

November 23, 2009

RE: Youth Ministry Facility Update

Dear New Life Church Family,

At our Saturday and Sunday gatherings this past weekend, we provided an update on the progress being made to address the facility needs of our ministry to youth and families. We also described our overall church mission and ministry philosophy and how the facility is consistent with this mission and philosophy. The purpose of this letter is to provide the same information to all our New Life families.

Background information

Since the 1980s, the house at the front of our property has been used as offices and meeting space for our youth ministry. This arrangement was always seen as temporary by our church and the city of Woodbury, until we could construct a facility dedicated for that purpose.

In 2000, New Life Church and New Life Academy conducted a joint capital campaign called "It is Time." The academy raised money for high school classrooms and a gymnasium; the church raised funds for the construction of a youth ministry facility. The funds raised for the church project were not enough to build at that time. The gifts that were received have been invested in CDs and have grown to \$490,000.

The Timothy Group Study

In 2008, a consulting firm, The Timothy Group, was hired to see what interest our church family had in again pursuing a youth ministry building project. Their findings included:

- The possibility of raising between \$750,000 to \$1 million in new commitments
- The desire for the new facility to meet the needs of the youth ministry as well as other ministries
- The need for clarity and consensus to move forward

Economic downturn

The economic recession that began in the fall of 2008 brought much uncertainty to the national and local economic scene, and concern over personal finances and our ability to launch a capital campaign effort. A decision was made to put on hold plans to move forward on a youth ministry facility.

Spring and Summer of 2009

Seeking to enhance the effectiveness of our ministry to families, the elders asked the Youth Ministry Building Team to find options for facility improvement using the funds that were available. This led to an extensive fact-finding project headed by Terry Thigpen to determine our ministry needs.

Ministry leaders of Family Life Ministry, Youth Ministry, Homeschool Family Ministry, AWANA, and New Life Academy were polled. We conducted follow-up conversations with 27 families who had responded favorably to the Timothy Group study. Two proposed projects were presented: a North site addition behind the church offices; and a South site remodel and addition to the current youth building.

Our primary purpose in seeking input was to see how God was moving in the hearts and minds of those closest to the project, and to use that information to determine how God would have us proceed. The results of the study strongly suggested that we should:

- Build a multi-use facility called a Family Ministry Center that would meet the needs of our youth and also provide space for gatherings geared to supporting and strengthening whole families
- Build this facility as a North site addition behind the church offices
- Not incur any additional long-term debt
- Allow the full church family to participate as God leads
- Provide a mechanism for people to give to reduce our indebtedness

Also, our interviews with the 27 families who responded favorably to the Timothy Group study indicated that there may be an additional \$1.2 million in new commitments toward a Family Ministry Center, for a total of up to \$1.7 million in previous and new commitments. Based on all of the above findings, the elders have authorized the securing of firm pledges for the project, the engagement of an architect to draw up initial plans for an addition to the north of the church offices in the range of \$1.2 to \$1.5 million, plus furnishings. The formation of a Family Ministry Center task force/steering team was also authorized.

Next steps

We anticipate that an architect will be hired soon and will begin interviewing directors of ministries, key volunteers, and others to design a facility that will meet our needs. Once initial drawings are available—likely after the New Year—you will be given an opportunity to respond with your questions and suggestions.

While we do not anticipate initiating a church-wide capital campaign at this time, you will be given an opportunity later to participate by specifying how you believe God is leading you to join us in support of this project, either for the construction of the Family Ministry Center, to endow the maintenance of the facility, or to give to reduce our

indebtedness. We believe that funds beyond the anticipated \$1.7 million should go primarily towards debt reduction, but we ask that you prayerfully seek God's guidance.

Overall mission and ministry philosophy

The elders and church staff have recently rephrased our church mission statement as follows:

“Advancing the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the Twin Cities and beyond by preaching the Gospel and serving the community in love and good deeds, equipping households and leaders, and planting churches that do the same.”

We are increasingly realizing that a key to achieving this stated mission is to strengthen whole households—particularly fathers—in Truth, in relationships within and among families, in engaging our surrounding culture, and in serving others.¹ Furthermore, the Scriptures call us to meet² in small or house groups³ and in larger groups⁴ “for the strengthening of the church.⁵”

Most of our houses probably have a family room where we naturally congregate with our spouses and children and spend time and do things that strengthen and draw us together as families, or where we invite neighbors over to build relationships. In the same way, we envision the Family Ministry Center as a New Life Church “family room” where families, youth, children, parents, singles, grandparents, men, and women can meet, talk, learn, pray, and play (and drink coffee?) to build relationships and equip and “spur one another on toward love and good deeds.⁶”

We'd love to hear your thoughts about this proposed Family Ministry Center. Please address your comments, questions, and concerns to elders@newlife4u.org or leave a message with the church office staff (651-459-0444).

In His Service,

Dan Wiersum
For the Elders

¹ Deuteronomy 6:4-7, Matthew 22:34-40, Ephesians 5:22-6:4, 1 Timothy 3:5,15, 1 Corinthians 9:21-23, Titus 2:1-8, 1 Thessalonians 4:12, 1 Peter 3:15-16

² Hebrews 10:25

³ Acts 2:42-46

⁴ Acts 2:46, Acts 19:9, 1 Corinthians 11:18-22

⁵ 1 Corinthians 14:26

⁶ Hebrews 10:24