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**Q & A: Why don't we just repair/renovate our current church and school to meet our ministry needs? That would be a lot cheaper than building new.**

Another good question. A short but inadequate answer is that in April of 2018 the Voters' Assembly, in a nearly unanimous action, resolved to pursue building a church and school on the Plum Road site, and instructed that four committees should be formed to accomplish this. End of story? Not really; there's much more to the picture.

**THE SCHOOL**

Earlier the Long-Range Planning Committee had assembled – from historic documents and from current input – a list of shortcomings at our school, shortcomings which hinder us in carrying out our God-given ministry. Space does not allow a duplication of the entire list here, but consider the following:

* Presence of asbestos
* Lack of central air-cooling
* Heating system is likely over 30 years old
* Serious space limitations (storage, no place for piano lessons, etc.)
* Not handicap accessible
* Classrooms are about 2/3 the size of regular classrooms
* Classrooms lack counter tops and sink
* Lacks a visitor welcome area
* Outdated electrical system
* WIFI connectivity difficult
* Lacks music room and performance space
* Lacks cafeteria
* Small dark restrooms
* Improperly sized toilets
* Just plain outdated throughout

**THE CHURCH**

A list of shortcomings at our church was assembled from the same sources. And again, our God-given ministry is hindered by them. Consider the following partial list of issues that call for attention:

* Plumbing issues
* Lack of 1st floor restrooms
* Insufficient space in narthex
* Elevator function and location
* Balcony not suitable for choirs/instrumentalists
* Brick repair and tuck pointing needed
* Leaking roof
* Inadequate sound system
* Poor lighting
* Inflexible seating
* Lack of private space for wedding preparation
* Limited technology capability
* Lacks workable Sunday School and Bible Class spaces
* Lacks meeting space
* Lacks sufficient office space
* Steeple is uninsured because of wood rot

**THE COST**

Let's look at some actual repair/renovate/remodel cost figures that have been gathered in recent years.

* In 2007 Selmer suggested it would cost as much as $632,500 to bring the school up to date. Although some needs have been met (recent window replacement), inflation would make that figure higher today.
* Adding another portable classroom behind the school, even if the village would permit it, would cost $25,000.
* A few years ago Glass Haus studied our valuable church windows and recommended that they be removed, rebuilt, and properly storm-protected at a cost of $212,000.
* Bids for dealing with the constant infiltration of water into the church basement range from $5100 to $8900.
* A bid for padding the church pews was $8200.
* We have not asked for bids on replacing the rotting steeple timbers, but it would likely be cost prohibitive. As it stands today, if a wind topples the steeple, our insurance would not cover the loss. Would we want to remove the steeple? What would that cost – and look like? Do we want to ignore the situation and endanger the neighborhood?
* Recently our Property Manager informed us that the church roof is likely leaking and in need of complete replacement. Because of the resolution to build anew, a bid was not sought, but this project, like the steeple project, would involve significant cost.

**A FEW STEWARDSHIP THOUGHTS**

What's the total cost to repair/renovate/remodel? Known costs listed above approach $900,000. Add in the steeple and roof projects and it's certain that **the total would exceed $1,000,000 by far.**

Could we do that? Of course, but **many of the most serious shortcomings that hinder ministry would** **not be addressed at all by this expenditure**. God calls us also to be wise stewards. To spend that much and still have buildings with major shortcomings does not suggest good stewardship.

**Nor is it good stewardship to do nothing**. The church steeple could collapse upon our own building and crush the roof in, or topple in a different direction and cause unimaginable damage to the life and property of others. At some point in time, the heavy stained-glass windows, which have been sagging for decades, will also give way and collapse. Doing nothing seems to be the last and worst option.

Let's return to the question posed at the top – Why not just repair and renovate? It's cost-foolish and more importantly, doesn't address most major real needs.

All of God's people are always richly blessed, but we are richly blessed even more so. Daily thank God for his many blessings as we move forward with this building project in accord with the resolutions of the Voters.

**AN HISTORICAL ANECDOTE**

Nearly 100 years ago a small group of Lutherans in Minnesota was debating whether to buy a college campus, a move beyond big and brave. The lengthy debate ended, and the campus was purchased, when this was said, “**Once we are convinced that the school is a necessity, we will discover that we can** **afford it.** We can do a lot of things that we think are absolutely impossible once they have become a matter of life and death to us.” (That little college today is Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, MN.)

**CAPITAL BUILDING FUND**

Over the years St. John has established several different building funds, which has inevitably led to some confusion regarding the purpose of each fund. Recently, to bring some clarity, some of these funds were closed to further contributions and the Capital Building Fund was established. Anniversaries and other similarly important family events are good times to express appreciation for God's abundant blessing. On such occasions, consider a donation to the Capital Building Fund.

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