

Our Vision

Staying Together means that we are moving together. It is no longer acceptable for our growth to be restricted by a building. Certainly no one should be so wedded to a building that they would rather stay here and slow the growth of Christ's Church. Yes, there are memories here. Weddings, baptisms, gospel meetings, and fellowship. Yet, it is better to have a facility that promotes a growing church.

Staying Together means we leave the "glass ceiling" of 340 members behind.

We have purchased a **22-acre** tract one mile south of **Exit 26**. The property also has roughly **1,100 feet of frontage** with Cumberland Trace Rd. Concerning visibility, a future facility would have at least **½ mile of visibility from I-65**.

With this tract of land, our congregation can have a new home with the **seating and parking area we need to grow**. In the future, we are also planning a small community of bungalow-style homes **for our older members** and widows, should it benefit them to utilize such an option. We envision an area **for our congregation's children** to play outside - which we cannot do in our current location. We also like this location because it generally maintains the same convenience of our current location for most of our members.

What does future development in the area look like? Currently the 256 acres that almost surround the property are planned for 330 single-family homes, 120 multi-family units, and an additional 20-acre campus for the new (relocated) Cumberland Trace Elementary School.

The project must be the Lord's in every way.

It will require:

- *Our time and our money*
- *Commitment to bring aid to the lost*
- *Open discussion, cooperation, the courage to set some deadlines*
- *Accessing the wisdom and skill of others beyond ourselves*
- *Great vision, much prayer, the involvement of the whole congregation*
- *Some changes to our existing culture, and consistently excellent communication.*



Expansion/Relocation Summary

Foundational Values of our Church Family:

- Sound Preaching from the Pulpit
- Scriptural Teaching in the Classrooms
- Maintaining Peace in the Family
- Emphasizing Prayer
- Sharing Love and Hospitality

What Leaders Do :

- Keep focused on job #1 and don't get distracted
- Know when to stop wasting time and move on
- Take the team into the future - otherwise we'd call them historians
- Set and accomplish goals

Relevant Considerations

Warren County vs. Lehman Avenue

- The population estimate for Warren County as of July 2017 is 128,845. This represents an increase of 15,000 persons since 2010. That's an increase of 57,000 people since the 1980's.
- Lehman Avenue's population (membership) since the 1980s has been capped at about 340 persons.
- "Why do we stay capped at 340?"

Restrictions to Growth:

- An auditorium capacity of 400 - with an 80 to 85% practical use of 320-340 persons
- A parking lot that really cannot support an attendance greater than 300 persons

Possible Building Solutions

1. Expanding the Auditorium:

- Add a balcony? No. An engineering study was performed in the last ten years to see if this could be an option. The existing structure cannot support a balcony.
- Add a wing toward Eastwood? No. The building is already too close to the street right-of-way and neighborhood setback requirements, but is allowed because it predates current codes. Note: This is also true of our church sign. In any case, we cannot build on the grass.
- Lengthen the auditorium by expanding behind baptistery? No. It would be very expensive due to re-location of all of the HVAC equipment and incoming electric service. More importantly, it would cost us parking spaces.

2. Parking:

- Pave Over the Parsonage? No. Due to local "green space" codes, if we demolish the parsonage, the only usable parking we obtain is the equivalent area equal to the "footprint" of the house (about 2,400 sq. ft. which is no more than 13 parking spaces). We need 50-60 more spaces, so this solution is not sufficient.
- Loss of visitors. **We routinely observe people enter our parking lot to attend services only to leave because they cannot find a parking space.**
- Borrowed parking. We are currently allowed to utilize parking at nearby commercial locations. If we were deprived of this option, we would really be in a mess. Greater than 30 cars are parked "off property" every Sunday morning.

Split & Stay vs. Staying Together

"Split & Stay" is simply to do again what was done to create the Alvaton congregation. Some members would leave and start a new work, the rest would stay at Lehman and rebuild. It IS less expensive to take this course, but there are other costs:

1. The "demographic" that left Lehman (when Alvaton was formed) consisted mainly of couples aged 30-50 and their children. It was an excellent way to start a new congregation because visitors/potential members often find young families with children to be very attractive. The problem is that this instantly turned Lehman Avenue into a "grey-ing" congregation. It would take many years to rebuild this age group. Some congregations don't ever recover from the loss of the 30-50 year old segment.

2. When it came time for new elders to be appointed 5-10 years later, and beyond, the men who would have most likely become elders here, were not at Lehman - they were now at Alvaton. And the pool of qualified men to be elders at Lehman (who were > 50 yrs old) was very slim and most that were asked to serve were unwilling to serve.
3. #1 and #2 combined to create a situation at Lehman wherein men were qualified to be elders, but were needed for service at an age that some would deem "too young." John Gott became an elder at 41, and Darrell Dubree at 40. This also created a 25+ year "age gap" between older and younger elders. Though these challenges were successfully dealt with, this situation was not optimal and should not exist for a congregation of 340 members.
4. Finally, there are some things to be done in the Lord's church that take larger memberships to accomplish. If Lehman were to "Split & Stay," those opportunities would be lost for many years.

Staying Together is the path we are choosing. We have exceptional unity and kindness within this congregation. We have a wonderful balance of age and youth that other congregations would envy. We have many talents untapped. We have the desire to grow, seeking and saving the lost of this community. We believe that, for all Lehman has done in the past, Lehman can realize its greatest potential for the Lord here, in Bowling Green, where the fields are most ripe for the harvest - perhaps more than any other location in Kentucky.