 meets all the existing needs of our church without a mortgage in these uncertain financial times. We are at an oil peak and the economy relies greatly on oil. The long term economic future is at great risk. We should be prudent in this economic uncertainty.

Heather Crandall encouraged young people to speak up. Heather is against the amendment. If we are trying to grow as a church, why not do further renovations and expansions. This church should be opening and welcoming to invite new people. She wants new people to have a good experience. We are a progressive church. As a young person, it's kind of scary since the future is uncertain. She feels this is a good idea anyways, and support will be found.

Paul Soracci said there was a lot of effort from a lot of people to get here today. Paul's background is financial. This is a risk and risk is required. This risk is about 2-4 families out of 500 members. This is a matter of proportion. Money value increases. This is about the future, the past got us here today and we need to advance for future.

Jean Sanfacon supports option 2. She feels that items in option 2 are a big deal now. There is not enough room for forums and fellowship together now. Adult forums and music are important to new members – these should be supported and given space. A kitchenette would be welcoming since the regular kitchen is intimidating. This would help with outside group use as well.

Sarah Lollar loves this church! It is time for us to take a risk and said amen about the choir space. She is for option 2.

David Smith called the question for the amendment. 3 against calling question in hand vote. Passed.

The amendment was voted on by paper ballot. Curt Minter said that discussion is still open on the original motion. Larry McCulloch said we are voting on the amendment.

David Smith asked about people who spoke on the amendment, can they speak again on the original motion. Liz said that they can speak to both but not twice.

Liz said 103 votes no, 24 yes and 2 abstain. Amendment turned down.

George Theodore called the question on the original motion. Judy Barth seconded. 27 against, denied – discussion continues.

Jenny Weller didn't like the last furthermore. She is ok with it now since it says that additional parts "may" be funded.

John Henry Peck likes the positivity. He is for the motion. John Henry is a "bit of a tight-wad" and likes the free columbarian.

Jane Nicolette supports the motion with one caveat on the third furthermore. She would like language added at end – "dependent upon an affirmative vote of the congregation". Liz asked if we are required to vote on that already per the Constitution – no. Passed as a friendly amendment, no one against. The new motion:

Be it resolved that the Plymouth Congregational Church UCC Building Committee will immediately begin to implement Option 2, (a partial implementation of the Master Plan) with a maximum budget of \$2,150,000.

- **FURTHERMORE**, if we can complete Option 2 for less than \$2,150,000, the Building Committee will be instructed to complete the following, in priority order:
 - Add kitchenette and restroom in East Wing (for Fireside Room/Youth Rooms)
 - Install doors, moveable seating at the back (north) of the sanctuary for overflow
 - Renovate existing restrooms (along east side of sanctuary)
- **FURTHERMORE**, we also agree to hold a second capital campaign of about \$765,000 (43% of our previous campaign) because Option 2 costs more than our initial campaign commitments.

We acknowledge that approving this option means (a) a second campaign is required to pay off the resulting debt starting in 2010 for three years or (b) the inclusion in the annual budget of payments of approximately \$4,900 per month starting in early 2009 (or some reduced combination of a and b).

- **FURTHERMORE**, additional parts of the master plan (e.g., new fellowship hall, modifications to the existing fellowship hall) may be funded by future capital campaigns or by increasing the size of the debt reduction campaign mentioned above, dependent upon an affirmative vote of the congregation.

Chuck Cairns wants the master plan long term. He is concerned about rising building costs and thinks we need a fellowship hall a lot more than choir and adult ed. That was too expensive. By the time we get to the fellowship hall we will be into 201* and costs will rise. He is against option 2 because he feels the fellowship hall is more important. He would like to ask for more money earlier to support the fellowship hall. He feels this option is not aggressive enough and feels people would contribute more for a fellowship hall.

Jon Dodson would support a second capital campaign even in uncertain times. This is important enough for a sacrifice. The church needs to grow. He supports option 2.

Jeff Dodson has been at college for a while. He will be joining soon. He is surprised by the growth of the church. He feels we are heading in the right direction and now we need the space. He supports option 2.

Anna Robinson feels that music is important. There is a place for everyone at this church. She is excited about a place for the choir.

Cinda Blessing is sorry we don't have enough money for the whole master plan. She feels we need space for the choir badly and this is more important than the fellowship hall. We need a lot of money now because we haven't kept up with maintenance.

Wayne Shepperd was around 30 years ago when this was all discussed before on the north wing and going into debt. That did pass and worked out well. Wayne called the question, George Theodore seconded. Unanimously passed.

The motion passed 111 for, 11 against.

Liz thanked the Long range planning and strategic planning, the priorities committee, the building committee, and Daryl Knoblock.

Cinda Blessing said we should thank Brian Kelly.

Hal said we should thank Liz.

We will hear from the building committee in the future.

Liz closed with a prayer at 2:30pm.

Aaron McGrew Moved to adjourn the meeting.