

# Feasibility Study for Wallenpaupack Church Hawley, Pennsylvania August, 2018

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## I. Introduction

Wallenpaupack Church in Hawley, Pennsylvania began in 2007. The church is associated with the Free Methodist denomination. Currently meeting at the Wallenpaupack North Intermediate School on Sunday mornings, the church does own a parcel of land which it purchased in 2012. The site is located along State Route 590 about two miles west of Hawley and is suitable for construction of a church building with parking.

The church has been renting facilities to meet in the school for most of its history. This arrangement has provided an adequate meeting space for both worship and children's ministry. It has also allowed the congregation to be established and to grow. However, there are some drawbacks. Use of the school is limited to several hours on Sunday mornings. Any other activities must be scheduled and held elsewhere. Meeting at the school also requires complete setup and tear down each week. This process requires that volunteers arrive early and stay late each week. While many different volunteers have participated in this assignment over the years, there is a tendency for members to become "weary in well-doing". Unfortunately, some have chosen to leave after feeling burned out in this area of service.

Leaders and members of the church have sensed that it may be time to take the next step in the life of the church, that being the establishment of a permanent church home. The availability of a suitable building for sale, along with the option of construction on the land the church owns, has presented two possibilities to consider.

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 next 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 are actively engaged at Wallenpaupack Church, with another 30 or more households connected to the church. Using the number 45, a goal of 23 participating households was set. I am pleased to report that the goal

was exceeded as a total of 36 households, including 52 people, participated in the study, a rate of 80%. All church households were invited to participate by choosing to engage in a confidential personal interview to discuss their views with Jeff Knauer, to return a paper version of the questionnaire, or to fill out the questionnaire online. 14 households, including 23 people, participated in the interview process. 22 households, including 29 people, responded with paper or online responses. This level of participation strongly validates the study results as being representative of the overall congregation.

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 establishing a permanent church home for the congregation.

## 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/Written		Overall	
2 years or less	9	39%	12	41%	21	40%
3-5 years	3	13%	7	24%	10	19%
6-9 years	7	30%	3	10%	10	19%
10 years or more	4	17%	7	24%	11	21%

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 while the rest are quite evenly divided between the various timespans. About 40% have been associated with the church for 2 years or less. 19% have been attending for 3-5 years, 19% for 6-9 years, and 21% 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. It also shows a pattern of church growth and retention. The church continues to be successful at attracting new people. However, not all who initially become part of the congregation remain over a length of time. Some reasons for this are discovered later in the study.

### QUESTION 2: LEVEL OF YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHURCH

	Interviews		Online/Written		Overall	
Very involved	14	61%	1	3%	15	29%
Involved	6	26%	11	38%	17	33%
Somewhat involved	3	13%	6	21%	9	17%
Not very involved	0	0%	11	38%	11	21%

This question was asked in order to further clarify study demographics in regard to how involved study participants consider themselves to be with church ministry. The value of this question has

to do with the fact that, in many cases, those who more involved tend to take more interest in projects and may contribute more to the positive outcomes of those projects. 62% consider themselves to be participating at a high level, with 29% very involved and 33% involved. 38% are involved to a lesser degree, with 17% somewhat involved and 21% not very involved.

Adding the first 3 categories which indicate involvement at some level, the total of responses is 79%. This compares to a national average response of 60%. This indicates a significantly higher level at Wallenpaupack Church than the average church. This level of involvement normally indicates high levels of interest and satisfaction with local ministry and a desire to cooperate with leadership. This is a valuable asset to the local church.

### QUESTION 3: HOW WELL WALLENPAUPACK CHURCH IS MEETING YOUR NEEDS

	Interviews		Online/Written		Overall	
Very well	17	74%	20	69%	37	71%
Well enough	6	26%	8	28%	14	27%
Neutral/no opinion	0	0%	1	3%	1	2%
Not very well	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Not well at all	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 98% highly rated their level of satisfaction, with 71% saying the church is doing very well and 27% saying the church is doing well enough at meeting their needs.

This is an extremely high level of satisfaction, suggesting that there is definitive action on the part of the church to acknowledge and address personal needs and expectations of its members. This is a quality that contributes to the attraction of new members noted earlier.

### QUESTION 4: LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING OF PROJECT INFORMATION

	Interviews		Online/Written		Overall	
Very well	14	61%	17	59%	31	60%
Well enough	6	26%	10	34%	16	31%
Neutral/no opinion	3	13%	0	0%	3	6%
Not very well	0	0%	2	7%	2	4%
Not well at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

This question was asked for the purpose of measuring how well the project information was communicated to the congregation. Information was primarily contained in an 8-page brochure that was designed, then professionally produced.

91% of participants had a satisfactory level of understanding with project information, 60% feeling they very well understood and 31% understanding well enough the project information. This level of response suggests that the project was explained well to most participants.

Participants were also asked to list further questions or requests for more info that they had. Here are those responses along with how many participants said essentially the same thing:

2 - In constructing new space, what would phase one include?

- 2 - The estimated cost of renovations to the existing building seems low.
- 2 - Great brochure!
- 1 - What would the cost of phase one of new construction be? Can better pricing be negotiated?
- 1 - What could the timing of phases look like?

**QUESTION 5: MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS OF A PERMANENT CHURCH HOME**

This question was asked in order to solicit opinions regarding the benefits participants see in having a permanent church facility. Each participant was asked to offer 3 benefits. Responses are listed below:

- 27 - An easier outlet for community outreach, gatherings, events held in-house, more exposure, ability to offer Bible training
- 26 - No set up and tear down and rebuilding the church each week, more time to focus on ministry, more energy for ministry that is now spent on other chores
- 25 - A permanent location, people will know where we are located, consistent headquarters for worship and ministry, a place to call home, pride of ownership, stability
- 23 - It would be inviting to new people, may increase membership, will not lose people because location is not a church, visible to the public
- 19 - Unified space for Wed. Bible studies, student ministries and children's activities through the week; offices, meetings, church meals, concerts, Easter services all under one roof
- 12 - Create the full environment without time and space limitations, not having to relocate when current space is not available, able to make the space our own
- 5 - Could expand children's programs with stable space, expand adult Bible training, offer family seminars and counselling services
- 4 - More time for fellowship
- 4 - Atmosphere, people will be more consistent because there is an actual building
- 3 - More likely to bring friends to a place we call home
- 2 - It will be a beacon of hope to the community
- 1 - More worship programs can be held

**QUESTION 6: WHICH PROJECT OPTION YOU FAVOR MOST**

	Interviews		Online/Written		Overall	
Construction of new space	13	57%	12	41%	25	48%
Purchase of building for sale	10	44%	17	59%	27	52%
Neither option	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

This question was asked in order to learn which project option may be most preferred by study participants. Option 1 involves building new space on land already owned by the church. It is most likely, should this option be selected, that the project would need to be built in phases due to the overall cost. Option 2 involves purchasing an existing building that is for sale, located near the church's land. This building would then require renovations to accommodate church services and activities.

Study participants slightly favor purchasing the existing building that is for sale, by a margin of 52% as compared to 48% favoring new construction. With this close a measure of support between the 2 options, it is likely that other factors will need to be weighed in order to make a decision on moving forward. However, it is clear that participants all favor taking action as no one chose neither option.

Additional comments offered at this question give greater understanding to the options participants selected:

- 5 - Build new if financially feasible
- 4 - Build new, but in phases
- 2 - Pros of buying building for sale outweigh cons, visual appeal not as important as future expansion possibilities
- 2 - Favor new, but okay with either
- 2 - Would like to see the blue prints
- 2 - Favor whichever is quickest and most affordable
- 2 - Existing building is cheaper, a good starter, a foundation to build on
- 2 - People will donate more to a building they can see than a plan that may not happen
- 1 - Don't know how an existing building would feel like home to us
- 1 - Don't want to see the time needed to build a few more seats
- 1 - Easier to add a service or expand existing building than to afford new space

QUESTION 7: 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/Wr	Tot.	Low range	Med. range	High range
Above \$25,000	0	0	0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
\$15,000-\$24,999	0	0	0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
\$10,000-\$14,999	1	0	1	\$ 30,000	\$ 37,500	\$ 45,000
\$8,000-\$9,999	0	0	0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
\$6,000-\$7,999	0	0	0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
\$4,000-\$5,999	2	0	2	\$ 24,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 36,000
\$2,000-\$3,999	3	2	5	\$ 30,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 60,000
\$1,000-\$1,999	5	9	14	\$ 42,000	\$ 63,000	\$ 84,000
Less than \$1000	3	6	9	\$ 0	\$ 13,500	\$ 27,000
Amount/range stated	0	1	1	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
No giving to camp.	0	2	2	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
No response given	2	2				
<b>Cash total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>\$ 131,000</b>	<b>\$ 194,000</b>	<b>\$ 257,000</b>
<b>Est. of other giving*</b>	<b>Group 1</b>			<b>\$ 30,000</b>	<b>\$ 30,000</b>	<b>\$ 30,000</b>
	<b>Group 2</b>		<b>\$ 32,500</b>	<b>\$ 32,500</b>	<b>\$ 32,500</b>	
<b>Overall total</b>				<b>\$ 193,500</b>	<b>\$ 256,500</b>	<b>\$ 319,500</b>

\*Estimate of other giving includes the following, based on consultant's experience:

1. Group 1:

2 participants from whom no response was given plus 9 additional active households within the congregation - anticipate same 89% participation rate as study participants,  $.89 \times 11 = 9.79$ . 10 households, 5 each at the 2 mid-range of the 2 lower categories -  $5 \times (\$500 \times 3) = \$7,500$  and  $5 \times (\$1,500 \times 3) = \$22,500$  for a group total of \$30,000

## 2. Group 2:

About 30-40 additional households connected to the church. Using the conservative estimate of 30 additional connected households, estimate that 50% may participate, 20 at the lowest level and 10 at a one-time giving level of \$250. This would calculate into  $20 \times (\$500 \times 3) = \$30,000$  and  $10 \times \$250 = \$2,500$  for a group total of \$32,500.

3. Not included are donations of labor, professional services, and materials. These items are addressed later. An estimate of some potential savings from these categories was included in Option 2, the purchase of the existing building which would then be renovated.

This question was asked for the purpose of measuring potential contributions should a project be adopted and a capital 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 to which a proposed project may progress.

Of the 36 participating households, 32 offered a response of potential giving to a possible capital campaign. This is a positive response rate of 89%. Of those who indicated no project giving, some offered assurance that they will continue current support of the operating budget and will help with the project as they may become able to do so. Several who did indicate potential giving noted that their ability may eventually exceed their initial estimate for the study.

Responses were measured within the ranges indicated, using the low, medium, and high extents of each range. Figures were also rounded up to even numbers to make estimates even numbers. Estimates of additional giving from other active households and congregational households who are less active were also calculated based on past experience of the consultant. Should a capital campaign move forward, total estimated cash giving may be realized at the low range of \$193,500, the medium range of \$256,500, or the high range of \$319,500. In addition to these amounts are estimated values of services, discounts, or donations of other items which may be utilized in a project.

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 \$256,500. Other significant factors to consider are additional donations of services, discounts, and donations towards any construction, renovations, or outfitting of space, and possible gifts of appreciation from past members of the congregation. It may also be possible to successfully raise some support from the community which has been positively impacted by the church's outreach and ministry.

With all factors taken into consideration, along with relying upon experience, a conservative total estimate of what may be raised in financial support is in the range of \$225,000-\$275,000. It is conceivable that this total could rise somewhat higher if an ambitious fundraising effort is engaged. However, it is the practice of our firm 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.

## QUESTION 8: INTEREST IN CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS A SPECIFIC PROJECT ITEM, HONORARY OR MEMORIALGIVING

This question was posed to participants to learn of interest in making all or part of potential commitments towards a specific project item, or giving in honor or memory of someone. 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 item:

	Interviews		Online/Written		Overall	
Yes	1	5%	0	0%	1	2%
Maybe	4	18%	10	40%	14	30%
No	17	77%	15	60%	32	68%
No response given	1		4		5	

In honor or memory of someone:

	Interviews		Online/Written		Overall	
Yes	0	0%	4	15%	4	8%
Maybe	8	35%	12	44%	20	40%
No	15	65%	11	41%	26	52%
No response given			2		2	

For both options, some interest was expressed by study participants. In the case of donating funds towards a specific project item, 32% of participants expressed positive interest. In the case of giving a gift in honor or memory of someone, positive interest was expressed by 48% of study participants. This is a significant enough indication to include options and suggestions for these types of contributions should a project move forward and a capital campaign be engaged.

#### QUESTION 9: FEELINGS TOWARDS AN ADDITIONAL GIVING PERIOD IF NEEDED

	Interviews		Online/Written		Overall	
Strongly support	7	30%	6	21%	13	25%
Support	9	40%	15	54%	24	47%
Neutral	7	30%	5	18%	12	24%
Oppose	0	0%	2	7%	2	4%
Strongly oppose	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
No response given			1		1	

This question was asked for the purpose of measuring participants' feelings towards the possibility of a second commitment period of up to 3 years if the campaign goal is not met as a result of the initial 3-year commitment period. This measurement, though premature in nature, can supply some indication of a willingness to accept this option if church leaders determine its necessity in overall project planning.

A majority of participants (72%) feel favorably towards a second giving period at this point in time, should it be determined that it would be needed. Only 4% are opposed to the idea. The other 24% are neutral at this time, citing too many variables to guide their feelings one way or the other.

This level of positive response at this time suggests that the congregation would probably be favorable towards a second commitment period should project circumstances require it. Such a period could be needed for initial funding or mortgage pay down so that any payment initiated would then fit into the church's operating budget.

## QUESTION 10: VOLUNTEER LABOR, LICENSES, DONATION OF 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 church leaders.

- 3 - Plumbing
- 2 - Framing
- 2 - Excavation
- 1 - Trim work
- 1 - Cabinetry
- 9 - Painting
- 3 - Drywall
- 1 - Sand and spackle
- 6 - General remodeling and construction
- 3 - General volunteer help
- 3 - Electrical
- 1 - Construction management
- 2 - Carpentry
- 1 - Civil site work
- 1 - Insulation
- 1 - Landscaping
- 1 - Lay tile
- 1 - Crafts, decorating
- 1 - Civil engineering
  
- 3 - Various professional licenses

Possible donations of:

Materials - architectural hardware, light fixtures, others willing to help seek donations

Services - Excavation, site work, project oversight, hands on remodeling, assist engineering firm with site plan to ensure it reflects church's interests, time from a painting contractor

## QUESTION 11: ANY FURTHER COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, IDEAS, OR CONCERNS

This question was meant to offer participants a final opportunity to comment on any aspect of the proposed project or a possible capital campaign. This includes comments, suggestions, ideas, or any concerns. Those of a similar nature were combined. The number of those offering similar comments is recorded.

- 5 - Consider modular or metal building construction to reduce costs
- 3 - Our land is a better site, that's the land God gave us
- 3 - Would like to be in there now, it is draining to set up every week
- 3 - A lot of turnover has occurred due to volunteer burn out
- 3 - If purchasing the existing building, we need to buy it outright, free and clear
- 3 - The building for sale needs to be more visible, cut down some trees or add good signage
- 2 - Have "FUN" fundraising events
- 2 - Support building new because renovation projects can run into unknown issues which raise the cost and end up near the cost of building new

- 2 - Cannot increase giving now but will when we can
- 2 - People in the community are familiar with the church's land and are expecting a building There
- 2 - Support a mortgage following a campaign that is affordable as determined by the church Treasurer
- 2 - Meeting in the school only offers one day per week availability
- 2 - Look at considering community dinners to gain support, offering holiday meals or a soup kitchen may encourage others to support the cause
- 1 - I feel strongly Pastor Ken will guide us to make the right decisions. Have total faith and confidence in this honorable man and our church members are blessed by having him as our Pastor.
- 1 - I'm very satisfied with this proposal.
- 1 - I would need to make my contribution in monthly payments
- 1 - Reach beyond the congregation - to Habitat, Congressional reps., fundraising in the area, OUR TOWN free paper
- 1 - Not yet a member but considering it
- 1 - Buying the building and renovating it is so much less, it does NOT have to be perfect, it's a GREAT start and the church can occupy it faster
- 1 - If we buy the building for sale be careful not to damage the heat in the floor when renovating
- 1 - New construction must be finished in a certain period of time which may limit how much work volunteers may do
- 1 - Building for sale has more usable land than site we own
- 1 - Hope to give more than estimated
- 1 - Like using our property but that may take much longer to be in a building, more volunteers may burn out waiting
- 1 - Rent out church space to generate income, for child care or preschool, events, receptions, craft classes, farmers market days with use of our commercial kitchen
- 1 - Without a building, the church is not taken as seriously
- 1 - New construction would be ideal but am concerned that costs will rise faster than money can be raised
- 1 - Would be nice to thank or honor workers once or twice a year to hold onto them
- 1 - Sweat equity promotes ownership and that matters
- 1 - All the current volunteerism that is needed to set up, etc., has us focused more inward in order to get things done than outward to minister
- 1 - Let's do this!
- 1 - Nice to have a brand new building but may not be financially possible, existing building could also be done in steps after we are already using it for services
- 1 - Pastor could put great messages on a new church sign

### **III. Observations, Conclusions, Recommendations**

#### **OBSERVATIONS**

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

1. Wallenpaupack Church is a warm and welcoming congregation. 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 children's area. All of this precedes the actual service which begins with a personable welcome, announcement highlights, then upbeat relevant worship. An enthusiastic message follows along with time to worship through giving and celebrating communion. All of this is efficiently fit into about an hour and fifteen minutes.

2. The church meets at Wallenpaupack North Intermediate School which well accommodates Sunday morning activities. Drawbacks include the weekly need to completely set up and tear down all structure needed to perform ministry. This requires volunteers to arrive an hour or more prior to services and to remain about an hour following services to unpack and pack supplies, set up and take down chairs, etc. I heard no complaints during my several visits but can imagine the weariness of this routine and its tendency to sink in over time. This has been the practice of the church for most of its history.
3. The church is led by a very capable Pastor who leads worship as well as handles the preaching duties. The Church Board includes dedicated members who are involved and interested in the present and future course of the congregation. Many other volunteers contribute time and talents which make the ministry exciting and effective. It is apparent during greeting time in the service that members have established friendships within the congregation and are truly glad to see each other. Guests are treated with similar warmth.
4. While the church has much to offer, there are some definite limitations to doing so. It would seem as though not having a home base from which to carry on and extend ministry is a primary limiting factor. Along with the lack of such space is the need to spend much volunteer energy with set up and tear down logistics which minimizes time and energy for ministry during that same key Sunday timeframe. Though members may not verbalize these issues on Sundays, they are willing to acknowledge them in confidence. Some of their former members and friends have departed after feeling burned out from these circumstance. It feels to many that a solution to the need for a permanent home should be found sooner than later.
5. A good representation of the congregation took part in the Feasibility Study. Those who did so gave careful consideration to the options and other questions posed. Much thoughtful insight was gathered which will be helpful in determining the best course to follow in moving forward. People are ready to take action and support a project with their time, talents, and financial support.

## 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 consideration of two current options for a permanent church home. In order to make the study results viable, a participation goal of at least half the active church households was established. Approximately 45 active households are part of the congregation, so 23 participating households was set as the goal. A total of 36 households, including 52 individuals, participated, accounting for 80% of the active households, well exceeding the established goal. Of these 36 households, 14, including 23 individuals, participated in confidential interviews with the consultant. 22 households, including 29 individuals, participated by online or paper questionnaires. This level of participation underscores the amount of interest in the project and cooperation from the congregation.

2. Demographics for study participants revealed about twice as many new members as are in each of the other categories; 40% attending for 2 years or less, with 19% 3-5 years, 19% 6-9 years, and 21% 10 years or more. This pattern shows the church's strong ability to attract new people, a somewhat rare quality in today's culture. Conversely, there is a bit of weakness in the area of retention. Several factors may be responsible for this issue including lack of a sense of stability from not having a church home. A majority of participants (79%) see themselves as being involved in church activities, and most (98%) feel well cared for by the church.
3. 91% felt they were given a sufficient amount of information concerning project proposals. This suggests that the committee did an adequate job in presenting the project to the congregation.
4. Top five benefits of having a permanent church home were seen to be:
  - (1) An easier outlet for community outreach
  - (2) No set up and tear down each week
  - (3) A permanent location to call home
  - (4) More inviting to new people which may increase membership
  - (5) Unified space for activities through the week

Participants did not struggle to identify meaningful benefits of having a permanent church home.

5. Choosing which option to pursue was almost evenly divided as 48% chose new construction in phases on the land the church owns, while 52% chose buying the existing building and renovating it. Pros and cons are recognized for each option. Costs and financial feasibility are major factors. So is the timing of which option may be realized sooner.
6. Potential giving to a project was measured at low, mid, and high ranges of estimates indicated by study participants. Estimates from the remainder of the congregation, both active and less active household, were also factored in. These estimates were based on experience of the consultant guiding the study. Overall totals of what may be realized in a 3-year capital campaign were a low range of \$193,500, a mid range of \$256,500, and a high range of \$319,500. Weighing a number of factors together, a reasonable campaign goal of \$225,000-\$275,000 may be expected. This figure should carry a minimum of downside risk with more potential on the upside. This is a figure that may be used for project planning.
7. A majority (72%) favor a second campaign giving period at this point if such a period would be needed. One third have interest in project giving for specific items and about one half have interest in honorary or memorial giving. These options should be included if a capital campaign is engaged.
8. Volunteer labor exists in 19 different categories. Several members possess professional licenses which may be helpful. And several may have access to donations of building materials or services in kind to assist with a project.
9. 33 additional comments were offered. All are listed. Most reiterate opinions stated earlier in the study. All are pointing forward to action being 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 a church home is apparent. People are willing to help and contribute in a sacrificial way. Two good options are available. Evaluating details should reveal a direction.

## 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, we recommend the report be shared with the congregation. This can be done by distributing the Summary portion of the full report during a 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 can be produced for those who may not have internet access. This step will maintain an ongoing sense of open communication throughout the process.
2. The first matter determined by the study was whether or not the congregation is ready to move forward to attain a permanent church home. Since 100% of participants chose either Option 1 or Option 2, and no one chose neither option, it is apparent that the congregation is ready to move forward. Based on this result, it is recommended that a plan of action be initiated.
3. Choosing which option to pursue requires an analysis of additional study data. Option 1 involves building new space in phases on land the church already owns. Cost of the finished project is estimated at \$2.4 million, while a phase 1 portion may be estimated to be at least \$1.2 million. The asking price of the existing building is \$565,000 plus an estimated \$100,000 for renovations, provided the congregation supplies sweat equity to accomplish most renovations. Otherwise, another \$50,000-\$75,000 would be added to pay labor for those renovations.

The study determined that a feasible campaign goal for a 3-year capital campaign would be \$225,000-\$275,000. The church has about \$30,000-\$40,000 in reserves for a project. This would indicate an estimated total of \$255,000-\$315,000 for a project. Option 1 will likely require about 50% cash in hand before financing for the balance could be secured. At current fundraising projections, this would require 2 consecutive 3-year giving periods before construction on phase 1 of Option 1 could proceed. Following construction, it would seem likely that additional giving periods would be required to pay down the mortgage balance to a point where the operational budget or church growth could absorb the balance. Should Option 2 be considered, the sale of church land could also be factored in, bringing the potential total of funds available to a range of \$355,000-\$415,000. This would suggest that financing may be available much sooner in the process so that the church may be able to pursue the purchase of the existing building in the very near future. Depending on the final costs of purchase and renovations, a second giving period may be required to pay down a mortgage balance to the point that the operational budget can cover it, or to pay off the balance completely.

From a purely financial standpoint, purchasing and renovating the existing building makes more sense. We recommend purchase of the existing building. If circumstances would prevent this option, pursuit of a similar option would also be advisable.

4. Another factor to consider in choosing a project option is timing. Throughout the study, it was mentioned often that volunteers have experienced a weariness in the need to "assemble and

disassemble church" each week. It is known that some faithful members have burned out and departed. While new construction offers some definite advantages, it will still be a number of years of fundraising before pursuit of that option can be engaged. Buying and renovating an existing building could happen much more quickly.

In consideration of the life and well being of the congregation, we would recommend pursuing the option that can be attained more quickly, that being the purchase and renovation of the existing building.

5. Other factors that contribute to our recommendation to buy and renovate the existing building:
  - A. The congregation has skilled volunteers willing to assist with renovations
  - B. The property for sale has more usable land for future expansion than the site that is owned by the church
  - C. Parking area already exists at the existing building
6. Should any circumstances prevent the pursuit of Option 2, we would recommend a comprehensive search for a similar property that can be purchased and renovated to suit the church's needs. Of a last resort, the church may investigate optional construction methods and costs relating to building on the land that is owned. It may be possible to lower construction costs by using options such as a steel building or modular construction. Though it is likely that costs would still be higher than purchase and renovation of an existing building, a lower cost option of new construction, if available, could narrow the time frame of getting into a building.
7. Since forward progress is indicated, we recommend that a capital campaign is initiated as soon as possible. Whichever option is ultimately adopted, the sooner funds are in hand the better.
8. We recommend that a plan of action be clearly established in order to consult with a local bank. The bank should be able to clarify what parameters would need to be satisfied in order to proceed. The bank can provide details necessary to establish timing for moving ahead with any offer to purchase or initiation of building plans.
9. Should a capital campaign proceed, we recommend that professional guidance be obtained to direct the effort. 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.
10. With an assumption of forward motion, following the receiving of commitments, cash flow can be determined based on how households decide to make their contributions. In short order, the full extent project support may then be determined.
11. Kirby-Smith is familiar with the project, the community, and all data gathered. We are prepared to guide Wallenpaupack Church through a capital campaign process. While there may be some concern over the cost of 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. Summary**

Pastor Ken and the Feasibility Study Committee are to be thanked for their time, efforts, and prayers in preparing Wallenpaupack Church for this very important step. The presentation of options for a permanent church home was placed before the congregation for their consideration, review, and evaluation.

A participation goal of at least half the active households of the congregation was set, being 23 of 45 active households. A participation of at least half the number of active households strongly validates study results. A total of 36 households, including 52 individuals, took part in the study, for an 80% response rate. This 80% level of participation included 23 people from 14 households who engaged in confidential interviews to discuss their responses, and 29 people from 22 households who responded online or by returning paper questionnaires.

Demographically, 40% of participants have been attending the church for 2 years or less, 19% 3-5 years, 19% 6-9 years, and 21% 10 years or more. 79% consider themselves involved in

church activities at some level and 98% consider themselves cared for by the church. A sufficient amount of information concerning the proposed projects was received by 91% of participants. The top 5 benefits of a permanent church home were judged to be:

1. An easier outlet for community outreach
2. No set up and tear down each week
3. A permanent location to call home
4. More inviting to new people which may increase membership
5. Unified space for activities through the week

Choosing which option to pursue was almost evenly divided with 48% choosing new construction on land owned by the church, and 52% choosing to buy and renovate the existing building for sale.

Potential giving to a capital campaign was measured with 89% of participants offering an estimate. Since the mid-range estimate is usually closest to what is realized in a campaign, that amount of \$256,500 was used to calculate a campaign goal. Estimates of what may be added from the remainder of the congregation were factored in to reach a conservative campaign goal in a range of \$225,000-\$275,000 over a 3-year period. Should it be needed, 72% currently favor a second campaign giving period. Sufficient interest exists in giving to specific project items or in giving in honor or memory. These options should be included if a campaign is engaged.

Volunteer labor in 19 categories exists to assist with renovations. Several members possess helpful professional licenses and others have some leads to the possible donation of materials and construction services.

All comments made throughout the study are listed in the full report. Those of a similar nature are combined. Final comments primarily reiterate positions taken throughout the study. The extent of comments rehearse reasoning for various positions, add ideas to consider, or reiterate the need to move forward.

Based on study results, recommendations include:

1. Study results should be shared with the congregation.
2. 100% of participants indicated interest in moving forward so a plan of action should be initiated.
3. From a financial standpoint, a new building would probably require two 3-year giving periods before construction could be considered while purchasing the existing building may be possible in the near future. Financially, purchasing the existing building is more feasible.
4. Considering the congregation's sense that a permanent church home is needed sooner than later, it would be possible to settle in the existing building much sooner than to accomplish new construction.
5. Other factors which lean towards the purchase of the existing building include: the congregation has skilled volunteers willing to assist with renovations, and the existing building has more usable land for future expansion than the site owned by the church.
6. If the sale of the current existing building would become prohibitive for any reason, another similar facility may be sought. As a last resort, less costly construction methods on the church's site could be investigated and considered.
7. A capital campaign should be engaged as soon as possible as it will be beneficial to gather cash in hand for whatever the final project decision will be.
8. A clear plan should be discussed with a local bank to establish necessary

requirements.

9. Professional guidance for a capital campaign will be beneficial. The campaign should be conducted in a comprehensive manner to include all possible sources of project support.

10. Once a campaign is conducted, cash flow can be determined and project timing may be calculated.

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!

## **V. Thank you**

It is with great appreciation that we thank you for allowing Kirby-Smith Associates, and Jeffrey Knauer, EVP, to assist with this Feasibility Study.

A special note of thanks is extended to Pastor Ken, Jackie, and members of the Board and Feasibility Study Committee for their time, hard work, considerations and prayers to make this study a success. And thank you to all those who took the time to participate through personal interviews, paper and online completion of the questionnaires,

Should a decision to proceed be made, Kirby-Smith Associates would be honored to conduct a Capital Funds Campaign for Wallenpaupack Church. We will work with you, exerting the same diligence and care to design and conduct a campaign that will achieve the highest level of your potential. Advantages to professional guidance include presenting many options for giving, including "Creative Ways to Give", and assisting with making sure all households you identify are contacted. Ministries guided through capital campaigns consistently raise more funds and experience fewer problems with the process than those who attempt a major fundraiser by themselves.

Again, thank you very much. It has been a distinct pleasure to serve you. We will join you in prayer for the success of your journey. God bless you.