



FROM THE PASTOR

“CAPITAL FUNDS CAMPAIGN!” Both I and the members of church council know that this concept is utterly distasteful to some of you. We are also aware that those who oppose such a campaign at Trinity number more than the seven to ten persons who voted NO to the proposal during the congregational meeting on June 15. I also realize that your disdain for such a campaign is undoubtedly based on a past experience that was unpleasant. Mt. Zion Church, York, where I served before coming to Holy Trinity, had experienced the harsh realities of what happens when a capital campaign is conducted badly. Although the actual campaign had taken place years before I served Mt. Zion Church, I heard the enduring angry reactions reported many times during my years as pastor. I am fully aware of the inherent danger from a bad campaign.

I say this because I want you to know that council and I have embraced the concept of a Capital Funds Campaign only after much consideration and research. Actually, John Weiss and I attended a workshop presented by KAIROS and Associates at Good Shepherd Church in Lancaster about four years ago. The pastoral staff of Good Shepherd spoke then very highly of the work that KAIROS had done with that congregation.

As a result, several years ago when the Stewardship Task Group did their research to establish the stewardship program that we are now following, they considered a “KAIROS led” campaign to stimulate congregational energy and to challenge giving. Good Shepherd Church, among others, has used such a budget building campaign quite successfully in recent years. Apparently, their increase in regular giving far outdistanced the cost of the contract with KAIROS. At that time, though, The Stewardship Task Group concluded that such a campaign was not the route to follow.

Nevertheless, a Capital Funds Campaign is before us now because it is needed. If we are to carry any building program to completion, we must have an organized and professionally directed challenge to the congregation. In the past three years, KAIROS has conducted Capital Campaigns for Redeemer Lutheran Church, Lancaster and Zion Lutheran Church, East Petersburg. They also guided recent campaigns for St. Peter’s, Neffsville, and Grace Lutheran in Lancaster. Zion Lutheran Church in Leola conducted a campaign that was led by Another firm. We also interviewed them this winter. The pastors of both Redeemer, Lancaster and Zion, East Petersburg spoke glowingly about the work of Pastor Renee LiaBraaten who will be working with us. Whether you agree with the concept of a Capital Campaign or not, please know that we have done our due diligence in getting to this point.

Most everyone looks at the cost of conducting this campaign, \$29,500, and questions if it is necessary...justified. The truth is that neither I nor anyone on council has any intent

to just “blow-off” almost \$30,000. We have wrestled with this both together as council as well as separately as individuals, and we have concluded that it is a step we must take if we are to move forward, and not just with a building project.

We cannot apply for outside funding, from any source, without a clear statement of congregational sources of revenue. We should not really proceed to some finished design for a facility without an idea of whether the congregation will support it and to what level. If we are to go ahead, we must have the stewardship information that a capital campaign will hopefully provide.

For me, though, the aspect of a capital campaign that is most intriguing goes beyond the actual dollars raised. If Pastor LiaBraaten helps us to raise \$750,000 to \$1 million in pledges for the project, her costs will represent only about 3% of the total, but hopefully the full value of her work among us will be felt in another vital way.

The pastors of Redeemer, Lancaster and Zion, East Petersburg are veteran, well-grounded pastors. They are longstanding friends whose opinions I value, and so I sought out their ideas. Both men have talked of how the experience of the campaign in each of their parishes energized their members and created a new level of commitment to their ministries. Their testimonials grabbed my attention.

We need such a renewal here at Trinity! We are a congregation in decline, not sharp and precipitous, but clear nonetheless. In this regard, we are no different from many, if not most, of the other mainline Protestant churches around us, but this should not mean that we simply accept what is happening.

I am not just interested in building a facility, but I am clearly intent upon renewing and giving new energy to our ministry. We have become too comfortable and satisfied with our congregational life as it is. Such resignation can have devastating consequences to a congregation.

Do not assume that Trinity Church will always be here. No where is that guaranteed! Nor are we called just to keep Trinity open. We are called by God to do His gospel work.

There is no magic, no quick fixes for parish renewal. It is about hard work, choices, and commitment to the work of Christ. It is my hope that Pastor Renee LiaBraaten will help us to begin that process here, and if she does, then her work among us will be worth far more than \$30,000.

In Christ,
Pastor Herbener