

Dear Covenant Family,

As Summer draws to a close and Fall approaches, we thought it would be a good time to give you an update on where we stand with our making room effort. Though we don't want the logistics or a focus on needed funds to detract from the heart of the church's ministry, we do want you to know what's going on and what progress is being made. At this point, it's still slow and much of it unseen, but we are making progress, and we're encouraged by what's getting done. There are three primary aspects of the project (all of which require progress if not completion before we actually begin construction). They are: 1) site plan approval, 2) architectural plans, 3) fund raising and financing.

Regarding the site plan, we think that we've resolved the issues with the City of Stuart's natural preserve requirements. The city's ordinance requires that we set aside 25% of the entire site as a natural preserve area. That's an area (or areas) that can be used for nothing but animal habitat (and a natural backdrop for the church), and in which all non-native plants must be removed and replaced with native plants. Since we couldn't make that work, we're reapplying under a different process as a PUD (planned unit development). The PUD application gives us a little more leeway and is more of a negotiation (where for instance, the 25% requirement can be lessened in exchange for some other concession). It will also give us a larger time frame in which to work, which should mean that we won't have to keep going back to the city to renew our long-term plans. There are a few extra steps in the PUD, but all in all, we think it's going to be a good thing, and though it's "delayed" our progress, we see the Lord's hand in that as well as we now believe that it will be even better for us. When we switched gears to meet the environmental requirements, there were a number of things that had to be redone and others that had to be updated (site engineering, surveys, & landscape plans), but those are now done, and have been turned in to the city, where they'll be reviewed by different departments and then sent on through the process, which will take at least a couple of months.

Our architectural plans are coming along quite nicely, and we're hoping that in the next couple of months we'll be able not just to show paper plans, but to make available DVDs with a "virtual tour" through a 3D model of the building. Our architect, Ross Andrews, is working very hard on our behalf, and is doing some amazing things to tweak our plans and design us the most practical, cost effective, energy efficient building possible. He has nearly completed what's known as the "schematic phase" and is preparing to involve the structural and mechanical engineers. If that sounds like Greek to you, that's OK. Just know that good progress is being made.

Lastly, our fund raising is coming along. We've raised \$172,128.77 since our Making Room campaign banquet just 6 months ago (yes, how time flies), and currently, we have \$308,689.02 in the building fund. I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you that are supporting the effort with your sacrificial giving, and encourage you to continue in your faithful stewardship. Amazingly, when we trust Him and stretch ourselves beyond our level of comfort, we continue to find Him faithful, and our faith in Him grows stronger as we experience his continued blessings. It's my hope and prayer not only that you'll find the Lord faithful, but that your faith in Him will grow in the process. Remember too, that "making room" isn't primarily about a building or a fund raising effort. It's about being intentional in reaching out to our friends and neighbors (or whoever else God brings across your path) and inviting them to see what Jesus is all about. That's our purpose for existing, and our purpose in making room. No matter who you are or what you may think you don't have, if you're a part of the body of Christ, you've got a role to play. So be encouraged. God is at work!

Humbly Yours,