

# Lobby Refurbishment Project

We can be thankful for the good stewardship and solid values of Lancaster Alliance Church. This church has a legacy of generous even sacrificial giving. We have also managed our money carefully and been frugal in how we have spent the funds entrusted to us. The attitude toward the use of our church building has been to use it to the fullest. Each week the building is used by hundreds of people. There is rarely a day that something is not happening within these walls. That is a great testimony.

The maintenance and upkeep of our facilities is an expression of our stewardship. That stewardship requires ongoing investments in the building. Over the last 10 years, we have invested \$1,129,200 to capital improvement projects.

- The Building Faith, Shaping Generations Capital Campaign begun in 2007 and headed by Herb Fisher and Fred Joost raised over \$560,000. Those funds allowed us to address many deferred maintenance issues.
- In the last six years, we have undertaken five other major projects which required the raising of additional funds. We replaced the ceilings in the **lower-level rooms**, renovated the **kitchen**, replaced **sound equipment** in the auditorium, demolished and landscaped the **barn property**, and replaced **our roof**. All were completed without borrowing money.
- Finally, through our regular giving to the Capital Improvement Fund and a monthly allocation from the General Fund, we now have a modest emergency reserve and an income stream to meet ongoing maintenance needs. Just this year we replaced our lock system with a master key system, upgraded technology in our classrooms, and completed the carpeting and painting of the children's ministry areas on both floors and the stairways on both ends of the halls.

With careful management of these funds our facilities are in good condition with one exception: the lobby. Our leadership team and the trustees are recommending that the refurbishing of the lobby is our next major project. Here are some of the reasons why this needs to be considered.

1. It's time for an update. The lobby has been relatively unchanged since the building was dedicated over 26 years ago. The carpet is worn, the ceiling is discolored, the paint is faded, and the furnishings are sparse and well-used. Our capacity to host the events already scheduled in the space is limited. Every Sunday supplies for the coffee fellowship time, including water, are hauled from the kitchen. The refreshments are served on "card tables", one visitor observed.
2. We want to create a welcoming, comfortable environment that is easy to navigate for new people. The lobby is often the place of first impression when people enter our building. Our current lobby does not convey to new people the warm and caring church we are. Last year we had over 390 local guests visit us on Sunday morning. Visitors make judgements based on first impressions.

We can do so much better in making those initial impressions positive by a modest updating to our lobby.

3. We want to develop a more functional lobby area for ministry. We value participation, group interaction and hospitality which call for a more flexible space for events and gatherings. The lobby space is our largest meeting area after the sanctuary. There is great potential to maximize this space if we invest in updating this area.

We have evaluated many options for improving this space. One promising idea was to enclose the narrow green area between the buildings. However, the cost to accomplish that was high when compared with the relatively small space we would gain.

Another option was to capture space in the back of the sanctuary to make a café area with more informal table seating. Again the cost was not viable for such a relatively small gain in square footage. While considering the many good ideas, we bring a modest proposal that takes what we have and maximizes the space at a reasonable price.

As we consider a new financial commitment, you may ask if giving over \$1,129,200 to capital improvement projects has hindered our other giving. It does not appear so.

Our mission giving has increased almost every year. Over the last two years our giving to the Great Commission Ministries of the C&MA has grown by 11%. This year we commissioned our first new vocational Alliance worker in years, providing for Ana's outgoing expenses and reducing her educational debt. Caitlin Kerr is completing her apprenticeship and we hope will be transitioning to career status this coming year.

Our General Fund giving has also been strong. We have a balanced budget with giving and expenses closely aligned. We had enough to pay all the bills last year with over \$22,000 left to begin the next year. Our giving only increased .4% this past year but over the last three years giving to the General Fund has increased 7%.

We could borrow the money but we prefer to avoid indebtedness. God has provided before in dramatic ways. There will always be competing needs but at some point we face an opportunity which is both urgent and important. The lobby project is one such opportunity. It will outlast many of us. It will be a gift to the generations to come. Let's join hands and undertake this next step of faith to the glory of God.

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