



Additional FAQs

September 22 Forum

Is this expansion adding adult classrooms?

Not directly. Our total facility expansion plan includes this, but due to cost, we have to save it for a future phase 2. That said, new rooms are being added that can double as group space: sensory room, mother's room, green room, mezzanine, new worship space, on stage, back stage...

If we raised \$5 million, could we throw classrooms in?

You bet! We'll first have to make sure all other expenses are falling within estimated amounts, but if we can raise enough to do some of those phase 2 renovations now, we can!

Why is the gift pyramid just for \$3 million and not for \$5 million?

We've contracted with LCEF to take us through this capital campaign. They advised us to target \$3 million as a more realistic estimate of what they thought FOF could raise. That said, let's not limit ourselves. Are we willing to come together and collectively commit to \$5 million? Then let's do it! Just remember, it will call for deeper sacrifice by each of us to raise this.

What is the best way for me to carve up my tithes?

First, don't think of this as your tithe. Anything we give to this expansion has to be over-and-above our current giving. Otherwise, our operational expenses won't be met and ministries will have to cease. We don't want that!

After that, it's up to you! Ask yourself what you can give over-and-above. Pray about it. Then challenge yourself to sacrifice one or two steps above it. The gift pyramid is a way of helping you target how you can do that, and how you can stretch yourself. We hope to meet with you this October to guide you through a process of discerning this.

Is there any attempt to reach out to our virtual audience to help fund the project?

Yes. There are people who regularly attend FOF virtually that we plan to reach out to. But don't get too excited. Unlike Covid days when FOF witnessed 200,000+ tuning in every week, that number has dried up as life has gone back to normal. (Not to mention we were never able to ascertain who most of those people were.) That said, we'll be reaching out to the faithful few in our online community.

What is the best way we can pray about this?

Pray about what role you can play, and the sacrifice God is calling you to make.

Pray about the people we're trying to reach that God wants to add to our number.

Pray about who you can invite, and then act on it.

Pray protection and provision over the whole campaign, the church, and its leaders.

Pray that a white-hot zeal for the will and way of God grips us, with wisdom and boldness to act on it.

Pray that God expands his kingdom in and through FOF.



Is this expansion leading us to a circus with new toys as opposed to spiritual wellness?

We sure hope not! A danger for every church and every believer is to focus so much on the “circus with new toys” that we forget spiritual wellness and formation. This is what our mission, vision, and values are about, and why we follow them so tenaciously – to keep us true to our purpose of discipleship.

This expansion is a tool. It’s a tool for spiritual formation. It’s far less about new toys than it is about raw space to accommodate people who want to grow spiritually. That said, we’re happy to get a cool ball you can balance on your nose like a circus seal if you’d like to try that for us some Sunday!

September 29 Forum

Have we looked into other fundraising methods?

Yes. One we’d encourage you to consider is inquiring as to whether your place of employment will do a matching gift. Some will! Let us know what documentation they’ll need to process this. We’re also interacting with some local businesses to see if they’re interested in sponsoring.

That said, the vast majority of this will be funded by direct donation from attendees. We don’t receive money from a denomination, sell a product, have trusts that we live off.... FOF is self-supporting.

Construction specifics

We received a number of questions on specific aspects of the designs as presented.

- ***With expanded parking, are we adding entrances?*** We’ll develop a second entrance to the facility from the new parking lot. There won’t be a new entry from the road onto our campus.
- ***Is the sanctuary going to be flat?*** The floor will. We’re not doing stadium seating. The roof? Possibly.
- ***Why isn't there a basement?*** The architect recommends against it. Cost prohibitive and not enough bang for the buck. Better to invest in first floor square footage.
- ***Why is the sanctuary black?*** It might not be. The interior picture is strictly an architectural concept. Exact colors and designs will be decided if the voters approve the project in a further development phase. But it will probably be a dark neutral color.

Do members get to vote on the specific design?

No. The vote will be to move forward with construction based on concepts, along with use of funds, and financing. The general concept pictures we showed are just that, general concepts. They will no doubt morph in the blueprint and construction phase based on all kinds of factors. This is inevitable in any building project. Our board of directors will make the final call on designs once the voters give the go-ahead.



October 6 Forum

Will FOF hire more staff or need more volunteers?

Yes. As FOF grows, so will the need for more staff and volunteers.

Any consideration to use the new space as a venue for things like Christian bands and such?

We'd love to! One issue is that many headliners require a room that can seat at least 1000, but we'd love to host performers willing to play in smaller venues like our new worship space. It can also be used for conferences and theater groups.

To elaborate on adult ministry, storage, and the office space subject, when the topic of expansion came up originally, these were primary reasons for doing it, but now they would be part of a phase 2. How and when could that ever happen, and how many of our current problems are really solved by this version of the expansion?

To do everything we want is estimated at \$9.7 million. If people are willing to give it, we'll build it all now. Short of that, we have to do this in phases.

Increasing worship space is the important first step. Increasing worship space leads to attendance growth, which leads to the financial ability to support phase 2. The hope is to begin phase 2 when the congregation can financially sustain it.

So, yes. Phase 1 solves space issues. The proposed worship auditorium includes rooms and spaces that can double for midweek adult ministry, and lots of additional storage. The reconfiguration also gives NextGen more space on a Sunday morning. The new kitchen gives our coffee bar director a work area. The production room and green room give our worship director and technical director office/work space too. Add to that additional parking, a canopy entrance, outdoor meeting area ("beer garden"), more bathrooms, renovated coffeehouse space with additional entrance, a new HVAC system, and window replacement in the current sanctuary... You start to get the idea of how much phase 1 accomplishes.

What will the adult ministry space expansion look like? I don't see any additional rooms/spaces on the building design.

There won't be dedicated classrooms, but the expansion creates more areas to meet. NextGen space is slated to have an area with stage to accommodate ~40. The sensory/mother's room, mezzanine, sanctuary stage, sanctuary round-top areas, and production room can be used for midweek adult ministry.

Why not dedicated meeting and office space if doing this?

Dedicated office space isn't as important as the other spaces in phase 1. The same on dedicated meeting space. Worship space is a better first step.

Is the children's area going to expand?

Yes. Most of the current coffeehouse will become NextGen space.



Talk to me about “the sensory room.”

If you look at the current specs, in the back of the sanctuary is a sensory room and mothers’ room. What are these? Quiet places where those with sensory issues or who need a quiet place with an infant can go. The room will be available for use during worship services and insulated from the lights and sounds of the main auditorium. The service will be piped in via TV feed and lights will be adjustable.

The sensory room and mothers’ room have since been combined by our architect into one combined space. Why? To accommodate adult ministries midweek. Since we’re not building dedicated meeting rooms, spaces like these need to be able to accommodate groups of 25.

I have concerns about the "warehouse" look of the new addition. It seems kind of out of place in the surrounding area FOF occupies.

Amen. The warehouse-look we presented is a quickly put-together concept by the architect just to show the location of the new expansion. Due to cost, we’ve told them we’re okay with the big box concept, but we also told them we don’t want it to look like a Costco. Further developments are already underway by the architect to dress it up with better materials and architectural features. This will continue to develop, and we hope to have a better sense of what it will look like by our Nov 24 voters’ meeting.

Since the new addition will have a large roof space, is there any consideration of installing solar panels on the roof? The roof would be under full sun. Yes, there is a capital investment for the panels, but it would also protect FOF from electricity rate increases.

We briefly discussed a “green roof” with the architect, but he staved us off due to cost. We haven’t asked about solar. Good idea! We’ll look into it.

What is the church's plan for handicap seating, wheelchairs, and walkers for people to come sit inside the church to be included in church service?

Handicap parking spots, bathroom stalls, and door entries are all set per building code. Chairs are movable, so it will be easy to park a wheelchair or walker.

This may sound superficial, but will there will crosses in the new church? The picture looked sterile and I’d like more of a religious feel.

Not superficial at all! We know these kinds of things are important. The pictures we’ve shown are extremely general concepts provided by the architect that are designed to give us a general feel more than to show us specific details. Designs continue to develop weekly. While we haven’t come to this level of specificity yet, we imagine there will be crosses in the building.

On average, how much more money do you think we need to give weekly? Example: If we give \$50 weekly, do we need to double our offering to reach our goal? Triple?

It’s going to vary person-to-person according to their means. For example: If we divide a \$3.5 million goal by our 280 giving families, that would equal \$12,500 per family over three years. Easy for some. Beyond reach for others.

Here’s our advice. Look at the giving pyramid. See what you can reasonably do. Then prayerfully consider challenging yourself to increase it by two tiers. We’ve said this many times, and it’s worth repeating: This campaign is going to require more than generosity. It’s going to require sacrifice.



When Jessica's team comes to visit us, will they help us figure out a good pledge amount? Specifically, will we get support figuring out how much we are able to give over the three years?

Yes. While each person will have to decide on their own what to give, we'll take you through the giving pyramid exercise mentioned above. Tina Gaddini, a tax accountant with Beacon Tax Advisors here in McHenry, is also offering free consultations on finding tax-advantaged ways to give, or even help in setting up a budget. Info sheets are available at the Mission 247 display.

What if you're one of the "at FOF in need"? How are we supposed to support this?

If you're in need, reach out to Pastor Dave via email or voicemail. We have a benevolence fund set aside that can help you with immediate financial needs. We're also happy to meet with you to help you evaluate your budget and get your finances under control. We can also connect you with a financial counselor or point you to helpful resources.

When it comes to supporting this, we encourage you to look at tithing not as a last option, but the first. It's an act of faith for everyone. Just think of the widow in Mark 12 who gave only a few small coins. She gave little, but she gave everything. Jesus honored it. We don't know the particulars of your financial situation, but what we've seen is that God provide for the needs of people again and again when they seek first his kingdom. Even if you end up receiving more from FOF than you give to it, developing a spiritual practice of giving is essential.

What weekly attendance level do we need to achieve to cover operating expenses for a new expanded facility?

It's not so much about attendance levels as much as it's about giving levels.

We currently overpay on our mortgage by \$5200/month. That's a lot of available cash if we drop to minimum principal and interest payments. If we finance \$1 million at 6% over 25 years (what our lender is recommending), we'd only have to come up with \$1233 more/month than what we're current paying on our mortgage. Not bad!

Let's assume that utilities, property insurance, custodial hours, and snowplowing will double. (They may not. Higher efficiency HVAC, better windows, or solar may reduce this.) That's another \$3600/month. So all-in-all, switching to minimum payments on our current mortgage + payments on a \$1 million loan + estimated increases in facility expenses means we're increasing operating costs ~ \$58,000/year. Keep in mind that as attendance grows, increased ministry expenses come too, but all of this is often offset by new giving units.

How much of a loan are we looking to take out?

As little as possible. Our lender (LCEF) has advised us not to go above \$1 million, with a probable limit of \$1.5 million.

Do you really think we can raise \$5 million?

Absolutely. Collectively, we who call FOF home have the money to pull this off. The question is whether this is important enough to enough of us to make the sacrifice to give it.

Can the construction number be reduced by using skilled volunteers instead of contractors? Maybe after hours?

Yes. This is requisite for us with any construction firm we hire.



How is our current financial situation today?

Sustaining with tight margins. We're more or less making budget, with income covering budgeted expenses (including \$60,000/year of mortgage overpayments). We have about \$75,000 in undesignated cash reserves. Not as much as we'd like, but still in our safety zone.

Why suspend all fundraising for other programs and missions while doing this?

FOF has gotten in a bad habit of asking for money for outside organizations on a regular basis. It dilutes our focus. Suspending the bad pattern we've fallen into should happen regardless. That said, we're not suspending our support of other missions. FOF continues to give 10% of its offerings to benefit other organizations. When you give an offering to FOF, 10% of it goes to help others in need around the globe. Right now, that's about \$75,000/year!

There's a mistaken assumption we've also come to hear. Many people think missions are "out there," not "right here." For us, the evangelistic and discipleship efforts we're trying to make in McHenry County *are* the mission. (Ironically, people around the globe also stream in and benefit.) If you don't see FOF as the mission, you're missing it. That's what this campaign is all about. The Lord is adding to our number those who are being saved, and wants to add more. We want to sustain it. So, we're asking for a full-focus, all-in endeavor of *this* mission.

What could we otherwise do with 3-5m?

Geez. Where to begin!? Lots of things, and it's fun to dream. But the proposed expansion is the pressing need.

Why take on more debt when we still have debt?

We really don't want to. We'd actually prefer to be debt-free. If we raise \$5 million and stick to phase 1, we shouldn't have any new debt. So please, give sacrificially! But if we don't raise the full amount, we still think the benefits of expanding outweigh the negatives of taking on additional debt, so long as we keep it to a sustainable amount.

How much money has FOF already spent on architects, financial planners, campaign planners, etc. to get to this point in Mission 247?

About \$60,000: \$35,000 on architectural and design fees, \$5000 for a financial procedure audit (smart to do in any organization, especially before entering a campaign of this size), \$15,000 for capital campaign services, and around \$5000 in other expenses and materials.

What is meant when you say "This will allow us to have new worship experiences"?

Think "better" more than "new." The worship style we have now is the style we plan to have in any new facility. Our current worship space was never designed for the style of worship we do. We've jerry-rigged it as best we can. A new worship auditorium that's actually designed for our style of worship, including better acoustics, better lighting, better staging, wider aisles, improved seating, a quiet room, production space, along with back-stage access to eliminate all our dumb transitions up and down from the stage poises us for a better experience all around.



Two services would make better use of the building we already have. Why not do that?

Maybe, but the congregation overwhelmingly voted to build in order to remain a one-service church.

With the uncertainty of the economy and the world... save money... have two services... two children's Sunday schools and donate to missions.... Church is not a fancy building.

This seems more like an opinion than a question, but let us speak into it a bit more. This certainly is a good option. But it is not the option the congregation said they want. When we presented this as an option to our congregation (along with the option of planting a second site, moving to a new location, or simply sending a cross-section of our congregation to bless another church), over 90% said they wanted to build to retain a one-service experience on this campus. In matters like this, we're following the majority opinion.

We don't think church is a fancy building either, but churches need places to meet. Unless we want to tell people to leave, we need a place for them. And outdoor tents just don't work in the Midwest. We'll also continue to donate 10% to outside missions regardless if we're one service or two. But please remember, the work we're doing here at FOF is our mission from God. It's what he's called us to do. FOF is just as viable and important a mission as those taking place in other places around the globe.