

Dear Grace Fellowship:

We have good news, bad news, and good news:

- *Good news* – God’s people at Grace Fellowship have put forth faith commitments of \$3.8 million toward the “Let’s Build Together” Capital Campaign (as of 11-27-11 Noon). That is a whole lot of money and a whole lot of faith! We celebrate! Thank You, Lord! Thank You, Grace Fellowship!
- *Bad news* – It is not enough money to do the original building project of a children’s building, a chapel, a parking lot, and a covered walkway which was estimated at \$7.0 million.
- *Good news* – Your church leadership (Church Council) has unanimously voted (17-0) to trust God for a \$5.1 million children’s building without incurring any new long-term debt. Church Council voted to cancel the plans for a chapel, parking lot, and covered walkways, but to trust God to make room for 700 more children and their families by **making the children’s building our sole project**. We just need \$1.3 million more in faith commitments or gifts to get started.

Here is **the formal proposal** that Church Council unanimously adopted Sunday afternoon (Nov. 27):

After praying, meeting, and discerning, we propose that we continue to trust God for the construction of a 28,000 square foot children’s building through continued asks and that we do not build a chapel. Specifically, we propose that we continue to invite the congregation to pledge and give toward construction of a children’s building and that if we do not reach our needed goal of \$5.1 million by Dec. 4 at Church Conference (2:30 p.m.), then we postpone the construction of the children’s building but immediately begin giving and saving toward it until pledges and gifts equal \$5.1 million (or the building cost at time of construction). When that goal is reached, we propose holding a Special Called Church Conference to vote on construction of the children’s building.

As you will remember, we have said throughout this campaign that we will not incur any new long term debt. Therefore, if we do not have \$5.1 million by Dec. 4, we cannot vote to build. (Please join me in praying that \$1.3 million in faith commitments and/or unpledged gifts will come in by December 4.) If an additional \$1.3 million does not come in by December 4, then **Church Council has stated that we will do the same thing that we would do in our own personal finances: Save toward our dream**. Rather than whipping out our credit card and charging \$1.3 million, Church Council has wisely voted to exercise self-control by being willing to delay construction and save toward our dream. We believe the money and faith commitments will come in.

Here’s what you can do to help:

- **Pray** – Pray for God to provide a children’s building through \$5.1 million in gifts and faith commitments.
- **Turn in a card** – If you have not already done so, please fill out a faith commitment card of what you want to trust God to give through you above and beyond your regular giving over the next 3 years toward construction of a children’s building. You can also fill out a card by going on-line to www.whatisgrace.org ... click on “campus expansion” ... click on “capital campaign giving” ... click on “give here.”
- **Start giving** – If you have already turned in a card, we invite you to start giving toward the goal. Checks may be written to Grace Fellowship with the memo “Children’s Building” and put in the offering plate.
- **Not a card person?** – If you are not a turn-in-a-card person, but you believe in this project of trying to reach 700 more children and their families for Christ, then start giving by making checks to Grace Fellowship with the memo “Children’s Building.”
- **Don’t like this plan?** – If you have already filled out a card but do not like this plan because it is a change from the original plan, then you are more than welcome to amend or rescind your pledge privately by contacting Finance Manager Leah Wilton at lwilton@whatisgrace.org or 281-646-1903 x.114.
- **Two questions** – See below for answers to 2 recently asked questions.

We believe that God is going to provide a children’s building for your church. It might take a little longer than we originally anticipated, but we are believing God to reach 700 more children for Christ. We are also super, super proud of your church for its commitment not to borrow its way out of this. We believe God will honor this.

Thanks for believing with us!

The Church Council of Grace Fellowship

Answers to 2 Recently Asked Questions We Have Heard

- **Question #1 – Didn't we vote to cancel the chapel project back in May?** No. A quick review of the entire timeline will help answer this question:
 - In **March 2011**, we did a **survey of the entire congregation**. 96% of the respondents to the survey indicated support for building a children's building. 74% indicated support for a chapel. At that time, the chapel concept was a stand-alone chapel out front near Mason Road that would have cost an estimated \$2.5 million.
 - In **May 2011**, we conducted a **Town Hall Meeting** to show the conceptual drawings of the architects and to get feedback from the entire congregation. There was lots of listening and great feedback. Some people expressed concerned over the cost of a stand-alone chapel and their feelings that it was a want and not a need. At the end of the Town Hall meeting, we conducted a straw poll vote and the results were identical to the March survey: 96% in favor of children's building; 74% in favor of a stand-alone chapel out front.
 - **Church Council met** immediately following that Town Hall and voted to go full steam ahead with the children's building, but to go back to the drawing board on the chapel. Although 74% is a very high percentage in favor of the stand-alone chapel, Church Council wanted more support than that. So they said to the Building Team, let's not do a stand-alone chapel out front. Instead, let's go back to the drawing board and look for ways to meet the needs of the chapel for less money. (This is where I think some might have believed that the chapel was scrapped altogether... which was not the case. Church Council voted to scrap the \$2.5 million out front chapel, but also voted to pursue other ways to achieve the same thing for less money.)
 - In response to the Church Council's direction, the Building Team (meeting throughout the **Summer of 2011**) came up with the Chapel-on-the-Porch idea – 2/3 of the seating capacity of the original chapel idea for about 1/3 of the cost (\$900,000).
 - At an **August 2011 Town Hall Meeting** (Church Conference), the latest detailed plans of the children's building and the chapel-on-the-porch were presented. That Church Conference voted 100% in favor of the children's building and 85% in favor of the chapel-on-the-porch.

- **Question #2 – Didn't we say that if we did not have \$7.0 million by November 20, then we would scrap the whole project?** No, our language was different from that:
 - Our language consistently throughout this campaign and process has been: "We will only build what the commitment cards say. We will not incur any new long-term debt."
 - Nowhere throughout the process have we made November 20 the decision date. We made November 20 "Commitment Sunday" as the day we asked people to turn in their cards. But we also realized (based on past experience) that it takes people time to turn in cards.
 - We did originally make December 4 our decision date as that is the date our District Superintendent had already scheduled our annual Charge Conference (a yearly accounting to our overseer of how the year has gone; also the meeting at which we adopt budget, elect leaders, and recommend candidates for ministry). Since only a Charge Conference has the power to conduct the final vote to build, we set December 4 as decision date. What Church Council voted to do this last Sunday is to extend that final decision date until we hit \$5.1 million. Our church government system freely allows us to do that.
 - Our consistent statements have always centered around "no new debt" rather than "make a decision on a certain date." The heart behind all of our statements has centered around "no new long term debt" rather than on a certain decision date.
 - Church Council voted this past Sunday to continue to trust God for the building of a children's building by (if necessary) delaying the start date of construction. This is how we recommend handling our personal finances – particularly in challenging economic times. If you don't have enough money to buy something, don't put it on your credit card, rather... be patient... delay your gratification... save toward your goal... and then buy it. That is what Church Council has voted for us to do on the children's building.