A Recommendation for a Campus Master Plan
Summary Report — April 22, 2012

Campus Master Plan Task Force

Central Lutheran Church
DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS
Dear Members and Friends of Central Lutheran Church,

On behalf of the Campus Master Plan Task Force, I am delighted to present to you this summary report of our recommendation for a campus master plan—how we feel our buildings and grounds should look as we move toward our 100th anniversary in 2019. Originally planned for release on May 20, the Task Force hopes this early edition of the recommendation will be as exciting for you to read as it has been for us to imagine.

You set us on our course!

We began our planning process in January 2011 with several months of listening—surveys, conversations, letters and emails. The report you have today is founded on that early work as you told us your hopes and dreams for the future of Central. Based on your input, we created a set of guiding principles, against which we have tested concepts over the last several months.

The process continued as we examined our current buildings to understand how they serve, aided by our consultant and architect. We have had countless conversations with our pastors and staff to understand the needs of worship, education, music and outreach programs. We have worked to learn how buildings and grounds welcome, teach, worship and become holy spaces. We have studied the issue of accessibility and how even just “five steps up or down” can not only be a physical barrier but also a roadblock to hospitality.

Our work has been grounded and bathed in prayer—each meeting beginning with devotions and a reminder that Central—even through its buildings—is about being the hands of feet of Christ in a world of need.

We have reached a decision—a Master Plan recommendation for your consideration. We have carried out our charge: Please view this proposed campus master plan as a commitment to the future of Central—a future, as reminded in our centering verse of scripture, in which God promises hope and abundance. This plan will not be accomplished quickly or easily, but with your support and commitment, we can now have a long-needed roadmap into the future.

It is our most sincere hope that you will prayerfully consider this recommendation. We ask that you freely bring forward your reactions, attend scheduled member meetings, share your thoughts and ideas with us and each other and be open to new possibilities that, yes, may even rival the vision of our founders.

The reality is that 60 years have passed, and our buildings from the 1950’s are in need of significant repair and our space needs have changed. We now have a unique opportunity to take the remarkable gift of our great sanctuary and honor the commitment it represents with new, flexible, accessible, welcoming space—tools for hospitality and ministry in this 21st century—to serve the city in the way our founders envisioned.

Respectfully,

Bill Masche, Chair
Campus Master Plan Task Force

*This summary report is excerpted from a larger report that contains more detailed information about our site, existing buildings, parking and the overall development plan. It will be available at the congregation forum on Sunday, May 20.

Central Lutheran Church has long been a congregation that was unafraid to look to the future. In the past decade, several strategic planning initiatives and updates have been completed which have provided direction for church leadership. In 2004-2005, the congregation undertook an extensive process of self-examination and futuring, out of which came a vision for Central. This thoughtful and provocative process resulted in the congregation adopting new mission, vision, and welcoming statements that still guide our ministry today.

Another initiative, completed in 2008, undertook a review of Central’s ministry in light of those statements, asking hard questions about how we were doing at living into them. This resulted in a Mission and Vision Implementation Plan that gave specific life and detail to actions that would help us in further carrying out these statements. Eleven goals were established, and 21 specific strategic recommendations were identified, intended to achieve significant improvements to the church’s ministries, approaches, emphasis, with a commitment to sustainability. The report and recommendations were received by the congregation, and have guided the Congregation Council annually in establishing specific strategic priorities for each year. The Council reviews progress toward achievement of these goals annually, re-prioritizes proposed implementation actions, and sets new direction for tasks to be accomplished.

In the same time frame, the Forward in Faith capital campaign was completed, with over $1.3 million dollars in additional giving committed, and decision-making began to determine the ways in which funds should be spent for improvements of the church facility. A primary focus of the fund commitment was a substantial renovation of the Casavant organ, but a significant balance of funds remained available to undertake other much-needed improvements to the church campus. A task force was created to provide guidance for the ways in which the use of these funds should be prioritized and architectural services were engaged to explore improvement planning. Some funds were invested in renovation of the South Commons and adjacent rest rooms, the creation of a new nursery space, and the commitment and build-out of dedicated space for the Restoration Center ministries. But, the Council recognized that there were not nearly enough funds to decide to proceed with other needed improvements, such as a total kitchen rehabilitation and/or relocation.

As a result, in 2010, the Council determined that the congregation needed to elect a new task force, charged with the responsibility to create a campus master plan that would build on the work completed by past strategic planning efforts and the facilities planning that had already been accomplished by the Mission and Vision Implementation Plan.

The timing for this endeavor was perfect. Central had regained footing with regard to its public image, relevant presence in the city and church-wide, its reputation for excellence, a rejuvenated self-image, and an authentic and relevant community of faith that exists to give itself away for the cause of Christ in the world. At the same time, it has become clear that certain necessary and increasingly time-sensitive maintenance, infrastructure, and safety remedies can no longer wait. A campus master plan seems to be a very effective vehicle to bring these two realities together imaginatively, boldly, and realistically.
Central’s Vision and Master Plan Themes

Our Theology
God has a mission/vision for our community of faith, and our campus is a tool to be utilized to achieve it: wellness, hope, abundance, and service. We seek to faithfully discern the future into which we follow God.

The legacy of our Founders’ vision for the ministry of Central: The faith of our fathers, in the language of our children, still prevails and informs the plan.

Our steadfast commitment to all God’s children and our firm belief in God’s fidelity, providence, and grace guides our ministry, our plans, and our life together. Evidence to this commitment is demonstrated by our worship and the arts, music, architecture, hospitality, generosity, service, and engagement in God’s world.

Inspiration and Direction
Grounded in Central’s vision and mission, the Task Force turned first to the congregation for inspiration and direction as it began the first phase of its work. Clear collective affirmation and support for the key elements of the vision and mission emerged from the 34% of members who participated in this “listening” phase of the project. Looking to the future, the majority want Central to be an “innovative leader with an expanded reach” and a “convener and vehicle for ministry to the city, community, world and wider church.”

Imaginings
The Task Force also spent focused time listening to and learning about the buildings and campus as they are today. A Saturday morning walking meditation and exploration of every nook and cranny of the campus provided deep inspiration (and information) for the Task Force at the early phase of the project. A “Balcony View” began to emerge that described Central’s aspirations for the future.

Growth
The Task Force reviewed Central’s growth and participation trends to gauge the future needs of the church as a parish and missional hub.

- Worship numbers are the highest they have been in ten years.
- The demographics of attendees and members are growing younger.
- The median age of active members is now below 50.
- Almost 30% of the 275 new members who have joined in the last six years reside in Central’s four adjacent zipcodes.
- Nursery usage has grown by 300%.
- Children and youth programs have grown by more than 25%.

Our vision for mission is to be a thriving, vibrant model of urban Lutheran ministry for the 21st century.

Grounded in gratitude,
Central Lutheran Church, in the heart of the city, welcomes all people to celebrate, discover and share the love of Christ!

Tom Baker
Imagine a community and campus that . . .

... is a vibrant, urban missional hub serving Central’s members and the larger community —
- relationships are fostered by providing welcoming and hospitable spaces for conversation and care for one another
- expanded Restoration Center ministries, touching even more lives on a daily basis, and facilitating the use of ministry gifts in service to the other by the people of God

... is an exceptional host and convener that invites guests and friends to become part of Central’s missional work in the world
- 50-60% of those at major events in sanctuary being able to gather, mingle, mix, and dwell in reception space, easily accessible by all

... collaborates with other mission-minded organizations and institutions in partnership with Christ in ministry to the world
- neighborhood and civic groups and Convention Center guests welcomed to meet in our building in new, contemporary, well-equipped spaces that serve the congregational needs as well
- courses taught on campus Monday through Saturday for congregation and community members in the “third age” of life (over 60) by faculty of various institutions
- Central as a gateway location for urban plunges/institutes for youth groups, college students, and seminarians with service components made uniquely possible by our own Restoration Center

... has easy access for all, and is a good environmental steward with energy-efficient operations
- heating, cooling, plumbing and electrical systems that meet current required efficiency and safety codes
- inviting urban gardens and green spaces that draw others to enter onto our campus for conversation and reflection

As the Task Force synthesized and discussed the qualitative and quantitative information, key themes began to emerge for the campus master plan.

Existing Building Analysis

With assistance from Architectural Alliance, information from the Fiscal and Property Committee, and major building contractors who work with such projects and guided by the survey results/comments from the congregation, an extensive review of the buildings was completed. The detailed results of this analysis are included in the full report.

Key among the conclusions were extensive, overdue maintenance issues; mechanical systems that are outdated and costly to operate; lack of fire code-required sprinkler systems; a kitchen that is of inadequate size and not in code compliance; space that lacks flexibility due to its singular purpose and limited accessibility— with particular problems associated with the multiple-levels of the Parish House and Education Building; and insufficient space for hospitality that matches the capacity of the sanctuary.

Imagine a community and campus that . . .

The most important assumptions that emerged were:

- Central’s campus does not need significantly more space for ministries now or into the immediate future. Rather, it needs 21st century space—better-designed, more-flexible and up-to-date spaces that will help us meet existing and future ministry opportunities. The recommended concept is based on 125,000 square feet.
- With a redesigned and reconfigured fellowship hall and kitchen, coupled with an extended hospitality and welcome space of approximately 9000 square feet, Central could accommodate up to 2/3 of the sanctuary capacity at a stand-up reception or event.
- Newly-designed, multi-purpose education and classroom spaces can better serve both Central’s children, youth, and family ministries, as well as our institutional partners who desire to utilize our space for their use.

With multiple campus and building concepts under consideration, determining the long-term value of keeping the Education Building became a critical step. Access to this building is limited due to the half-level organization of the building—severely compromising its ability to accommodate public uses in an open and accessible manner. The infrastructure is outdated, expensive and inefficient to operate and even more costly to renovate.

For these reasons, the Campus Master Plan concept includes removing the 1950s Education Building to make way for a new one-level building, main entry and welcome center that is flexible, technologically modern, and which addresses the current needs of the congregation and the future vision for Central Lutheran Church.
A Campus Master Plan for Central Lutheran Church
Recommended by the Campus Master Plan Task Force — April 2012

“Continuity and Change”

A legacy of Central Lutheran Church is the story of how the founders established the first congregation in the Twin Cities to convert to the English language. The excerpt from this decision reads, “the faith of our fathers, in the language of our children.” This principle of engagement is reflected in Campus Master Plan Concept.

The master plan envisions Central as an urban destination and a crossroads of activity in downtown Minneapolis for expanded activities and uses that include provisions for Worship, Music and Art, Meeting Spaces, and Ministry Programs. The master plan integrates the needs of the current membership with provisions for mission-related partners and programs that address the needs of the diverse downtown community. Design elements of the master plan envision the site as open, accessible and inviting, creating a welcoming oasis in the City that allows a context for discourse, reflection, and active engagement.

New buildings and spaces, while sensitive to the scale and character of the existing sanctuary and the context of the site, are intended to convey a contemporary feel, with glass entrances that enhance the accessibility and friendliness of the campus and technologies that support modern engagement and interaction. By juxtaposing exciting new venues like the welcome hall and new landscaping/gardens with the historic sanctuary and Parish House, a sense of diversity, vitality, and congregational progressiveness is conveyed, addressing the needs of the next generations and thus creating an exciting connection to the principles of engagement that were first advocated by the founders of Central.

30,000 square-foot, one-level “Welcome Center”
— flexible meeting space, new kitchen, fellowship hall, offices
— accessible public spaces, visible and welcoming face for CLC
— Garden at the heart of the site

Renovation of existing Parish House
— to accommodate education ministries, Restoration Center and music rehearsal space
— New elevators and M+E Systems

Estimated project cost: approximately $15 million
— Welcome Center, Parish House Renovation, site improvements
Future development opportunities at south end of site

- New office building locates staff together near main entrance
- New Welcome Hall serves as gathering and reception space
- New Kitchen with direct access to loading dock
- New Fellowship Hall can be divided into smaller banquet/meeting rooms
- Sanctuary structure is not altered
- Commons concourse is widened
- Parish House is renovated to accommodate education ministries, The Restoration Center and music rehearsal space.
Financial Stewardship
The cost of the Campus Master Plan Concept is estimated to be approximately $15 million. With such a significant investment, important questions arise about the feasibility of Central’s congregation and friends to successfully meet this goal.

In-depth answers to questions about growth, sustainability, due diligence and feasibility are all on the horizon. However, the Task Force is committed to providing the congregation with an early “confidence reading” based on existing financial information and informal conversations with possible partners, key donors and financial institutions.

A review of the information gathered at the time of this report and summarized below suggests that, with a combination of borrowing and giving over time, this plan is feasible.

Growth in Visitors & Friends
Growth is measured within the faith community in many ways—all of which are valuable. One of the Council’s stated strategic objectives is to increase the reach of Central—touching more lives, bringing more folks with an affinity for what we are about on to our campus, making a greater impact in the downtown community, civic affairs, the world, and in the larger community of faith. We want to grow our reputation in the community as a congregation that exists to give itself away in the name of Christ, to touch more lives, to grow more disciples to serve, and to remain a relevant force in our city for good.

One of the guiding principles and understandings is that there will not be thousands of new “members” arriving on Central’s doorstep over the next ten years to help finance the final recommendations. Many national studies, including one commissioned at Central, support this. So, increased “membership” as it is traditionally defined, is not the primary driver of the plan.

But increasing the number of people who come to Central as guests, friends, or participants in this movement called “Central” is! The Task Force believes that there can be thousands of new affiliates/friends participating in ministries, worship, civic/public events, and new educational enterprises, many of whom will have the opportunity to help support Central financially.

A Growing Congregation
Since 2006, Central has been blessed with many new “friends” and “members” joining the Central community. In that time, almost 300 new members have joined, with over 30% of them living within the four adjacent zip codes to Central’s campus. More than 95% of these new members have made gifts to support Central’s annual spending plan. Other important indicators for continued growth are:
- Worship numbers are the highest they’ve been in the past 10 years!
- Congregational giving is at the highest level ever!
- The demographics of Central’s attenders and members are growing younger!
- The nursery has grown by 300%
- Children and youth programs have grown by more than 25%

New Partners & Expanded Collaborations on the Horizon
The conversations to date with eight mission-aligned organizations have been very promising and there is a strong commitment to continue exploring specific opportunities for collaboration as Central’s vision becomes a reality. Possible partners include Augsburg College, Luther Seminary, Gustavus Adolphus College, Augsburg Fortress Press, Fairview Health Services, Lutheran Social Services, Thrivent and St. Olaf College.

The opportunities include: collaborating on new and expanded human services such as new health care initiatives, student services in our urban location, serving as host to new conferences, meetings and events, providing urban studies programs for related affiliates like our seminaries and colleges of the church, and third-age (60+) curricula on our site by which Central members and friends alike could engage in lifelong learning. The possibility exists for residential/study space for urban college student programs, and even the leasing of office space for other partners in ministry to the city. Many of these opportunities would also help diversify and expand Central’s annual income.

Current Giving
Today 85% of our members and friends actively support Central’s mission, vision and ministries with their offerings. In 2010-2011, the largest number of giving units in ten years made commitments for their regular giving. In addition, the highest local giving in envelopes in the history of Central occurred just last year.

Investment in Future Generations
This plan will be an opportunity to invest in Central’s future. By increasing the percentage of active members and friends who give an additional and consistent monthly gift to Central, significant resources become available to underwrite the plan. Here’s an example: If 50% of the 900 household members donate $25 per week for seven years, $4 million in new revenue would be realized to support the plan.

We believe that those members and friends who have generously supported past capital projects will be excited about this Campus Master Plan Concept and clearly understand how it advances our vision and strategies to be an exciting urban missional hub and an exceptional host in the 21st century. We are optimistic that significant leadership gifts will emerge that will encourage everyone to participate in a meaningful way in order to achieve Central’s vision. Conversations with lending institutions about this plan lead us to the conclusion that Central can responsibly proceed and not put the community financially at risk in the short or long term.

Leveraging Property Value
A property value assessment is currently underway with an outside analyst for the parking lot parcel south of the ramp—commonly referred to as “the boot.” We believe that there are several opportunities to leverage the value of this parcel for the long-term financial benefit of Central. Possible options for further study and evaluation are:
- Senior high-rise housing
- Multi-purpose affordable housing and office/retail location
- Hotel supporting the Convention Center
- Hostel and low-cost residential

In addition, the boot could be used to leverage the Convention’s Center need for additional property with Central’s desire to own 100% of the Parking Ramp revenues.
What happens next?

Cottage Meetings and Informational Open Forums

Over the next several weeks opportunities will be available to meet together to learn about and discuss the recommendation for a Campus Master Plan with members of the Task Force and Congregation Council. The specific schedule for cottage meetings (in members’ homes) and open forums (at Central) will be published in the newsletter and on Central’s website (www.centralmpls.org). The Task Force hopes that all Central members (and friends) will take the opportunity to participate and welcomes the continuing conversation!

May 20 Congregation Forum

An opportunity for a larger group discussion will take place from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, May 20. The Task Force will present feedback received in the Cottage Meetings and facilitate an ongoing conversation. Copies of the full Campus Master Plan report (see page two) will be available.

June 10 Annual Meeting

At the 2012 Annual Meeting of Central Lutheran Church, members will be asked to consider approval and adoption of the proposed Campus Master Plan.

The Campus Master Plan Task Force

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