

Feasibility Study for Wallenpaupack Free Methodist Church Lakeville, Pennsylvania August, 2023

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I. Introduction

Wallenpaupack Free Methodist Church began meeting in Hawley, Pennsylvania in 2007. The church held services at the Wallenpaupack North Intermediate School on Sunday mornings for about 12 years. In 2012, the church purchased a parcel of land located along State Route 590 about two miles west of Hawley. That parcel was deemed suitable for construction of a church building with parking.

Meeting in the school held some advantages such as adequate space and parking at a reasonable cost. There were, however, some disadvantages as well. Space was only available on Sunday mornings. All other activities had to be held elsewhere. Complete setup of the worship area and equipment were required every week. And, occasionally, school events would take precedence over the church's usage of the facility.

By 2018, both leaders and members of the church sensed that it was time to take the next step in the life of the church. It was time to establish a permanent church home. Two options were given consideration: construction on the land the church owned, or finding a building that could be renovated..

In order to determine the wisest course of action, church leaders decided to enlist the counsel of a church consulting firm that specializes in helping congregations with such matters. Jeffrey Knauer, EVP with Kirby-Smith Associates of Quarryville, Pennsylvania, was selected to work with Wallenpaupack Church. Kirby-Smith is a firm with 80 years' experience guiding churches in this type of decision-making process.

The first step taken was to develop a Project Vision. This step included clearly outlining the Future Ministry Vision for the church. This Vision sets forth valid reasons for the idea of establishing a permanent church home. The second step was to outline the two options being considered, along with pros and cons of each choice. The third step was to figure general financial estimates of the costs of each option and to assemble the information in a brochure for reference by the congregation.

This brochure was then used to communicate information to the congregation as they were invited to participate in a Feasibility Study. The point of the Study was to gather input from participants in order to measure preference of the options, financial support, and possible project assistance with volunteer labor or donation of materials and services.

In order to judge the validity of the Study, a goal of 50% of active church households was established. It was determined that about 45 households were actively engaged at Wallenpaupack Church at that time, with about another 30 households connected to the church. Using the number 45, a goal of 23 participating households was set. A total of 36 households, including 52 people, participated in the study, a rate of 80%. This level of participation strongly validated the study results as being representative of the overall congregation.

As we now know, the results of the study were overwhelmingly positive about moving ahead with plans for a permanent church home. Costs of construction of a new facility on the church's lot, however, were found to be beyond the congregation's means at the time. And so, a search for a building to renovate was enjoined, with the option to sell the lot in order to increase the available proceeds.

Several possible buildings were considered but none met the criteria or price the church was willing to pay. The search process continued until the congregation witnessed the hand of God move mightily on their behalf. A suitable building became available on the very lot next to the one they already owned. A price was agreed upon which allowed the church to maintain its lot, giving the congregation a total plot of nearly 12 acres. Renovations were almost entirely completed by members of the congregation and a beautiful permanent home was at long last established in Lakeville.

This would be a fitting end to a marvelous story of God's faithful provision. Would the group in the school longed for was met. God answered prayers in a most surprising way. But the story is not over. In many ways, it is just beginning. The opening of Wallenpaupack Church along the Purdytown Turnpike caught the attention of passersby quickly. Many who began to attend invited others. Just recently, worship has had to extend to three morning services and Sunday classes for children have moved into a tent outside the building. Challenges are not the same as in the school, but leaders have come to realize that next steps must be addressed.

In order to gather input from the congregation, Church Consultant Jeffrey Knauer was engaged again to conduct a Feasibility Study. Leaders joined with Jeff to fashion a study questionnaire that was offered to all church households for their response. Participation could be enjoined by scheduling a personal interview with Jeff to complete the questionnaire, filling it out online, or completing a paper copy and dropping it in the offering box.

It was a bit of a challenge to arrive at a reasonable estimate of the congregation's number of households. Growth has been so rapid, it has been hard to track everyone involved. The lack of church administrative space has also contributed to this challenge of constructing an up-to-date data base. Nevertheless, using average attendance estimates, giving records, and measurements common to other congregations, it has been determined that approximately 120 households form the current congregation of Wallenpaupack Church. This means that our participation goal to validate the study results is a minimum of 50% of 120, or 60 participating households.

I am pleased to report that the minimum goal has been surpassed, with a total of 88 households having participated, a 73% response. This level of response validates study results, making them useful in helping to guide any next steps regarding the need for space. The response from 88 households included 57 who participated online, 14 with paper surveys, and 17 who had personal interviews. A total of 113 individuals were involved, 64 who participated online, 19 who submitted paper surveys, and 30 who had personal interviews

The purpose of the Feasibility Study is to measure several important factors in order to supply leaders with necessary data to be taken into consideration as they plan any next steps. Among the factors to be measured are:

1. Moral support for the idea of addressing needs for space
2. Specific space to be added if not all needs can be addressed initially
3. Financial capability of the congregation to support adding space

4. Potential volunteer labor available to assist with any construction
5. Ideas, questions, concerns that may be on the minds of study participants

All those who made time to be involved in the feasibility study are to be thanked for their participation and valuable feedback. It is hoped that the input provided by those who participated will assist leaders as they prayerfully determine the next step to take in addressing the need for space created by the rapid growth as a result of God's blessing.

II. Data and Analysis

Each question that was posed on the questionnaire employed by the study will be treated separately. Results will be shown for the group who was interviewed, those who submitted only paper or online responses, and the overall totals. Brief comments will be offered, while a more in-depth analysis of results will be offered later in the report.

QUESTION 1: LENGTH OF TIME ATTENDING WALLENPAUPACK CHURCH

	Interviews		Online/Paper		Overall	
2 years or less	10	33%	51	61%	61	54%
3-5 years	11	37%	15	18%	26	23%
6-9 years	1	3%	8	10%	9	8%
10 years or more	8	27%	9	11%	17	15%

This first question was asked in order to establish demographics for study participants. The question asked how many years each participant has been attending Wallenpaupack Church. Responses show that the largest group of participants are newer to the congregation, verifying the fact that the church has experienced recent rapid growth. About 54% have been associated with the church for 2 years or less. 23% have been attending for 3-5 years, 8% for 6-9 years, and 15% for 10 years or more, most of this last group since the church's beginning.

This response assures that a broad range of perspectives is represented. Especially during the personal interviews where more involved discussions took place, 30% of participants have been attending for 6 years or more, which presents views of those who have seen the full scope of transition from meeting in the school to the move to the current facility to growth. These views, together with the views of those who have only known church life at the present location supply the study with a broad perspective on each issue.

QUESTION 2: HOW WELL WALLENPAUPACK CHURCH IS MEETING YOUR NEEDS

	Interviews		Online/Paper		Overall	
Very well	23	77%	68	82%	91	81%
Well enough	6	20%	14	17%	20	18%
Neutral	1	3%	1	1%	2	2%
Not very well	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

This question was asked in order to measure the level of personal satisfaction with the church that participants possess. A total of 99% rated their level of satisfaction in the positive range, with 81% saying the church is doing very well at meeting their needs and 18% saying the

church is doing well enough at meeting their needs.

This is an extremely high level of satisfaction, suggesting that there is a sufficient amount of attention being given to acknowledge and address personal needs and expectations of members. This is a quality that helps to contribute to the attraction of new attendees as noted earlier.

QUESTION 3: LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHURCH

	Interviews		Online/Paper		Overall	
Very involved	10	33%	12	14%	22	19%
Involved	9	30%	15	18%	24	21%
Somewhat involved	10	33%	30	36%	40	35%
Not very involved	1	3%	26	31%	27	24%

This question was asked in order to further clarify study demographics. The purpose was to measure how involved study participants consider themselves to be in church activities and service. In many congregations, those who are more involved tend to take a greater level of interest in the positive outcome of projects such as adding needed space. In the case of Wallenpaupack Church, some consideration must also be given to the fact that many newer households are just beginning to become acquainted with activities and opportunities to serve.

In evaluating the responses to this question, we find that 75% of participants see themselves involved at some level, 19% very involved, 21% involved, and 35% somewhat involved. This compares to a cumulative national average of 60% of church members who see themselves involved at some level in their respective churches. A high level of involvement often suggests strong personal interest and a sense of satisfaction in programs offered and ministry taking place within a local congregation. Many comments to this affect were received during the interviews as well as during times of general conversation outside of the interviews.

Only 24% consider themselves not very involved. It should be noted that a number of those who responded that they are not very involved also included notations as to their reasons for this response. These reasons included busy work schedules, living a distance from the church, lack of transportation, living or commuting out of the area, health issues, or caring for family members. All of these reasons are certainly understood.

A second part to this question was posed, primarily due to the fact that many newer members have not yet had a chance to become as involved as they may wish to be. The question was:

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN THE LIFE OF WALLENPAUPACK CHURCH?

	Interviews		Online/Paper		Overall	
Yes, please contact me	2	7%	43	54%	45	41%
No	28	93%	37	46%	65	59%
No response given*			3		3	

* In the cases where no response was given, the number of such occasions is noted but the total is not factored into percentages as there can be no assumption as to what an answer may have been.

Many who are already involved saw no reason to have further contact on becoming more involved. Others felt they were well enough aware of opportunities and could become engaged by their own efforts. There was, however, a strong response desiring contact with information regarding ways to become more involved. Many of these are newer attendees along with some who have been attending for a while who simply want to increase their levels of involvement. This strong level of interest suggests that opportunities are attractive and attendees are energized to participate. This is a very positive sign within a growing church.

QUESTION 4: IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING THE NEED FOR MORE SPACE

	Interviews		Online/Paper		Overall	
Very important	26	87%	58	71%	84	75%
Important	4	13%	24	29%	28	25%
Not very important	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Not important at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
No response given			1		1	

This question was asked for the purpose of measuring the congregation's moral support for addressing the need for more space. While leadership establishes a vision for forward movement in a church, support from the congregation is an essential element to successful pursuit of the vision.

Results show that 100% of those who responded to this question consider addressing the need for more space to be a matter of importance. 75% consider it to be very important while 25% consider it to be important. This level of support will be very helpful to leaders as they seek to determine what the next steps may be.

QUESTION 5: MOST CRITICAL SPACE NEEDS TO ADDRESS FIRST

This question was asked for the purpose of measuring participants' opinions as to what specific spaces are seen as most important to add if not all needed spaces can be addressed by any initial project. Participants were asked to select 3 of the 5 options or to add an additional suggestion to the list. Not everyone selected 3, and a few selected more than 3. All responses have been tallied, as doing so has not been perceived as unduly swaying the results. (The average number of selections per questionnaire amounted to 2.58 items.)

	Interviews		Online/Paper		Overall	
Wallykids space	26	33%	66	31%	92	32%
Youth space	22	28%	56	26%	78	27%
Group worship space	18	23%	45	21%	63	22%
Administrative space	13	16%	30	14%	43	15%
Informal gathering space	1	1%	12	6%	13	4%
Other	0	0%	3	1%	3	1%

The results favor space for Wallykids and youth above the other needs. Those who offered reasons for their choices cited the fact that some children's programs are currently being housed in a tent and youth have no specific space of their own in which to meet. More insight may be gained from responses to Question 7. Support was also given to adding more space for

group worship. Again, reasons for this choice will become clearer later in the study. Briefly, many participants see 3 services on Sunday morning as too taxing on staff and volunteers, making this arrangement unsustainable over a long period of time. There is also a desire to have more time to fellowship between services. Conversely, the need for 3 services is understood in order to accommodate all those who wish to attend while leaving room for continued growth.

In fourth place, though gaining significant support, is the need for administrative space. Many participants notice that there is no space for the pastoral staff to gather, meet confidentially with members, or perform administrative duties which are important, especially to a growing congregation. Those who have taken notice are aware that current administrative space is housed in part of the storage pantry to the rear of the kitchenette that serves the fellowship space. In fifth place is informal gathering space. While benefits of more space for this purpose can be seen, it is not the highest priority in the opinions of most participants if not all needed spaces can be added at the same time. 3 participants chose the "other" option but did not specify an additional suggestion.

QUESTION 6: SUPPORT FOR LEADERS DEVELOPING A PLAN TO ADD SPACE

	Interviews		Online/Paper		Overall	
Very supportive	20	67%	61	74%	81	72%
Supportive	9	30%	18	22%	27	24%
Neutral	1	3%	3	4%	4	4%
Opposed	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly opposed	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
No response given			1		1	

The full text of this question as stated on the questionnaire will shed greater light on its purpose. The full question was, "Church leaders believe it is time to develop a plan to address the need for more space. If study results are positive, plans will be developed to add as much space as possible within a feasible project budget. How supportive would you be of leadership taking this step?"

While Question 3 measured moral support for the concept of adding more space, this question states that leaders will move forward with developing plans if study results are positive. The difference between the two questions is that the first acknowledges the need while the second states that action will be taken if responses are positive. It is possible to acknowledge a need while still not favoring addressing that need. Therein lies the purpose of this question. Is there support for taking action?

The answer is that 96% of study participants are supportive of leaders developing a plan to address the need for space with the caveat that the plan is "within a feasible project budget". The other 4% of responses were not opposed to this action but simply took a neutral position.

QUESTION 7: BENEFITS GAINED BY ADDING MORE SPACE

For this question, participants were asked what benefits they see being gained by addressing the need for more space. Results from all three sources of input - interviews, online, and paper are combined. Similar responses are combined and totals for each response noted.

42 - Better space to provide more effective ministry to our children, alleviate crowded classrooms, move out of the tent, better conditions for teachers and helpers, we don't want to lose our kids, kids bring parents and families continue our growth

33 - Reach more people for God, keep growing, and preserve the growth we have gained

27 - Better serve our church community, more room for everything to take place, ability to add new programs

22 - Larger worship space allowing for fewer services, more time to connect with others between services, less stress on staff

15 - Youth space for present and future growth, a space of their own, could also be used as a place to hang out on weeknights

15 - We can help more people, hurting people, to experience the love of God

14 - Reach new generations, more young people, which is extremely important for the success of humanity

12 - Better serve the Hawley area, could offer programs such as NA or AA, etc., we are currently limited in the number of people we can serve

4 - Staff needs an office to be able to conduct day to day tasks, pastoral counseling

3 - Need a place for people to go when they arrive, space for new families to feel comfortable

2 - Would be nice to have a gym

2 - A room for nursing mothers

2 - Playground space, other outdoor space such as a pavilion, place for music events

2 - Space to rent out to generate income

2 - Safer space for Wallykids

2 - Group worship is important, we need to worship God

1 - Will make us rely on faith and prayer to take this step, growth requires steps that may be uncomfortable

1 - Larger informal gathering space away from sanctuary doors would be less disruptive during services

1 - Larger informal gathering space would allow for community events, fundraisers, mission and outreach programs, and teaching space

1 - Fewer volunteers needed to run Sunday programs if we could go to fewer services

Note: Some responses that fit better at the final question have been moved there.

Leading themes of the responses to this question focus on better space for children and youth, continued growth and outreach, preservation of the growth that has been gained, and fewer services which would allow more time for fellowship and stress staff less. In addition, many other interesting points were offered for thought.

QUESTION 8: SUPPORT FOR A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN TO GENERATE PROJECT FUNDING

	Interviews		Online/Paper		Overall	
Very supportive	18	60%	38	46%	56	50%
Supportive	10	33%	32	39%	42	38%
Neutral	2	7%	12	15%	14	13%
Opposed	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly opposed	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
No response given			1		1	

This question was asked for the purpose of measuring support for conducting a capital funds campaign to generate financial support for a project to add needed space. While moral support and support for making plans are key elements in the study process, the ability to move forward with any plans will require financial commitments.

Using a capital funds campaign has proven to be one of the most successful methods in most projects of this nature. This was the method used before by Wallenpaupack Church when making the move to acquire and renovate the current property. It is the intention of leaders to follow this same pattern should a project move forward at this time.

Study results show that 88% of participants are supportive of this strategy, 50% being very supportive and 38% being supportive. While there were no negative responses, 13% submitted a neutral response. Some of these responses may be due to not understanding what is involved in such a campaign. This statement is made because a number of those who attended interviews asked for an explanation of how such a campaign proceeds prior to voicing support. 12 of those who indicated a neutral position did not have the advantage of additional information which may have allowed them to gain a clearer understanding and offer a supportive viewpoint.

In conclusion, there is strong support should a capital funds campaign be engaged.

QUESTION 9: RANGE OF POTENTIAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Estimated commitments to a 3-year Capital Campaign
(Numbers ending in 9 are rounded to next higher numbers)

Per year amt.	Interviews	Onl/Pa	Tot.	Low range	Med. range	High range
Above \$25,000	0	0	0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
\$15,000-\$24,999	0	1	1	\$ 45,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 75,000
\$10,000-\$14,999	1	1	2	\$ 60,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 90,000
\$8,000-\$9,999	0	1	1	\$ 24,000	\$ 27,000	\$ 30,000
\$6,000-\$7,999	2	4	6	\$ 108,000	\$ 126,000	\$ 144,000
\$4,000-\$5,999	2	1	3	\$ 36,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 54,000
\$2,000-\$3,999	4	15	19	\$ 114,000	\$ 171,000	\$ 228,000
\$1,000-\$1,999	4	14	18	\$ 54,000	\$ 81,000	\$ 108,000
\$500-\$999	2	19	21	\$ 31,500	\$ 47,250	\$ 63,000
Less than \$500	1	8	9	\$ 0	\$ 6,750	\$ 13,500
No giving to camp.	0	6	6	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Cash total	16	70	86	\$ 472,500	\$ 639,000	\$ 805,500
No response given		1				
Other*	1					

* Giving towards payoff of current mortgage prior to any new project giving

This question was asked for the purpose of measuring potential contributions should a project to add more space be adopted and a capital funds campaign be engaged. Though no firm commitments were registered at the time of the study, responses give an indication of possible financial support and can be used to help determine the extent of any proposed project.

Of the 88 participating households, 80 offered an estimate of potential giving to a possible capital campaign. This is a positive response rate of 91%. Several who indicated potential giving noted that their ability may eventually exceed their initial estimate in the study.

Responses were measured within the ranges indicated, using the low, medium, and high levels of each range. Figures were also rounded up to even numbers to make estimates even numbers. Should a capital campaign be engaged, total estimated cash giving may be realized at the low range of 472,500, the medium range of \$639,000, or the high range of \$805,500.

In order to determine a reasonable campaign goal from the data received, several factors should be considered. Historically, the medium range estimate is closest to what campaigns usually realize. In this case, that amount is \$639,000. Other significant factors to consider are possible responses from those who did not participate in the feasibility study. If the estimate of total households who are part of the congregation is nearly correct, there may be at least another 32 households from which to hear. Comparing the list of study participants with the list of core giving families in the congregation, there are about 25 of those households yet to be heard from.

Taking all of these factors into consideration, along with relying upon the consultant's experience, a conservative total estimate of what may be raised in financial support is in the

range of \$550,000-\$650,000. It is conceivable that this total could rise somewhat higher if an ambitious fundraising effort is engaged. However, it is my practice to present estimates in a conservative range as many decisions to proceed with a project are based on information provided by studies such as this. The range provided by this study should be a fairly solid projection upon which to base forward decisions. There should be less downside risk to this range than upside potential.

Any project budget may also factor in the offers of construction assistance from members noted later in the study. In addition, several offers to donate materials are included.

QUESTION 10: INTEREST IN CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS A SPECIFIC PROJECT AREA, HONORARY OR MEMORIALGIVING, NON-CASH OPTIONS

This question was posed to participants to learn of interest in making all or part of potential commitments towards a specific project area or item, or giving in honor or memory of someone. Also measured was interest in learning about options to contribute using methods other than cash. Should there be sufficient interest in these options, choices for these types of giving may be developed as choices for campaign commitments. Responses are as follows:

For a specific project area:

	Interviews		Online/Paper		Overall	
Yes	2	7%	4	5%	6	6%
Maybe	1	3%	32	43%	33	32%
No	27	90%	38	51%	65	63%
No response given			9		9	

In honor or memory of someone:

	Interviews		Online/Paper		Overall	
Yes	4	13%	3	4%	7	7%
Maybe	3	10%	29	38%	32	30%
No	23	77%	45	58%	68	64%
No response given			6		6	

Information made available to contribute using non-cash options:

	Interviews		Online/Paper		Overall	
Yes	18	60%	20	25%	38	35%
Maybe	2	7%	19	24%	21	19%
No	10	33%	41	51%	51	46%
No response given			3			

Directing contributions to a specific project area showed interest from 38% of participants, 6% yes and 32% maybe. Given this level of interest, some thought may be warranted in the planning of a project to design opportunities for sponsorship of certain items or areas.

Contributing in honor or memory of someone drew interest from 37% of participants, 7% yes

and 32% maybe. Several participants mentioned the possibility of a memorial or meditation garden, perhaps with inscribed bricks or a plaque to acknowledge those for whom funds were donated. This could be used as a funding tool.

Information about options to contribute using non-cash options would be of interest to 54% of participants, 35% yes and 19% maybe. It should be noted that the percentage of interest was significant higher among those who had interviews. During the interviews, options of non-cash giving were often discussed in detail which contributed to a greater level of interest. In my opinion, this program has the potential of helping many to realize ways to utilize other resources they may have to make a meaningful contribution to a project. It should definitely be a part of a capital campaign effort should a project move forward.

QUESTION 11: VOLUNTEERING TO HELP WITH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN EFFORTS

	Interviews		Online/Paper		Overall	
Yes	18	60%	45	55%	63	56%
Maybe	6	20%	24	29%	30	27%
No	6	20%	13	16%	19	17%
No response given			1		1	

This question was asked in order to measure interest in assisting with a capital campaign should such a fundraising effort be engaged. Participating in this way could involve serving on one of a number of committees or assisting with one-time events. A positive response was received from 83% of participants, 56% yes and 27% maybe. Of the 17% who said no, some did note that their schedules simply would not accommodate more activities.

This level of response indicates strong support for conducting any capital campaign effort. Names of those who responded with interest in serving will be forwarded to the leadership committee. It is recommended that, should a campaign be engaged, efforts should be made to involve as many members as possible. History has shown that the more involved people become, the more supportive they are of the overall effort.

QUESTION 12: VOLUNTEER LABOR, CONSTRUCTION SKILLS, LICENSES, DONATION OF BUILDING MATERIALS

This question was asked for the purpose of assessing the availability of potential volunteer labor. Also assessed was availability of anyone who may assist with professional licenses or have sources that may donate services or materials. Listed are the number of individuals indicating possible availability. Names and details will be given to the leadership committee.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 18 - General labor, skills, helpers | 1 - Blasting |
| 13 - Painting | 1 - Spackling |
| 12 - General construction, including several general contractors | 1 - Permit applications |
| 9 - Plumbing, including plumbing/heating contractor | 1 - Assembly |
| 7 - Electrical, including licensed electricians | 1 - Landscaping |
| 4 - Framing, including a license | 1 - Kitchens |
| 4 - Carpentry | 1 - Prepare food for workers |
| 2 - Excavation, site development | 1 - Window installer |
| 2 - HVAC | 1 - Insulation |
| 2 - Masonry | 1 - Cleaning |

- 2 - Equipment operators
- 2 - Drywall
- 1 - Commercial building management
- 1 - Interior design, architecture
- 1 - General organizer
- 1 - Project manager
- 1 - Septic system expert
- 1 - Civil engineer, storm water advice
- 1 - Flooring
- 1 - Advise phone system installation, electrical
- 1 - Engineering
- 1 - Wetland scientist, OSHA, Hazwoper

Donations:

- Landscaping materials
- Door and window hardware
- Use of dump truck
- Use of backhoe

It should be noted that a number of potential volunteers possess more than one skill, so their names will be listed in more than one place. The total number of volunteers is 54. This level of skilled individuals willing to lend their assistance could make a significant impact upon any project the church may engage.

QUESTION 13: ANY FURTHER COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, IDEAS, OR CONCERNS

This question was meant to offer participants a final opportunity to comment on any aspect of the proposal to address needed space, or a possible capital campaign to fund a project should the church move forward. This includes comments, suggestions, ideas, or any concerns. Those of a similar nature were combined. The number of those offering similar comments is recorded.

9 - Consider multi-uses of new space for purposes such as daycare, preschool, a hospice or home nursing ministry, a food pantry, etc. - plan for this when developing the project design

7 - The building needs to grow with a growing congregation, more worship space is needed

7 - Fully supportive of the growth and improvement of the facility, all for Wally Church, will do whatever I can, I love this church

6 - Offer continued prayer for this

6 - Need a full kitchen for multiple uses - fundraising, youth, other groups, public or community causes

5 - Feel confident church leaders will stay grounded and building will not take our focus off of mission

5 - So new here, willing to help in any way needed, thank you for helping us see again, thankful for Pastor Ken and all our caring leaders

4 - Build a massive pole building and divide it as needed, worship space for 300, then kids and youth space, on a slab with radiant heat

4 - Feel better after having this interview, glad church hired a consultant

3 - Consider an alternate service on Weds. or Sat. evening to accommodate those who must work on Sunday mornings, who help with the children, and who live outside the area and must

leave for home on Sunday mornings. We have enough staff to share preaching duties.

3 - Put this in God's hands and train people to handle this step of faith

3 - Add an outdoor space with a memorial garden with bricks or a plaque to help raise funds

3 - More staff needed to attend to hurting people so they are not overlooked when they need personal prayer

2 - Concerned that space will become an idol or the focus as I've seen happen in other churches rather than maintaining our focus on worshipping God

2 - Borrowing money to pay for such a project is concerning, hope we can raise the vast majority from members and fundraisers

2 - Staff needs office space

2 - I am available to help in any way and have experience to offer

2 - Need a moms' nursing area, moms/dads room where services can be seen and heard, frustrating for parents whose young children cannot make it through a service

2 - Like to be more involved but live outside the area

2 - More space would be amazing for the church, potential for much more outreach to our community

2 - Would be good for all parts of the faith community to have their own space

? 2 - How many total acres does the church own?

? 2 - Are any grants available?

2 - Mike has such a good relationship with the young people, they should have a place to meet through the week

2 - Suggest building a sanctuary connected to the present building with a walkway

2 - Consider selling bonds to help finance the project

? 2 - Is adding on to the present building possible?

? 2 - Would other options such as vacant buildings in Honesdale be considered?

? 2 - Could a satellite campus be considered?

2 - Kids' programs are driving the growth, they are being well educated in the scriptures

2 - Explore business networking in the church among tradespeople, invite outside tradespeople to join the group

1 - Like to see a library

1 - Like to see new space built for kids and youth and retrofit current space to make it larger for Sunday services

1 - Concern about keeping the close community feel as the church grows

1 - Keep the music as worship inclusive rather than performance

1 - Outgrowing our space is a great problem to have, large amount of young people is a sign of a healthy church

1 - Excited to see what God does with this project, and how we meet Him in what He is doing

1 - God moves in incredible ways, we witnessed it throughout the last campaign, He's done it before and He can do it again

1 - I feel we need a teen space but don't know if this is included with the needs of Wallykids

? 1 - Are we growing too fast? Is this just a season?

? 1 - Should we stay the same size and plant more churches? Are we fast tracking our new pastors?

1 - Can help with a merchandise room selling donated items or a hot dog stand

1 - We are retired with special needs in the family, are at our maximum contribution level

1 - Space to host missions groups overnight who may come to visit and minister in our area

1 - Hard to be involved due to work at another ministry and distance from the church

1 - 3 services are not sustainable and may exhaust the wonderful people serving our church

1 - The church has been wonderful to us. I am thankful that I am in a much better place spiritually. Regarding the build, pray for the best option that does not risk the church's mission. Consider out of the box solutions that will minimize cost and not overload the church with financial burden. I am happy to offer suggestions if helpful.

1 - Like to see a veteran's memorial space as religious services are often stress relievers for veterans

1 - Need to keep the reasons for expansion in front of the congregation, easy to believe it is not needed if not reminded

? 1 - Do we have any programs to help the elderly with tasks who have no family nearby?

1 - Publish a list of trusted church members who are experienced the trades

1 - Have a desk and office supplies to donate if office space becomes available

1 - Develop outdoor space for youth and children, include sports fields, etc.

- 1 - More parking will be needed
- 1 - Could use a baptism tank and laundry for towels
- 1 - Consider transportation for the elderly
- ? 1 - Where will new space be built?

Final thoughts cover a broad spectrum of topics, from the subject of new space to ministry items to other related topics. It is evident that study participants gave serious consideration to the matter of addressing the need for space. They also gave thought to future ministry vision.

III. Observations, Conclusions, Recommendations

OBSERVATIONS

Definition: Observations are based on comments, suggestions, impressions, and various written materials reviewed, along with an interpretation based on my previous experience. The following observations were noted during this study:

1. Wallenpaupack Free Methodist Church is welcoming congregation. It is an exciting place to be. Those who attend Sunday services can expect to receive personal greetings, handshakes, even hugs. Snacks are ready to be enjoyed, music fills the worship space, and excited "noise" radiates from the many children and youth who seem to be everywhere. All of this precedes the actual service which begins with a personable welcome, announcement highlights, then upbeat enthusiastic worship and a relevant message. All of this is efficiently fit into about an hour, and happens three times on a Sunday morning.
2. The church meets in the facility it purchased and renovated a few years ago. Since that time, growth has been steadily significant. People who pass by on the heavily traveled Purdytown Turnpike are curious enough to visit a service. Many of those who do so make this their church home. They, in turn, invite friends and family to join them. Community outreach efforts have caused the church to be well thought of in the area. This reputation is validated in the way people, especially children and youth, are attended to when they visit. Friendships are formed among those of all ages and a true sense of community has been developed.
3. The church is led by a very capable Pastor who helps to lead worship as well as handles most of the preaching duties. A capable staff has been assembled to help guide various areas of ministry. This cohesive team has undoubtedly contributed to congregational growth as well as maintaining that growth. The Church Board includes dedicated members who are involved and invested in the present and future course of the congregation. Many other volunteers contribute time and talents which make things run as smoothly as possible.
4. The church has much to offer, and a desire to add more ministry among members as well as outreach to the community beyond church walls. It seems clear to most study participants that a lack of space has become a major constraint to these desires. If housing children's programs outdoors in a tent had escaped people's attention, the need to add a third Sunday service has driven the challenge home. With a recognition of this factor, most seem to be facing the reality that more space is required to maintain current numbers and will be needed to continue to grow from this point.

5. There is an overall sense that something must be done to address the need for more space. There is confidence that church leaders will guide this effort and that those in the congregation will support the effort financially and with voluntary lending of any skills they may possess that could benefit a project.

6. While there are some words of caution regarding keeping the church from overextending itself too far on a project, and some room given to consider other options, the prevailing course of thought is that new space needs to happen on the present campus. A decision to move forward will not surprise members. They are ready to learn what may be done within a feasible budget. They are ready to commit time and resources to help reach a project goal. They want what is the best solution for the next chapter of progress at Wallenpaupack Church.

CONCLUSIONS

Definition: Conclusions are based on direct interpretation of personal interviews and written surveys. After analysis, study, and prayer, the following conclusions have been reached:

1. This study was initiated for the purpose of gathering opinions and input regarding the need to add more space to accommodate various ministries, worship services, programs and functions of the church and staff. In order to make the study results viable, a participation goal of at least half the active church households was established. Approximately 120 active households are part of the congregation, so 60 participating households was set as the goal. A total of 88 households, including 113 individuals, participated, accounting for 73% of the active households, well exceeding the established goal. Of these 88 households, 17, including 30 individuals, participated in confidential interviews with the consultant. 71 households, including 83 individuals, participated by online or paper questionnaires. This level of participation underscores the amount of interest in the need for more space and displays an excellent level of cooperation from the congregation.

2. Demographics for study participants revealed more than half of participants have been attending the church for 2 years or less. This underscores the fact that the church has experienced recent rapid growth. 54% have been attending for 2 years or less, with 23% 3-5 years, 8% 6-9 years, and 15% 10 years or more. This pattern shows the church's strong ability to attract new people, a rare quality in today's culture. As a result of this growth, the facility has been taxed beyond its capacity to comfortably accommodate all those who wish to gather. Some classes have had to occupy a tent and worship services have had to expand to 3 on Sunday mornings. In some ways, this has divided the group which thrives on being together. It has also stretched staff and volunteers. More space could allow the church to reduce the number of Sunday services, better accommodate the number of children and youth, and place less demands on volunteers.

3. About 99% of study participants have a positive level of personal satisfaction that their needs are being met by the church. There are always going to be areas that can be improved, but no undercurrent of dissatisfaction was discovered during the study process. The main item that people would like to see addressed is a reduction in the number of services in order to facilitate more time for fellowship with the friends they have found at church. This should be seen as a positive reaction.

4. About 75% of study participants see themselves involved in the church at some level, 19% being very involved, 21% involved, and 35% somewhat involved. 41% have a desire to become

more involved and have agreed to be contacted to learn of more opportunities. This is a very healthy level of participation. Many churches are struggling to find enough volunteers to carry out basic functions. Wallenpaupack Church has a very healthy number of current volunteers with more willing to become engaged.

5. 100% of study participants consider the need for more space to be an important issue that should be addressed. 75% consider it very important and 25% consider it important. If not every area that needs more space can be addressed initially with a building project, participants rated which they favor addressing first. The results were:

- 32% - Wallykids space
- 27% - Youth space
- 22% - Group worship space
- 15% - Administrative space
- 4% - Informal gathering space
- 1% - Other (no specific space mentioned)

The need for more space for children and youth is obvious to most with the presence of the tent. But needing to expand to 3 morning services has also accentuated a need for more worship space. Simply by order of priorities, the need for administrative space fell to fourth place. People do recognize that this space would greatly assist staff in their duties in caring for the congregation. All in all, if most areas of need could be addressed as soon as possible, the congregation would be most satisfied.

6. With a unanimous consensus that addressing needs for space is important, it is no surprise that 96% support leaders developing a plan to do so, 72% being very supportive and 24% being supportive. The other 4% were neutral, meaning that no one was opposed. This response gives leaders very strong support in taking the next step to develop a plan.

7. Participants see many benefits that may be gained by adding more space. The top 5 mentioned include the following:

- 42 mentioned better space to minister to children
- 33 mentioned the ability to both continue growth and preserve the present growth
- 27 mentioned the ability to better serve the present church community
- 22 mentioned the ability to reduce the number of services and increase fellowship time
- 15 (tie) mentioned dedicated youth space for present use and future growth
- 15 (tie) mentioned the ability to help more people come to experience God's love

These benefits underscore the understanding that participants have for the need for more space. This information may be helpful as leaders seek the best solution moving forward.

8. Support for a capital funds campaign was measured at 88%, 50% being very supportive and 38% being supportive. The other 13% were neutral with none opposed. This result supplies strong support for this method of organized fundraising should a project proceed. This method worked well for the church when the present facility was attained and renovated.

9. 91% of study participants offered an estimate of potential financial support should a capital funds campaign be engaged. Potential giving to a project was measured at low, mid, and high ranges of estimates indicated by study participants. Overall totals of what may be realized in a 3-year capital campaign were a low range of \$472,500, a mid-range of \$639,000, and a high

range of \$805,500. Weighing a number of factors together, a conservative campaign goal of \$550,000-\$650,000 may be expected. This figure should carry a minimum of downside risk with more potential on the upside. A significant number of core giving households have yet to be heard from. This is a figure that should be helpful in project planning.

10. Just over one third have interest in project giving for specific areas or in honorary or memorial giving. These options should be included in planning a capital campaign if one is engaged. More than half of participants are interested in learning about non-cash options for making contributions. This information should be included in any capital campaign that may be engaged.

11. 94 participants stated that they are, or may be, interested in helping with the tasks of a capital funds campaign. This suggests that a more than adequate number of people will be available to assist should a campaign be engaged.

12. Volunteer labor exists in 32 different categories. Several members possess professional licenses or certifications which may be helpful. And several have equipment which may be utilized if needed. Donations of certain materials may also be available. If a project schedule can accommodate these offers, substantial cost savings could be realized. This occurred during the renovations to the present church building.

13. 56 additional comments or questions were offered. All are listed. Many reiterate opinions stated earlier in the study. Others offer thoughts about future ministry possibilities. Most are pointing forward with anticipation that action will be taken. Some point out needs, others offer encouragement, while the rest offer helpful suggestions or ideas. They indicate the depth of thought members invested as they spent time considering the decision before the church.

10. The need for more space is apparent. People are willing to help and contribute in a sacrificial way. The overall expectation is that a plan will be developed and action on a plan will be taken.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Definition: Recommendations are based on our observations and conclusions. The following recommendations are respectfully submitted:

1. Based on the level of information gathered in the study, it is recommended that the report be shared with the congregation. This can be done by distributing the Summary portion of the full report during a portion of time during Sunday services or at a separate Town Hall style gathering. Following that gathering, the entire report can be made available electronically for those who may be interested in details. Hard copies may be produced for those who may not have internet access. This step will maintain an ongoing sense of clarity and open communication throughout the process.

2. The first matter determined by the study was whether or not moral support for addressing the need for more space exists. Study results show that participants agree that space is needed and they support leaders developing a plan to address the needs. It is recommended that church leadership moves forward with studying options and develops a plan in keeping with a feasible project budget. It may be wise to call upon other congregational members who possess expertise in certain fields in order to assist with identifying the best option available.

3. A major factor in determining the extent of any project will be the budget. It is recommended that the conservative estimate of cash that may be raised with a 3-year capital funds campaign, that being \$550,000-\$650,000, be used as a basis for consideration in project planning. This total could rise as additional households who were not part of the study choose to participate. Non-cash options for giving may also boost the total. Incorporating any new members who joined over time could help. Another factor to consider would be a second campaign following the first in order to pay down any borrowed amount to a point that the regular church budget could handle the remaining mortgage payment. Once project details are identified, the consultant can assist, if desired, in assembling a potential scenario of what may be afforded using all these factors. Such a scenario may then be included at the time that any approvals by the congregation are requested.

4. It is also recommended that the pace of moving forward becomes a priority. Solutions to deal with the growth that has already occurred have been put in place but people are already sensing that they are unsustainable over a longer period of time. If the development of plans is not forthcoming in the near future, history has proven that growth will likely subside and even the progress that has been made may reverse course. Decisions to move forward should be well-communicated to the congregation and news of progress kept up-to-date. Most members will exercise patience in enduring less than ideal conditions as long as hope for improvements is not deferred too long.

5. Since forward progress is indicated, we recommend that a capital funds campaign is initiated as soon as possible. It is almost unanimously agreed upon that the need for space be addressed and that a campaign would be the most necessary and efficient means of generating funding for a project. All aspects of developing, approving, and engaging a project will require funds, so delaying the generation of funds will only delay any progress to be made. Once commitments are identified, the overall budget can be better determined.

6. Should a capital campaign proceed, we recommend that professional guidance be obtained to direct the effort. As many of the willing volunteers as possible should be engaged to assist with various events and committees. A capital campaign should be conducted in a comprehensive manner, engaging a number of different audiences including the congregation, the surrounding community, and other friends and businesses that are aware of the ministry. Such a campaign can also provide an opportunity to expand the base of support through publicity and solicitation efforts directed to the general public in a manner deemed appropriate.

7. As your consultant is familiar with the church, the community, and all data gathered it is recommended that he be retained to guide any capital campaign effort. The prior effort in conducting a campaign to attain the present facility was a success which suggests another effort should follow the same pattern. While there is a cost for professional guidance, results show that ministries conducting campaigns by themselves often raise 50-60% as much as with professional guidance. Increased results quickly absorb costs associated with such assistance.

IV. Thank you

It is with great appreciation that I thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving Wallenpaupack Free Methodist Church once again. It is exciting to witness how God has blessed the church since moving into your first permanent church home.

A special note of thanks is extended to Pastor Ken and his staff. Helen, Cissie, and Mike were hospitable and helpful in many ways which made the process flow smoothly. I also want to

thank the leadership team for their confidence in bringing me back to conduct another feasibility study. Their interest in the process and prayers for its success were answered.

I especially want to thank the 113 individuals who took the time to participate, whether online, on paper, or in person at an interview. The study process would have been meaningless without the input all of you supplied. It is your thoughtful responses that formed the text which will convey the information desired by church leaders. Your opinions will help to guide the next steps in the future of your church.

Should a decision to proceed be made, requiring a capital funds campaign, I would be honored to be retained for the purpose of guiding such an effort as I did before. I would work with you, exercising the same diligence and effort put forth in the past. Such a campaign would include information about "Creative Ways to Give", options to contribute using resources other than cash. Guidance would also be provided in the use of volunteers in various fundraising efforts.

Again, thank you so much for the honor of serving you. I will join you in prayer for God's wisdom and guidance, as well as continued growth and success to the glory of God.

(Note: The Summary Report to the Congregation begins on the following page. It has been separated in order to make copying a simpler task.)

V. Summary Report to the Congregation

Pastor Ken, the pastoral staff, and the Leadership Committee are to be thanked for their time, efforts, and prayers in preparing Wallenpaupack Church for this very important study. Since occupying its first permanent home, the congregation has experienced rapid growth. This growth has stretched the building beyond its capacity in a number of ways. Leadership has acknowledged a need for more space. The purpose of this study is to measure the congregation's response to this need. Much weight will be given to this input in deciding how to address this need.

A participation goal of at least half the active households of the congregation was set, being 60 of 120 active households. A participation of at least half the number of active households strongly validates study results. It should be noted that the number 120 is a "best guess" of staff as the actual number is somewhat fluid due to the rapid growth and lack of administrative space and tools to maintain a comprehensive data base. A total of 88 households, including 113 individuals, took part in the study, for an 73% response rate. This 73% level of participation included 30 people from 17 households who engaged in confidential interviews to discuss their responses, and 83 people from 71 households who responded online or by returning paper questionnaires.

Demographically, 54% of participants have been attending the church for 2 years or less, 23% 3-5 years, 8% 6-9 years, and 15% 10 years or more. 99% consider their needs to be sufficiently taken care of, 81% very well taken care of and 18% well enough. 75% consider themselves involved in church activities at some level, with 41% wanting to be contacted about becoming more involved. This response indicates the strong level of interest people have for their church.

100% of participants consider the need for space an important issue. If not all areas of need can be addressed right away, the order that members prefer is as follows:

- 32% - Wallykids space
- 27% - Youth space
- 22% - Group worship space
- 15% - Administrative space
- 4% - Informal gathering space
- 1% - Other (no specific space mentioned)

Priority was given to children and youth first. Both of these groups are currently struggling to make current spaces work, including a tent outdoors. A desire for increased group worship space closely follows along with a desire to reduce the current number of Sunday services so that more time can be given to greetings and fellowship. Administrative space needs are understood and benefits of more informal gathering space are also valued. But the priorities are what they are. 96% of participants support leaders developing a plan to address these needs. No one was opposed. Primary benefits of adding space included better space to minister to children, ability to keep growing and preserve growth already gained, reduce the number of Sunday services, provide space for the youth, and increase outreach opportunities.

Support for a capital campaign to generate funding for a project stood at 88%. 13% were neutral. 91% offered an estimate of giving to a potential 3-year campaign. Amounts were measured at the low, middle, and high points of each range of suggested giving levels. The amounts that could be realized in 3 years were a low level total of \$472,500, a mid-level total of \$639,000, and a high level total of \$805,500. A number of factors were weighed in order to

provide a conservative estimate that leaders may use for planning purposes. These factors include those who currently support the church who did not participate in the study, potential non-cash donations, and the consultant's experience gained on hundreds of campaigns. A conservative goal of \$550,000-\$650,000 should be attained in a 3-year campaign effort. This figure should have little downside risk with greater upside potential.

94 individuals said that they are, or may be, interested in helping with campaign efforts, be that on a committee, assisting with a special event, or in some other way. Volunteer labor has been offered in 32 different categories including a number of professional licenses and certifications. Some donations of materials may be available as well as use of some heavy equipment. All of these offerings of "sweat equity" could make a difference in the planning process and may help with project costs as such volunteerism did with the present building.

All comments made throughout the study are listed in the full report. Those of a similar nature are combined and may be slightly reworded to reflect the group's overall thoughts. 56 final comments primarily reiterate positions taken throughout the study, but also add a number of visionary thoughts having to do with ministry goals for the future. A number of questions were also posed which will be directed to leaders for responses.

In conclusion, participants appear to be in agreement that a need for more space exists and should be addressed. An air of expectation exists that something will be planned and carried out. The vision seems to be that the church should continue its pattern of growth, meaningful ministry, and outreach. Caring for children and youth must be a priority. Effective ministry will require more space as soon as possible. If a plan is developed as soon as possible, people will patiently endure in the meantime.

Based on study results, recommendations include:

1. Study results should be shared with the congregation, including access to the full text.
2. Leaders should not delay in developing a plan, with a feasible project budget
3. Members with specific areas of expertise may be consulted to assist with planning
4. Members should be regularly apprised of progress during the planning process
5. A capital funds campaign should be initiated as soon as possible as all steps associated with design, permits, approvals, and construction will require cash. To delay the fundraising process could delay the timing of any project..
6. As many volunteers as possible should be engaged to lend their energy to a campaign effort
7. Volunteer skills and labor should be assessed in order to determine how much of a factor it may lend to an overall project plan
8. It is recommended that professional guidance be retained to guide a capital campaign effort. Churches who attempt this step by themselves generally realize an amount of 50-60% of what may be gained with guidance. This worked well for the church before.

A final word of thanks is extended to all those who made time in their schedules to participate in the study. Your help was appreciated and key to the success of this study. Thank you!

