

Advancing the Vision

“...we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”

*—Ephesians 4:15-17
New Living Translation*

How Did We Get Here?

In the early 1970's a forward-looking group of people from the San Pedro Church of Christ began to dream about planting a congregation in Northern San Antonio to meet the needs of the growing San Antonio population and to continue to reach out to people in Jesus' name. That dream became a reality on March 27, 1977 when the Northside Church of Christ opened its doors for its first worship service.

Northside grew from the start, so much so that in just three years, plans were begun to expand the original building. Our current education wing was constructed and our auditorium was also expanded. The new education wing and expanded auditorium were formally dedicated on March 7, 1982.

As the decade of the 1990's dawned, Northside continued to be blessed by God with spiritual as well as numerical growth. By the mid-1990's it was clear that our present auditorium could not meet the needs of our growing family. In June 1998, our Shepherds established a Long Range Planning Committee tasked with

identifying and making a recommendation to the Elders as to the growth direction Northside was to take over the next 10 - 20 years. Three options were investigated:

- 1) Purchase a site for Northside to “seed” or “plant” a sister congregation,
- 2) Purchase the storage facility north of Northside’s property to build a 2,000 seat auditorium
- 3) Purchase a site in the growth corridor to relocate Northside

Several months later, the team’s report was presented to the Elders with the recommendation to begin planning for relocation. The team had concluded that the feasibility of purchasing land adjacent to the existing facility was remote, it would prove to be less than cost effective, and it would fail to properly resolve all of the logistical challenges of staying in this location. The team also concluded that “planting” a sister congregation was not financially practical, or in keeping with our core values in fulfilling God’s Vision for our church family.

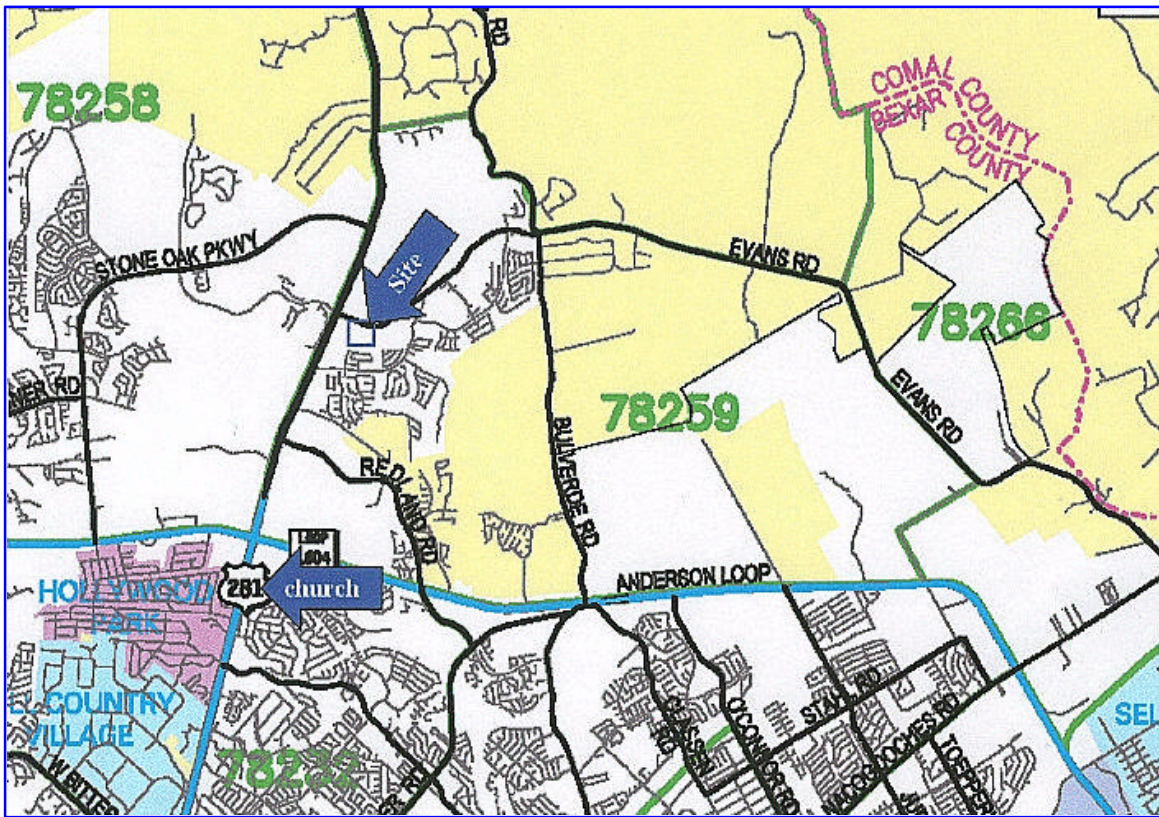
In November of 1998, the Elders furnished the Long Range Planning Committee with the following charge:

Northside church of Christ, as a body of believers in the risen Lord, should be constantly reaching out to our surrounding neighbors, serving and teaching just as Jesus did, and we believe that as we do, we will be continue to grow spiritually as well as numerically. The result of our desire to act and love like Jesus will become a magnet that will grow our family in numbers such that there will come a time when our assemblies and facilities will be considered full to the point of discouraging additional growth. At that point, we are in agreement that the leadership will implement a growth plan that involves the best and most beneficial disposition of our current facility, and purchasing new land and building a new facility to accommodate our entire church family and its growth. We have considered and studied the growth mechanism known as planting a church and conclude it is not God’s will for this church family, as it divides the family, dilutes its resources, and has been shown to work best only when a mother church is starting a daughter church in a different locality, using different methods and new families. We do not believe this method is right for Northside.

When our new facility is realized, our vision is then to implement a new long range plan of outreach that includes evangelizing the largest sociological group in San Antonio, the Hispanic population, by working to

establish new churches in those neighborhoods. It is understood that this new Hispanic mission outreach will be in addition to, and not take away from, either our current mission efforts in Fortaleza, Brazil or those of the current ongoing outreach of the existing ministries of this church.

From that moment, the Long Range Planning Committee set out to find a piece of land suitable to accommodate our church family's continued growth for the next several decades.



The committee identified a parcel of land near Hwy 281 and Evans Road in 1999 and our family embarked upon a capital campaign to raise money to purchase that property. Unfortunately, we could not raise sufficient funds to purchase the land outright and our indebtedness at that time made borrowing a large sum of money a dangerous proposition. Since our indebtedness was the primary reason we could not move forward with the purchase of land, our shepherds asked all those who had contributed and pledged money in the capital campaign if those monies could be

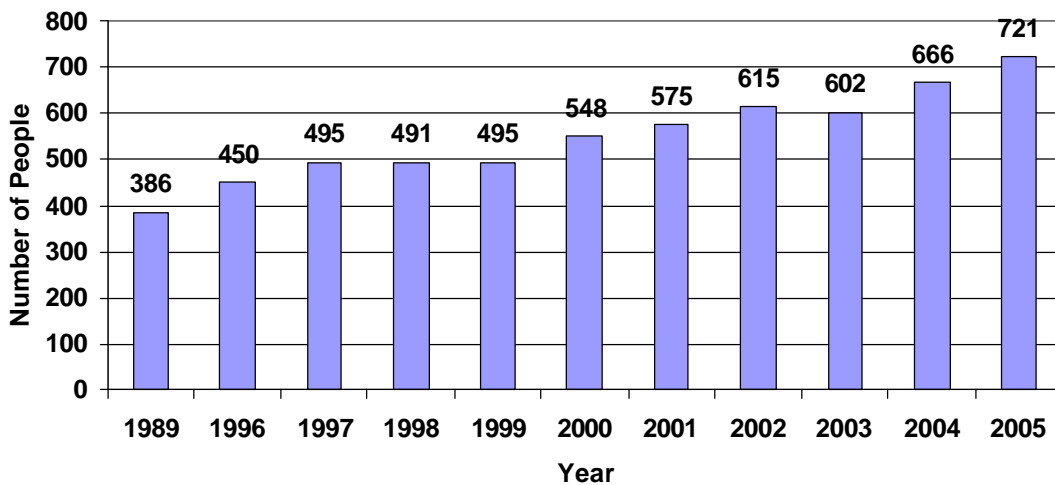
used to pay off debt so our family would be in a better position to purchase land, rebuild, relocate, and continue to grow. The response was a resounding “Yes!”

So, in February 2001, our Shepherds gave our family a presentation entitled “Faith, Hope, and Love: Facing the Future” in which they set forth the following goals for our church family:

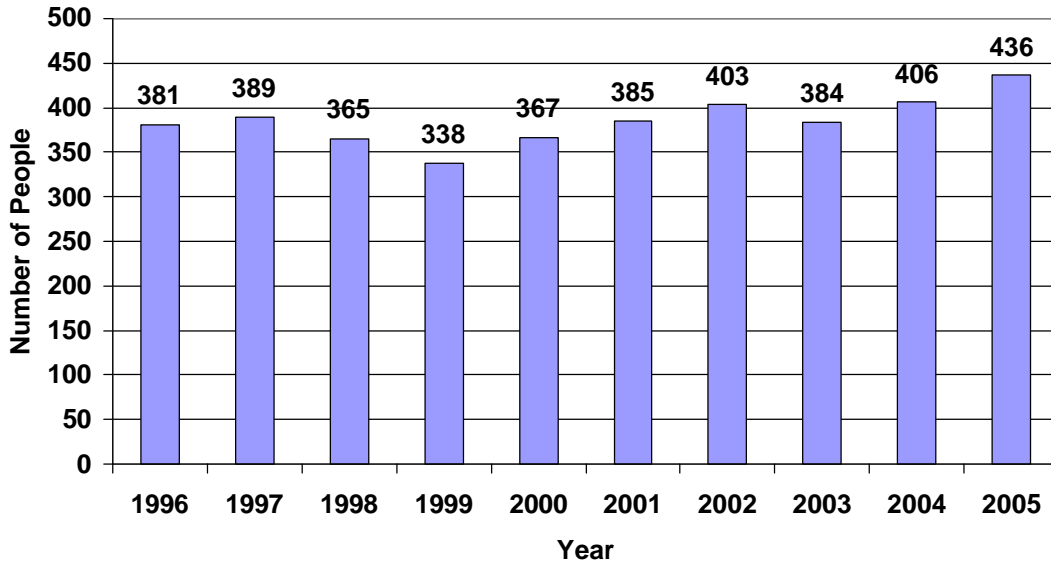
- ❖ 2001 – Pay off \$248,000 bank loan
- ❖ 2002 – Fund full-time Children’s Ministry; 50 Bible Studies ongoing
- ❖ 2003 – 700 Members in regular attendance; Two Services
- ❖ 2004 – Debt Free; Full-time Singles Ministry
- ❖ 2005 – Hispanic Church Mission; Buy land for new facility; 850 Members in regular attendance
- ❖ 2006 – Begin construction of new facility
- ❖ 2007 – Northside 30th Anniversary – move to new facility; 1000 Members in regular attendance

While it is clear that some of these goals have not been met, many of them have. Our church family is currently debt free. Tina Wharton is our full-time Children’s Minister. Through 2005, our attendance continued to grow in both our assemblies and our Bible classes.

Average Sunday AM Attendance



Average Bible Class Attendance



Since November 2001, we have been offering two services on Sunday mornings to try and accommodate our growth. Average worship attendance in 2006 so far is 763 and our average Bible class attendance is 457.

As the 21st Century has begun, it seems clear that God had even greater plans in store for our church family. God continues to bless us with growth! The question remains however, “What about the future?”

What Are Our Options?

In 2004, our Long Range Planning Committee began to revisit the goals we had set and the conclusions we had arrived at in 1999-2001. The same three major options were present:

1. Plant a new congregation.
2. Rebuild on our current site.
3. Purchase land and relocate.

Instead of simply assuming that Option #3 is the appropriate option for our church family, the Long Range Planning Committee revisited all three options with a view towards validating the work that had gone on before.

Option 1 - Planting a New Congregation

There is no doubt that we owe our current growth and blessings not only to God but also to those future-minded individuals at the San Pedro Church of Christ who took a step of faith and planted the Northside church. Without their faith, our church family would not exist!

While there is also no doubt that planting churches is a viable option for church growth, the question is whether or not this is a good option for our church family.

Our Shepherds, and the Long Range Planning Committee, do not believe that planting a church is the best option for us, for several reasons.

- **First, the impact this would have upon our leadership.** In planting a new congregation we would be faced with the possible loss of some of our key leaders as well as members. It was believed that this would dilute our efforts in our growth plan for Northside.
- **Second, would be the financial impact.** The initial investment was estimated to be at least one million dollars. The monthly support could represent upwards of fifteen to twenty thousand dollars. The outlay for this kind of a commitment would have a dramatic impact on Northside's ongoing programs and ministries.
- **Third, the trends and culture of our day dictate that people select a church home based upon where vital ministries are provided.** There are small neighborhood congregations throughout America that struggle to be a vital ministry opportunity for new growth. For us to replicate what already exists is not good stewardship of our vision for Northside or the Lord's Church.

Option 2 - Rebuilding on Our Current Property

So why not just expand our currently facility?

It is not architecturally possible to expand our current auditorium space. We cannot add a balcony because of the current structure and we cannot expand to the north and south because of our auditorium's proximity to driveways and parking.

This option has been studied and restudied since the mid-90's and that same conclusion has been reached every time.

Then why not rebuild on our current property and stay in our current location?

The short answer is that rebuilding here is a possibility. With the roughly 9 acres we have currently, a facility of some kind could be built. The real question however, is: what kind of facility could be built and what would it cost? Can we build a facility that will meet our needs for the next 20 or 30 years? Can we build a facility that will allow us to maximize ministry to the people of San Antonio?

Our Shepherds and our Long Range Planning Committee do not feel this is a feasible option for four main reasons:

- ***First, 9 acres is just not enough to meet the growth needs of our church family for the next 20 or 30 years.***

Church growth experts and architectural groups who work with churches say that a church needs about 1 acre for every 100 people (for facilities and parking - See <http://www.lifeway.com/churcharchitecture/rules.pdf>). Given that rule of thumb, we are already almost at the limit of growth potential at this location.

- ***Second, rebuilding at this location would not be feasible because of current City, State and Federal Codes and Regulations:***

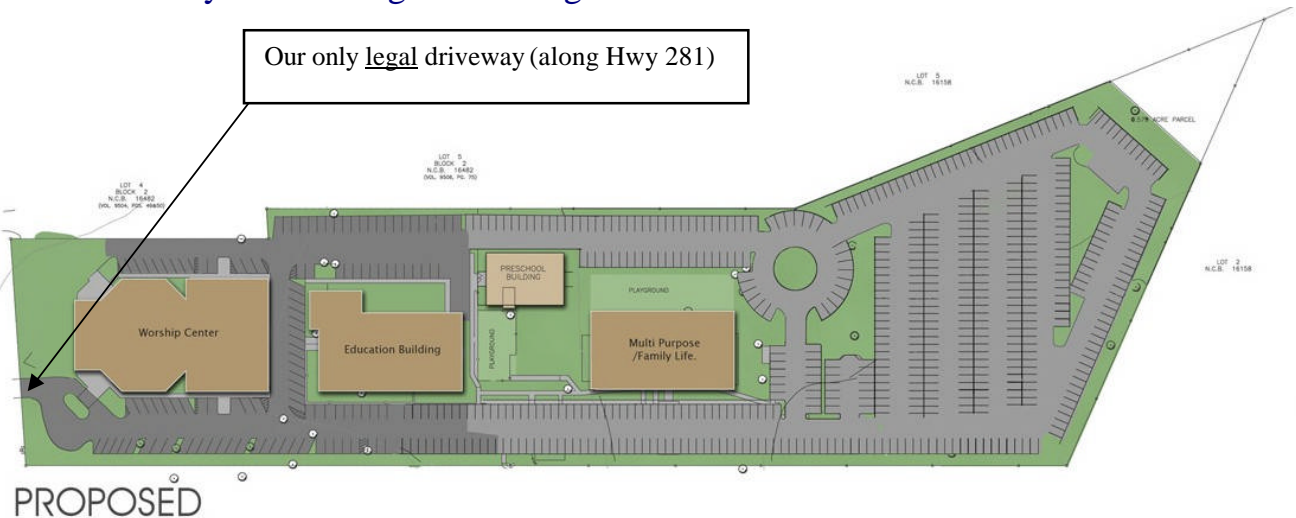
Since the last major expansion, building codes and City, State and Federal Regulations have changed greatly. Today we face new state energy codes, state and federal accessibility regulations and an entirely new Building Code and Ordinances in San Antonio. There are also runoff water quality requirements that were not required a few years ago and many other code enforcements that regulate renovations and additions.

The accessibility requirements alone make it very challenging for private entities when anticipating expanding an existing structure. Renovations costing more than \$50,000 require that the existing structures be brought up to current accessibility standards as well as many new city and state regulations. For Northside, that would affect almost every space in our building, from the addition of an elevator, to ramps, parking lots, toilet facilities, kitchens, door hardware, and more. Mechanical, electrical and

many other new requirements would make it very costly to expand our buildings.

- ***Third, there are Site Constraints.***

Our property's size, shape and relationship to adjacent properties create real challenges for our growing congregation. Currently we have only 108 marked parking spaces on our property. The use of our neighbors parking has been a blessing but has its limitations. Our campus has only one legal driveway for entering and exiting our site.



Master Plan studies done for us show that if we were to cover most of our property with parking lots, including the ball fields, it would yield only 620 parking spaces and leave very little green space (see above). The majority of the spaces would be at the rear of the property and this creates an almost impossible scenario for exiting and entering the property after each service and would make it impossible for a fire apparatus to maneuver through our site (an important Fire Code requirement would not be met).

NOTE: This scheme will also not allow for space for the required filtration and sedimentation basin(s) we currently do not have but the city would require.

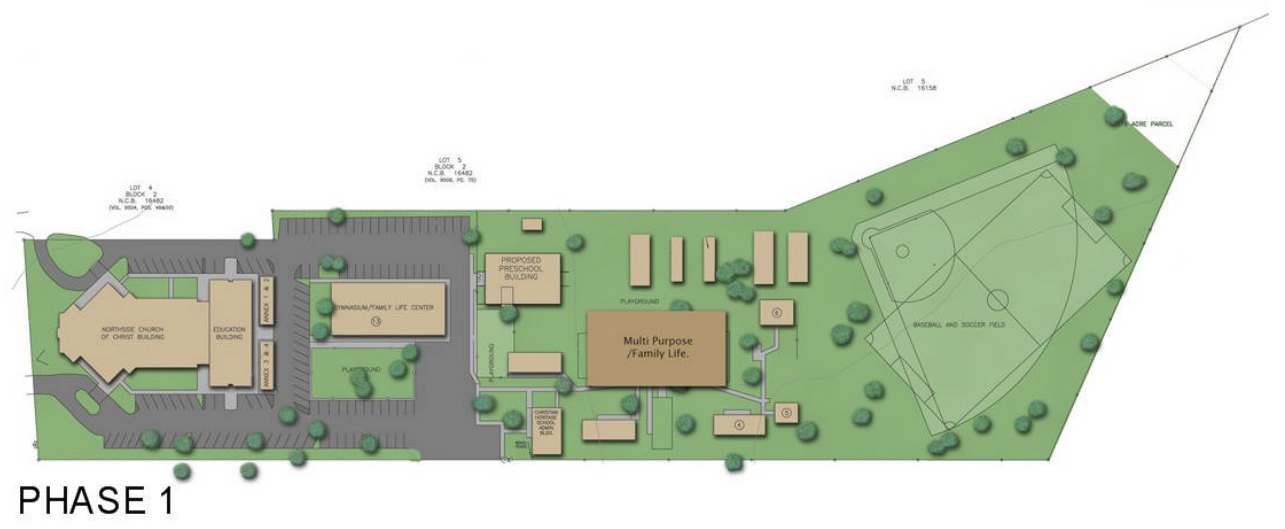
- ***Then, there is Cost, Time & Inconvenience Factors.***

Because of the many buildings on our property, expanding our facility on our present site would require a tremendous amount of time, patience and money. To provide the “state of the art” facility that we would expect for

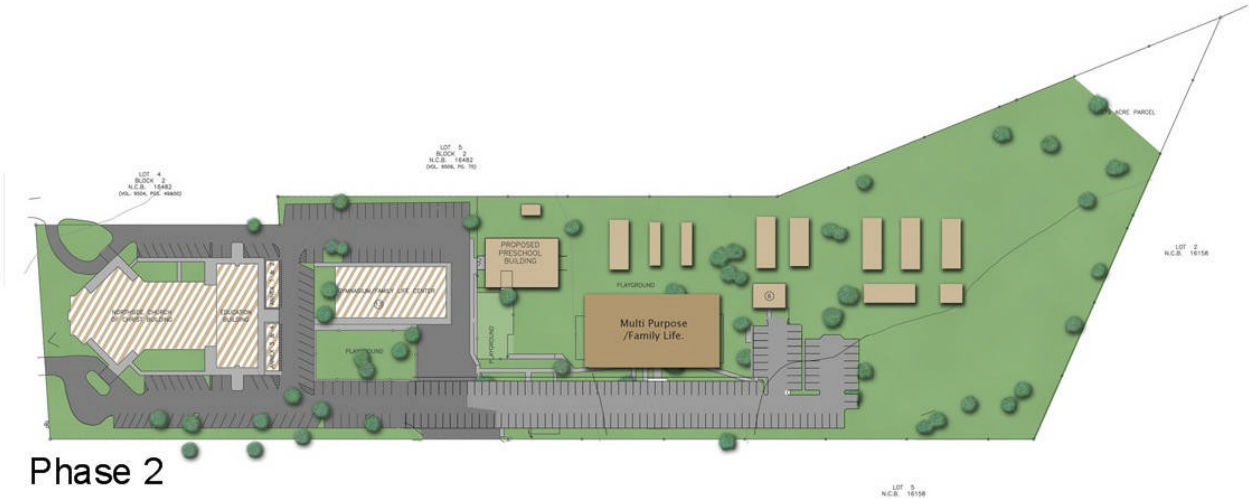
this level of financial investment, many of the smaller buildings at the rear of the property would need to be relocated to allow for new buildings. These smaller structures would continue to be used during the construction, as shown in the pictures below:



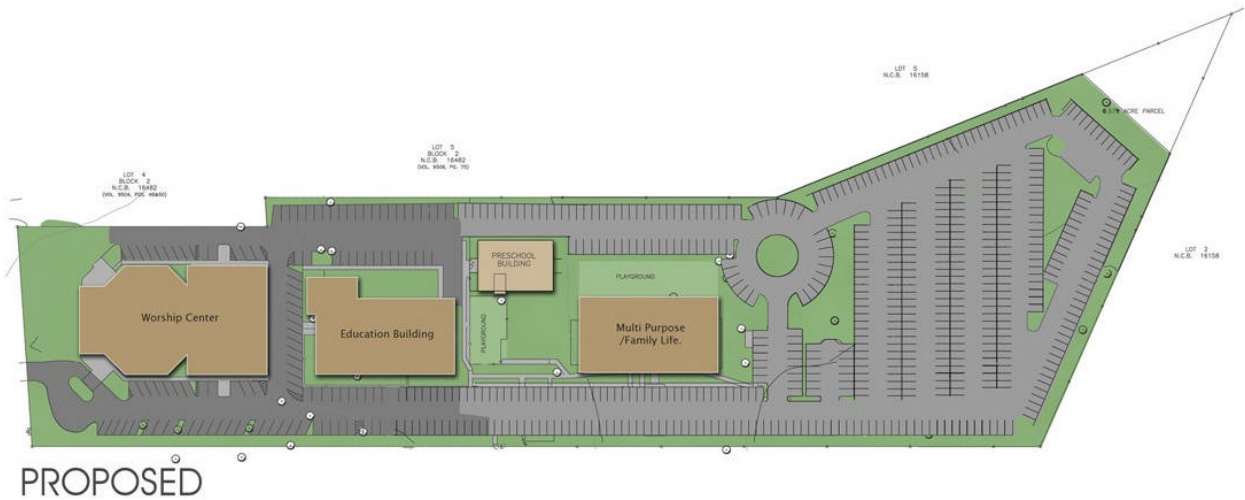
First, we would have to move the CHS buildings and then build a multi-purpose facility for our family to meet in during construction:



Then, we would incur the expense and inconvenience of tearing down our old facility:



Finally, we would end up with property that still would not provide us with the necessary parking spaces or room to grow much beyond where we are right now.



Utilizing our current property for expansion would require much more time and effort from our congregation. Since construction would need to be done in several phases, it would add more than twice the amount of design and construction time and cost to the schedule because construction involving major renovations and new construction in restricted areas always costs more than new construction on unimproved land.

Option 3 - Purchase Land and Relocate

The third option, and the one our Shepherds and Long Range Planning Committee came to in 1999-2001 (and in 2004-2005) is to purchase land at another location and build a facility that will meet our needs now and well into the future.

A new church campus usually gives churches an opportunity to build facilities that are safer, up to code, more effectively designed for today's educational needs and more conducive to today's worship.

New buildings indicate to society that the church is interested in providing safe and up-to-date guidance for our children, more accessible arrangements to our seniors, and amenities that are appreciated by all members.

A transition into a new community gives the opportunity to set a new vision with new goals for growth.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Our next step as a church family is to engage in a capital funds campaign that will help us raise the necessary money to complete this project.

Our plans call for this to take place in the fall of 2006.

Facing the Future with Faith...

It is important to understand that ultimately, this proposed relocation is not about bricks and mortar or building a monument to honor ourselves. It's about glorifying God and answering the call He has given us to grow and reach out to hurting people. It's about sharing the Savior's love with people who need God's direction and help in their lives. It's about saving souls.

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