

Frequently Asked Questions: Harvest Dream Big Project

Who is funding the project?

We have been awarded a \$500,000 grant to fund the redesign. The initial plan for how to spend the money was submitted to and approved by the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church. The grants were awarded to churches with restrictive debt. Guidelines for how the money can be spent were outlined in that application process. Money is to be spent on projects that would result in permanent growth of Harvest, both in depth (engagement) and width (numbers of persons participating in the life of the church).

Why the emphasis on appealing to families with young children?

When asked the question, “Why Harvest?” in the *Sharing a Harvest Welcome* gatherings with Pastors Michael and Katie in their first 9 months at Harvest, in every group multiple people responded with the answer: “Because Harvest is a place for young families.” Meeting the needs of persons raising children has been an important part of the story and ministry of Harvest. The pastors, staff, and leadership are proud to serve a church with a heart for the next generation.

The redesign project provides the opportunity for Harvest to continue to live this story in our community. The environments say to families, “Your family is welcome here. We have a place for you. We want to partner with you.” As Moses did not get to go into the promised land but gave a final address to the people of Israel, he commanded them to continue to pass the faith from one generation to the next. We have a very real and present opportunity to care for and partner with the families of Lakewood Ranch and beyond as they raise their children to be adults. We will, together, leverage whatever resources that we have to reach the next generation. And this is only the beginning. There are still dreams to dream about how to reach youth and college students and young adults and older adults.

What about plans for a sanctuary, designated youth ministry space, and a full kitchen?

\$500,000 is a relatively small amount of money when dealing with facilities. It would only be a fraction of the amount of money needed to address these bigger, long-term dreams/goals of the people of Harvest. This project is designed to be a catalyst for growth in order that Harvest would have the opportunity to, in the future, continue to dream and do the big things God calls the church to do.

Why the emphasis on guest readiness/hospitality?

Most persons decide within the first ten minutes of their visit to the church whether or not they will ever come back again (gregatkinson.com). The vision of Harvest places high priority on welcoming others. The design plans include elements which work in tandem with people to intentionally welcome and invite persons to deeper engagement – worship, grow, serve. The coffee area will provide a place for conversation, relationship building, mentoring, youth ministry gatherings. The redesigned lobby will have clear areas for people to respond to invitations to deeper engagement. The redesigned Sprouts Child Development entrance, office area, and hallways communicate the level of professionalism and excellence of early childhood

Christian education that our school is known for. As new schools continue to be developed in Lakewood Ranch, Sprouts will have the all of the ingredients necessary to continue to flourish in the market. The west wing lobby space will enhance Sunday morning ministry to children and will provide opportunities for Sprouts families (as well as our community at large) to feel welcomed on the campus: they can grab a cup of coffee, use a table as a workspace, build relationships with other parents, and when school is done for the morning, they will be able to gather together while their children play on the preschool-aged playground. Approximately 75% of our Sprouts families do not have a church home. What Harvest has to offer a family with children is life changing – a relationship with Jesus, the possibility to form meaningful friendships, a place to worship, grow, and serve. Essentially, a place to belong and a place to make a difference in the world. Guest readiness is the first step in building relationship with persons who are guests on our campus. Next steps for persons include deeper engagement: joining a small group, developing Christian leadership skills, or using God given gifts and talents to make a real difference in the community and world.

What are the 4 Keys for the space planning of public venues, including churches?

1. Encourages conversation for the building of relationships
 2. Symbolizes the values/beliefs of the organization
 3. Demonstrates the outward focused goal of the organization
 4. Includes places where people can gather information for deeper engagement
- You will notice that the redesign plans include all 4, over and over again. Prayerful intentionality has been the guiding force as these plans have been and will continue to be developed.

What are the plans for campus security?

- Interior and exterior camera monitoring will be added to the campus.
- A Florida Wildlife Commission officer will be providing security services during Sunday morning worship services.
- A new system for entry which includes designated access points/locks/and additional doors will be added to the campus.
- The campus operational hours will be publicized and we will lock and unlock the campus accordingly.
- In the new design we will have the ability to lock down the West Wing as we are currently able to lock down the East Wing.
- We will train, put into place, and practice drills for emergency situations. Omni has installed a phone in every room of our campus. We will be able to use this phone system as an emergency alert system.

What is the project timeline?

The timeline is currently to be determined. The conceptual drawings have gone to Fawley-Bryant and Willis Smith Construction in order to determine permitting and timeline. As we have the answers to this question, we will provide updates to the congregation in the weekly Harvest e news.