The Hill Topper

SPECIAL EDITION ISSUE



Volume I, Issue 136

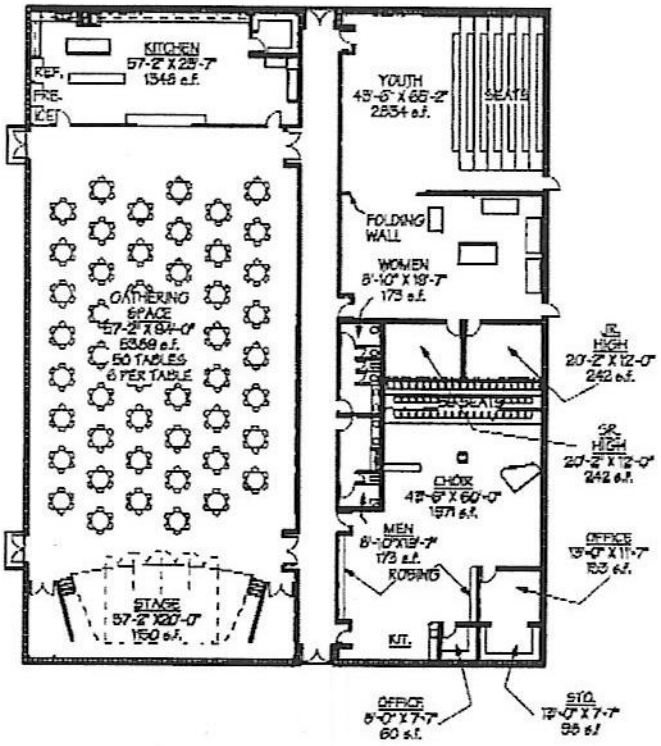
Richmond Hill United Methodist Church **Richmond Hill, Georgia** **August 16, 2006**

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

Welcome to this special edition of The Hill Topper. From your Building Committee There is an important concern that needs special attention by the entire congregation of our church. The physical facilities of our church needs prayerful consideration and actual improvements. The renovation work on some of the older parts of our facility is underway, and those projects are proceeding on a schedule which anticipates a completion date prior to year's end. The funding for this renovation work is approaching its goal now; it is expected that when the renovation work is completed, all associated bills will be paid, which means that no new church debt will be incurred.

The Building Committee now places before you its ideas for a new space; the Building Committee analyzes and identifies by a variety of means the needs for new physical space to accommodate current and future ministries of the church; the Building Committee prepares possible plans to meet those needs in consultation with all interested parties so that the space will be proper and constructed at a price that is acceptable to the congregation.

Continued on page 2



Connected To Fellowship / Sunday School Building

Extra! Extra! continued
Then these plans are submitted to the church's Administrative Board for refinement and approval. Eventually the plans must receive Church Conference and Savannah District approval.

In a nut shell, the Building Committee plans; the church's total governance structure from the local church through the larger church approves; and the congregation pays for the new construction.

It is important for the entire congregation to understand the various roles that must be performed. The role of the Building Committee is to plan new construction for the future. The group must make some tough choices. Everybody will not get everything that he or she wants when new construction is planned. Some areas simply won't be as spacious as the intended ministries desire, and some ministries will have to wait for the next round of building to occur in the future. Most of this disappointment is cost-related. If building materials and labor were free then the Building Committee's job would be so much easier.

HOW BIG AND HOW MUCH IS IT GOING TO COST?

The size and costs of any project are two factors which cannot be separated. The Building Committee is looking at about 15,000 square feet with parking and drainage at about a two million dollar cost. Based on past experience, we believe that this church can accomplish this task in a reasonable time period. We should be able to complete the planning and approval process with its associated Capital Funds Drive early in the year 2007, complete construction within a year, and pay off the accrued debt over the next several years. As a congregation of over 1200 members with about 400 giving units, we believe this is a reasonable expectation.

It will, of course, require response from each of us. Obviously, we can not all give equal gifts. Such should not be our goal. Instead our giving goal is more clearly stated with the phrase, "Not equal, but sacrificial giving." This goal would apply to us all equally.

SO – WHAT IS THE BUILDING COMMITTEE UP TO NOW?

You will find in the Narthex of the church, and on page 1, a line drawing of possible new construction. I encourage the reader not think of this drawing as a plan but rather as an idea stimulator. The exact shape of the footprint of the building is not finalized; the size and arrangement of the rooms are not set; the location of the new construction is tentative; even the features of an individual space are yet to be finalized. We, the Building Committee, need your help. Many things are yet to be finalized, while some things are pretty well established.

First, some things that are pretty well set are the primary functions to be accommodated on this round of new construction. Youth ministries, music ministries, and a gathering center that seats about 300 are agreed upon at this time as the priorities for this round of construction. There are other pressing needs, but we will have to find alternative routes to accommodate them until the church can afford to move in those directions. Once this new construction is completed, then some of the vacated space can be utilized to alleviate some of the pressings needs in other ministries until a better solution is found.

The Building Committee proposes that the new construction be added as a new building behind the Fellowship / Sunday School Building. This is the location that was originally proposed, later changed to accommodate some mold and mildew fears, now going back to the original site (now that renovation is alleviating the mold and mildew problem). We propose that it be a separate building connected by an open air cover. This would solve a lot of code problems that would have to be dealt with if it were directly connected onto an older building.

What do you think? The Building Committee wants every member of our congregation to be a part of this project from the beginning. Your ideas are important, but we won't know what they are unless you communicate with us. We want each and every one of you to feel a sense of ownership, and the best way to do that is to get involved.

YOUTH MINISTRIES, MUSIC MINISTRIES, AND A GATHERING CENTER

Why these three and not some other ministries accommodated at this time? The answer is both simple and complicated. It is simple in that these three ministries have "stood the test time." Over the past decade there have been numerous surveys, listening sessions, committee meetings, at which this list has been discussed at length. In this special edition of The Hill Topper, you will find elsewhere additional information about these ministries. I encourage each and every one of our membership to talk to other members, and quickly they will learn why these three are the survivors of a long and arduous process.

The simple answer is easy and straightforward, but what about the complicated one? The complicated answer is most easily understood in terms of costs. Nobody wants to make a ministry wait for new construction or renovation to occur, but sometimes circum-

MINISTRIES continued
stances dictate that course of action. It doesn't mean that some other ministry is unimportant, or not necessary, or not meaningful, or anything else at this point in time. A new or an enlarged Sanctuary is important; our children's ministry is crying (no pun intended) for additional space; and the list goes on. Certainly these ministries will be addressed in the immediate future. When the current Fellowship Building is vacated, then that frees a logical area to expand our Children's Ministries space – something to consider. When the Gathering Center is built, it will accommodate all for which it is intended, but it will also provide a location for Sunday worship services while a possible Sanctuary enlargement project is underway – something to consider.

The establishment of the list to be included in this project for new construction has perhaps taken more time and more effort than any other topic addressed by the Building Committee, but what do you think? Go to the feedback section and express your opinions and ideas

Todd's Music Ministries Thoughts

When asked to contribute my thoughts on how the Music Ministries of this congregation might use new space my initial response was something akin to "where do I start"?

Our own needs can be highlighted by what we've been using. The Children's Choir now rehearses in the choir loft, not the best environment. Seating and lighting is poor; the children navigate several layers of doors and dark steps to gain access to the loft. Once there we struggle with contact as the children are elevated from the leaders by the chancel setup. If we had proper seating and floor space available we could better monitor musical and behavioral progress. All of the above can be said for our Youth and Chancel Choir rehearsals for we must use the choir loft as well.
Our Handbell Choirs currently rehearse in the Fisherman's Sunday School room. This setup is difficult for many logistical reasons. The bells themselves are currently stored in a lockable room up a flight of stairs and down the hall from the rehearsal space. The bell tables and other accoutrements are stored in the locked room and in a hall air conditioning closet. Having space to leave this setup in one room and permanently would be much more efficient and would add to the life of the equipment by not having to setup-takedown-setup-takedown etc.

In a pure morale (not moral) sense, having a place to nest and nurture our Music Ministry ensembles will only help them expand and mature. I firmly believe that if you walk into a room and it looks like a rehearsal should begin then a rehearsal *will* begin. We face enough distractions daily, attending a handbell or choral rehearsal in insufficient space should not be one of them.
I continually preach to those I work with that we not only make music to praise and glorify but we act as worship leaders when we take our efforts to the congregation and to God. I

Continued

Todd's Thought's continued
would like for you to think of the church's music ministry in terms of its short-term and long-term gifts to our members. The short-term, immediate gift requires the in- vestment in a practical environment for music – rehearsal space, instruments, furniture, lighting, storage, and all the other assets needed to provide a house in which music can thrive. The long-term gift is the understanding that listening to and performing music enriches life forever. Children who receive music instruction in their early years enjoy it as adults. Life is about more than learning basic academic and employment skills; the music ministry adds a layer of enrichment for our children and families. If new space can aid in any of this then doesn't the gain exceed the sacrifice?

Kristin View's

What an exciting opportunity we have that sits before us!! If you were present in May I spoke to our congregation about how it is a privilege to build a building unto the Lord (1Kings 5, 2Chronciles 6 & 7) and now we sit here with the opportunity and blessing to build a <u>new</u> building unto the Lord!! My heart gets excited when I think of the incredible opportunities that sit before us if the Lord graced us with the opportunity to build this new building.

So the question is what would we use this new building for? We as the Youth would know and understand that this is a gift from Him. It would be a place we would come to Encounter Him. A place we would come to seek Him in prayer, worship, small groups, fellowship and community. A place to call home. A place of refuge. A place to come to when things aren't okay at home. A safe place to hang out off of the streets. A place that our Youth Group would become unified in our Jesus.

The Youth Group right now meets on Sunday and Wednesday nights along with small groups that meet during the week. The Youth have been so patient without a lot of complaining when they get pushed around and have to make do with what has been given them. On Sunday nights we meet in the Gill Fellowship Hall and the Sanctuary which are not ideal places to have a youth group. We are always having to move things around in the Gill and the Sanctuary is way to big as we are always trying to create that intimate environment that is needed for worship. Wednesday nights we meet in the 10th grade Sunday school room and small groups meet through out the Sunday school wings. There is no place the Youth can call home. There is no storage area and there is not a proper place for our worship team and their equipment.

These are just to name a few but I do not want to concentrate on the negative. Instead I want to concentrate on what the future holds for this youth group. Our desire is to create a home. An environment that would be welcoming to the youth in our community. The desire is not for a youth group that only meets during scheduled hours, but a place the youth can come to during the week after school. I'm looking forward to this new chapter that the Lord has for us as a Youth Group here at RHUMC and I'm excited for your partnership in the lives of our young people.

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"FISH OR CUT BAIT"

Churches simply come to times like this. Where I came from it was put this way, "Are you going to fish or keep on cutting bait?" Sometimes God brings us to moments when the talking needs to cease to be replaced by action. After years of talking, we have come to such a time. The community is exploding with growth and it is time for us to respond to the exploding opportunity for ministry.

This special edition is about that opportunity. As it is read, we will see a plan for future expansion which is still quite flexible; yet, specific enough to enable us to see how those plans will benefit the work Christ entrusts to us. What is being proposed will provide much needed space to move forward with stronger ministries to children, youth, and Senior Adults as well as strengthen our growing music ministry. The Gathering Place will provide room for all ages to come together for fellowship as a church family. And at the same time it will provide room for our children and youth to stretch their legs and their imaginations. The time is right. God is calling us forward into His future and; therefore, we can move with confidence that He will provide what is needed to accomplish the vision He has given to us. I pray you will share with me in the excitement of this season of great opportunity. —Bill

THE FEEDBACK SECTION

The Building Committee members request feedback in any and all forms. In the Narthex of our church, and on page 1, you will find a very basic line drawing of proposed new construction. Do not think of this drawing as a "plan." Instead, think of it as something to encourage thinking. You will find a page of questions that you might want to answer to provide input. Also, there is a lot of room for comments to encourage you to give the committee details of your ideas. It is far better for us to know your thoughts now rather than later. Put the completed response sheet in the collection plate; or mail it in; or hand it to someone who will submit it for you. If it is inconvenient for you to pick up a sheet from the Narthex, then call the church office (756-2190), and one will be mailed to you. You can return it at your convenience to the church office to the attention of the Building Committee. Explore the RHUMC website, www.rhumc.com, to read the special edition of the Hill Topper and to respond to the request for feed back.

Respectfully Yours,

John Brewer, Chairman, Building Committee