

Sanctuary Presentation for September 2, 2018.

Dated 8/28/18

Introduction:

Good morning! It is a pleasure to have the opportunity today to share with you my thoughts regarding the current sanctuary restoration program being considered for Salem. Most of you know me, but, for those who may be visiting, my name is Terry Pursley. I am a longtime member of Salem Church who is part of the team looking into the possibility of implementing architectural restoration of this sanctuary and the adjoining East Hall. My goal today is to share where we are in this planning process and to ask the congregation the following general question: **“WHAT DOES THE CONGREGATION WANT TO DO WITH RESPECT TO THE SANCTUARY RESTORATION PROJECT?”**

I ask this question because Salem Church belongs to the congregation. Regardless of how many committees, leaders, or opinions are generated by this process, we must always remember that the **“Church is not a steeple, the church is not the building, and the Church is not a resting place. The Church is the People!”**. Experience tells me people in leadership positions can innocently tend to forget who they work for and become defensive about their work. The restoration team members are guiding this restoration process for the congregation, and, thus, it is the congregation who will determine the final product. It is for this reason that I come to you today to shed light on where we are and to solicit input from the congregation in a manner I will discuss later.

It is important to begin by identifying two major concepts relevant to this presentation that are based on my personal experiences.

First – My experience with major design-build construction projects has led me to understand that the nature of the relationship between the two criteria of “Form and Function” can be particularly helpful in our considerations.

Second - I find the Bible to be TRUE, both in a literal and in a figurative sense. Not only is it TRUE, but it is also instructive for many practical applications in our lives today. I consider the Bible to be God's “OWNERS MANUAL”, a manual that should be read, taught, considered, and used in all aspects of our lives. I find the Bible particularly useful in our consideration of the Restoration Project.

It is with these two fundamental principles of Form vs Function and the Bible's relevance as a guide for decision-making in our lives that my presentation continues.

Form vs Function:

Form vs Function (Biblical Examples)

We find many examples of “Form vs Function” in the Bible, two of which I now share:

Example B1: In Genesis Chapter 6, we read the story of Noah and the flood, and within this story is the construction of a large “Boat”. In this story God tells Noah how God wants the “Boat” built, including the exact dimensions to be used in its construction. The dimensions and details of the “Boat” God gave to Noah were preceded by God defining the “Function” that God wanted to be accomplished. This “Function” was to offer a safe haven for Noah, his family, and a multitude of animals while God destroyed, by water, all other living things. God

did not tell Noah to build a “Boat” and later determine what He wanted to be accomplished with that boat. God determined a Function first and then developed the Form (Boat) needed to accomplish the function! “FUNCTION PRECEDED FORM”.

Example B2: In Exodus Chapter 25 thru 27, we read about the construction of the Tabernacle and the “Ark of the Covenant”. God determined that the Function of the Tabernacle was to provide a physical place where humans could encounter God. The Form of the Tabernacle was a very large and ornate tent with three interior compartments constructed of very expensive materials erected to exacting standards furnished by God. Here again, we find the Function of the Tabernacle was determined prior to the actual Form being communicated to Moses. In other words, once again “FUNCTION PRECEDED FORM”

In both of these Biblical examples the Function preceded the Form.

Form vs. Function (Secular Examples)

Moving on to my secular examples of Function preceding Form, I find it helpful to reflect on a basic aspect of construction I experienced during my business life. At the beginning of almost all construction projects the “Function” of a particular facility is determined first and then the “Form” follows. The following examples may help communicate this aspect.

Example S1: When the St. Charles Family Arena was first being considered, the “Function” of the facility was determined to be primarily as an ice hockey team, allowing for an attendance of about 12,000 people with the related concession stands and restrooms. In

addition, the facility had to be designed to allow the ice rink to be altered within about 24 hours to allow other entertainment events to occur. All of this was to be accomplished within a certain overall budget. These “function” criteria were well-defined, which allowed both the final design and construction teams to build the facility, a facility that is still in successful use today. **Again “Function preceded Form”.**

Example S2: When the then-named TWA Stadium (“the Dome”) was initially envisioned, it was meant to provide the function of an indoor facility where NFL Football could be played, including the associated TV lighting and broadcasting booth functions. The facility was to have a capacity of about 66,000, connect to the existing convention center while having the ability to modify itself to support other entertainment events, and be constructed within a certain budget. This was accomplished, and in November of 1995 the first NFL game was played in the Dome. What subsequently occurred was that the “Function” criteria of the facility changed to a facility that could adapt to many more different and complex types of entertainment in an attempt to garner an increase in attendance and an increased “revenue stream”. The St. Louis facility local support did not adapt to this new “Function” definition, and, as we all know, the RAMS left St. Louis because the “St. Louis FORM” did not support the NEW FUNCTION as defined by Stan Kroenke and his team.

Example S3: My last example is our own Duff Hall. I will not belabor this point because it may still be a sensitive subject to some. For our learning purposes, the **FUNCTION** criteria for the upper level of Duff Hall was well-determined, making it a valuable space for many activities. However, the **FUNCTION** criteria for the lower level was not so well-determined, which resulted in an expensive space that has limited value. I hasten to say that I am not

calling into question the decision makers at the time because I know many of the people who worked on the project were doing the best they could. I only bring up this example to help us remember and learn as we consider spending money on the sanctuary. We need to make certain we have a clear “FUNCTION” defined so that we achieve the very best value for our FORM dollar.

Salem's Application of Function vs. Form

This discussion now brings us to the question of Salem's Sanctuary Restoration. With both God's examples and also secular examples clearly telling us to adapt our “Form” to our “Function”, it seems we must ask ourselves, 1) “What is our Function Goal?”, 2) “Why are we considering the physical restoration of our sanctuary?”, and 3) “What Biblical Functions are we attempting to accomplish?” These questions came to my mind as I come to you today with my thoughts on this Function question. I hasten to add these are my personal thoughts. It is always the responsibility for the church congregation – you – to determine the local “church's Function”, keeping in mind, per the UMC's “Book of Discipline, that such Function definitions are to be processed through the Ad Council with the resulting “Form” implementation accomplished in coordination with the Trustees and Finance Committees. Therefore, it is important we share our “Function” thoughts with the Ad Council members so that our thoughts may be included in the Ad Council's decision-making process. This is exactly what BJ is initiating with her listening session of last week and those yet to come. It is imperative for success that you the congregation share your thoughts regarding function with the Ad Council team. They will condense the input to a workable outline.

My Thoughts

The question of “What is the Function goal of Salem” is a somewhat difficult idea to “nail down”. There are many ideas on this subject, so it occurs to me it will be useful to reference the Bible to help guide our thought process.

I have been attending a Bible study class for the past 8 years thru an organization called “Bible Study Fellowship” (BSF). I started this process reluctantly, but I now find myself with a better understanding of what the Bible actually says rather than snippets of what other people tell me it says. I have come to understand the Bible (Old and New Testaments) is NOT a work of fiction. Rather, it is indeed a factual (literal or figurative) recording of God's word to be ready applied to our lives.

From this curriculum of study, I have gleaned there are at least 3 important over-arching functions laid out in the Bible, and I share them with you now.

God requires us to:

- 1, WORSHIP Him.
- 2, SERVE others, and
2. TEACH the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Worship:

The very first thing Noah did after he and his family left the Ark was to build an altar and **worship** God. (Gen. 8 vs. 20-22). Chapter 19 of Revelations clearly provides a picture of all God's redeemed people **worshipping** God. These visions of worship are held outdoors and indoors and involve excitement, with singing and open access. The worshipping of God is prevalent throughout the Bible and is not presented as sober occasion. It seems that worship should be an eager and exciting expression of our relationship with God. It is this excitement

and eagerness that should be a part of our worship experience and environment.

Serve:

The obligation to **serve** others is exemplified in multiple places in the Bible and none better than in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), which clearly tells us to **serve** people we encounter who are in need, regardless of our perception of their value or merit. If we are not serving others, we are not doing God's will! Our renovation project should therefore provide a "FORM" that will support an active supporting function, including access for the mobility challenged persons.

Teaching:

The **Teaching** concept is clearly identified in the Great Commission of Jesus to "...**go and make disciples of all nations....**" (Matthew Chapter 28 verse 18-20). This "telling" can also be defined as "Teaching" others about the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Given these three basic **Function** Goals, it seems to me it is incumbent upon us to ensure our efforts to restore the sanctuary should consider these three goals as a basis. Please keep in mind I find very little discussion in the Bible about "Legacy" being a key factor to consider. To be sure, Legacy is an important consideration for remembering the Prophets and their messages, but that seems to be accomplished quite well in the Bible. There is no need for us to embellish beyond the scriptural references. What does seem important is to reach forward to **WHORSHIP, SERVE,** and **TEACH** others about God's Word.

My personal review is that we do a reasonably good job with our WORSHIP and SERVICE efforts, but I do not see a similar strong effort regarding “TEACHING” the Good news. We have a couple of ladies who plan a meaningful Sunday School curriculum each week for the children, and we have a couple of adult Sunday School or Bible Study classes that meet periodically, but there is very little push as a part of a goal-driven, church-wide education program. It may be that without this educational commitment we are much like a “three-legged stool” with only two legs.

What does all of this mean for the sanctuary restoration program?

Well, it could mean we make a commitment to opening up the sanctuary to more than one worship service. For example, in 2020 we could add a Saturday evening service with a goal of attracting a younger group of people.

We could enhance East Hall so that people will have additional space for their Sunday School activities in addition to Duff Hall. Of course, we would need to assure that accessible access is provided.

We could modernize the existing sanctuary along the lines of the current schematic design, with enhanced lighting and sound systems that would be designed for use by multiple services, including both Traditional and Contemporary services.

Of course, these options will require a larger commitment to the church other than just physical adjustments to the facility. We would need more leaders and people dedicated to

the success of the new approach. This would not happen quickly, but a start and a commitment would be a way to begin. We may need to contact the UMC District and Conferences offices to begin the process of employing the new pastors when Ken retires. We need pastoral leadership willing to commit to our potential new focus on Function.

Money

Whenever projects such as those explained herein are discussed, the inevitable subject of money is raised. Specifically, **“How are we going to pay for such a project?”** We currently estimate it will cost something more than \$560,000 to perform the various restoration items being considered. Where is this money going to come from? My answer today is, **“I DO NOT KNOW.”** I say this not out of a sense of fear and resignation but, rather, out of a sense of hopeful anticipation, based in large part on what I read in the Bible.

Do you believe Noah had a hidden stash of money to pay for the construction of the “Boat”?

Do you believe Moses had a hidden stash of money to pay for the Tabernacle?

Do you believe the Disciples had a hidden wallet of money to pay for the food to feed the 5,000+?

In all three cases the answer is **NO!** The people did not know from where the financial resource was coming but they did know – **IT WAS GOD'S PLAN TO PERFORM THESE TASKS, AND GOD WOULD SUPPLY WHATEVER THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES COULD NOT PROVIDE.**

Noah had no idea how to procure materials and build a boat of any size, not to mention one

that would house a large number of animals and humans for over a year in a sea of troubled waters. Noah just started the work on God's plan, and God made up for what Noah did not know or have.

Moses did not know how to build the Tabernacle, but God made up the difference. When the Israelites left Egypt, God told the people to take gold, silver and other luxury items from the Egyptian neighbors. The Israelite's did not know at that time why they should take this material, but God knew. This material was what the Israelite's used to build God's Tabernacle. Also, God imparted certain skills and construction wisdom to specific people, who then led the Israelite's to construct what they would not normally know how to build.

In John 6 we read about how Jesus tested the disciples by asking Philip where they could buy bread to feed the 5,000 men plus others. Phillip said if they worked for months they would not earn enough to feed the crowd. There were only 5 loaves and 2 fish available to them, and, therefore, there was no way they could get enough money to pay for the feeding of such a large crowd. Then Jesus did two things: First, He told the people to "Sit Down"! Then Jesus thanked God for the 5 loaves and 2 fish and distributed the food to all the people, eventually ending up with 12 baskets of leftovers after the feeding was completed!

Do you believe these stories, in either a literal or figurative manner? What is present in all three examples that allowed for success? I suggest to you the overall key to success was in the people doing what God wanted them to do. In all three cases it is God and His believers working together to make the miracles happen.

What Function does God want Salem to perform? If we do not know, how do we find out?

Throughout the Bible, how do people find out what God wants them to do? – They talk to God – They PRAY! I suggest for Salem to know what God wants them to do with the sanctuary we must come together and ask God through prayer. I suggest under the leadership of our pastor the congregation should come together in a church-wide prayer session and ask God for guidance. We then ask the Ad Council to help implement God's response in whatever time frame or manner God speaks to us. The Bible tells me that if we proceed to do what God wants us to do then God will cause any shortfall of ours to be covered by His Grace.

DO YOU BELIEVE THIS TO BE TRUE?

Of course, all of this is just my thoughts and is not worth much if the congregation wants to go another direction. However, I suggest before we spend any significant money on any updating of the sanctuary and East Hall that we determine what FUNCTION God wants us to achieve. I suggest we must pray individually as well as together and then share responses we receive with each other and the Ad Council members. Then, the Ad Council can take the God inspired ideas and bring them together in a coordinated plan to accomplish what God wants. The Trustees can take the coordinated plan of the Ad Council and proceed to implement the plan. But it all begins with the congregation -you-asking for God's help.

Conclusion:

As I mentioned earlier, the steps I have suggested, or any others that may be considered, must go through the Administrative Council. It is this group that is responsible for the “FUNCTION” programs of the Church. The TRUSTEES would then be given the opportunity

by the Ad Council to provide the “FORM” to support the FUNCTIONS. I, therefore, suggest that we all talk with God and share our subsequent response with the AD Council members. This is what I see from Scriptures we must do.

To coin a phrase, “The church is not the sanctuary, the church is not east hall, and the church is not a resting place. The church is you, the PEOPLE.”

THIS IS YOUR CHURCH, SO PLEASE LET THE AD COUNCIL MEMBERS KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS REGARDING THE BASIC FUNCTIONS YOU WANT TO BE SUPPORTED BY THE RESTORATION PROCESS.

Have a Great Day and Enjoy Life!

Terry