

**Forward in Faith: 2014 Initiative
Immanuel Lutheran Church and School
Valparaiso, Indiana**

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we having this initiative?

We are celebrating our 150th anniversary as a congregation in 2014. Like all significant anniversaries, this one prompts us to consider where we have come from and where we are going. As we give thanks to God for blessings past, we also need to plan for the future. The theme “Forward in Faith” captures the spirit of this initiative. It is as much about growing in our relationship with God, both as individuals and as a congregation, as it is about dollars and cents.

Why are we doing this now?

We recognize that over the past two decades, compensation of our staff has taken a back seat to other pressing ministry needs. It is time to reverse that, and make it a priority. Many of us do not desire to pass on debt service to the next generation, so eliminating our \$1.5 million mortgage and putting that money into compensation and new ministry just makes sense. Deferred maintenance projects cannot be deferred indefinitely. Communication is absolutely critical in today’s world, and we need to staff for the complexities of it.

How long until staff see raises?

We would like to begin with a modest cost-of-living increase already for 2012, but this is entirely dependent on annual offerings and tuition income. Since the money to provide significant increases is keyed to eliminating the mortgage, we can begin significant increases when the mortgage is paid. If the initiative goes really well, we may pay off the mortgage within the first year. If not, significant increases will need to wait until the mortgage is paid in full, thereby freeing-up the funds from principal and interest payments to apply to staff compensation.

What are the specific projects with detailed amounts?

In order of priority, here is what we will do as the gifts come: Staff compensation

- a. Gathering Space Ministry Center
- b. Parking lot
- c. Repair skylight in church
- d. New kitchen equipment
- e. Implement Technology improvement plan
- f. Feasibility study for the next phase

Why aren’t we building something really big, like a Community Life Center or building the office complex that was designed in 1994?

Our current thinking is that if we eliminate our current debt, compensate our staff appropriately, and address some deferred maintenance issues, then the path will be cleared to consider the feasibility of a major project like a Community Life Center. Last year a group of Immanuel leaders gathered and discussed the pros and cons of trying to build the office complex designed in 1994. Pros: an entrance facing Glendale Blvd is more welcoming to the community; we already have the drawings/design. Cons: we would have to construct a new choir room

elsewhere, which is expensive; it is not likely that the city of Valparaiso would give us permission for a two-entrance school zone on what has become a very busy street; our current office space is adequate.

Why did we hire a consultant?

Our own experience as a congregation and the experience of congregations around the country prove that initiatives conducted with the help of professional consultants are more successful. After contacting several firms and interviewing two, our Congregation Council selected Kairos. As with many things in life, it is usually best to have a specialist on hand to guide the process.

Our consulting cost is \$61,000. This provides in-person training for our leadership team on the most proven successful methods and structures for our initiative. In addition to working with the leadership team, other teams in the congregation are being trained by the consultant to do their work on the initiative. Prior to the start of the initiative, our consultant conducted a feasibility study which measured the support of key congregation members. The study showed that there is a high level of interest and support. The consultant will continue to work with us during the three years of the initiative.

How much and when am I expected to give?

We encourage you to pray and discern your household's most generous response. Consider the many gifts God has given you and let your giving reflect your blessings. We have prepared a Giving Guide that can be found on the back of the "Forward in Faith" brochure to help you to decide. Please remember that your "Forward in Faith" pledge is over three years and is in addition to your regular weekly giving.

When is the initiative happening?

The leadership team has been planning since last September. The Forward in Faith initiative begins on Sunday, February 12, and will conclude on Sunday, March 18. During that time, a number of fun and informative "tell the story" events will take place. Everyone is encouraged to come to at least one "tell the story event." Commitment Weekend will be the weekend of March 18, 2012. Gifts will be gathered over three years, 2012, 2013, and 2014. A follow-up team will be working over these three years to follow-up on commitments.