

Q&A FOR THE BUILDING PROGRAM (June 18, 2014)

MASTER PLAN

- **What is a Master Plan?** This is our first master plan ever. It envisions our needs for space into the future within the constraints of our campus, showing how each component fits into the total plan, keeping in mind our values and vision. The scope of the proposed Phase I may change depending on the results of the capital campaign. Beyond Phase I the phases can be switched based upon changing needs.
- **Why bother with a Master Plan if all we can build is Phase I?** The Master Plan forces us to lay out the space in Phase I so that future expansion is possible without having to redo any Phase I construction. It also places Phase I in perspective, showing how much of our long range vision can be built now, and what is to be deferred for the future.
- **I would like to see a change in the drawings. Is Phase I set in stone?** Phase I is fixed for now, but it can be changed after the September vote. The current Phase I is the vehicle we have used to complete the exploratory work and it is the plan we will use for our Financial Feasibility Study. Should we decide to vote to proceed with the capital campaign, we will hire an architectural firm to finish the plan. Right now we are interested in receiving your suggestions so that, if the September vote is to proceed with the capital campaign, we may consider them when we return to the design work.

PHASE I

- **How was Phase I determined?** From 20+ visioning circles and 6 focus groups, the Design Build Team determined that our overarching goal was to have most of WUU's primary activities under one roof as soon as possible. That includes a larger religious education space, a larger, more welcoming Gathering Hall, a Chapel or signature sacred space that is different from our general meeting rooms and classrooms to accommodate children's chapel, meditation, special occasions, etc. and an administrative space that is integrated into our programs. Phase I also places an emphasis upon maintaining the beauty of our current campus while holding true to our values about integration with nature.
- **Why are the RE classroom so large? Do we really need that much space?** Virginia standards for children from preK-5th grade require 35 square feet/child, significantly larger than the space needed for adults. Fahs House, with 1417 square feet, is rated for 40 children. Our current maximum attendance for preK-5 is 44 (about the same it was in 1994). There have been occasional fluctuations, but we have not grown in 20 years. Fahs' size and configuration has always been inadequate for our RE program, and this may be one reason that growth in the children's program has never kept pace with overall growth. The proposed Phase I space has capacity for 55 children which would support a 25% increase in the number of children served.

- **Is the RE space large enough for our program?** The RE space includes the Nursery (at our current size) and three rooms for preschool through fifth grade (preK-5). This allows for a modest increase in our current maximum attendance of about 12 preschool children and another 32 children through fifth grade. This will allow us to separate the preK from kindergarteners which is highly recommended by educators. If we experience the rate of growth in the children's program that occurred when the Sanctuary was built (and membership grew from about 100 to 250), we may be crowded again, but in view of other immediate needs, this is as much as the DBT felt could be allocated to Phase I.
- **How can we justify spending so much money for space to be used only on Sunday morning?** The RE space is to the children as the Sanctuary is to adults: It is where they worship on Sunday morning. Creating a beautiful environment for children that embodies our values is integral to our mission. Each room will have direct access to the outdoors, for children to maintain a close connection with nature. And just as we have found ways to use the Sanctuary, so we will find ways use the RE classrooms throughout the week. The rooms have adequate storage space so that adult groups could store things there, and meet in these spaces when they are not in use by the children. Rooms will be partitioned for flexible use by smaller groups (useful, even though partitions will not keep out all of the noise), and if built according to applicable Virginia standards, these rooms might also serve as a preschool space during the week. There are many other possibilities for use of this space, including a possible Social Justice Center.

- **Haven't we left out the youth and HS groups? Don't they deserve space in the new building?** Yes they do, but to reduce costs the Phase I plan calls for a renovation of the Fahs House (done by WUU volunteers) for middle school and high school youth. Fahs could be repartitioned into two private sections (all that is feasible). If allowed to decorate it with sofas and comfortable chairs, we expect youth would enjoy having their own space separate from the adult congregation as well as the other kids. It is anticipated that Fahs would continue to be meeting space for various small groups of adults during the week. Under the Master Plan, new space for the youth and HS groups is deferred to Phase II, with Fahs continuing as an adult meeting place.
- **I don't see any special space for Social Justice/Outreach, a central WUU mission. What provisions have been made for it?** As we learned in the focus group discussions, SJ/Outreach is a varied program involving both (i) planning for activities at remote sites and (ii) holding events at WUU. The new "RE wing" could be an ideal space for SJ/Outreach events held at WUU during the week, saving Sunday for use by the children (and if this idea is adopted, the RE wing might be named the "Social Justice Center"). The Phase I design also has other multipurpose spaces for planning meetings of various sizes, including the new Gathering Hall and renovated Fahs House. Finally, in order to plan activities, the Work/Copy room in the administrative wing will have carrels or work stations that can be dedicated to SJ/Outreach, and we will have a dedicated space for storage of outreach equipment (such as our WUU flags and banners).

- **How will the new design help with the flow in and out of the Sanctuary?** First, there will be four, instead of two, doors between the Gathering Hall and the Sanctuary. Second, with the garden space to the left of the Sanctuary, we will install glass exit doors directly into that space, replacing the single fire door near the AV room.
- **What will be accomplished with the new kitchen?** Phase I moves the kitchen (and its associated noise) away from the Sanctuary while making possible a much larger and more open Gathering Hall. The coffee bar will serve the Gathering Hall, and the new kitchen will be more functional with this new configuration. Most importantly, we can begin to have a commercial kitchen in Phase I without having to wait until we build a Fellowship Hall.
- **Why did you move the nursery?** The nursery was moved to give a large unified space for the new Gathering Hall and the new kitchen. It is now located near the RE rooms and near the restrooms. Security and safety are more easily controlled with its new location and access to the new playground is also more convenient and safe.
- **What will the playground include?** Though the location of the playground is in the plan for phase I, we will need the input of families with children as well as persons interested in a preschool to help us plan for the right equipment mix.

- **What about the acoustical improvements that we need in the Sanctuary?** These are urgent, and since Sanctuary renovation takes place in a later phase, and they are not that expensive, we can make these improvements now.
- **Why do we need a new administrative space when Parker works just fine?** Parker is isolated from the rest of the campus, is not handicapped-accessible, and is an old building in need of repair. There is little space for volunteer work and there is no adequate counseling space. Having our administrative space located close to everything else enables the entire facility to be more functional, well-managed, integrated, and accessible. Additionally, it provides ample space for volunteer work and growth. In further phases there is room for expansion.
- **How does the Phase I administrative space compare with the current Parker administrative space?** Parker's first floor includes 1,200 square feet of which only 962 square feet is dedicated to administrative use. This administrative space includes 4 offices housing 5 persons. The new Phase I administrative space is more than twice the size (2,370 square feet) and includes 4 separate offices, a storage room, a conference room, a large work/copy room with work stations, shelving, machine space, etc. This space is even larger if one includes the reception space in the greeting area.

- **Why is the administration space right up front when RE, the Sanctuary, and Fellowship are the heart of our building?** The DBT feels that to make the RE, Sanctuary, and Fellowship accessible to all during the entire week someone has to monitor, welcome, and direct any visitors at any time they may enter. Additionally, by passing through our Gathering Hall, visitors are introduced to WUU activities by the displays there and to mingle with others seeking or involved in WUU services. The reception desk, as part of administration, is located at the hub of these activities and is semi-open to the Gathering Hall for visibility and interaction.
- **Why are there only 4 offices when we expect to need space for additional staff in the future?** If an additional one or two offices are needed, they can be carved out of the large work/copy room. The design of this large room has been left flexible to be adapted to future needs.
- **How much space has been allocated for choir practice and storage?** The number of choir members on a usual Sunday is about 35. The Chapel can comfortably fit the choir plus a piano, and on the rare occasion that the choir number grows to 40+ there are rooms in the new RE wing that can hold the larger number and instruments. There is a dedicated 6'x10' Choir storage room, and more storage behind the chancel.

- **Why do we need a Chapel?** In both the visioning circles and focus groups, congregants spoke of the desire for a small, signature sacred space that supports the WUU mission. This will be a special sacred space that will emulate much of the simplicity, architecture and beauty of the Sanctuary, only at a different scale. Additionally, it will enable us to save energy costs by serving more of the weekly meeting needs without heating/cooling the Sanctuary. The Chapel will be (i) a sacred meeting space, (ii) an intimate space for reflection, prayer, personal meditation, group meditation, small worship program, (iii) a place to sit with a fellow member who is facing loss, illness, and other challenges. (iv) a place for spiritual exploration, e.g. classes by the minister; classes/talks by a guest speaker; interfaith meetings and programs, (v) a beautiful, unique space for events such as small weddings and memorial services, (vi) place for children's worship, and (vii) a space for musical groups to practice.
- **What happens to Fahs?** For Phase I and perhaps beyond, it serves a critical function by providing space for our youth (teen) programs and other functions (coffee house, adult RE). It is close enough to the new facility to be a functional part and it already is handicapped accessible.
- **What happens to Parker?** Parker is an old building, with an out-of-date electrical system, that would be very difficult to make handicapped accessible. It isn't located close enough to the new facility to make it a functional part of WUU's mission. Though Parker has provided valuable space for WUU, its principal value in the future is the land that it sits on, primarily for parking. Additionally,

we will probably need to use a portion of the Parker land for a possible second egress and ingress from Ironbound Road. Thus, we recommend that Parker should be razed after Phase I is completed.

- **Why must we wait so long for a Fellowship Hall?** As the Design Build Team reviewed the priorities, it attempted to find creative solutions. For instance, we need a larger gathering space since our lobby is too cramped, noisy, and not conducive for socializing, conversations, etc. By expanding the Gathering Hall to be more than 2/3 the size of the Sanctuary, it should be large enough to seat almost 100 people for a meal, or host a meeting of over 150 participants. There will be a few times (auction, etc.) when we will need to use the Sanctuary in addition to the new Gathering Hall. The conclusion reached was that the additional expense of the Fellowship Hall (about \$1.5M) would have to be deferred to a later Phase.
- **Why wasn't the creation of additional Sanctuary space a higher priority?** The visioning circles and the focus groups gave the highest priorities to religious education space and improvement of our lobby (which has led to the large Gathering Hall), leaving the expansion of the Sanctuary further down the list. (Taking the long view, our original construction of the large Sanctuary in 1995 has already come first, leaving other needs to be met now.) Given these priorities, it is too expensive to create new Sanctuary space at this time, particularly when it is recognized that our current space will be sufficient well into the future if we fully fund a second service (currently being planned to start in

the fall). Finally, the Chapel and/or Gathering Hall can provide over-flow capacities with the use of video-streaming, etc.

- **Where is the Library?** Since our original library was funded by a special gift, and interest in preserving this function remains (although most members who participated in the focus groups did not feel we needed a dedicated space for a Library), the DBT suggests that the Small Conference Room house the Library and that it carry the name of the original donor. Books could also be shelved in places along the wide hallway connected to the Gathering Hall.
- **Some spaces dedicated by donors in 1995 are slated for renovation or removal. What will happen to the plaques dedicating these spaces?** These plaques will be relocated to new places appropriate to the original dedication.
- **What happens to the Memorial Garden?** The Memorial Garden stays as it is (though work as a part of the Campus Improvement Team project is planned for the circle). However, it is easy to envision a new, improved path leading from the new garden outside the Sanctuary and Chapel to the Memorial Garden.

- **Will the parking spaces and facilities be handicap accessible.** Yes! The entire complex will be all at the same level, with flat corridors connecting all the spaces and wide handicap accessible doors. There will be two main entrances from the parking lots: the current one in front that leads directly to the Gathering Hall and the Sanctuary, and an entrance from the left leading to the small conference room, the Minister's office, and the RE wing. Both entrances will have a smooth ramp over the parking lot curbs and easy access through wide doors.
- **What plans are being made for energy efficient construction?** The present orientation of the buildings is not optimal for the use of solar panels, but this is still under discussion. Other energy saving measures are being considered. If the Congregation votes in September to proceed, every effort will be made to make the new facilities as energy efficient as possible.

FINANCIAL

- **How much was our first mortgage(s)?** The current facility was financed by two mortgages: (i) a UUA loan for \$250,000 entered into at the end of 1994, and (ii) a SunTrust loan, the size of which has fluctuated. This loan is renegotiated every five years. It started in 1993 at \$148,000, grew to \$250,000 in 1998, remained at \$250,000 in 2004, and was set at \$169,703 in 2009. Both of these loans will be paid off by the end of the next fiscal year (and as you know, the SunTrust loan is being carried by us, interest free, until we finish our payments). (The UUA loan is now interest-free also.)

- **How much was raised to build our current Sanctuary?** We raised an initial \$317,000 in the 1993 capital campaign, plus an additional \$50,000 during our "Miracle Sunday" in September 1994. When combined with the two mortgages, the approximate total raised was \$867,000. This amounts to about \$1.4M in today's dollars.
- **How will we raise the money to create this new space?** Our Financial Feasibility Team, with Allen Cooke as chair, is working on this. A sample of our members and friends will be interviewed by our UUA financial consultant in July. That will provide important information about our readiness and financial capacity to proceed. After receiving a report prepared by the UUA Financial Consultant, our DBT, BOF, Finance Committee, and the Board will prepare a plan to be voted on by the congregation in September. That will end all of the exploratory work. If we decide to proceed with the vote in September, the capital campaign will begin to raise the necessary money.
- **What is the estimated cost of Phase I and the entire Master Plan?** Phase I is \$2.7 M (of which \$1.5M is construction with the rest site preparation, fees, and contingency). The Full Master Plan would cost about 5.2M in today's dollars. (For more details see the DBT presentation.)

- **What will we do if we can't raise the \$2.7M needed for Phase I?** After the Financial Feasibility Study has been received at the end of July, the DBT, BOF, Finance Committee, and the Board will prepare a revised Phase I to be reported to the Congregation on Sept. 14 and voted on Sept. 21.

STATEMENT FROM BOARD TO THE CONGREGATION RE BOF/DBT PLANS AND PROGRESS MAY 18, 2014

- During our recent meeting, the Board once again reviewed, with Roger Guernsey, chair of the Design/Build Team, two things: the preliminary facility expansion plan and the continuing process as the congregation explores expansion. The Board is in full agreement that the Design/Build Team and the architects have focused on the most needed improvements to our facilities in the preliminary plan, improvements that will provide needed space for us to better carry out our mission and realize Vision 2017.
- The Board thanks and congratulates the Building Our Future Task Force and Design/Build Team for their continued intense work and it wholeheartedly supports the entire process as it takes WUU through the next stages to our congregational meeting on September 21st when the congregation will determine if we move to building.
- We urge everyone to continue reviewing the preliminary plans, talk with members of the DBT, submit questions and comments to them. Input from everyone is needed and welcomed.

- At our August meeting, the Board will review the plan again, along with all the questions and comments the congregation has put forward, and the results of the Financial Feasibility Study. We will then submit to the congregation a proposal that will be considered and voted upon at the September 21st congregational meeting.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- The Design/Build Team will continue to collect comments from the congregation in a variety of ways.
 - The Congregation is invited to four program group meetings to answer questions and discuss the design.
 - The BOF teams are available at our major gatherings.
 - An electronic, on-line blog for posting questions is being planned.
 - Contact BOF members in person at the BOF table or submit your questions/comments in the Listening to You box at the table
- The Financial Feasibility Team will complete their work by the end of July so we will know what to recommend to the Board. That will complete our exploratory work.
- Then we, as a congregation, decide in September whether or not proceed.