

**LETTER THAT WAS HANDED OUT AT THE NOVEMBER 2020
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

Philippians 2: 2-4: Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Dear St. Matthew's Congregation,

We are grateful for the opportunity to share the current facts and report the progress of the Sanctuary Update. Our Committee consists of six esteemed members of our congregation: Ronnie Bumgarner, Joan Campbell, Gina Chandler, Jean Funderburk, Linda Hawn, and Jerry Minter.

Our Committee has set the unified goal of achieving a timeless renovation that pays homage to the proud, historical heritage of St. Matthew's Reformed Church. We are making decisions based on this foundation while keeping budgetary and timeline considerations at the forefront.

Please know there have been major visible, invasive changes in our Sanctuary. We have been in constant communication with the Consistory, had extremely productive dialog, and obtained approvals for each of the efforts described below.

To-date, all approved works have been part of an exploratory process to uncover and better understand the condition of the critical elements. This will allow our Committee to move forward with a clear, concise consideration for the in-depth scope that will be required to enter an accurate quoting phase with a licensed Contractor. Completed task include the following milestone exploratory achievements:

- 1.) The wall paneling has been removed. This has exposed the brick and the original bead board. In order to access these elements in their entirety, part

of the choir loft was removed. During this process, it was apparent that minor maintenance was necessary and a few additional repairs are still needed to ensure longevity of the historical brick. There are no structural concerns at this time. Please note, there has been no decision on whether the brick will remain visible in the final Sanctuary design. All work, including the regrouting, was solely for maintenance purposes.

2.) Environmental tests have been concluded by a third-party. We were pleased to learn that no harmful substances, including asbestos, were present. This finding cleared us to safely conduct additional exploration.

3.) A small sample area of carpet was removed and the original hardwoods were sanded and finished. This exposed coveted heart-of-pine flooring. The hardwood vendor left one stripe untouched and raw (appears yellow) and applied a clear polyurethane to the remaining area (appears darker) so our Committee could evaluate. This sample area of hardwood flooring is located by the back handicap door entrance on the North side of the Sanctuary.

4.) The pews have been removed and relocated temporarily to the Fellowship Hall and basement. This will allow for the remaining carpet to be removed in order to evaluate the condition of the hardwood flooring throughout. The fate of the old pews are in discussion by Consistory and will be communicated soon.

5.) Preliminary pew designs and layout options have been provided by a third-party vendor for Committee review. Manufacturing lead times for the pews is approximately 120 days. With this single element being the longest-lead time item, the pews will ultimately dictate the overall aggressiveness of the Sanctuary update calendar schedule. Three spec'ed quotes will be attempted from various vetted vendors. Our committee will seek COVID-friendly fund-raising opportunities once pricing details are known.

6.) The Chancel/Pulpit furniture, piano, organ and other delicate items have been relocated to ensure their safety during the exploratory and renovation process.

7.) The inclusion of a handicap ramp and access point to the Sunday School, Altar area, and Choir Loft were a priority. In March 2020, the Sanctuary Update Committee made the recommendation to the Consistory to configure the Handicap access points within the existing side Choir Room. This proposal was approved by the Consistory and passed to the Property Committee.

The exploratory phase will conclude soon. Items still on the docket are: removal of the carpet, removal of the remaining Choir Loft, and Vestibule exploration. We will then start inviting licensed Contractors into the equation to gain expert evaluations, recommendations, questions/answers, and ultimately turn-key quotes. A minimum of three quotes will be obtained and professional references requested. Once selected, the Contractor will be responsible for pulling the required County Permits.

The goal is to then approach the Congregation with a comprehensive package that includes a Committee recommendation as well as any elements that need to be evaluated from a design and/or related pricing standpoint, as well as the obtained Contractor quotes.

During this exciting time in our Church's history, we encourage you to visit our Sanctuary to witness first-hand the progress taking place. We also ask for your patience and prayers during this process. As the Chair, I cannot be more proud of the Committee's efforts on this challenging project. Our meetings have been productive, our conversations inclusive of all well-represented opinions, and they have voted unanimously on each decision to date.

We do feel transparency is fundamental during this process. With that said, to maintain an open line of communication, our Committee will be submitting updates to post in the monthly Church Newsletter. We will

continue to seek guidance and approvals from the Consistory as needed. I also encourage you to directly contact me or any of the Sanctuary Update Committee Members if you have any questions or concerns.

Again, thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide this update. We hope that you are pleased.

With much love and respect,

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