

“Eternal God, who crosses the years of time...as we move from the vision of one generation to the vision of another, we would stay close to your presence. Be with us this day and always. Amen.”

*Excerpt from the Unison Prayer, “A Service of Exodus and Entry”
Aurora United Methodist Church Feb. 29, 1976*

Throughout the consecration, growth and unification of the churches that united to become the one church we know as Aurora United Methodist, the people were about building up congregations of faithful people to the glory of God. Today we continue this tradition of a movement forward that will serve not only the people present in our church today, but generations to come.

Aurora UMC has always been a leader in this community for increasing vitality, strength, faithfulness and service in the name of Jesus Christ. The building that was planned and built more than 40 years ago has been a vital tool in that mission. Throughout those years there has been a vision of what more could be done if we expanded our facilities. We believe now is the time to transform that vision into something real.

Our need to expand is visible any time that our children and youth are gathered together in one place!

- Our Wednesday night children’s program hosts 40-60 children each year, with up to 70 children during Vacation Bible School.
- Our Middle School Youth Group hosts up to 40 energetic, effervescent youth who yearn for space to stretch out.
- Our High School Youth Group has not met in the church building for several years because there can be as many as 60 of them on any given evening!

Our need to expand is also visible in other ways:

- Many of our current rooms are “dual-space” rooms - for instance, the Middle School Youth Room is also home to the Yarn Spinners. One of our Sunday School rooms is also the meeting space for the quilters and the bell choir.
- We lack space for storage
- The nursery needs more room for our babies and toddlers
- The preschool could grow if there were more classrooms
- Our kitchen is inefficient and outdated
- Some HVAC systems need replacement and more restrooms are needed

The vision for expanding the church started to find clarity in the early 2000’s and conversations continued over the years. At the Aurora UMC Charge Conference in 2017 a Building Committee was formed. This group also studied the needs and the hopes of the church and have proposed an initial plan for meeting those needs.

Our current proposal for this expansion includes:

- A multi-purpose room (or Family Life Center)
- New Heating and Air Conditioning Unit
- Lighting upgrades in the Sanctuary
- New and expanded kitchen with a walk in pantry, patio area for grilling

Updated restrooms
Additional storage space
New classrooms for middle and high school youth
New preschool building (to code) with possibility of serving more children & families
Security system
Expanded parking area

This proposal meets the well documented and well discussed needs to support our growing church family, as well as opens up new ways that we can serve the community.

Thanks to the foresight of our faithful church leaders, we have a strong financial foundation on which to build. The church has been the recipient of two generous gifts that put us in a strong position. From the Caldwell Trust we received a gift of nearly \$1,000,000. Half of this can be used for the building project. The other half is endowed which means we can use the dividends from the invested principle. An anonymous endowment was set up at the Nebraska United Methodist Foundation of just over \$460,000 with Aurora UMC as the beneficiary. The proceeds from this endowment are to be used specifically for capital improvements, with the kitchen area being top priority. The proceeds from these two endowments are estimated to be between \$35,000 and \$40,000 per year. This will not only help us in construction costs but can aid in servicing debt that may be incurred.

Faithful stewardship of the above named funds point us towards moving forward on our proposed project, which we estimate will cost 3 million dollars. Aurora UMC has been blessed with a history and tradition of planning for future generations with all of our resources, and we feel that God is leading us once again to take what we have been given and prepare it for our children and our children's children. God has granted us a strong foundation on which to build! To help us take these next steps, we have partnered with Horizons Stewardship to provide guidance, expertise and support.

We close with the final stanza of the poem "**God Builds No Churches**" (Edgar A. Guest, 1881) which was printed in the bulletin for the Ground Breaking Service of the Aurora UMC, August 4, 1974

The humblest spire in mortal ken
where God abides was built by men.
And if the church is still to grow,
is still the light of hope to throw
across the valley of despair,
men still must build God's House of Prayer.
God sends no churches from the skies,
out of our hearts they must arise.