

(Comments captured in response to 3 questions posed to participants in 5 small-group sessions (4 in the Commons, and 1 online) during the Dec. 14, 2022, forum

**Question #1: What are your hopes for our future space?**

- To “walk the talk” with inclusive space, certainly to code for the disabled but also for a wide range of diversities; welcoming; to have a natural environment; to have a building and grounds where people want to go.
- A warm community with more people knowing about us; becoming even more a place where LGBTQ individuals can feel welcome and safe; a good place for kids and youth.
- Accessible in a multitude of definitions; welcoming; with nature incorporated, sometimes a walk outside is such a gift; a place where young people feel this is home.
- A place that as we grow we continue to have the intimacy that we have now with a deep sense of connection.
- To remember the building is not the church. Accessible to people of all economic levels so that we may serve beyond ourselves; especially important to cooperate with other social justice, possibly sharing space and using the building during the week.
- More space in general without traffic jams and without sending the kids out and off.
- A building that encourages people to come in, unlike the current building; flexible classrooms; handicap parking that is not dangerous for those needing easy access; a picnic area and welcoming outside environment where people can simply get-together. The northeast land has a grove of apple trees perfect for a quiet walk; a place that is welcoming and attracts new people.
- Want to live up to our ideals; to pay attention to our mission; accessible in the most complete sense. While some people think we are centrally located now, there are a lot of people that don’t have a clue as to our location. Location should not deter us from moving. People will find us.
- There is simply not enough space but especially for the youth; the library is hidden in the elevator corridor; the nursery is very congested with kids and parents; need more space and not where the kids are so separate.
- Better accessibility,
- Kitchen and Commons: Those with limited mobility or gait aids can’t contribute, are in-the-way, and detract from the efforts of other volunteers. A new kitchen needs to allow these members to contribute: space for wheelchairs, lower counter height, etc.
- Religious Education: It’s important for youth to mix with disabled peers and adults, so the spaces need to allow for this.
- Sanctuary: The addition of a ramp to the chancel was excellent.
- Welcoming: The entry and common areas need to invite people who are new and unfamiliar.
- Multigenerational: This atmosphere is improving but much further to go.
- Be unified in our mission and vision.

- Fits with environment, supports increased membership, flexible space.
- Captures imagination, embrace community, spiritual growth, light, creative spaces, green space.
- Kitchen-centric as method to embrace community, beautiful spaces to share meals, interactions, space for outdoor events.
- Deeply connected to the community / service projects, spaces to support community activities and/or rental income during the week ... shouldn't be just for Wednesday evenings and Sundays.
- Practicality of space, better spaces allow for increased staff energy, big feast hall, better kitchen / cooking, support events.
- Increase sense of community, better children, youth, and food spaces, less nursing home appearance, gardening, nature, light, true to our principles.
- More accessible and welcoming (current church has spooky renovated Hogwarts vibe, less convoluted routes, flex / multi-use spaces.
- Much better green space / natural world connection, allows for a strong UU presence in southeastern Minnesota.
- Environmentally sustainable, design new church with adaptive/flexible spaces to support changes in the future.
- Open, welcoming, green space, accessible, expandable in stages, how to do something other than normal asphalt parking lot.
- Connection integration with nature, labyrinth paths, space to partner with Rochester Orchestra and have space that supports “real” orchestra and chorale.
- More connection to nature to have walks and tap into my spiritual practice being in nature.
- I want a building suited for our mission, that is welcoming and that demonstrates environmental stewardship.
- I want the building to be flexible – as we can never build big enough.
- A building with light.
- Flexible options.
- Build a lasting building that will be around for 100 years.
- Have a space that is a center for families, for learning and for worship; allowing spaces to gather, play, a space for kids to run around and a quiet space for reflection.
- I want a place where we can relax, all have fun and be inspired.
- A space for people who don't have a voice to come to express their talents and we would welcome them, have a garden space and be more open than just Sundays.
- A space where community programs could be developed.
- A space where people of color can join and feel whole, a space where we can grow spiritually and connect with other churches.
- A space welcoming to families and is accessible to all and accessible to the community.
- Flexible space, thinking of a place where we can eat together and host large community events.
- Good acoustics – important for rentals.

- More inclusive of youth and children. They're all blocked off; space is tight; more lighting needed.
- A place that feels more inclusive than exclusive; more spaces that allow everyone to come together.
- More parking; the first time I came I parked hundreds of meters down the street.
- More interior space; more light.
- A reflection of all seven of our principles.
- Something powerful for the Rochester community.
- I'd like to see a vitality for people attending; I love this Wednesday night stuff.
- A space to provide community services and involving people in the community.
- A more open RE wing and multiple entry points to the building.
- Large windows; more space; more things on one level.
- Address accessibility issues; gender-neutral bathrooms; bathrooms that people can find.
- Versatility; we currently have a lot of space, but we can't use it.
- A place for spiritual health and for visitors; a vision of outreach – for use by community members and for practicing justice.
- More versatile, more open, more flexible; include a day care, which could provide revenue for the church.
- Our kids grew up here, but this space is too broken up; a space that feels inviting, with natural light. Space outside the church for a community garden and for other community stuff.
- Versatile space; more greenery and plants.
- On a bus route, or have a bus.
- Space to grow; green-certified.
- I don't mind the stairs, but our church has a lot of stairs for someone new.
- Warm in terms of interior architecture; more modern.

## **Question # 2: What are you wrestling with?**

- All my questions have to do with how to proceed after the vote; worries about money and inflation since prices are high and how will we raise the funds.
- Not worried about the capital campaign – the money will come. Most concerned with the diversity component and how do we share our strong mission without proselytizing.
- So many of the questions people are raising are issues that we cannot solve by ourselves – location of streets or future bus routes – we need to work within the Rochester systems to develop the solutions that will help us grow.
- Costs. Really worried that the capital campaign won't raise enough. The location of the building will send a strong signal (positive or negative) to those in marginal households.

- While painfully aware of the limitations of this building, don't want to be building poor because we choose to move. Worried about the finances in general, including the capital campaign but also a negative impact on the operating budget. Seek outside groups or services needing space that we might gain from increased revenue.
- Not worried about the money; worried about the right location, close to a bus line; suggest serious consideration of the property where Longfellow School previous stood.
- Worried about money. I cannot even image a million of anything on my small salary. How do we make sure that we hear from everyone, even those not old enough to be members; the people that cannot vote?
- Have all that people that need to hear the information in order to vote heard the facts? Will everyone vote?
- The actual move. Not whether or not to move, that is a given but how to do the work of moving; what to take; what to leave; who will do the work of packing and toting?
- Money.
- Transportation, especially for members with limited mobility.
- Lack of local public transit after 6 p.m. and weekends, especially for mobility aids (scooters, wheelchairs, etc.).
- Zip transport is the only current option but has limited qualification criteria and is very inefficient.
- Currently some members a disenfranchised from in-building activities, and relegated to Zoom/YouTube.
- The extent of member participation in the BOF/BO discovery process.
- We need to know clearly what newer and younger church members think about a substantial capital campaign.
- Poor timing of such an investment: pandemic, economy, limited in-person networking.
- Don't want vote to split congregation, don't want to get hung up on finances.
- Financial capacity support, don't want people to feel they aren't welcome if they can't commit much financially.
- Process is overwhelming.
- Not knowing what the financial "ask" will be.
- Timeline and planning process, people not being on the same page.
- Not being able to get everything we want.
- Change is difficult.
- How to handle logistics and maintain membership if we're out of current church (due to sale), but unable to quickly move into existing (renovated) or new church.
- We brought in a young minister instead of an older minister that would likely be on his/her last calling. People need to embrace our opportunity for growth now.
- I am a firm go. I see older churches where folks are trying to manage their building issues – I don't want to worry about these things so we can focus on our mission.
- I don't want to lose kids in the transition, so how to deal with transitions that happen in this whole process.

- I worry that we will lose the relative centrality of our current location. It may take a while for public transit to catch up.
- Worry about process – I worry about the folks who aren't here to hear these discussions.
- Will the neighborhood be welcoming to us?
- Worried that the process will take too long.
- Worry about youth, worry about engaging people through this process.
- Trying to balance new building for the future while acknowledging the history of the past.
- Worry about cost and the time it would take to renovate.
- I worry if we stay here, we won't be able to fulfill our mission.
- I'm not worried about finances and love the potential of growth.
- Not much potential in making this building big enough.
- How to instill a vision of a new space.
- I want to highlight the importance of having youth and children; the nursery is so dark; children using the playground contend with steps and poison ivy.
- I worry about what we lose if we stay here, the cost of staying. I know young families who left the church after they tried it for a while.
- For people under the age of 35, let people know who we are and what we do.
- Cost, affordability and expenses. The numbers shown in the brochure are optimistic.
- A lot of church buildings sit empty much of time; we need outreach.
- I'm worried about a vote that is less than 75 percent.
- I'm worried that a new location might be too far out.
- Concerns about the cost, whatever we do; the numbers that we've seen are low.

**Question #3: One (to three) words that describes our future space:**

- Welcoming to all
- Inclusive
- Awesome
- Multifunctional
- Green
- Good learning space
- Flexible
- Accessible, flexible
- Accessible
- Thriving
- Welcoming
- Comfortable
- Togetherness
- Hopeful

- Inspiring
- Contemplative
- Holy
- Inspirational
- Feast hall
- Dreams
- Inclusivity
- Excitement
- People
- Happiness, fun
- Welcoming, accessible
- Room to grow
- Environmental example
- Sustainability
- Room to grow
- Flexibility -- long-lasting
- Inspirational
- Spiritually edifying
- Wonderful
- Connecting
- Hopeful
- Future-oriented
- Timeline
- Egalitarian
- Connection
- Build-it-and-they-will-come
- Collective best interest
- Inclusivity
- Attracting millennials