

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Most of you know that we are in the midst of a time of earnestly seeking the Lord about His desired future for our ministry. We know that God has given us His mission to seek and to save the lost. For 145 years the goal of St. Paul's Lutheran Church has been to do just that, leading people into a strong, saving relationship with Jesus Christ. At St. Paul's the specific vision "Build the home, change the world" has directed us to emphasize the importance of strong families and building a vibrant, dynamic family of faith.

Carrying out this vision is the reason we began the long range planning process over two years ago. This course of action led to a very bold ten year strategic plan which was overwhelmingly approved by the congregation last July. The Long Range Plan has caused us to take a very serious look at our current ministry and keeps us looking to the future as we seek ways to significantly impact Macon County and beyond with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Part of the Long Range Plan called for the formation of a site committee to evaluate the best facility and location for future ministry in Decatur. This committee was appointed in October 2008. At the May voters meeting the Site Committee brought five possible locations to the congregation.

One of those locations was the LSA. Because of our commitment to Christian education and our vision to build strong families the LSA site has been at the top of the list for consideration. Last Sunday we had a candid discussion with people from St. Paul's and the other LSA congregations about whether we can continue to seriously consider the LSA site for our future. To be absolutely clear, we will continue to do ministry there!

While many recognized the benefits to the school and overall ministry to the Decatur community with having a church more closely connected with the LSA, the meeting last week revealed to us that it would be very difficult for St. Paul's to establish a fully supported, growing, worshiping ministry there.

This response has led us to move the LSA option to the back burner and to look more carefully at the other locations recommended by the Site Committee.

Amazingly, God has brought one of these locations to the front burner. We had begun a dialog with the Bachrach family several months ago to determine if the Bachrach corporate office and warehouse could be a viable option. In May we talked again with Mr. Ed Bachrach and Mr. Ron James to further pursue the Bachrach property as a possible site.

Recently Mr. Bachrach asked to meet with us again. At this meeting he agreed to have exclusive negotiations with us about the Bachrach property and asked that we try to reach a contractual agreement by the end of June. He also asked that we bring the matter to the congregation for a vote by the middle of July.

We agreed with most of Mr. Bachrach's requests, with the exception that we asked that we have until the end of July to be able to communicate with the congregation as much as possible and

provide you with the information needed to make a wise, God-led decision by July 26. He agreed to this. He clearly does not want a long, drawn out negotiation process. He has been very forthcoming in providing information about the property to us. He has also come within range of a realistic price, though final deliberations are not yet complete.

We ask now that you join with us in working toward a decision by July 26 when we will call the voters together. This is a shorter time frame than we would like, but we believe we can gather everything we need to make a God-honoring decision. We promise to tell you everything we can about the Bachrach property. We will describe how it could meet our ministry needs well into the future. We will tell you what we think it will cost to buy and renovate this property for ministry needs and how we believe God can provide these means. We will tell you about the possibility of developing an open site and what the costs would be for that as well.

We are challenging you to seek God with utmost seriousness about these matters. We know that many people have strong opinions about these decisions, and we ask for your patience, your help, and especially your prayers during this time of deliberation. God must lead us...and we believe He will!

We are excited to bring this possibility before you. We believe that you will see in the days ahead that this is an incredible opportunity. Take some time to drive out to the Bachrach site in the 1500 block of West Mound Road. Pray about and ask God to help you envision a ministry for hundreds of children playing on the front lawn. Consider the possibility of family picnics and fishing around the pond. Imagine plenty of space to gather with friends in Bible studies and for special events. But most of all, consider how many more people we could invite to explore a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

We began the Site Committee with the words of God from Genesis 12. When God called Abram He said, "Go to the land I will show you." This has been our prayer often since that day. Please join us as we pray for God to show us as His people His plans for us.

Sincerely,

Pastor Wray Offermann
Senior Pastor

Pastor Robert Mrosko
Executive Pastor

Malcolm Head
Chairman