

Easter

Lutheran Church

Where we've been and where are we going?

Before we begin to describe the vision of where we are going with our church facilities, it is important that we look back and provide some context for where Easter has been. Between 1990 and 1995, weekend worship attendance at Easter doubled from just over 500 to just over 1,000. Projections of continued growth suggested by 2010 easter would host around 1,800 worshippers on the weekend. This led to the decision to purchase the Lake site and develop a vision to move Easter Church to the Lake at some point in the future. With the development of Phase One at the Lake, Easter took its first step toward the vision of relocation, and with that step Easter became a multi-site ministry. While many ministries grew rapidly in the subsequent years, including confirmation ministry and diversity in worship, the total growth in worship attendance leveled off at 1,100. This fact, along with congregational feedback last spring in the Planning and Assessment Study, suggests that we cannot afford to make that vision a reality in the near future. While the vision of a single-site ministry may still happen, the timing certainly has changed.

Despite this new information about slower than anticipated growth, for the past several years Easter has continued to evaluate its facility needs with the vision of what is missing at the Lake. With a vision to relocate to a single-site, it just made sense. Now, after three workshops, it seems clear that we want to focus on what we have become and still can achieve by becoming a multi-site ministry with the added capabilities that this has given us and the untapped opportunities that it still presents. Our focus should not be so much on one site over the other, but on the ministry of Easter Lutheran Church as a whole and how well both of our facilities can help us meet those needs and opportunities.

This has become the focus of the Master Plan Committee.



Defining the New Vision *In Progress*

What has been done so far and what have we learned?

There have been three workshops during the month of October (Easter Staff, Church Council, and Congregation). Each workshop involved discussions of the evolution of multi-site ministry at Easter Lutheran Church and the primary ministries at Easter: worship, community, youth and family, stewardship, outreach, administration and facilities. From those workshops, we have identified three initial findings that will help inform the master plan process. These are not the final conclusions of our team; however they are observations of common themes present in all of the discussions. It is important to remember that this is not a “Pastor Jim” thing, or a “Master Plan Committee” thing, nor even a “Church Council” thing. This is an “Easter Lutheran Church” thing, and we are all Easter. We need your prayerful input, questions, challenges, and support.

1. Multi-Site Ministry

We heard at three workshops this fall, including the congregational meeting on October 28th, that Easter Lutheran Church has become a successful multi-site ministry over the past nine years and will be for some time into the future. This does not preclude a move in a different direction at some other point, but for the foreseeable future, Easter will continue to be on multiple sites. The Church, as described in Acts 2, is not about a building. The physical buildings that serve the ministries of Easter Lutheran Church provide an environment for what Paul was referring to in Ephesians 2:20-22 when he wrote, “through Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple of the Lord. And in Him, you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives in his Spirit.” The church Paul is talking about is people, not buildings. Church happens where two or more are gathered to do ministry and mission. While the Church is not a building, the Church happens in buildings as well as outside of them.

Common Theme: Easter Lutheran Church is a single ministry on multiple sites and any investment in programs or facilities should be viewed through a holistic Easter perspective. It is important that we evaluate the various ministries at Easter and their effectiveness regardless on which site they are provided.



2. Faith Community

As Paul wrote, the purpose of the church is to allow individuals to be “built together” in Christ. The facilities merely support this. It’s where people of all ages meet, learn about and surrender to Christ...it’s what allows Easter to *grow in faith and carry on the work of Jesus Christ*. The three primary ministries or functions of most churches are Worship, Education, and Gathering (Fellowship). The space for Gathering is instrumental to building a successful faith community. There are a few attributes to consider for effective Fellowship:

Community: Allowing individuality in a larger whole
Encouraging participation in a faith community
Creating structure for casual connections

Connections: A connection between individuals
A sense of welcome and belonging
A place to reach out a hand to another

Circulation: An ease of movement
Movement is natural, and yet orchestrated
Comfortable

From time to time, improvements are necessary for Easter to consistently meet these needs at the Lake and the Hill. These limitations impact Easter’s effectiveness in allowing individuals to connect with each other and to connect personally with the mission of Easter.

Common Theme: We need to consider facility options that can foster, strengthen, and enhance the faith community of youth and adults at Easter for the foreseeable future.

3. Balance

Currently there is a state of imbalance between the sites which can result in limitations on attendance and growth at one or both sites. One example of this is the inadequate infant-toddler space at the Lake. While a similar number of persons worship at the Lake as on the Hill, the infant-toddler space has one-third the capacity. Similarly, when large groups are present, the gathering space at the Lake functions more as a hallway instead of encouraging fellowship as the Fireside Commons does on the Hill. Lack of space for gathering at the Lake encourages people to leave rather than stay an engage in fellowship.

Common Theme: Many of these imbalances have been identified, we need to explore, evaluate, and quantify options for creating balance on each site.



Easter Lutheran Church

4200 Pilot Knob Road

Eagan, MN 55122

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit # 5207
St. Paul, MN 55101

What is our goal?

With these findings in mind our goal as a committee is as follows:

By April 1, 2011, we will develop a comprehensive multi-site facilities Master Plan, enhancing the uniqueness of our current sites. We will strive to plan so that each site will be balanced, integrated and complementary as they each serve the Mission of the whole. We will seek to maximize both the current and future options regarding facilities and ministries.

How can you be involved?

We still need your input. Questions and comments can be emailed to easter@easter.org attention/subject to the Master Plan Committee or connect with one of the committee members in person.

Master Plan Committee:

Pastor Jim	Jason Christianson	Judy Pascoe
Angie Swetland	Dean Hoffrogge	Sheryl Johnson
Jason Day	Gary Ehret	

