

Southminster Presbyterian Church  
An open and affirming community, seeking a caring and just society.

Case for Support 2015

Southminster Presbyterian Church (SPC) has proven years of successfully ministering to members and friends in the bench area. The New Beginnings Report, commissioned in 2013 noted that SPC is a vibrant and vital church and is still making an impact in our neighborhood. Those that planted this church have created a strong base for those that are here to continue SPC growth and service to others.

While great facilities are not necessary for ministry, poor facilities can hinder the mission. The current facility size and condition is becoming a hindrance to moving forward in SPC's mission. Many areas in the current site need improvements, including but not limited to the following: fellowship hall, the kitchen, staff offices, classrooms, visible entrance and overall building maintenance costs. The last time an expansion was done was the addition of the current sanctuary worship space in 1976.

This spring the Session formed and commissioned a Vision Committee (Committee) to research and study expansion/remodeling possibilities for SPC. The Committee met weekly, went through the surveys submitted by the congregation, reviewed the ministries of SPC, determined the barriers for growth, assessed the needs, and developed the following possibilities for SPC building site.

THE GATHERING PLACE (THE COMMONS)

The current site used by SPC for fellowship after worship and for other activities is in the basement. There are support posts and dividers breaking up the space and making it difficult to set up tables and to create good areas for functions. The entrance to this space is down a flight of narrow stairs making it difficult for aging members to access safely. Visitors are reluctant to venture down the narrow "tunnel" of stairs. Instead, they exit out the front door and we rarely have an opportunity to meet and greet them. Some members and visitors have stated that they do not attend functions downstairs because of the inaccessibility of the fellowship hall.

The growing Saturday Sabbath Worship Service would greatly benefit from a better fellowship space. On those Saturdays, the Food Trucks serve food, which invites more neighbors to join us for dinner, yet there is no place to really dine and interact with our neighbors or with each other. Having a facility with doors on the ground level and direct access to a patio and the parking lot could alleviate this issue. The new gathering space could also be an additional space for worship.

The Committee recommends the construction of a new commons area that would accommodate 200 people on the ground level (no stairs) near the current entrance and sanctuary, with doors opening to the outside and onto a patio. During much of the year, the space would have indoor/outdoor usage. The space would allow gathering space outside the sanctuary, flowing out of worship into fellowship space. We would also have enough room for the entire congregation to gather for potlucks, meals, and coffee fellowship. New gender neutral bathrooms will be included near the commons area.

To minister to the neighborhood, our mission field, the new gathering space would be versatile enough to accommodate meals, concerts, classes, community events, etc. This space would be open and inviting: a non-threatening place for the unchurched visitor/participant. Grace

Jordan Elementary School has a gym, but perhaps this new space could be a useful space for the school when a gym is not adequate to the task. A new gathering space would greatly expand our mission opportunities for the community.

#### COMMERCIAL KITCHEN:

The current kitchen does not meet current commercial standards and its size limits our ability to produce the amount of food to serve our congregation. It also limits our ability to feed the community and join the community dinners served by other churches on the Bench. The location, size, and equipment needs to be improved.

We are a church who loves to eat and we are grateful for the fellowship that happens when we gather for meals. We do not have enough outlets or a strong enough electrical system to accommodate crock pots.

A new commercial kitchen would give us an up-to-date kitchen, up to code with all the necessary outlets, equipment and space necessary to participate in SPC fellowship: from Palm Sunday brunch to Presbyterian Women luncheons.

Ascertained from the New Beginnings Report, we want to serve our neighborhood by providing meals to the community. This new kitchen would allow us to do that.

#### CLEARER VISIBLE ENTRANCE:

The current entrance to the building is on the north side of the building, which is not visible from Overland Road or W. Hummel Dr. While it is nice to have the parking and entrance away from the busy road, those who are not familiar with the building have difficulty finding the entrance.

The new beginnings reports indicated that SPC wanted to continue to serve our neighborhood and getting to know them. To accomplish that, we want to be a church that is active in our community. We want to be the “front porch” of the neighborhood, a place where people will gather. This new construction would make the entrance to the building visible to traffic on Hummel so the neighbors will know that we are open and ready to serve.

The Committee recommends that the design include better signage for parking and the front entrance. That signage will be visible and obvious from Overland Road and W. Hummel Dr. The entryway into the building will be warm and inviting, where people from the neighborhood and our mission field will feel comfortable to gather. It will make visible the activities that are taking place. There will be park-like benches, tables and chairs out front where people can gather and our neighbors will notice and maybe enticed to join in the fellowship.

The Committee also proposals that the doors to the larger gathering place be either glass garage doors or glass by-folds that will open wide for indoor/outdoor space. This contemporary look used in restaurants and other gathering places is a familiar look to the unchurched and is nonthreatening entrance verses that of the traditional church.

#### OFFICE SPACE:

In the new construction, the pastor and secretary’s office would be renovated and expanded near the current location. New offices would be easily accessible to visitors from the front doors.

#### MAINTENANCE CONCERNS WITH OLD BUILDING:

The current site has many maintenance issues: flooding, HVAC and others. The repairing of these problems affects the funding and advancement for the mission work of SPC. The hope is that the remodeling/expansion will address and remedy this ongoing problem.

The new construction would not initially replace our original facility. Our hope is to build this new construction in a way that allows for additional construction in the future. Eventually, we envision tearing down Pletcher Hall (current fellowship hall and classrooms) and Genesis room. A new wing of classrooms/meeting rooms on ground level could be built either to the East of the sanctuary or to the West after Pletcher Hall is torn down. With phased construction, we could use the new space while the old building is replaced and would not have to temporarily relocate. This would open up the side yard for more parking and better visibility for those driving by the church. Most importantly, it would remedy the high maintenance costs associated with the older part of the building, allowing us to funnel repair money into mission work.

It is also the desire of the Committee that green materials be given first consideration in construction. Stewardship of God's creation is important to us. If our building reflects this priority, the community will see us putting our belief into action.

#### CONCLUSION:

Southminster Presbyterian Church has served many people over the years in our current facilities. We are grateful for the vision of the people who built our space and gifted us with enough land to grow. The work that Saints have done before now is evident in the community. We want to continue to fulfill our mission in the community. While having a building that allows members to recharge and find nurturing is important, we are excited about the mission opportunities our new facility will help us live into. When a building hosts the integration of nature and people to share laughs, tears, and dreams, one will find a place where the Holy Spirit gives strength and confidence to continue its mission.