

York First Church of the Brethren
Master Planning
Congregational Forum Report-April 2019

The Master Planning Team members include: Pat Carey, Jayne Baldwin, Ed Martin, Roy Rollman, Jay Crist, Richard Brown, Pastor Joel Gibbel and Deb Klinedinst. Mike Bingham, SCORE volunteer, has guided the first steps and processes of the Master Planning Team.

Some of this information was included in our fall congregational report but we feel it is important to keep the process and reasoning behind proposed changes before the congregation. In review, the VITAL Teams visit to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church Fall of 2017 to view the architectural changes they made to their Narthex and Library made it evident that good architectural choices were important to improving worship participation, promoting a sense of community and to make neighbors feel more welcome. Frank Dittenhafer, Blake Gifford and Lisa Clemmens of Murphy and Dittenhafer Architects have provided their services throughout our journey to provide designs that will refresh our facilities. We believed our buildings speak to our neighbors and that we needed to be good stewards of our space/ buildings and resources. **The pressing question that continues to drive our efforts is that we are looking at new ways to change the trend line of our declining membership.**

The VITAL team proposed that a separate Master Planning Team be appointed to perform the following important tasks in accomplishing our vision and mission:

- Analysis of the long- range plans and goals of the Church to accomplish the Church's ministry plan
- Review of financial needs and abilities along with recommendations and guidance for financing and lender options
- Analysis of current/future programming needs
- Recommendation for future space needs
- Analysis and development of a Master Plan of our ministry to our current congregation, casual users of our facilities and our surrounding community
- Suggested schematic architectural design to suggest the size and character of the design and construction of any recommended facility changes to accomplish the ministry of FCOB

To date we have accomplished the following:

- Engaged the leadership of Mike Bingham, Susquehanna SCORE, to lead the team in a strategic planning process. Mike has donated his time to this process.
- Reviewed a summary of historical data of York First Church of the Brethren that included: demographic information on attendance, participation, annual giving, staffing patterns and CDC data.
- The committee completed a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis to determine where we are today as a congregation. This information was used to determine the future plans for the Master Planning Team.

- Upon approval from the Leadership Team we engaged an architect, Murphy and Dittenhafer, at a cost of \$14/K to work with us on the following projects: Refurbishing the Library, Men's restroom update, change the Narthex Area, and changes within the Sanctuary. The approval of the \$14/K will cover the study and presentation of the named projects. \$1/K will be applied to the approved Library project that has designated funding. The remaining \$13/K is unbudgeted and would need to be part of a capital fund drive.
- The Master Planning Team determined that the projects we were pursuing would be broken down into two phases. Phase I will include the Library and Sanctuary chair projects. Phase II will include improvements to the Narthex/Gathering Area, Men's Bathroom and Sanctuary.
- We will be moving forward with the Phase I project this summer. The Library project will be completed this summer. New chairs for the sanctuary will be ordered by May with a goal of having them in place by September. The pews are worn, some of the backs are cracked. ,A generous donation from a member of the congregation will cover the cost of the chairs. The size of the Library project has expanded to provide an adult and children's area. The space will provide a meeting location for adults and a children's area that will serve the church and the CDC children well. We are considering moving the security doors that are currently located before the Library further down the hall to accommodate greater flexibility when funerals are held at the church and access is needed to the Fellowship Hall and Nursery. This change is still in discussion.
- Murphy and Dittenhafer will be present to review Phase II drawings to the Congregation. It would be the Master Planning Team's intention to begin planning for Phase II in September 2019.
- The gym and exterior appearance of the church are also areas that we are considering for an update to be refreshed. Frank indicated they could look at these areas and offer their expertise and recommendations.

Again, the pressing question that continues to drive our efforts is that we are looking at new ways to change the trend line of our declining membership. How will we socially, emotionally and physically connect with others to share the joy, peace and love that comes from building healthy relationship through our faith in God. The information we have used thus far in determining our direction was collected during our Dreamcasting session June 2017, in our SWOT analysis and during our visits to other churches that have completed renovations to renew their facilities. We have received important information from these sources and intend to use this information to change our trend line.

Respectfully submitted,
 Deb Klinedinst
 Chairperson