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Talk about exciting! It was exciting enough when the congregation voted to establish four committees to oversee the much-needed building project in which we are engaged. It’s even more exciting to sit in on the meetings of these committees as they under God’s guidance pursue their respective tasks.

Recent releases from the Communication Committee brought you information about two of the working committees, their personnel, and a photograph. Here we’ll take a break from that emphasis and share with you what’s been keeping them busy.

 **PROPERTY DISPOSITION COMMITTEE UPDATE** --

There’s a lot to consider when leaving behind old buildings and moving to new ones. The initial question is, “What of the old are we going to bring with us to the new?” There seems to be consensus that the recently rebuilt organ and some of the stained glass will be incorporated into the new design. What about pews? The tower bell? The tower clock? You may have other suggestions to be considered. **Share your thoughts with the committee** (Chair is Wayne Cisler.) The committee is in touch with four area churches which have made this move to gain from their experiences, and intends to visit their sites to see first-hand how this re-use works in real life.

There are also less flashy issues, like brick salvage and asbestos abatement. And what market value might our old buildings command? The committee has these issues covered also. While it’s too early to establish accurate values, the committee has contacted realtors to lay the groundwork for this assessment.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE** --

The early emphasis of this committee’s work has been to identify companies which have successfully helped other churches in their capital fund drive. Not just any company will do! Rather, the company’s leadership must understand biblical principles of Christian stewardship. While a law-based program might produce a bigger pile of money for building purposes, God is not pleased unless the giving is a joyful response to the great work Christ has accomplished for us.

Three companies were identified for interviews: The James Company, Cornerstone Stewardship Ministry, and Generis. Each has been successfully employed by other WELS churches. The committee then scheduled interviews with representatives from each firm, and by the time you read this those interviews should be completed. The interview process demonstrates that each company comes to us with both strengths and weaknesses, and at various price points. The committee will evaluate all this input, assess our needs, and then recommend which firm might best serve us and assist in bringing this major building effort to a successful conclusion.

**Consider adding this committee’s members and work to your daily prayer list.** Without God's abundant blessing, we build in vain!

**BUILDING COMMITTEE UPDATE  --**

Assembling a list of legitimate architectural/construction/design-build firms to be interviewed may not be the most exciting task a committee ever had, but the interview process was breath-taking in the variety it exposed. You are to be forgiven if you thought the committee would have to choose between a conventional bid process and the design/build approach. In truth, between and beyond those basic approaches there lies every imaginable variation and nuance, and the committee, over about seven hours of interviews, heard them all.

The following firms were invited to be interviewed:

* Alliance Construction and Design
* Calmes & Sons
* Catalyst Construction
* De Leers Construction
* Excel Architects/Engineers
* Smies and Associates, Architects
* Somerville Architects/Engineers

Each firm was recommended for consideration by a member of St. John, by their work on a neighboring church, or through the experience of Building Committee members. Each was given an hour’s time to share their story, their expertise, their ability to move our program forward. And, of course, there were plenty of questions asked of each firm. **Wish you could have been there; wish you could have participated!**

So who in the end will be the architect to design our school and worship facility? What construction firm will be chosen to bring this dream to fruition? That awaits a big Building Committee discussion on another day, and should be quite a process of considering pros and cons, strengths and weaknesses, needs at St. John, what characteristics we bring to the table, and more.

 **Q & A  Building a new church and school will cost a lot of money!** **Who is going to pay for it?**

Another good – and practical –  question. We would do well to see how both the Old Testament Tabernacle and Solomon's famed temple got built.

Many skilled craftsmen were working on the Tabernacle using gifts that the people had freely brought morning after morning. After a time, the skilled workers appealed to Moses that the people’s offerings were greater than needed, so Moses instructed the people to stop from bringing offerings. “And so the people were restrained from bringing more, because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work” (Exodus 36:6-7).

Years later, when the famed Temple of Solomon was soon to be under construction, King David set the tone by contributing large quantities of precious building materials -- gold, silver, bronze, onyx, turquoise, all kinds of fine stones and marble, and more. Other ranking officials of the land followed suit, gladly contributing also large quantities of precious materials. And how did the people respond? “The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord” (1 Chronicles 29:9).

So the leaders led and the people followed in joyful response. Now the comparison to our situation is not completely one of apples to apples because what will be proposed for us to build will not be anywhere near the luxury and expense of either the Tabernacle or the Temple, and we the people are among the most richly blessed of any people on earth – ever.

So who is going to pay for it? People who have been most richly blessed by God in Christ, people who cannot help but respond with joyfully gathered gifts.

NOTE: Committee meetings are generally noted in the Sunday bulletin not just for informing committee members but also for YOU. Yes, you are welcome to attend these meetings. Don't let others have all the fun!

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