January 24, 2021

Dear Fort George / Lighthouse Community,

Re: A proposal for renovations

At our last congregational meeting in November, a motion to do maintenance and renovations to our worship space was initially brought to the table. However, in the weeks leading up to that meeting, several helpful questions highlighted the importance of treating the renovation separately from the maintenance. These questions also pointed out areas where we needed to provide more information. As such, the motion to do renovations was pulled from the floor. Thank you to those who engaged in the process and helped us make this wise decision.

Over the last few weeks, we have been working to do our due diligence into the areas of concern that were raised and now have significantly more information that we are able to share with the congregation.

**Vision for the project:**

Over the last several years, the ministries surrounding our church have been increasing. Youth for Christ rents space in our basement and often runs programs like suicide prevention in our church, Spencer has created space for college and university students to hang out and do homework, Lighthouse continues to become more and more a part of our church, and prior to COVID, we had a growing outreach into the Harwin Elementary School community through our children’s programing. On top of this, we have fostered our relationship with Sonrise Men’s Transition House, which often uses our building for meetings of various kinds.

Each of these ministries has increased our opportunity to use our facility to shine the light of Christ into the city of Prince George, which is why we exist.

On top of these increasing ministry opportunities, we also recognize that our sanctuary has not been updated in several decades and has some limitations:

-Newcomers who enter through the North entrance often find themselves intimidated as they end up entering the sanctuary from the “front” after the service has begun.

-There is a severe bottleneck entering the ministry room from the sanctuary after funerals and weddings.

-It is difficult for those with mobility issues to access the basement when we do things like potlucks.

-Those who use the main floor washrooms during the service have to walk past the front of the sanctuary to access them.

-The South foyer is our main visiting space after services, but it is too small to accommodate many people.

The renovation ideas we would like to propose will fix these issues as well as create a space where we can better facilitate the growing ministry needs of our church. We will accomplish this by turning our sanctuary into an updated, multi-purpose space. This would mean things like potlucks would now happen on the main floor. Access to washroom facilities would be much easier and would not involve walking through the front of the sanctuary. Our ministry room would double as our main foyer. And people who enter from both our North and South entrances would find themselves comfortably able to access the sanctuary.

Considering that during COVID the use of our space is significantly reduced, we feel this is an excellent time for our church to take this project on.

**The Details in brief:** (Please read the following section while looking at the attached drawing).

If you were entering the sanctuary through the ministry room on the north side of the building, you would have two double-door entrances to choose from. The current door we have will be expanded to a double door, and a second double door will be installed on the east side of the ministry room. These two double doors will enable much more fluid movement to the ministry room from the sanctuary and much easier access to the main floor washroom facilities.

The sanctuary will have all new flooring and paint. The current stage will be removed and replaced with a two-step high smaller and more efficient stage along the east side of the sanctuary.

Above the stage, a new box truss scaffold will be installed with controllable lighting, which will increase stage visibility and effect. Our existing projector and screen will be relocated to the center of the stage. The windows on the east wall will be covered from the inside but left unchanged on the outside of the building.

The seating will also face the east wall, which will mean people will sit closer to the stage than they do in our current setup. This will increase visibility as well as enable the vast majority of our seating to be in the section of our sanctuary that has the high ceiling. Our sanctuary will now have a true “center aisle,” which will be perfect for weddings. The new seating will consist of comfortable chairs.

On the south side of the sanctuary, the current back wall, sound booth, and half of the nursery will be removed in order to incorporate the current south foyer into the sanctuary. This will increase the size of the sanctuary by around 10%. It will also gain us access to some beautiful stained-glass windows that currently go almost unnoticed near the roof in the south foyer.

The new sound booth will be installed toward the southwest corner of the sanctuary with room behind it to store a portable baptismal tank.

At the south/west corner of the new wall of the sanctuary, a double door will lead through to a small welcoming area and the south exit.

In the nursery, there will be new flooring, paint, a sink, and a privacy coating installed on windows to the sanctuary.

At this point, there are a couple of hidden details most people won’t notice but are important. There is a ventilation fan above the current nursery that will be kept but framed in with a much smaller box. There is also a chimney beside the present sound booth that will be removed. HVAC professionals tell us that a chimney could be re-routed up the new south wall, but our best option would be to upgrade our furnaces to high efficiency, which would eliminate the need for a chimney altogether. The electrical sub panel that is currently in the sound booth will be relocated to the “outside” of the new sanctuary wall. There will be a small panel in the Nursery wall, which will hide water access and a drain for the portable baptismal tank.

**Questions and Answers:**

Members of the congregation asked the following questions prior to our last congregational meeting:

Q1) Will we need engineered blueprints drawn up for this renovation?

1. No. While we will be removing the chimney from the south wall, it isn’t structural. Similarly, the new wall that will be installed on the south side of the sanctuary will not be structural. As such, while we will need permits for some of the work, we will not need engineered drawings.

Q2) Will a side sanctuary design result in sound difficulties?

1. Blake Productions gave estimates for moving our current sound system and installing new lighting and sound upgrades. He did a reverberation test in the sanctuary and said that he didn’t anticipate we would run into any major sound problems with a side stage design. Sound absorbing panels could be installed to ensure there are no sound problems.

Q3) Do the proposed changes mean that we will be replacing the sound system we just bought two years ago?

1. No. We will be reusing 100% of our new sound system and upgrading it with several new components.

Q4) Is the renovation committee able to itemize the renovation proposal with estimates so we have a better idea of exactly what is being proposed?

1. Yes. Please see the attached table.

Q5) How will the electrical panel in the current sound booth be dealt with?

1. This will be a significant job and has been priced at around $17,000 to accomplish. Some of the wiring will be re-routed through the floor from the current location, and other wiring will be re-routed across the ceiling from the current location. New lines will be run for some fixtures in order to avoid junction boxes in awkward locations.

**Summary and financial situation:**

Last year the renovation committee brought in a general contractor as well as several sub-trades to give quotes for the entire renovation and maintenance project. This came in at a total of $140,000, of which we allocated $40,000 towards maintenance (see 2021 budget). Updated estimates have our renovation costing $137,500 if contractors are paid to do the whole thing.

Since that initial consultation, several trades people from our congregation have expressed a desire to be part of the project. This would enable us to do a lot of the labour ourselves, which would bring the cost down to $104,000 (see options for cost savings in the attached table).

While this may seem like a lot of money, we have some good news. Prior to our congregational meeting last November, we approached Bob Krahn and the NAB executive and asked whether they would be willing to help us update our space. In December, we received word that they are very happy with our efforts to be involved in our community and have awarded us a matching grant of $40,000 to accomplish this vision.

This means that if we raise $64,000, with the NAB executive money, we will arrive at our goal of $104,000. Amazingly, as of the writing of this letter, people from our congregation have already donated almost $40,000 towards this project without knowing about the matching grant. This leaves us only needing another $25,000 for the project.

**Further Discussion Invited:**

If you have any further questions, the renovation committee eagerly invites you to contact John Zettl by February 8th, 2021. Your questions will be answered and forwarded to the congregation. Once all further questions have been answered, we plan to present the following motion to the congregation: Motion that we renovate the sanctuary according to the proposed plan.

Sincerely,

The Renovation Committee

John Zettl, Ernie Hoffman, Angie Schlak, Ben and Jeanette Wiens, Mansour Bajestani, Brad Neuman, Quinn Hudson, Kyle Todoruk, Ryan Martinsen and Jeremiah Plouffe