

FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT

OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH IOWA CITY, IOWA

Preface

These are the results of the Feasibility Study conducted for Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Iowa City, IA.

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church's History

From the strategic location at the corner of Court Street and First Avenue, Our Redeemer has been equipping and making disciples for Jesus for nearly 60 years. The original sanctuary, chapel, and current sanctuary have each provided wonderful places for worship. The mid-90s building project expanded the education facilities, improved the office area, and upgraded technology in the sanctuary and fellowship hall.

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church's Vision

Vision 20/20 challenged Our Redeemer to move forward into a new era of mission and ministry. This began with a new roof over the entire facility in 2013, refurbishing the sanctuary in 2015, and will continue with refreshing the fellowship hall, expanding the narthex, and moving the chapel. The final phase of the 90s master plan is the building of the Activity Center, which will include a large multi-purpose room, new preschool facility and area for youth ministry.

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church's Need

Our Redeemer needs a large space which will provide the flexibility to hold simultaneous church activities and create opportunities for outreach by making the space available to the community. Additionally, by relocating the preschool and youth room to the new building, the current facility will have space for adult education.

The cost for the entire project is estimated to be \$5.2 million.

PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

- 33 Personal Interviews were completed and recorded, with 54 individuals participating
- 125 surveys were completed in a worship setting or online
- 179 total surveys were completed by representatives of 143 households (25.4% of total households)
- Age:
 - 48.9% 61 or older
 - 35.6% 40-60
 - 10.9% 25-39
 - 2.9% 18-24
 - 1.7% 13-17

- Length of Membership:
 - 59.1% Over 15 years
 - 16.4% 0-5 years
 - 9.9% 6-10 years
 - 9.9% 11-15 years
 - 4.7% Not a member
- Worship Attendance:
 - 71.1% Weekly
 - 21.4% 2-3 times a month
 - 5.8% At least once a month
 - 1.7% Less than once a month
- Did you attend a Feasibility Study Forum?
 - 55.1% Yes
 - 44.9% No

REVIEW OF RESPONSES

1. Respondents were asked several questions about the ministry of Our Redeemer:
 - a. 94.3% of respondents indicated Our Redeemer meets the spiritual needs of their household.
 - b. Respondents agreed Our Redeemer provides a valuable ministry to the:
 - Lutheran community (98.1%)
 - Broader Christian community (73.2%)
 - Entire community (72.4%)
 - c. 58.9% of respondents indicated it is most important that Our Redeemer provide a valuable ministry to the entire community.
2. Respondents were asked what they perceive to be Our Redeemer's greatest strengths. The top three responses were:
 - Preaching & Public Worship
 - Adult Education
 - Children Education
3. Respondents were asked what they perceive to be Our Redeemer's greatest challenges. The top three responses were:
 - Evangelism/Outreach
 - Stewardship
 - Assimilation

4. Just over 76% of respondents agreed that Our Redeemer is being given an opportunity to do something vital for mission and ministry – not only for today, but also for tomorrow.
5. Respondents were asked the “need” and “timing” of the following items:
- A large multi-purpose room for church activities and programs
 - There is a need: 47.5% agreed 26.5% neutral 26.0% disagreed
 - Now is the right time: 38.0% agreed 32.4% neutral 29.6% disagreed
 - A new preschool facility
 - There is a need: 38.4% agreed 29.4% neutral 32.2% disagreed
 - Now is the right time: 33.3% agreed 32.8% neutral 33.9% disagreed
 - An area for youth ministry
 - There is a need: 57.4% agreed 23.9% neutral 18.7% disagreed
 - Now is the right time: 40.7% agreed 35.5% neutral 23.8% disagreed
 - An area for adult ministry/Bible study
 - There is a need: 43.8% agreed 28.7% neutral 27.5% disagreed
 - Now is the right time: 33.4% agreed 35.0% neutral 31.6% disagreed
 - The Activity Center
 - There is a need: 40.1% agreed 30.5% neutral 29.4% disagreed
 - Now is the right time: 38.7% agreed 31.0% neutral 30.3% disagreed
6. Just over 64% of respondents agreed the new Activity Center will allow flexibility in scheduling simultaneous events in the sanctuary, fellowship hall, and Activity Center. 21.3% neutral; 14.6% disagreed.
7. 58% of respondents felt the new Activity Center will provide a greater opportunity for outreach beyond the immediate community into the greater Iowa City area. 20.4% neutral; 21.6% disagreed.
8. 122 respondents (68.9%) indicated they had been given adequate opportunity to have their questions answered concerning the plan for completion of the Master Plan as described. 18.1% neutral; 13% disagreed.
9. 63% responded they had adequate opportunity to share their opinions about this project. 24.5% neutral; 12.5% disagreed.
10. 66.6% of respondents agreed to support a plan the majority supports, even if it is not their preferred plan. 15.9% neutral; 17.5% disagreed.
11. Just over 49% of respondents indicated now is the right time to conduct a capital campaign to help fund the vision as described. 30.5% neutral; 20.4% disagreed.
12. Respondents agreed (57.1%) they knew enough about this project to make an informed decision regarding their financial support. 25.2% neutral; 17.7% disagreed.

13. 39.2% of respondents were willing to make a three-year financial commitment to a capital campaign, 42% were not sure, and 18.8% indicated they would not make a commitment.

Preparing for a capital campaign requires clarity of mission and vision together with an alignment of resources to move people toward action. With that in mind, your Capital Funding Services (CFS) Consultant provides some observations as well as recommendations based on information that was shared through surveys, personal interviews and forums, together with conversations he has had with church leaders.

OBSERVATIONS

1. With 94.3% of the members indicating Our Redeemer meets the spiritual needs of their household, it is clear that Our Redeemer is in the heart of its members.
2. Only 58.9% of respondents indicated it is most important that Our Redeemer provide a valuable ministry to the entire community. This may indicate the need for more robust teaching and modeling of the purpose of the church: To be “sent ones.” Evangelism/Outreach was identified as Our Redeemer’s greatest challenge.
3. 29.7% indicated that the most important group to focus upon is the Lutheran community. If we put the best construction on this, we may interpret this to mean that our people must be disciplined in order to be effective ambassadors. The alternative explanation is that many at Our Redeemer believe that the church primarily exists to minister to and serve them, which is not a missional/biblical view of the purpose of the church.
4. Our Redeemer provided five forums for members to learn more about the final phase of Vision 20/20. Many comments were received that if members didn’t have adequate opportunity to have their questions answered, it was their own fault. 55.1% of respondents attended a forum. Most felt they had the opportunity to ask questions, but many felt their questions weren’t answered.
5. It is apparent in the survey results and comments from the forums and interviews, Our Redeemer is divided or somewhat neutral regarding the pursuit of the current plan. Many respondents struggled with the word “need” and may have chosen “neither agree nor disagree” rather than take a stand one way or the other as indicated in the high number of neutral responses.
6. Out of all the components of the Vision 20/20’s final phase, an area for youth ministry received the strongest support from respondents (57.4% agreed).
7. 66.6% of respondents indicated they would support a plan the majority supports, even if it was not their preferred plan. This percentage is a little lower than we would hope to see (the average percentage being (75-80%).
8. Only 57.1% of respondents indicated they knew enough about the project to make an informed decision regarding their financial commitment which is reflected in an above average number (42%) of respondents not sure if they will make a three-year commitment.

9. If all verifiable and non-verifiable monetary and non-cash gifts were realized, the campaign would generate between \$432,000 and \$594,500 for Our Redeemer Lutheran Church. Another \$51,600-\$96,000 may be available if unreliable commitments were also given.
10. Based on our experience with capital campaigns such as this, and the information presented in this study, we estimate that challenging but realistic goals for a campaign conducted today would be \$450,000 to \$600,000.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Empower the Feasibility Study Team to work further with your building project leaders, architects, and Consultant John Sproul, to design an alternative project that does not feature a large multi-purpose room, but does provide for new or refreshed facilities for the preschool and youth ministry.
2. Once the plans have been reviewed and refreshed and communicated thoroughly to members, we recommend you allow CFS to send a brief survey to your members to get feedback on the new plan to evaluate potential to build momentum toward an altered, unified plan.
3. Once a revised plan has been determined with member buy-in, we recommend Our Redeemer move forward with a three-year *Immeasurably More* Campaign with Capital Funding Services to best fund the mission and maximize the spiritual integrity of the process.
4. We recommend Our Redeemer explore the potential of utilizing the services of Laborers For Christ for any construction/remodeling in the revised plan. Utilizing Laborers For Christ will allow your campaign dollars to go further.
5. Finally, CFS recommends Our Redeemer promptly share this report with their members who will not be able to join us for our June 27 meeting, through subsequent church meetings, printed and electronic publications, special mailings, and other communication efforts that work best for Our Redeemer.

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