

September 16, 2024

Dear Canton First Family and Friends,

As we look back through the last two and a half years, Canton First Methodist has faced many challenges with grace and with a unified spirit. With God's guidance, we have made decisions about our affiliation, undertaken a significant refresh of our building and signage program, replaced and upgraded an aging playground, and expanded our local missions – all the time growing in faith, growing in numbers, and growing in love for our community.

Once again, we have reached a defining point. Perhaps you have noticed: God has answered our prayers for more young families and young people to join us. Two years ago, our church set a strategic goal to attract 100 new young families to our church in the next five years. We are seeing God moving and working as we serve together to fulfill the Vision that He has called us to at Canton First Methodist. We are blessed to have children and youth attending worship, Sunday school, preschool, and youth activities. Our halls are filled with their enthusiasm and laughter as they gather in fellowship, grow in the faith, serve, and worship.

While our beautiful sanctuary still fills our needs on Sunday, we are reaching our limits in space for Sunday school classes for all ages. During the week, we use almost every classroom for church and community activities and events. As a congregation with a proud history of more than 182 years in the Canton community, we pledged to pay forward the faith that those before us passed down to us, and now is the time to answer the challenge.

The Governing Board has been aware of the growing needs and earlier this year authorized a Building Expansion Task Force team (Building Expansion TF) to study the issue and make recommendations. Members of the Task Force Team include Bob Hulsey, Susan Dreschel, Will Thacker, Mike McCord, James Cannon, Julie Little and Pastor Kenny Ott.

Working with the Trustees, the Building Expansion TF quickly determined that it is time to expand. The Building Expansion TF consulted with the architect who designed and supervised the construction of the sanctuary, Mr. Gene Barrington. He recommended that we construct a new addition that would connect with the back of the Fellowship Hall. We would preserve the current drive around and may even be able to add parking spaces by pushing the current drive and parking area back onto land we already own to accommodate the new addition. After study and discussion, the Building Expansion TF decided a new two-story, 10,000 square-foot building addition, along with remodeling the

current classroom and office space would create enough space to accommodate our needs for years to come. We will literally be **Making Room** for future generations. The preliminary plan is for construction to begin in August 2025 with a target of completion in 2027.

We voted to engage Mr. Barrington to design and supervise the construction of the addition, as well as the necessary remodeling. Of course, this will require us to raise the money to pay for the additional space. Our church has never failed to meet the challenge of providing the means to accomplish God's work, and we know this time will be no different.

Our next letter will give you the financial prospectus and outline the capital campaign. As always, feel free to contact us with any questions.

May God bless and keep you,

Bob Hulsey, Governing Board Chair
Dave Sullivan, Lay Leader

cc: Dr. Kenny Ott, Lead Pastor