

ren-o-vateCentral

repair · revitalize · renew

The leadership of Central United Methodist Church has some wonderful news to share!

We have been working hard for several years now on discerning a working vision for Central's future, given changing resources, demographics, and community, and we have been making plans for the next chapters in Central's life and legacy. Central is at a turning point that we come to recognize; we can move deeply into a maintenance/preservation mode, or we can go boldly into a revitalized future. Your leadership has chosen to think boldly and is very excited about what is coming, viewing these new paths of thinking and the plans for the future through the lens of "renovation." It's a fun theme for the coming months as we begin to move forward.

After much work, prayer, and discernment, and with some pushing and pulling of the Holy Spirit and some impossible-to-ignore signs and hints along the way, the leadership of your congregation made some very forward-thinking decisions in May and June. This is a summary; you will hear much, much more in the coming months as plans become action and as we move forward, trusting in God for continued direction on the way.

First, we plan to preserve the legacy of our wonderful Möller organ, which is in dire need of urgent repair and restoration. A task force comprised of Worship Council and Trustee members worked throughout the winter and spring months to create a plan to address the current and future issues with this magnificent instrument. Church Council approved the plan and authorized a Capital Campaign to fund the work. You will hear much more about this soon, and you will have opportunities to see the work that needs to be done, hear the plans, and receive the opportunity to help with a financial gift for the five-year Campaign period.

Second, we plan to continue the vitality and encourage growth of our nearly 200-year old church. Part of that plan is rethinking space and ministry resources in our building, considering ways to serve not only ourselves, but the community as well. We will be developing service opportunities in line with Central's long history of serving others. We will be working on some renewal and redecoration, and some different uses of space. Along with this, we are considering how to continue funding for mission and ministry in the future. A Core Vision Team has been developed for what we are calling (for now) "Central1.0".

Third, we have developed an audacious plan to create a church-within-a-church, right here at Central. What we know about church now and how new generations relate to the life of faith and the institution of churches tells us that there are many (among them the never-churched, the dischurched, the anti-churched) who still seek the life of the God of grace, peace, and justice—whether or not they can articulate that need. The traditional practices and worship of a century-church like Central are not where they see themselves living out that faith, once found. This is why there are so many new church plants out there in the world—seeking to offer that life to persons who might never walk into a church like Central. A Core Vision Team for this "Central2.0" has been formed and is enthusiastically beginning the work of creating a vision and the plans to give that vision life for this new, boldly-progressive, small-groups-rooted, mission-hearted expression of CentralUMC.

Fourth, as an act of confident investment in the new vision, we developed a plan for staffing for Central1.0 and Central2.0 that includes some rearrangement of existing positions, plus the creation of two more. The two Core Vision Teams, the Finance Committee, and the Staff/Parish Relations Committee will be working on refining job descriptions and beginning the search for applicants. The vision for these positions include a traditional (Central1.0) Christian Education Coordinator, a Web/Social media director for Central1.0 and 2.0, and a Director of Mission and Engagement that will provide the structure for and bridge between the two expressions of Central, creating mission opportunities for both Central1.0 and Central2.0, trusting that both expressions of Central, traditional and new, will find community as they live together in service to the world.

As you can see, it has been a busy season. There has been much to think about, to pray about, and to celebrate in this journey toward the future. We hope you will catch that vision and celebrate, too, so we are hosting Listening/Q & A sessions on **July 15** following worship and Wednesday, **July 25** at 6.30pm (with ice cream!), and **August 12** following worship and Wednesday, **August 22** at 6.30pm (again, with ice cream!)