



April 2, 2007

As the Executive Director of the *Called to Grow* campaign, I have been asked a few questions that I would like to answer for all of you. I think these are good questions, and I am sure they are on the minds of many.

Why are we undertaking the “Called to Grow” campaign?

Grace Church has decided to embark on the *Called to Grow* campaign to honor the past and present while we look toward the future. We are blessed to have a beautiful church building that has met the needs of our congregation since 1931; however, it is in need of some repairs and routine maintenance. While considering those improvements, we also realize the need to offer a different style of building that will meet additional needs within our church family and community. This is in no way an intention to replace our current church building; we are simply adding to the resources that we currently have. This new building will allow us to reach out to our congregation in different ways and to offer additional opportunities to minister to those in the community without a church home. As Jesus asked of his disciples, we too are instructed to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

One campaign focus is to address the current needs of our church building. Our Board of Trustees has established a five-year plan of improvements that should be made. These improvements include repairs to the roof, upgrades to the restrooms and a comfort improvement -- air conditioning for the sanctuary. The other campaign focus is the need to fund the vision that Grace Church has for this community. More than two years ago the Visionary Leadership Team determined there is a need for a Ministry, Worship and Community Center. Not all of the uses for this facility have been determined. That actually is good; this facility must be flexible to meet the needs of a changing community. However, some immediate needs can be addressed. The ideal facility should be at least 20,000 square feet with a design that would allow for future expansion. A building of this size would allow us to meet some of the needs as established in a community needs survey conducted by Indiana County service agencies.

Here is what the survey told us:

- Fifty-three percent of those surveyed told us that there were limited recreational opportunities for families. To meet that need this facility could include but would not be limited to space for basketball, volleyball, a walking track, fitness equipment, aerobics, a climbing wall and much more. Outdoor areas could have a playground, softball field, horseshoes and a pavilion for gatherings.
- Forty-three percent indicated a concern in childcare needs. I do not expect that our church would open a daycare facility. However, we would hopefully have enough space to allow a third party to offer these services.
- Sixty-three percent of the people surveyed stressed the need for employment benefits such as training and employment referrals. Once again, I am hopeful that we could provide space for these services.

This new community center should not only meet physical/recreational needs but should also address mental, emotional, and material needs. There should be space available for counseling. I am concerned for this community and the negative influences confronting adults and children of all ages. I pray that we will be able to offer faith-based counseling for those experiencing difficulty with marriage, drug and alcohol abuse or physical abuse. To meet the material needs of this community we will have additional space to expand or initiate outreach ministries, which have

always been a hallmark of Grace Church in the community.

Where will this facility be located?

That cannot be answered at this time. This project is similar to the process an individual goes through when buying a home; finances need to be in place before an offer is made. Our church in the same way needs a financial commitment to the *Called to Grow* campaign before we can make a land or building purchase. We had overwhelming support at the March 13, 2005, church conference. In fact, 77 percent of persons attending and voting at this meeting were in support of pursuing the implementation of the vision. We also received support from the leadership of our United Methodist District and Conference. There are a few properties being considered; however, we will not move forward until finances are in place and God leads us to the right property. Where God guides, he will provide.

How much money do we need to raise?

The improvements to our church building are confirmed costs. We know that these improvements will cost between \$1.2 million and \$1.5 million. The cost of the Ministry, Worship and Community Center is unknown since we don't have property selected, and a building design is not complete. We have asked an architect to design a conceptual building that would meet the needs we have established and explained in part above. Based on this preliminary information we can anticipate property and new construction to cost between \$2.5 million and \$3 million. When more detailed plans are available, I anticipate our campaign need for both projects to be between \$3.5 million and \$4 million.

Please pray for our *Called to Grow* campaign. This is one of the most important steps in the life of Grace Church. At one of our campaign meetings the comment was made that we are faith raising, not fund raising. We, as believers, must walk by faith and think as big as our God does. "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26). We can make a long list of what God could do through renovations and a new building but God will do more than we can possibly imagine if we give Him the avenue through which to work. When we don't step out in faith, we limit what God could have done. I trust that you see the spiritual goal, not the financial goal, and that the faith of our church is raised to the level that we are able to fund our improvements and the vision to grow our church and the Indiana community.

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” (Ephesians 3: 20-21)

God bless you and our Church,
Tom Millen

MINISTRY, WORSHIP AND COMMUNITY CENTER TIMELINE

February/March 2000: Pastor Brad attended a Beeson Institute conference in Houston, Texas, and saw firsthand the Power Center and how it could impact a community.

Feb. 18-22, 2003: A group from Grace Church attended the Beeson Institute for an Advanced Church Leadership conference in Phoenix, Arizona.

Jan. 20-23, 2004: A group from Grace Church attended the Large Church Initiative in Houston, and Pastor Brad shared the vision God had given him regarding the Ministry, Worship and Community Center (MWCC).

Feb. 14, 2004: The MWCC vision was presented to the Visionary Leadership Team.

Feb. 16, 2004: The MWCC vision was presented to the Administrative Board which approved the formation of the Vision Steering Committee for the MWCC.

Feb. 27, 2004: Discussions were held with Amy Bentz, the annual conference general counsel, regarding the logistics and legalities of setting up a separate non-profit center.

March 2004: The March Grace Notes front page letter from Pastor Brad spelled out the vision and purpose of a MWCC.

March 30, 2004: Mark Anthony chaired a Community-Wide Needs Assessment Task Force meeting to help define their charge and task assignments.

April 14, 2004: The Community-Wide Needs Assessment Task Force met with Indiana County social services to find out what is being done and what is needed.

May 12, 2004: The MWCC mission statement was adopted by the Visionary Leadership Team.

May 17, 2004: The MWCC mission statement was adopted by Administrative Board.

May 26, 2004: The Community-Wide Needs Assessment Subcommittee met to further define identified goals.

July 9, 2004: A church-wide letter from Pastor Brad was mailed that reported the vision and purpose of the MWCC.

July 20, 2004: A refined vision statement for the center was presented to the Visionary Leadership Team.

Aug. 3, 2004: The communitywide Needs Assessment Subcommittee reported to VLT.

Aug. 11, 2004: The first meeting for nominees to center team was held with the VLT.

Aug. 12, 2004: Bob Carter attended an initial meeting as a member of the "Welcome to Indiana" group.

Aug. 17, 2004: The second informational meeting for nominees to the center team was held with the VLT.

Sept. 2, 2004: Bob Carter met with Marilyn Dilg and reaffirmed our position in Indiana County CareNet.

Sept. 13, 2004: Bob Carter met with Bonnie Dunlap of Indiana County Department of Human Services and Marilyn Dilg to begin cooperative ventures.

Sept. 14, 2004: Grace Church joined the Indiana County Human Services Council.

Sept. 16, 2004: Grace Church joined the Indiana County Chamber of Commerce.

Sept. 21, 2004: The Ministry, Worship Community Center Team was given formal approval at the Administrative Board meeting.

Oct. 25, 2004: The VLT met and decided to postpone asking for a congregational vote on the MWCC at the November church conference. It was felt there needed to be more communication with the congregation regarding the vision before a vote should be taken.

Nov. 29, 2004: The combined VLT and MWCC teams met and discussed strategies for communicating the vision, and the Needs Assessment Subcommittee was asked to return in January with a prioritized list of community needs.

MWCC TIMELINE, CONTINUED

Dec. 6, 2004: The combined VLT and MWCC teams met and discussed process and procedure for identifying community and congregational needs.

Dec. 17, 2004: The grant writing team met, identified and prioritized 25 private grant opportunities that would be appropriate for the MWCC.

Dec. 20, 2004: The process of forming two separate non-profit corporations was initiated through the annual conference legal counselor's office. One corporation was created for providing programming services, the second for real estate management.

Jan. 5, 2005: Rev. Larry Homitsky met with the combined VLT and MWCC teams and discussed the demographics for our church and community, then spoke regarding how vision meets reality in ministry.

Jan. 24, 2005: Rev. Homitsky met with the combined VLT and MWCC teams and discussed the processes involved with communicating the vision to the congregation.

Feb. 6, 2005: Pastor Brad shared the vision to the congregation in all three worship services. Manuscripts of the sermon were copied and made available in the Welcome Center; audio tapes were also made available. The first of four bulletin brochure inserts explained the vision statement, the VLT team and demographics of Indiana County.

Feb. 13, 2005: The second of four brochures was inserted into the bulletin that outlined the spiritual profile of Indiana County and Grace Church. This brochure was explained in all services by Bill Wolff of the Ministry, Worship and Community Center team.

Feb. 20, 2005: The third of four brochures was inserted into the bulletin and outlined the identified needs of Indiana County residents.

Feb. 27, 2005: The fourth brochure was inserted into the bulletins and outlined the ways we can partner with IUP. This was presented by Mark Anthony of the VLT.

Feb. 25, 2005: Two pages of explanation outlining the vision and rationale were included in the March Grace Notes and mailed to all members of our congregation.

March 5, 6, 9, 2005: Church-wide informational meetings were held at various times to present the vision and answer any questions from the congregation.

March 13, 2005: Those attending a church conference voted overwhelmingly to empower the Ministry, Worship and Community Center team to pursue implementation of the vision.

June 28, 2006: A church conference was conducted by District Superintendent Rev. Sharon Schwab to present the proposals for building purchases and the formation of a capital campaign group.

September, October, November 2006: A committee met with representatives of RSI Inc. and Generis Inc. and on Nov. 3, 2006, voted to contract with Generis.

January and February 2007: The capital campaign steering committee was recruited and structure given to the campaign, now known as the "Called to Grow" campaign.