



Lake Nokomis
Lutheran Church

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) about the Three-Church Initiative

updated Sept. 28, 2020

ADDITIONAL FAQs since Sept. 1, 2020

If the resolution passes at all three churches, what happens next?

We'll move forward! Here are some of the initial steps that will happen simultaneously:

- An attorney will file to create the nonprofit building corporation and draft the legal bylaws based on the Building Partnership Agreement. A lawyer experienced in real estate law from Spirit Catholic Community has agreed to do this work pro bono.
- Three members of each congregation will be identified to form the Building Board.
- We'll choose an architect to create the building plans based on the preliminary layout. John Bergly from LNL has agreed to help identify the architect.
- A building contractor will be selected from two potential companies who submitted preliminary estimates.
- Teams – with members from all three churches – will form to address everything from furnishings, to worship/music arrangements, to office spaces, to shared storage.
- Prior to actual renovation, we'll identify meaningful ways for the LNL community to celebrate the legacy of our building.

Are the layout drawings final?

No, they're basic layout concepts agreed to by team members from all three congregations. Layout details may change based on the architect's work. Furnishings and liturgical elements in the sanctuary spaces will be refined. Storage requirements and a main level kitchenette will be addressed.

What's the rationale behind replacing pews with chairs?

Moving to chairs gives us maximum flexibility -- to accommodate worship styles of two churches, and to create both intimate experiences and offer larger concert settings. We imagine being able to set up tables for an agape meal; warmly welcoming visitors new to the idea of church, regardless of ability; and having a visual connection to each other and God's awesome creation in the courtyard.

Spirit Catholic Community is firmly committed to worshipping around the communion table as well as to accessibility, and will not enter the partnership if we retain the pews. That's why it's incorporated into the Building Partnership Agreement.

Has this kind of building partnership been done before – successfully?

Yes – there are at least eight partnerships we know of where congregations share ownership of one church building similar to this proposal! They've been going strong from 6 to 50 years, and only one has ended because a partner church decided to close. One example is Springhouse Ministry Center in Minneapolis, formed in 2011 with Lyndale United Church of Christ, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and Salem English Lutheran (ELCA) churches.

Can we hear more details about renovation costs?

The broader Three-Church team created a construction subcommittee that includes representatives from all three churches. Preliminary estimates from several potential contractors show that the proposed renovation is financially feasible, although final design details are subject to change.

Living Table is expected to contribute approximately \$700,000 after the sale of their building in 2021. Spirit Catholic Community will contribute \$400,000. LNL will contribute the building.

How will the building partnership impact our congregation's ongoing expenses?

All facility costs – existing mortgage, building manager salary, utilities, care and maintenance of outside grounds, trash, custodial, and repairs and maintenance – will be the responsibility of the nonprofit building corporation.

In 2019, after allocating facility costs to the charter school based on the lease agreement, LNL incurred facility expenses of approximately \$68,000.

In 2021 and 2022, our share of facility costs is projected to be between \$40,000 and \$45,000, an annual savings of more than \$20,000.

Changes in accountabilities:

- LNL will share in the salary expense of a part-time building manager, who would be responsible for scheduling building use and performing light repairs and maintenance. Currently, that responsibility is delegated to LNL office staff and John Becker (in a volunteer capacity).
- Responsibility for maintaining the charter school lease agreement and relationship would shift from LNL staff to the building corporation.

LNL's finance committee is also reviewing financial projections.

What if the charter school leaves? Or another charter school takes its place?

The newly formed nonprofit building corporation will manage any changes. Ever since we began leasing to a charter school, the impact of lost income if they were to leave has weighed heavily on our financial stewards. Under the new agreement, any losses will be shared with the other churches, relieving some of the burden on LNL alone.

I know musicians love the acoustics in our sanctuary. Are we committed to this going forward?

Yes! Jodi Gustafson has let the team know that a hard surface floor – rather than carpeting – is critical. A new and improved sanctuary sound system will also be part of the remodel.

FAQs prior to Sept. 1, 2020

What churches are involved in the proposed nonprofit building partnership?

Living Table United Church of Christ, Spirit of St. Stephens Catholic Community and Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church.

Will we worship together with the other two churches, share a pastor?

No. Each church will worship separately. Each congregation will have their own spiritual leadership.

What time would we worship?

Exact worship times haven't been decided yet. Spirit Catholic Community worships for 1½ hours, so LNL will likely worship first, followed by Spirit Catholic Community.

Will we share Sunday School?

This is not part of the initial agreement. As with many other details, we may consider this later.

Are we selling the building to the other churches?

No. We will all share the building. A separate nonprofit building corporation will be created to own and manage the building. All three churches will share in the management by equal representation on a Building Board. All three churches will have a significant financial investment in the nonprofit.

What about Hope Lutheran Church?

Hope expects to complete the sale of their building September 30th. LNL and Hope are currently in conversation to determine their next steps. A final decision is expected this year.

Will we share staff?

Plans are to have the Building Board hire a building manager and possibly a custodian. There are no immediate plans to share other staff.

How will we schedule rooms for meetings and practices; funerals and weddings?

The building manager, hired by the Building Board, will be responsible for scheduling space use equitably for all three congregations.

What about parking?

There is ample parking in our lot and around the neighborhood. We have seen this work when we have large funerals with up to 400 people in attendance.

What about the charter school – Hennepin Middle School?

The charter school lease and relationship will be managed by the building manager, under the direction of the Building Board.

What about a building name?

This will be addressed after the partnership is approved. All three churches will be part of the process.

How soon would the change take place?

If the resolution is approved, we will immediately form a nonprofit board and begin remodeling the building. Spirit Catholic Community would possibly move this year, pending approval by the LNL Council, and pay rent to LNL until the Building Corporation is established.

Will we save money?

The current estimate is that, yes, we will save money. We have been blessed by those who preceded us in the creation and care of this beautiful building. The goal is to honor this gift and preserve this building. By sharing maintenance and upkeep costs, we will have more funds for our ministries.

What if a church wants to leave the partnership?

This is addressed in the Building Partnership Agreement.

How will we communicate with the other churches?

In terms of building management, members of the Building Board will report to the councils of each church. Since all three churches will have staff in the building, there should be ample opportunity for communication.

What if I have other questions?

Contact any member of the LNL Three-Church Team, including Pastor Sara Spohr, 612-729-2323, saraspohr (at) lakenokomis.org

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