

This month marks the fourth anniversary of Pastor Bill's suggestion that I run for church council and become involved in our building project. These past 48 months have taught me many lessons, but chief among them is that the Holy Spirit is alive and working in the life of Fox Point Lutheran Church.

A project like ours will never be without its challenges. Navigating a sea of outstanding but diverse opinions of members and staff, complying with the requirements and interpretations of village code, balancing cost and wishes, negotiating construction contracts, and the list goes on.

What has consistently amazed me, though, is that each challenge has brought with it its own solution, almost always at the suggestion of or in the form of one of our members. I think of Jim Hoffman's incredible creativity and commitment during our conceptual phases and thereafter, Chris Noyes' referral to the perfect resource to help us traverse village approvals and Mark Grady lending his knowledge of village government and processes. Our Church Council has raised important questions, tested our assumptions and provided outstanding support. Pastors Bill and Bruce have guided us in so many ways and our church staff has been so very patient and supportive in this effort.

At just the time our project leadership needed more structure and broader member involvement Mark Metzendorf answered the call, putting his organizational and leadership talents to work. Eric Lorenz took on the challenge of heading up our Appeals Leadership efforts. Allen Cooper and Sandy Murphy have done superb work on finance including arranging the ideal banking relationship for our project, Mike Bohlen supported the design our outdoor spaces, Pat Wilkins and Karen Sullivan invested countless hours on interior design. Our membership also includes several attorneys whose counsel was invaluable in negotiating our construction contracts.

As our project reached a phase that required more active project management, Pete Todd jumped in, bringing to bear decades of experience in commercial construction and Katie Smith and Diane Knapp the regular communication to our members. To our individual volunteers not already referenced, space precludes me from recognizing every one of you but know that your commitment has been incredibly valuable and appreciated.

Most important has been the support of our congregation, a group that not only voted overwhelmingly last September to approve the borrowing resolution that enabled the project to move forward but has contributed to and pledged to support its economic requirements. Your confidence in the *Building Faith Forward* teams is not taken lightly.

I am pleased to say that as of today our project is entirely on plan both as to schedule and our \$8.2 million budget and adjustments to our project to date are well within our budgeted contingencies. Thanks to the teams from *Abacus Architects* and *Moore Construction* and its many subcontractors who are doing an outstanding job of communicating project status to the members of the church's project leadership team who meet with them every week.

At each milestone our project becomes progressively real, but reality definitely set in this past week when some of the outside walls of our church came down to make way for our expansions and renovations that will facilitate the inspiration of several more generations of Christians toward lives of faith and service. For me, that is what our *Building Faith Forward* project is all about. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of it and may the Holy Spirit continue to be present in and guide this most important work.

Matt Kirchner
Building Faith Forward/Church Council

