

Smoky Mountain Reflections

January 2010

Happy New Year!

As we transition to a new decade a number of important things will take place this year. Our nation will conduct its census. This is a very important process which helps our local and national government to be good stewards of our local and national resources. Our church body will conduct its Triennial Synodical convention in order to do the business of our synod which the constitution, bylaws call us to do. But more importantly it is the process by which we as a church body have chosen to regularly review our practices to make our best effort to seek Gods will in all that we do.

We as a congregation are also coming to the point this year of important decisions with regard to how we might go forward making our best effort to seek God's will in all we do. What drives this question should always be how God would have us reach out to the community that He has called us to serve. Some of those answers will come this year as we start to flesh out the expansion plan that was presented to the congregation during our final quarterly meeting last year.

In order to fully understand and appreciate the decisions that lie before us, a quick review of how we came to this expansion plan will be necessary. Two years ago as the plans were being discussed for the design and installation of our last stained glass windows; it became clear that the plans made for our current facility had come to completion. So our Council established a planning committee to evaluate our current and future needs in order to better reach out to our community. As our congregation has and continues to grow at a steady pace it was determined that we should examine our current facilities maximum congregation size, while also examining the possibilities of relocating our campus and planting churches in our area. Relocating and planting were determined to be far enough in the future to reconsider later and the committee focused its efforts on our current facility. A summary of the results of their hard work are the following;

- Our current facility has a maximum occupancy of 223
- The maximum occupancy expansion for this property is to a total of 299
- This allows for the addition of 1140 square feet to our current facility

These four needs were identified in the consideration of an expansion project;

1. A larger fellowship space
2. More classrooms
3. More narthex space
4. Proper storage space

Because of the foresight of your council we are well ahead of the power curve in the planning scheme of things. At our current rate of growth, we could function in our current facility for three to five years. However, we are already starting to experience growing pains and they will only get worse as we continue to grow. These are good issues to have to deal with but if they are not dealt with, they could have a negative affect on our outreach efforts. The total cost of a project this size is not small, however your council will prayerfully consider all our options and present them to you for prayerful consideration as well.

The plan that was presented takes into consideration all of things that that were mentioned above. However, it is possible that you have a good idea that your council had not considered. So please take some time this year to look over our current plans and consider how we might make them better and how you might be a part of this project.

Looking forward to working with you to share Christ with our community in 2010.

In Christ,
Pastor Portier