

# **Richland Lutheran Church Facilities Strategic Plan**



**Prepared by:**  
*The RLC Facilities Building Committee*

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## **Richland Lutheran Church**

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## Preface – If Walls Could Talk



Richland Lutheran Church (RLC) has a rich and storied history. From the very beginning, our congregation recognized the need for facilities to support ministries. Within the first two years of our existence we met in four different facilities – the old Lewis and Clark Grade School, the old Methodist Church, Richland High School, and the Vale Grange Hall (which became our first permanent Sanctuary). Now, over seventy years later, we reflect on all our congregation has witnessed at RLC.

Our facilities and ministries have been growing since our incorporation as a church in 1946. RLC is the place we meet to worship, pray, sing, learn, grow in faith, serve others, plan, welcome guests, and commune with one another. In all these ways, we glorify and praise our gracious God.

What stories would our walls share with us, if they could talk?

Would they reminisce about buffets held in the basement and Sunday school classes held behind curtained doors in our first Sanctuary? Or would they remember worship services, weddings, and baptisms held in our temporary, second Sanctuary – the Prince of Peace?

Would our walls recount church planning sessions that grew a regional Hospice program, a Luther Senior Center, a Shalom Ecumenical Center, and a Good News Media Ministry? Or would they pay tribute to Vacation Bible Schools, first communions, and youth ‘lock-ins’ held in our facilities?

Would our walls recall discussions heard in adult Bible study classes, staff meetings, and Council meetings? Or would they mimic the joyful sounds of children playing in our nursery?

Would our walls echo the heartfelt music, prayers, and sermons heard in our existing Sanctuary? Or would they name all the members and visitors who found faith, hope, and love in our worship services?

Would our walls radiate the warmth of quilts and other hand-made items lovingly crafted in our Prince of Peace for those in need of comfort? Or would they describe the compassion of our food pantry?

Would our walls thank the volunteers who meet weekly to assemble bulletins? Or would they honor those who participate in men’s and women’s ministry events held in our facilities?

Would our walls express appreciation for the space we make available to Alcoholics Anonymous? Or would they laud us for the outreach to boys with limited exposure to faith through RLC’s Scout units?

God has blessed RLC. There is so much our walls could say about our facilities and the ministries they have supported over the past 70 years.

As we think of these stories, we wonder what stories our walls will tell about our ministries 70 years from now. Will they be of Lutheran Congregations in Ministry for Christ (LCMC) events, Christian concerts, Walks with Christ, or seminars for RLC congregants and others? Will they be of programs that help dependent people become self-sufficient or of RLC pre-schools, after-school schools, or summer schools? Whatever the answer, God has a plan for us. We just need to be obedient and willing to follow Him.

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***Jeremiah 29:11 - “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”***

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## Introduction

Because God wants us to worship Him as a corporate body, and not just individually, sanctuaries and related church facilities play a vital role in our spiritual lives. They provide the physical space for corporate worship, and they assist us in fulfilling the Great Commission – making disciples and teaching them to obey God’s commandments.

Since the time God led the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land there have been dedicated facilities for making sacrifices, corporate worship and teaching. These included the Tabernacle commanded by God, the magnificent temple built by King Solomon in Jerusalem, and the local synagogues in Jesus’ day where there was regular worship on the Sabbath and where students learned to read, write, and understand the Scriptures.

The earliest Christians in Jerusalem met daily in temple courts to hear the Apostles’ teaching, then met in smaller groups in individual homes for community meals. As persecution began, believers had to meet in private homes rather than the temple but within two centuries the first homes were being remodeled into dedicated church facilities. By 260 AD, dedicated church buildings had become the norm for Christians in Europe and the Middle East. Christians have provided for corporate worship and ministry by building facilities ranging from small churches to magnificent cathedrals for over 17 centuries.

RLC has worshipped in its present sanctuary for fifty years now and used the attached facilities for ministries for almost sixty years. Recognizing that needs change with time and that maintenance costs were growing, the Long Range Planning Committee, led by Pastor Ernst, in 2013 included a goal for facilities in their final report. That goal was to “Ensure the church facilities meet the ongoing ministry needs of our congregation.” The Congregation Council established an Architect Selection Committee to seek a professional firm to develop a concept and cost estimate for meeting ministry needs. The Congregation Council then established a Facilities Building Committee to work with the professional firm to formulate an *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan*.



Using input from the congregation, the Facilities Building Committee met with church staff and the Congregation Council Executive Committee to rank our ministry facility objectives. These were then transmitted to our architect to obtain professional guidance on how best to meet those objectives. The architect provided two alternatives for meeting these objectives; a thorough remodeling and partial expansion of our current facilities, or a complete rebuilding of our facilities. In either case, the sanctuary

was to be maintained. The congregation chose to pursue the rebuilding option as the basis of the *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan*.

This report provides the recommendations of the Facilities Building Committee for achieving the goal of the *Long Range Plan: Our Guide for today, Our Vision for Tomorrow* approved by the congregation. Using actual RLC maintenance cost records it concludes that our current facilities are deteriorating at an accelerating rate resulting in increasing future costs for maintenance. The review of current building code requirements identified areas where we are not providing safety for our congregation from the dangers of fire or assisting members with physical handicaps from easily and safely using our facilities. The review of our individual facility spaces demonstrated that we do not always have the right sized and shaped spaces. For instance, a long narrow room may have a lot of square footage but it does not meet the needs for an adult classroom. Bathroom capacity is clearly inadequate.

This *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* establishes the detailed rationale for renewing Richland Lutheran Church facilities and describes how RLC can acquire new facilities to support current and future ministries. The work of Meier Architecture and Engineering (Meier) is summarized in the Appendix of this document and incorporated throughout the *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan*.

Recognizing that it may take several years for funding to become available, this *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* also provides proposed actions to extend the life of the facility in the interim so that we may continue to meet the needs of our current ministries and provide for the safety of our members while we prepare ourselves to replace our facility.

This *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* is intended to be led by God. Accordingly, no time tables or precise targets or milestones are presented. At RLC, we praise God for what he has given us, signs of his gracious love. We offer these resources, through our ministries, for the sake of him who offered himself for us.

Thus, a complete strategy is provided for enabling RLC to pursue its ministries and realize its vision of making Jesus Christ known to all people and advancing His Kingdom. As such, this document is divided into two main parts:

- Justification
- Strategy for Rebuilding RLC Facilities

## **JUSTIFICATION**

## Justification

The rationale for renewing RLC facilities is fivefold. Space, condition, safety, accessibility, and modernization issues all contribute to the need to renew RLC facilities. This section addresses each of the five factors, in terms of their current state and deficiencies/shortfalls that keep us from our desired goal – RLC facilities that better meet the needs of our current and future ministries.

RLC's facilities are all about enabling ministries to advance God's Kingdom. It is good stewardship to strive to conduct existing ministries more effectively, while seeking to do more/new ministries.

## Space

Our facilities are integral to our ministries. If ministry is defined as anything that leads people to Christ and glorifies Him, it can easily be said that our facilities serve as instruments of ministry.

Our facilities witness to passersby and visitors who we are and what we value. Our unusual architecture, our grounds, our signs announcing services and special events, our stained glass windows, our interiors, our crosses and images of Jesus, our Bibles and song books all glorify God and lead people to Him.

Unlike some historic churches and cathedrals built with large, open rooms that are still working well for their congregations, our fellowship and education wings were built with many small, narrow spaces that have been constraining our ministries for quite a while. It is time to alleviate our space issues with larger and better-designed facilities. More and better configured space is necessary to improve support of our current and future ministries and increase their effectiveness. The following examples underscore this.

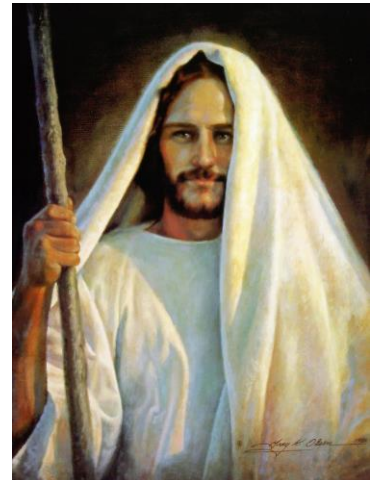
Our Narthex is small and dark, and our main entrance has ceased to be readily identifiable to visitors. A lighter, more open, and more functional Narthex would be more inviting and welcoming to guests.

Our Sacristy isn't much bigger than a closet. Only two people can work in the Sacristy at a time. There is no counter space for setting up communion trays and the other objects we place on our altar. There is very little storage space. It is nearly impossible to prepare for communion and baptism, simultaneously.

Our food pantry is tiny and poorly situated. To be more functional, it should be larger and more convenient. We have a shortfall of practical table and chair storage throughout our facilities.

Space constraints (including bathrooms) limit our ability to host and conduct large events at RLC. The storage and rehearsal space dedicated to the choir is limited.

RLC's Vacation Bible School affords community children the chance to hear the Word of God -- in some instances, for the first time. We have seen the joy on children's faces as they point out Jesus to their parents, when walking through our hallways. Some parents have begun attending RLC, because of their children's participation. We *are* making a difference with our Vacation Bible Schools. This ministry could certainly use better configured space and more of it, as VBS continues to grow.



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***Mark 10:14 - "...He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'"***

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Our Sewing Bees Ministry produces quilts that soothe veterans, comfort residents of nursing homes, and warm the less fortunate, worldwide. We are all aware of the dedication and hard work associated with this benevolent ministry when we see the beautiful quilts displayed in the Sanctuary, ready for our blessings. Many of us are not aware of the crowded conditions under which the members of this ministry function. They could really use more and different space than is currently available to them.



Good News Media Ministry is another very important RLC ministry that could use more and different space to facilitate its effectiveness. From cramped quarters, GNMM produces programs that send Christ's words of faith, hope, and love to people throughout the world. RLC's GNMM television segment is the longest-running Sunday program on ABC affiliates KAPP-TV (Yakima) and KVEW-TV (Tri-Cities). GNMM broadcasts allow those beyond our walls to participate in worship services with us – members of our congregation who cannot get to church (the elderly, the ill, the disabled, those on travel, those on missions, and those without transportation), Christians who do not belong to our church, and non-Christians who may be hearing Christ's Words for the very first time. In 2015, about 15,000 minutes of GNMM YouTube videos were watched nationally (by west coast viewers from Washington to California and east coast viewers as far away as Florida). Internationally, people from Jordan, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Turkey, and other countries watched our services. Some of the greatest Christian disciples of this era are emerging from the least likely of world locations through efforts like Good News Media Ministry.

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***2 Corinthians 5:20 - "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."***

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RLC ministries are doing an admirable job in existing facilities, but it is clear to many that the effectiveness of our current ministries is limited by our existing facilities. As RLC seeks to grow in its discipleship, it is important to ensure that space constraints do not hinder existing ministry expansion and new ministry growth – such as hosting Christian events that require more space (e.g., Bible Study Fellowship, Walk With Christ retreats, and large conferences).



Space is essential for effectively carrying out ministry, and space is RLC’s greatest deficiency. Meier performed a programming analysis to define the optimal space requirements that best suit our congregation and the effectiveness of our ministries. A comparison between the programming analysis and the current state of our facilities (shown below) reveals our shortfalls (gaps).

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Existing (square feet)</b>	<b>Programmed** (square feet)</b>	<b>Shortfall (Gap) (square feet)</b>
Narthex	1900	3000	1100
Restrooms	467	800	333
Offices (square feet)	1410	1500	90
Offices (Number)	9	11	2
Food Pantry	50	200	150
Shop/Maintenance	600	800	200
Nursery	430	600	170
Preschool	1216	1200	(-16)
Elementary	1352	1600	248
Children's Chapel	242	242	0
Junior High Room	362	600	238
High School Room	490	1200	710
Music	380	600	220
Multi-Purpose	1521	1521	0
Adult Meeting and Class	816	1600	784
Media Resource*	0	400	67
Kitchen	432	700	268
Fellowship	3024	4000	976
Education Storage	100	400	300
Individual Micro Mini Storage†	312	500	188
Parking (Number of spaces)	103	125 (code: 105)	22

\* Existing resource room is counted under adult meeting room (Friendship Room)

† Only existing is for Quilters and Scouts

\*\* Ideal sizing (reference Meier Strategic Plan Report an Appendix to this document)

## Condition

The following story is based on a true situation at one of Oxford University’s oldest colleges – New College, founded in 1379.

In 14th century England a chapel was built with a vaulted roof supported by huge oak beams. Seven hundred years later, the beams had so deteriorated that the roof was in danger of collapsing. The building required extensive renovation, including replacement of the oak beams. Those repairing the building did not know where they would find replacement beams of the size and quality available to the original builders – or how they could afford them, even if they could find them. The answer lay right outside the chapel doors. The original builders had known that at some point far in the future, the structure would need new oak beams, so they planted acorns in the church yard. Over the centuries, a grove of oak trees had grown to full maturity.

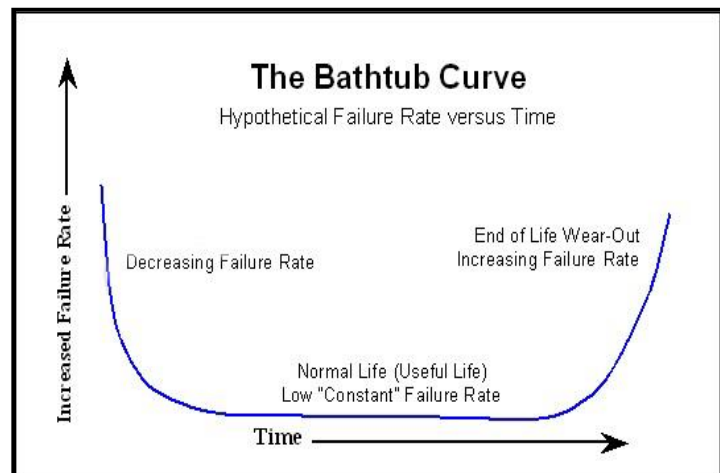
This story serves as a reminder of the importance of forward planning. What the original builders in the story understood is that eventually all things deteriorate – and they planned for the time when new oak beams would be needed. RLC also needs to plan for the deterioration of our facilities. It is only a matter of time before the deterioration of our facilities becomes critical and affects the conduct of our ministries.

Our existing facilities are approaching or have exceeded their useful life. They have housed us well for decades, but that will change at an increasingly costly rate in the near future. We are at the point of exceeding the design life of many facility systems. Our heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system fails so regularly, a staff member once joked that he saw repair workers in our church more frequently than some parishioners!

The cost of maintaining our existing facilities will soon exceed the cost of remodeling or rebuilding them. Poor facility conditions can negatively impact RLC ministries by diverting resources to address failures – inefficient operations and diminished functionality. To estimate *when* facility deterioration will become critical, the Facilities Building Committee gathered actual RLC costs for repair and replacement of failing components over the last 15 years.

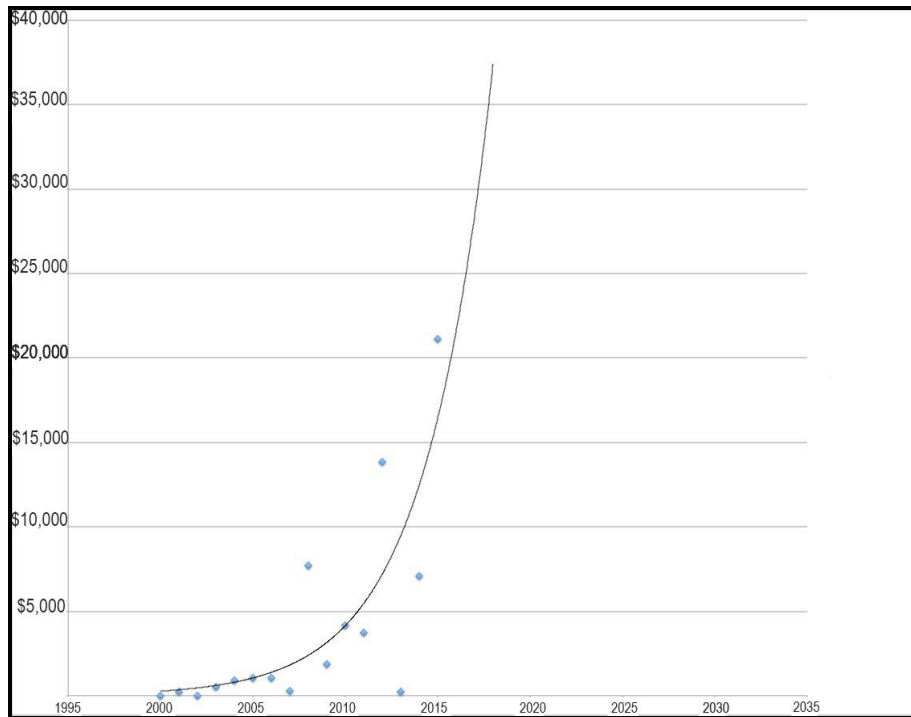
The failure rate of complex systems (in buildings, cars, computers, airplanes, and the like) is typically characterized by a ‘Bathtub Curve.’ This curve has three distinct parts:

- Early failures that are manufacturing or construction blunders. This is what warranties are intended to cover. (‘Decreasing Failure Rate’ in figure)
- Random failures that are infrequent and unpredictable during the normal life of a system. Owners budget small amounts over long periods or insure against these types of failures. (‘Normal Life/Useful Life, Low Constant Failure Rate’ in figure)



- End-of-life failures, in which complex and interrelated system components begin to fail at an exponentially increasing rate. (‘End-of-Life Wear-Out, Increasing Failure Rate’ in figure)

When 15 years of *actual* RLC annual cost data are plotted against time, our curve looks like this:



**RLC Cost Data Plotted Over Time**

It is evident that RLC facilities are in the end-of-life portion of the bathtub curve. The curve that is fit to our data can be projected forward to predict likely future costs. Extrapolating this curve to estimate annual repair and replacement costs into the future, the curve shows that costs will likely be approaching about \$30,000/year in 2017, will exceed \$30,000/year in 2018, and will grow exponentially from there.

The prudent time to act is now. If we do not begin to gather resources *now* for replacing failing facilities, in the future we will be simultaneously paying high repair expenses *and* trying to gather replacement resources.

**Safety**

Since our facilities were built, building safety codes have changed considerably. New facilities are necessary to improve safety. Our uneven parking lot and lack of a fire suppression system are examples of safety concerns facing our facilities. As our members age, our parking lot becomes harder for them to negotiate. The absence of a fire suppression system grows increasingly worrisome as time goes by.

**Accessibility**

Accessibility is necessary for effective ministry. Curbing outside the building and stairs inside the building restrict access for elderly and disabled parishioners. We could really use more and better configured exits to relieve congestion and improve traffic flow in the Narthex and in our hallways.

**Modernization**

Modernization is necessary to better fulfill our ministries. Electronic technology has evolved significantly and energy efficiency (e.g., insulation, LED lighting) has improved greatly since our facilities were built.

**STRATEGY FOR REBUILDING RLC FACILITIES**

## Methodology

The RLC congregation approved the *Long Range Plan: Our Guide for Today, Our Vision for Tomorrow* in 2013, as well as an update to the plan in 2014. RLC's Long Range Plan re-establishes the fundamental role of the church in our lives and provides a set of objectives for congregants to work toward. Objective 6 of the Long Range Plan called for developing an *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* to ensure our facilities continue to meet the needs of our ministries.

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***Long Range Plan: Our Guide for today, Our Vision for Tomorrow, Objective 6:***

***“Use Our Resources to Advance God’s Kingdom.***

***Facilities – Ensure the church facilities meet the ongoing ministry needs of our congregation.***

***Submit a Facilities Strategic Plan and a supporting funding plan to the congregation for approval...”***

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In order to develop a facilities strategic plan, it is necessary to understand the direction and magnitude of the undertaking. So immediately following the approval of the RLC Long Range Plan, a separate decision was made by the congregation to hire an independent professional firm with the expertise to tell RLC what it would realistically take, in terms of size and cost, to ensure that future church facilities would meet the ongoing ministry needs of our congregation.

To determine the direction and magnitude of the undertaking, facility concepts needed to be developed. The facility concepts serve as a *basis for planning only*. They *do not represent final designs* for renewed RLC facilities.

Meier Architecture and Engineering (Meier) was the firm selected. The Meier deliverables consisted of:

- Prioritized church objectives, to form the basis for concept development. (The description of this process and the final concept objectives are included in the *Meier Strategic Plan Report [Meier Report]* which is an Appendix to this *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan*.)
- Record drawings of the existing RLC facilities.
- Two facility concepts representing the two fundamental courses of action: 1) ‘Remodel’ -- modifying our current facilities, and 2) ‘Rebuild’ – removing our current facilities and replacing them with new facilities.

A phasing plan and rough-order-of-magnitude (ROM) cost estimate was required for each facility concept.

(The facility concepts are required to establish the magnitude of the endeavor. They are not intended to precisely represent what the facility will look like at the end of the ‘Rebuild.’)

- A strategic plan report based on the congregation’s selected path forward. (The *Meier Report*, which serves as the basis of this *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan*, is an Appendix to this document.)

Following the development of the two facility concepts (which are intended only for planning purposes, and do not represent what the final design will be), the Facilities Building Committee presented Meier’s ‘Remodel’ and ‘Rebuild’ information at four workshops in July 2015. The four workshops were repeated in August 2015.

In the workshops, members of the congregation learned that in the two facility concepts there are different possibilities to address the criteria to meet our ministry needs. The workshops stressed that the facility concepts were to be used for planning purposes only and they do not represent the final design of new facilities.

The Remodel Concept had a lower estimated cost. However, due to facility limitations this concept could not meet all 22 of RLC’s prioritized concept objectives.

The Rebuild Concept had a higher estimated cost, but it was a better match for our 22 concept objectives. Further, the Rebuild Concept had less impact on ongoing church ministry activities during construction, when compared to the Remodel Concept.

Again, the facility concepts are only ideas for addressing the 22 prioritized concept criteria. RLC’s final design will be based on the congregation’s final rebuild criteria and could look very different

At an August 30, 2015, Special Congregational Meeting, the RLC congregation decided by a significant margin that the *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* should explore the Rebuild path forward. This action did not obligate the RLC congregation to any specific solution, as there are a range of options within the general Rebuild direction.

The Facilities Building Committee began developing the *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* knowing there was consensus among the RLC staff, leadership team, and congregation that no significant changes would be made to the appearance of the Sanctuary. Only changes to improve safety, function, and/or to meet current building codes would be considered for the Sanctuary.

A complete description of the Meier Rebuild Concept (which represents only one idea for replacing our current facilities by rebuilding, and does not represent what the final facilities will look like) is contained in the *Meier Report* in the Appendix of this document. This concept includes about 41,670 square feet of space. Its rough order of magnitude cost is estimated at \$9,690,669.

To minimize the impact of construction on church ministries, Meier included in the Rebuild Concept a phased construction sequence with a 28-month duration. Other phased construction schedules are possible; though the necessity for bringing present facilities up to code once work begins does limit the total time for construction.

The proposed phased construction scheme, along with the timing of costs, is described in the *Meier Report* in the Appendix of this document and is factored into the plan described below.

This *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* anticipates a future of growth for RLC. It is anticipated that this will take time to happen, and RLC needs to use this time wisely to put itself in a position to be able to take action as soon as RLC has the wherewithal to undertake the endeavor to replace its facilities. RLC cannot afford to let its facilities hinder eventual ministry growth.

As institutional-grade buildings, it is important for RLC to avoid compromising quality. It is imperative that RLC *exclude* modular construction approaches due to the limited life and durability issues that are typical of this construction approach.

## **Foundation – Principles for Carrying Out This Endeavor**

If we are to succeed in rebuilding RLC facilities, we must be practical, reasonable, and realistic in our approach. We must also manage and minimize risk in as many of the following ways as possible.<sup>1</sup>

1. Spend time in prayer.
2. Follow a logical process.
3. Choose the right leader and team.

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<sup>1</sup> [Ministry Today, “Before You Build,”](#) Walsh, Brian, May 1, 2002.

4. Think ‘outwardly’ not ‘inwardly’ in defining the final design. The purpose of a church building is to enable ministries to bring people to Christ through the Holy Spirit. A new building should serve a purpose in the community, not just be more comfortable for those in the church.
5. Count costs.
6. Know parameters. Plan the project within land constraints, size, and building coverage restrictions. Build and borrow within means.
7. Implement in phases.
8. Avoid ‘trendy’ designs.
9. Let professionals do their jobs.
10. Choose the right delivery system. Low bid does not always mean the best value. Choose a trusted company and put a system in place to monitor progress.
11. Take the time required.
12. Have realistic expectations.
13. Think long-term.
14. Be flexible.
15. Have a contingency plan.

In addition to these principles, the RLC congregation must strive to enable RLC ministries in a way that honors our values:

- We value **spirituality** and spiritual things (having to do with things of the spirit and spiritual nature) as opposed to living for temporal, earthly, or human things (Colossians 3:1-5)
- We value **love** in the way we relate to and interact with God and others (Luke 10:27)
- We value **truth** and honesty spoken and lived in a loving environment (Ephesians 4:25)
- We value **accountability** between one another when done with care, trust, and respect (Galatians 6:1-2)
- We value **integrity** in all we become and do (Titus 2:6-8)

In carrying out this *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan*, we commit to remaining true to our congregational vision (of making Jesus Christ known to all people and advancing His Kingdom) and our congregational mission (of equipping, empowering and encouraging our congregation to live and grow in Biblical Stewardship, Spiritual Transformation, Christian Service, and Worship). In fact, the *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* is intended to ensure that RLC ministries effectively serve these purposes.

We commit to staying focused on our outreach and broad ministries in the community while building new facilities required by our ministries. As a mission church, it will be important to our congregation to maintain resources for ongoing ministries, while securing the means for rebuilding our facilities. The resources required for rebuilding our facilities must be above and beyond the resources devoted to ongoing operations and ministries, so that other ministry opportunities are not lost. At the same time, it will be important to remember that our facilities *are* a ministry that enable our other ministries.

While conducting all aspects of this Plan (e.g., the preparation, planning, and construction of new facilities), we commit to minimizing any extra effort, workload, or disruption on our congregation and staff. We must recognize that the effort to rebuild our facilities is large and will likely be long term. It will

require tremendous patience, faith, and commitment from each of us. It will mean joyfully pursuing a dream together – even though some of us may not live long enough to see the dream come to fruition.

Developing a final design for replacing our facilities will be an incremental process. If the RLC congregation approves the *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan*, it means that RLC will take the next steps in advancing the Rebuild path forward. The next steps include reaching consensus on the ‘right size’ requirements for current and future ministries.

If the RLC congregation rejects the *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan*, thoughts of rebuilding our facilities will cease. Instead, we will focus on how we can adapt our facilities to meet current and future ministry needs, while budgeting for increasingly costly end-of-life system failure rates.

Either way, there will be several decision points prior to embarking on the multitude of options we can pursue. At each of these decision points we will take all considerations into account -- most importantly, how our facilities will meet our ministry needs.

Nehemiah and the other Israelites rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem worked long and hard toward their goal and saw it come true! How happy they must have been! Other people of God have worked together towards goals that spanned several generations. Many of them died never seeing their goals achieved. They remained faithful and committed throughout their lives, however. It is through the rich history of the Bible that we see evidence of that which they could not.

It is important for us to remember to let God lead the way. To this end, the following plan for securing the necessary resources and implementing the acquisition of new facilities serves as a guide but is not prescriptive. Time frames are left general with only criteria determining next steps.

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***Psalm 127: “Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.”***

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## **Plan for Securing Resources and Attaining New Facilities**

### **Step 1 – Prepare**

As in the story mentioned earlier about the centuries-old New College chapel in England, our congregation probably should have been thinking a long time ago about *when* and *how* we would renew our facilities. As such, we would probably be more comfortable developing plans for rebuilding our facilities today. Nevertheless, we are still in a position to plan for the future of our facilities and avoid a reactionary situation.

The first step in our effort to replace our facilities is to begin preparing ourselves for the Rebuild endeavor. This entails building up financial resources and defining our long-term vision for our ministries (which will drive the design of new facilities) -- while taking actions to extend the life of our existing facilities in the interim.

The Rebuild Concept provided by Meier was intended to give us a general idea of the magnitude of the effort to replace RLC facilities. The concept is only one idea for achieving the objectives of enabling our ministries into the future. The final design will likely be different. The information Meier provided to us gives us a ‘ballpark’ idea of what it will take to replace our facilities and reflects the reality of acquiring new facilities in this day and age.



The extent of the undertaking to secure the funds necessary to remove our existing facilities and build new ones is probably more than any one RLC individual (or group of individuals) could manage. Though RLC congregants will aid in the effort to acquire funds, the overall effort is complex enough to warrant the expertise of a professional fundraiser who would be able to present innovative fundraising approaches to our congregation.

It is clear that accumulating the necessary funds will require multiple approaches, many of which have not been a prominent aspect of the RLC stewardship agenda (e.g., estate planning and ‘crowd funding’ – which is the practice of funding a venture by raising many small amounts of money from a very large number of people, typically via the Internet). Different approaches will help ease the pressure on individual giving.

RLC has employed professional fundraisers in the past. In 1953, our congregation hired Wells of Chicago to help raise funds for our fellowship building. Our goal was \$100,000. Wells promised to raise \$75,000, but helped raise \$149,698. (This is equivalent to over \$1.3M in today’s dollars – 3.52% annual inflation.)

It is easy to be overwhelmed by a large endeavor. As we go forward together with God’s guidance, it will be important for RLC congregants to focus on *incremental* means to surmount the overall challenge of securing funds to remove our existing facilities and build new ones. If the *capacity* of the RLC community is examined, rather than the entirety of the undertaking, it becomes apparent what is possible.

Any large endeavor is manageable with many contributors over time. For example, if 300 RLC ‘giving units’ (e.g., an individual, a couple, or a family) gave just \$33 more each week *on average* (i.e., some would give more, while others would give less than \$33 additional), RLC could raise more than half a million dollars in one year. It would take planning on the part of each giver to contribute to the extent their means allows, but this example demonstrates how doable it could be for RLC to fund a large capital project. The key would be to focus on the RLC congregation *giving capacity*, not our current or past routine giving performance. Other avenues that RLC can take to raise funds, as mentioned above, will reduce the burden on the individual contributors.

RLC has a history of rising to the occasion to fund large capital projects. Focusing on what 300 active givers could do, rather than the overall climb ahead, is paramount. With the help of a professional fundraiser, members could receive assistance in examining their priorities and planning for their giving.

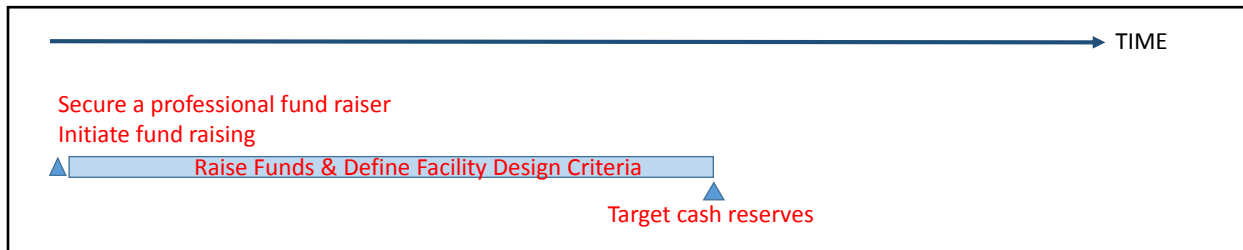
This *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* does not include (or advocate) borrowing funds in the early stages of the project. It does, however, provide an option for borrowing funds towards the end of the project to allow the acquisition to be performed, in its entirety, earlier and at a level the congregation would be comfortable with. RLC has used this approach in other large acquisitions it has completed in the past.

The ‘target cash reserves’ goal shown in Figure 1 (Page 18) is an amount equal to the total estimated cost of the project minus the amount the congregation would feel comfortable borrowing to complete the balance of the project.

The Meier Rebuild Concept information (which is intended for the sole purpose of understanding the rough order of magnitude cost and does not represent a final design) helps provide the basis for establishing a ‘target cash reserves’ dollar amount. Meier’s rough order of magnitude estimate for removing and rebuilding is \$9.7M. If the congregation would be willing to borrow \$1.7M in the future, \$8M would be a reasonable goal for the target cash reserves.

The time it will take our congregation to obtain the target cash reserves dollar amount will depend on the rate at which we acquire funds via fundraising. God will determine the duration.

In fostering a growing church, RLC’s focus will be first on *who we are* then on *what we will do*. RLC needs to take advantage of the discernment period to position itself to take action on replacing its facilities. Being prepared includes understanding the vision for RLC’s ministries. During the fundraising effort, it is recommended that our congregation reflect on our current and future ministries, as we identify what we must have in new facilities. A long-range ministry plan that prayerfully outlines the ministries to which God is calling us is advised. This ministry plan would serve as a guide as we design new RLC facilities in the future. It would help us establish the appropriate size and configuration necessary to carry out current and future ministries, effectively.



**Figure 1 - Initiate Fundraising and Define Facility Design Criteria**

**Extend Life of Existing Facilities**

Richland Lutheran will continue to use its existing facilities until the congregation can build new ones. While RLC is taking action to put itself in a position to replace existing facilities, we will continue to use our *existing annual budget dedicated to general maintenance costs* to maintain our facilities. It is recognized that the longer we occupy our existing facilities, and the further we progress along the Bathtub Curve (pages 10-11), the more rapidly our upkeep costs will increase.

In addition to the *existing general maintenance budget*, we will also need to set aside funds in a *new budget account dedicated to making strategic facility life-extension actions*.

As we save for our new facilities, the funds we spend on our existing facilities will be limited to critical needs necessary to extend the life of our existing facilities. As such, only the ‘Facility Condition’ need (described on page 10 of this *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan*) will be partially addressed going forward. Space, Safety, Accessibility, and Modernization needs (e.g., efficiency improvements) will continue to await a comprehensive solution. Life-extension activities will not provide remodeling or other similar improvements. The life-extension expenditures will be considered short-term fixes until we can replace our facilities with new ones. To be good stewards of God’s precious resources, expenditures on existing facilities should be minimized, so as to not sink a lot of money into facilities that we plan to replace. We need to be focused on saving money for more lasting and permanent facilities.

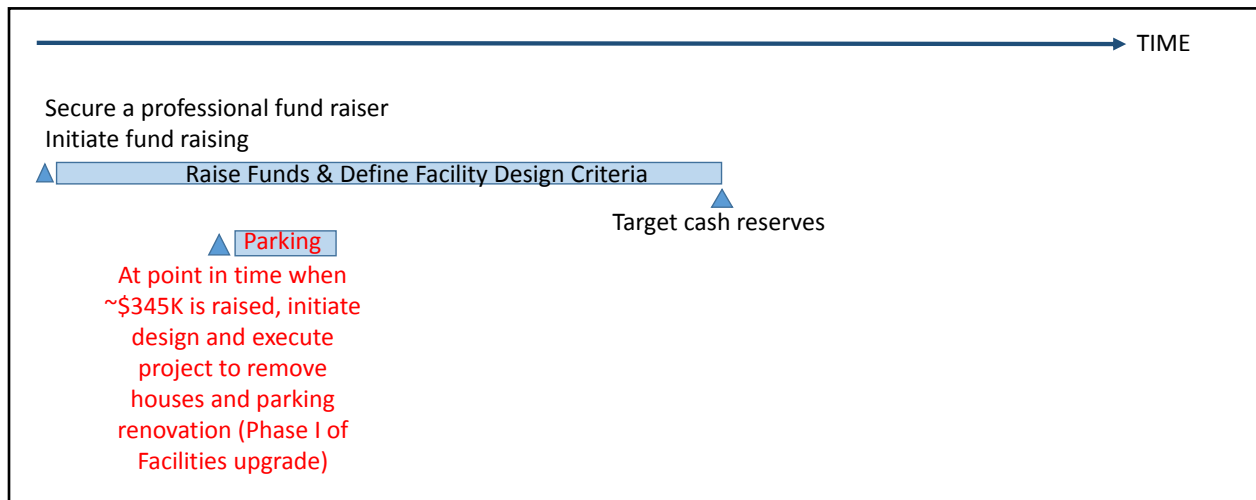
To develop a meaningful life-extension plan, specialized expertise and capability is required to evaluate the RLC facility systems. Richland Lutheran Church does not have the ‘in-house’ expertise to accomplish this task, so the Facilities Building Committee advocates hiring a professional firm to complete a detailed condition assessment. Such an assessment would likely need to be done with some frequency, as conditions in an aging facility change over time. The Facilities Building Committee recommends that detailed life-extension planning be done on an annual basis.

The professional assessment will give RLC a basis for budgeting, but there will still be a high degree of uncertainty in costs and prioritization. Contractor costs vary by season of the year, costs escalate with time, unforeseen complications arise when working in aging facilities, and our best guesses could be laid

to rest by unforeseen and/or untimely facility failures. It is important to note that life-extension planning uncertainties correlate with the depth of the condition assessment, and most RLC system vulnerabilities are hidden below or behind surfaces.

### Step 2 – Remove Houses and Renovate Parking

When the RLC congregation has raised approximately \$345K, we will initiate and implement a design for removing the ancillary houses and renovating the parking area (see Figure 2).

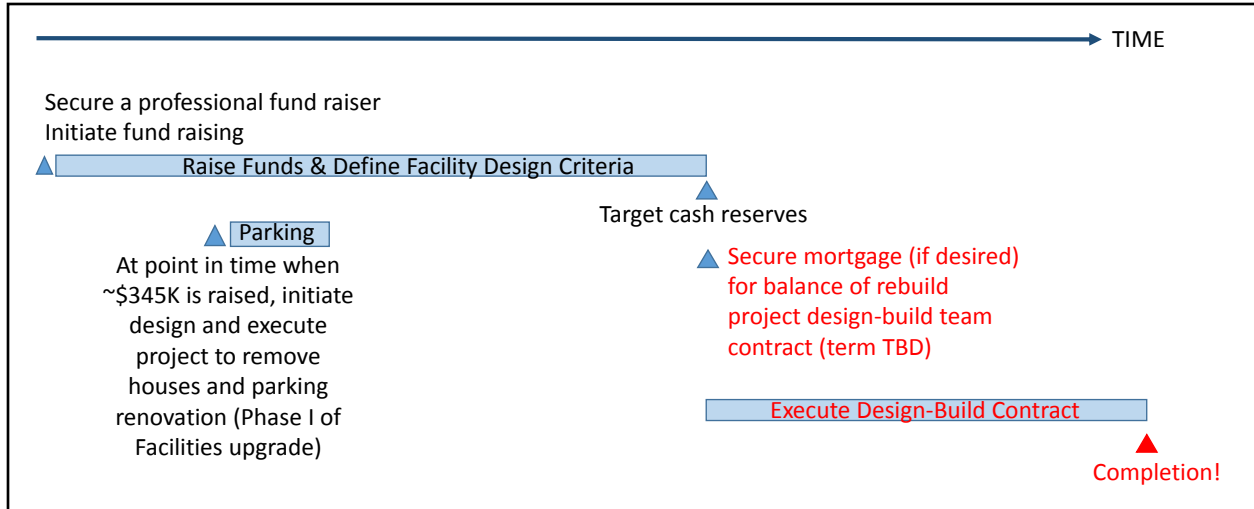


**Figure 2 - Remove Houses and Renovate Parking**

### Step 3 – Initiate Acquisition of New Facilities

Two acquisition approaches can be considered for obtaining new facilities.

1. The 'Design-Bid-Build' approach separates the design and construction services into two separate contract solicitations – design followed by construction. In this process, there is more control over the development of the design, but the schedule is more elongated and costs can be higher.
2. The 'Design-Build' approach comprises a single solicitation for a design/construction team. The Design-Build approach is most attractive for maximizing what is achievable in the design requirements; and the schedule is often shortened, because construction can begin prior to the design being completed. This approach lends itself better to a cost-constrained acquisition. However, the Design-Build approach requires well-defined specifications; and requirements and can be risky, in terms of schedule delays.



**Figure 3 - Secure Funds and Initiate Design-Build Contract**

This *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* is based on a Design-Build approach. Using the long-range ministry plan, the congregation will develop definitive design criteria for new facilities that support its ministries. A solicitation will be issued to design-construction teams to acquire the new facilities. Once bids are received, any borrowed funds can be secured and the contract awarded (see Figure 3).

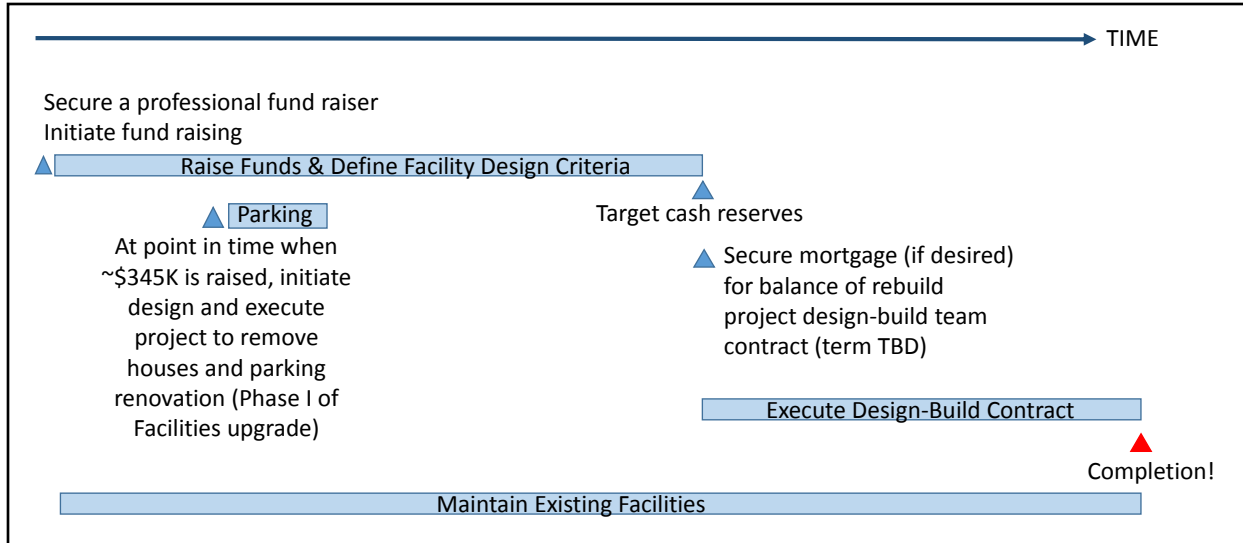
### Summary

The process of acquiring new facilities involves many steps and several phases (see Figure 4). An integral aspect of the *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* is the congregation’s involvement and approval at major decision points throughout the life of the project.

In the steps that follow, major decision points are defined by triangles in the accompanying diagrams. Additional interim decision points could be added, as appropriate, during project definition. These decision points will be addressed in congregational meetings, at the appropriate time. The decision points include:

- Initiating fundraising
- Setting the dollar amount for target cash reserves (this includes considering how much, if any, we would be willing to borrow)
- Expending funds to initiate and implement the design for removing our ancillary houses and renovating our parking area
- Developing and accepting new facilities design criteria
- Awarding the Design-Build contract for new facilities
- Securing a mortgage

During the implementation of the *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan*, RLC will continue operating in its existing facilities. This will require the ongoing upkeep of the facilities.



**Figure 4 - Complete Plan for Removing and Replacing RLC Facilities**

The proposed funding plan for rebuilding our Narthex and fellowship and education wings is practical, reasonable, and realistic in its approach. It manages and minimizes risk. It affords our congregation the opportunity to raise funds before implementing design and construction.

Removing our ancillary houses and renovating our parking area approximately one year after implementing the *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* will benefit our congregation, greatly. First and foremost, it will make our property safer and easier to navigate for our aging members and those with disabilities. It will also reduce our liabilities and maintenance costs. Any savings realized would reduce our general operating budget.

Once our new facilities are completed, we will be able to move into them and begin removing our existing facilities. Again, the impact to our ministries would be minimal, using this approach. It is possible for this plan to be implemented within a seven-year period.

Many people are uneasy with major changes, and that is understandable. There is comfort in consistency, regularity, and uniformity.

Our RLC body of believers has been comfortable for a long time. It is time for us to step out in faith to better enable RLC ministries and advance God’s Kingdom. The *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan*, (including the *Meier Report*, which is an Appendix to this document), allows for the facilities acquisition process to be carried out at a pace that reduces the stress on our congregation, while steadily completing activities that move us along the path to new facilities.

The periods of high activity would be colorful and invigorating, filled with a little drama and lots of excitement. The interim periods would allow us time to catch our breath, as we think and plan and prepare. But we must go forth together, if our Church is to remain healthy. If we don’t change and grow, our church will continue to decline.

In “10 Problems of a Dying Church (and How to Fix Them),” Theresa Cho says after all the studies have been done and the experts consulted, it takes a leap of faith and commitment from a congregation to make the changes that turn a steady decline around.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [Sojourners, “10 Problems of a Dying Church \(and How to Fix Them\),”](#) Cho, Theresa, June 13, 2011.

## Next Steps

First and foremost, each RLC member must prayerfully consider where God is leading RLC and determine whether the approach recommended in this *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* best attains the future facilities necessary to meet our ministry needs going forward.

The RLC Facilities Building Committee recommends that the congregation vote to approve the *RLC Facilities Strategic Plan* presented herein, subject to the decision points specified in the Summary section above.

The RLC Facilities Building Committee further recommends that the Congregation Council:

1. Initiate fundraising by forming a facilities fundraising committee that will:
  - Immediately begin promoting giving for life-extension actions and for eventual facilities replacement,
  - Investigate and, within one year, propose to the congregation a recommendation for securing the services of a professional fundraising firm, and
  - Determine and propose to the congregation (at the same time as the professional fundraising services recommendation) a recommendation for the target cash reserves that will be needed to acquire new facilities (this includes considering RLC's willingness to borrow funds).
2. Create, in the annual budget, a new account for facility life-extension actions, and continue to build the existing capital fund for facilities replacement.
3. Discuss the feasibility of a professional facilities condition assessment that would determine what life-extension actions are needed to ensure RLC ministries continue to be enabled while we prepare to replace our facilities.
4. Develop a long-range vision for ministry facility usage that will serve as a basis for designing future RLC facilities

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***“In the end, after all the study has been done, the congregation has been surveyed, and the experts have been consulted, it will take a leap of faith and a commitment to see change through. If a congregation is not willing to take a chance on what could be, then all that is left is to maintain a steady decline.”***

***Theresa Cho***  
***McCormick Theological Seminary Graduate with awards in Preaching and Theology***

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