

Walking With God
Future Ministries for Our Community
Reflections of Pastor Ryan
Issue 1, June 20th

Last Tuesday, the First Presbyterian Session and the Bigfork Lutheran Council met to discuss the what, where, when, why, how and how much questions of the future of our two churches whether together or separately. To quickly sum it up what was decided, in good church fashion was to form a committee to look at the future.

Even though I just kind of joked about it by using the term “in good church fashion” that was probably the proper way to go that evening, because there was no consensus on what way we should go.

But as our churches Walk With God, what are the opportunities for ministry that are before us? What can we do to truly follow God? Two major areas were discussed by the leadership groups ... the first is to become one church and the second is to build a new church. Both of these issues need to be discussed openly and we need to make sure that all the details are properly shared.

That is why I have ventured into this format: to help everyone understand what is going on.

We have some tremendous opportunities to offer ministry to our community!

Look around you, we offer worship opportunities each Sunday
We celebrate the Sacraments: Communion and Baptism
We offer a Celebration of Grace
We will go tailgating on the grass in a couple of months!
We hear God's Word
We give prayer, praise and thanksgiving to God

In addition to our Worship ministries we have:

Education Ministries

Adult Bible Study

Confirmation

Sunday School

Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Release Time Ministries

Vacation Bible School

Youth Ministries

A youth worship service

The National Youth Gathering Servant Trip

The Women of our Church have ministries all the time!

Bible Studies

Quilting

The Prayer Shawl Ministry

Serving funerals

Working with Conference Women

Reaching out in love throughout the World!

And there are all the Social Ministries we support!

World Hunger Issues

The Local Food Shelf

Volunteer work at Bigfork Valley

And a multitude of other Social Ministries!

What can we do make all these ministries work more smoothly?

What can we add to our ministry list to fulfill even more ministry opportunities for the COMMUNITY?

What can we do to open our church and be accessible to all people?

Over the years, Bigfork Lutheran Church has talked about this. They have put long hours of study into the ministry needs of the community. They determined long ago that the building in which they worshipped did not offer the needed bathrooms, space and accessibility that were needed to fulfill the ministry of our church. So ... we sold the building!

Furthermore, the name itself was limiting ... therefore, we will start looking for a new name ... and end it with the all-welcoming title of Community Church ... realizing that this is a church for all people.

The church has voted (twice) to build a new church, and the property north of the old church, along Highway 38, attached to the property on which the parsonage lies, is already set up for sewer, water, and electricity. The Church Council set forward goals to make this approved vote of the congregation a reality. These were the goals set forward in the minutes of the council as printed in the last newsletter.

First Presbyterian, of course, has not been a part of the 20 year experience. In a letter written to me, which I announced at Council, and at the meeting last Tuesday it was announced that the Session voted to not be a part of the building program.

I appreciate their position in many respects. First of all, their forthrightness and honesty allows us to move on knowing where the Session stands. The major point is that the present building is paid for and is adequate for the needs of the Presbyterian Church. I also appreciate that the Session is open to talking about what this means to the future ministry of the two churches working together. Rich Runyon, Bob Zimmer, Sue Gustafson and Pastor Dave Gabriel will represent the church in these discussions.

It was agreed upon that the churches are indeed working well together. The Presbyterians are great hosts and the Lutherans feel welcomed as guests to the church. Furthermore, the Session has started looking at what changes could be made to the church building to offer more opportunities in the present building.

The Lutheran church will be represented by Al Gustaveson, Carol Warren, LaVonne Knefelkamp and me. I will keep everyone informed through this writing each week.

In the meantime Bigfork Lutheran Church is moving forward with its plans to build a new building as presented in the newsletter. The reasons are very simple ... the ministries continue to expand ... the sale of the church has offered money to build ... costs will continue to go up if we continue to wait and the excitement of having a new building is palpable.

Where are we at with the new church?

The schemes presented by the council have been sent on to Jeff Jore from AmeriBuilt. AmeriBuilt is a company similar to Morton Builders, they build steel framed buildings. Jeff will be getting back to us with some estimates on the schemes presented. The next step would be to use these estimates, along with our present finances to go to a financial institution to receive a loan to build a building.

Once we have all the information available, we will present the plans for building along with the plans for financing to the church to get approval to build. As you know, this will require the proper announcements of the Special Congregational Meeting ... letters in the mail and announcements in “The Voice” and the bulletins before a meeting can be held.

Yes, it is all very exciting! We have so many opportunities. The First Presbyterian Church and Bigfork Lutheran Churches are working together ... what is the future ... we will have to wait and see.

The new building is exciting ... what is the future ... we will have to wait and see. We have the best opportunity – Let’s Grow Together!

We pray that God will guide us, and that we follow God’s will in God’s time. We may not always agree with what that will or what that time frame is, but we can pray together that God does the guiding!

Walking With God
Future Ministries for Our Community
Reflections of Pastor Ryan
Issue 2, June 27th

What a wonderful walk with God! It has been a little soggy this week at times, but we have made it through.

And speaking of soggy ... the moisture has prevented the borings from taking place on the land at the new building. We are waiting for the company to come back and try again. They will be using an all-terrain vehicle next time so that we can get going on our planning.

AmeriBuilt has been checking on some things to get some building estimates to us in a timely fashion. Furthermore, we are talking about getting electrical services onto the property so that we could be ready to go when all of the t's are crossed and i's are dotted.

Building our ministries for the future is the exciting part for all of this. We have talked about offering an expanded youth program. I was talking to some of our youth about the next servant events possible. Having an expanded youth program that is based on the tremendous ministry started last year gives hope for the future. What else can we offer? Youth choir and worship? Programs for kids to teach how to baby-sit? What about opening up the building for other youth opportunities? Game nights or just a place to hang...

We could have parent-to-be classes ... or how to wrestle with the teen-age years ... various support groups ... Wii fitness classes ... child care ... a multitude of ways that the church can truly be a part of the community ... especially if we are going to call ourselves a community church.

And that leads right into the next page ...

In *The Voice* coming out this week you will see in my article a request for help ...

What do you want to call the church?

Years ago, when we started to talk about our church, we decided that we would want to rename our church to be more welcoming.

_____ **Community Church**

As I say, _____ is not too interesting. The council wants a name!

The cry went out for you to help NAME THE CHURCH.

So please help us.

What would you like our church to be called?

You may think of a word that describes who we are ...

You may think of a phrase that says it all ...

Help us name the church

We will present the proposed name for approval very soon, so get your request in ASAP.

You can call me, e-mail me, mail it in or list it below and hand it in!

My suggestion for the name is:

_____ **Community Church**

Your name: _____

Thank you! Who knows? You might have the perfect name!

Reflections Issue 3 was lost

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Issue 4, July 18th

Let us give thanks to the day our Lord has made... Let us be glad and *Rejoice in it!*

I give thanks each day for all of you, and how you serve the Lord.

We need to stop and thank each other once in a while ... just as we thank God for all that God gives us. You see, God has given us each other for support and love and care.

Tonight, we begin Vacation Bible School right here at First Presbyterian at 6:30 p.m. This special week-long event runs Sunday through Thursday evening 6:30-8 p.m., and is entitled, *The Baobab Blast, God's Great Get Together!*

A lot of things are happening with the New Church. Many of you have offered some great names for the new Community Church. Thank you one and all! We are going to be taking a look at all these names and getting back to the church for choosing a name very soon! In the meantime, keep those ideas coming in! Use the form at the bottom of the page.

Other news worthy items:

- Jeff Jore, the representative from AmeriBuilt continues his follow-up with us with some up-to-date estimates for the cost of the new church.
- We are using these estimates to figure out some costs from financial institutions.

- We have had our first preliminary meeting at our local bank in Bigfork.
 - We met with a representative from the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA. Anne is not only a person who crunches numbers, but she is an engineer who helped us look at a number of specific questions concerning the new building. We look forward to using her as a continuing resource.
 - All of this will continue to be reported to our church and we will be able to make some great plans for the future ministry in our community.
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Soooo, what is your suggestion regarding the name of the New Church? One of the key changes Bigfork Lutheran has talked about in opening up *The Future Ministries for our Community* is to change our name. What do you think the change should be?

_____ Community Church

Your name: _____ Thank you!

Return this form to me as soon as you can!

Walking With God
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Issue 6, August 1st

A lot of things are happened this week in Lake Wobegan. Many of you offered some great names for the new Community Church. Thank you one and all! When you get The Voice you will take note of how we will be arriving at a new name for our Community Church. You will be deciding in the next few weeks!

We have received a number of estimates regarding the building proposal. We will be using the estimates to receive some figures for a loan. Proposals will be written, forms will be filed, and we will have some numbers to bring to the church regarding a new church building.

We have several questions to answer before we can crunch the numbers specifically for the building. These are specific questions regarding the heating of the church, how much we want finished by the builder and lining up the costs of preparing the site.

As promised, we are trying to keep everyone involved in what is happening. We are trying to get all of these things done in preparation for a Special Congregational Meeting to borrow the funds to build the church. As you realize, we will need to set that date, send out a special letter to all of the members and have two announcements in the bulletin for announcing the meeting.

We will also be writing some proposals for grants that will help pay for some of the costs for the building. This is truly a resource for the ministry of Christ in our community. If you have questions please talk to our president, Laura Rajala, our council members or give me a call sometime. We want everyone to be involved in our new church building, God's new home in the area.

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Issue 6, August 1st

As you read about it in *The Voice*, we are voting on the name which will replace Bigfork Lutheran Church:

The Bigfork Council has been receiving names for the new church family. Over the next few weeks, Bigfork Church Members and Associate Members will be choosing the new church name. About 30 names were submitted by our community, and the Council chose the following 5 to present to the congregation. The five names are (in alphabetical order):

Christian Community Church
Christ Community Church
Faith Community Church
Grace Community Church
United Faith Church

Now it is up to you to choose which one you would like for your church family's new name. Use the form in the newsletter, or the form in this bulletin or you can submit your name choice on a separate piece of paper with your name clearly marked on the paper. **There will be one vote per member.** Each person can only vote once ... therefore you need to put your name on the ballot. You have until August 15 (including that Sunday). You may place the ballot in the offering plate or hand it to Pastor Ryan. You can also mail it in or e-mail your ballot to bigluth1@bigfork.net. But remember, your name must be clearly marked on the ballot to be counted.

We will announce the new church family name at the Bigfork Worship on the Grass on August 22nd right after the opening hymn!

We are also busy with writing our loan applications for the new church building. This building is a true resource to the ministries for our community. It will be a fully handicap-accessible building with bathrooms that are also handicap-accessible. It will be a “green” building, one that will welcome our community and show how we are stewards of God’s great creation. The building will feature a large narthex so that we can greet our friends and neighbors more easily as we enter and leave the church. Finally, it will be focus on energy saving for the future ... so there is a future for all.

As promised, we are trying to keep everyone involved in what is happening. We are trying to get all of these things done in preparation for a Special Congregational Meeting to borrow the funds to build the church. As you realize, we will need to set that date, send out a special letter to all of the members and have two announcements in the bulletin for announcing the meeting. That will take some time, but we want to get moving on this so that we can enclose the building before it gets too cold outside.

So you see, there are lots of things to do, and not much time until the weather works against us. Please continue to read the material we offer so that everyone can stay informed.

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Issue 7, August 8th

We have one week left for you to vote on the name which will replace Bigfork Lutheran Church:

The Bigfork Council chose the following 5 names to present to the congregation from the multitude of names presented. The five names are:

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Now it is up to you to choose which one you would like for your church family's new name. Use the form in the newsletter, or the form in this bulletin or you can submit your name choice on a separate piece of paper with your name clearly marked on the paper. **There will be one vote per member.** Each person can vote only once ... therefore you need to put your name on the ballot. You have until August 15 (including that Sunday). You may place the ballot in the offering plate or hand it to Pastor Ryan. You can also mail it in or e-mail your ballot to bigluth1@bigfork.net. But remember, your name must be clearly marked on the ballot to be counted.

On Thursday, August 5th the Church Council voted to call a Special Congregational Meeting on August 29, 2010, at the Presbyterian Church immediately following the 10:15 a.m. Worship Service.

The purpose of this meeting is to vote to borrow \$372,000 to build a new church building on the property we have owned for several years at 59816 State Hwy. 38, Bigfork, MN.

We encourage all the members of Bigfork Lutheran to be at this meeting. This is the start of a whole new ministry in the future of our church.

Next Sunday at 9:45 a.m. there will be a **Prayer Gathering** before worship at the west end of the basement of the Presbyterian Church to ask for God's guidance and discernment for this major step of our congregation. **Prayer Gatherings will be held on the property at 3 p.m. on Tuesdays – August 10, 17 & 24th and Thursdays – August 12, 19 and 26th**, weather permitting. **All** (Please invite community members who are not members, too!), **because all** are encouraged and invited to attend these **Prayer Gatherings**. Prayer is the key to making God's will work through our hands.

With God's guidance we may be able to celebrate the start of the building project in mid-September.

The loan applications have been submitted and we are awaiting the results. The proposed building is a metal construction building on one floor. It will be a true resource to the ministries for our community. It will be a fully handicap-accessible building with bathrooms that are also handicap-accessible. It will be a “green” building, one that will welcome our community and show how we are stewards of God's great creation. The building will feature a large narthex so that we can greet our friends and neighbors more easily as we enter and leave the church. Finally, it will focus on energy saving for the future ... so there is a future for all.

Look around you, we offer worship opportunities each Sunday

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Volunteer work at Bigfork Valley

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With a new building we will offer new ministry opportunities to the entire community. We want to have our building open to all so that it is used all the time. This is the focus of the dream that started nearly twenty years ago ... or more. Pray for God's guidance as you consider the vote to be held at the Special Congregational Meeting.

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Issue 8, August 15th

Today is the last day to submit your ballot

The Bigfork Council chose the following 5 names to present to the congregation from the multitude of names presented.

I want to call our new church family:

Please turn this in to Pastor Ryan today to have your vote counted!

(Vote for one by circling your choice)

Christian Community Church

Christ Community Church

Faith Community Church

Grace Community Church

United Faith Church

Please print your name so that our counters can see who voted:

My name is: _____

(One vote per member, vote on or by August 15)

We will announce the new church family name at the Bigfork Worship on the Grass on August 22nd right after the opening hymn!

The loan applications have been submitted and we are awaiting the results. The proposed building is a metal construction building on one floor. It will be a true resource to the ministries for our community.

It will be a fully handicap-accessible building with bathrooms that are also handicap-accessible. It will be a “green” building, one that will welcome our community and show how we are stewards of God’s great creation. The building will feature a large narthex so that we can greet our friends and neighbors more easily as we enter and leave the church. Finally, it will focus on energy saving for the future ... so there is a future for all.

After Laura calls the Special Congregational Meeting to order in two weeks we will take time to pray for God’s Will to be done.

This will be followed by a motion to borrow the money.

There will be a short presentation

Followed by open discussion on the motion

The congregation will then vote to borrow or not borrow the money.

I want to say thank you to all of you for your help and direction over the years. Long before I was called to be your pastor this was a hope of many people in the church. I believe we have a very good, ministry oriented building planned. It is affordable, and yet it fulfills all the needs of our programs offered and to be offered for the community.

We had a great first Capital Campaign, and we are moving forward to help others know that the building proposed will be a super resource for years to come in our community. If you have any questions, please talk to me. May God guide us in our decision.