



OuterEdge FAQs



Why would we purchase a building?

Four years ago, Emmaus Road Church (ERC) took the step of electing Elders and calling a Pastor. This is a huge accomplishment for a church plant: it communicated we were financially self-sustaining, had gathered a solid core of people, and are successfully training and equipping leaders. One of the Elders' first steps was to discern from the Lord and the congregation where ERC was headed. In that discernment, we came up with a few concrete goals: to plant a church in Oshkosh, to intentionally disciple every person in our church, to train and equip leaders (specifically in the formation of a diaconate), and to establish a more permanent presence in our community. By God's grace we have planted a church in Oshkosh, formed a Deacon Team, and are continuously striving to disciple every person at ERC. The one goal that still remains is to establish a more permanent presence in Appleton. We still believe this is an important goal in order for ERC to carry out our mission of "reconciling what is broken in our world." Through prayer, diligent searching, and robust discussion we believe God is leading us to a permanent place.

Why would we purchase the OuterEdge?

In order to move toward reaching our goal of establishing a more permanent Gospel presence in Appleton, we formed a New Location Team (NLT) two years ago. Over these past two years, the NLT has looked extensively for places to rent long-term, lease, and/or buy throughout the Fox Valley. The NLT has taken suggestions from the church, toured multiple buildings, met with contractors to see if certain buildings would work, and hired a commercial real estate agent. They have taken a serious look at 40+ locations that could possibly fit our criteria. In this very proactive search, not one building has come close to fitting our criteria and needs as well as the OuterEdge.

How do we feel about owning a building that is 100 years old?

We have taken the concerns related to purchasing an older building very seriously. We have had three different professionals thoroughly examine the OuterEdge: a professional commercial appraiser, a church remodeling contractor, and a professional inspector. Each of them has testified to the structural stability of the building and the amount of work put into the building by the current owners. The updates to the roof, newer HVAC system, new electrical, and new sprinkler system are all substantial upgrades that would allow us to avoid major updating costs. Some of the other issues of basement capacity, water seepage, and brick work are all issues with relatively small costs and are being worked on by the current owners.

No matter the age of a building, home/church ownership comes with more work than renting. As exciting as it sounds to not have to set up/tear down each week and to have a space we can use throughout the week, it comes with tradeoffs: building maintenance, heating/cooling costs, etc. However, over the past seven years, we have seen first-hand that our church body doesn't simply sit and watch, but takes ownership in the life of the church. It's not 20% of the people doing 80% of the work. Collectively taking ownership of its continual restoration allows us to

show our surrounding community the beauty, not merely of the building, but of a church family that lives out our mission of reconciling what is broken.

How does this fit into our long-term vision?

One of the major markers of our church is that we strive to be a Village Church, a church where we know each other and are involved in each other's lives. The size of the OuterEdge forces us to cap our size at 300-400 people. This allows us to think about a growth strategy that doesn't mean moving on to a larger building or adding additional services. Instead, it actually aids us in fulfilling our mission of planting Gospel-centered churches in the Fox Valley, enabling ERC to be a resource church that helps train and equip future pastors to reach areas of the Fox Valley that we can't reach while still retaining our Village Church ethos.

What about being downtown and around so many other churches?

When we look downtown, we see so much brokenness but also so much opportunity. At ERC, we acknowledge that we were broken but were reconciled by grace. What a great opportunity for us to tell others the "Good News" that we have experienced in Christ and to play a part in the reconciling work of the Gospel. As we walk around the church, we see the construction of high-end condos and apartments alongside those who hang around the bus stop and the library. ERC has a unique opportunity to reach both populations. Both of whom are in deep need of the love of Jesus.

For the past 10 years, the OuterEdge has been known as a place for the community to gather for weddings, concerts, and community events. ERC has an opportunity to continue to make this a public space where non-Christians can experience the hospitality, common grace, creativity, and beauty of the Lord. Oh, that people might enter our church and know the source of all love, our Savior Jesus Christ!

When we walk down College Avenue, we see a ton of bars filled on Friday and Saturday nights. Wouldn't it be awesome to have as many places downtown that preach the Gospel filled on Sunday mornings? Many of the historic churches in downtown Appleton have abandoned the truth that comes with preaching Christ Crucified. It is our hope and prayer that ERC would proclaim the power of the reconciling message of Christ in downtown Appleton, bringing transformation to our city.

Why are we moving forward with purchasing a building in the middle of a pandemic?

Let's be honest, these are tough times. In addition to physical difficulties, there are significant amounts of spiritual and mental damage taking place right now. This is an opportunity for the church to step in and, by grace, reconcile what is broken. But right now, we have no permanent location from which to launch into the community and provide stability—so in some ways it's riskier for our mission not to settle down and establish some permanence during these tumultuous times.

God has also been providing for us throughout this pandemic. Even during the pandemic, our church has actually been growing—we have added new families and giving is up, not down, as one might suspect. Further, the opportunity to purchase this building probably wouldn't be available if it weren't for the pandemic, and it seems to be where God is leading us.