

More follow-up from the informational meeting held on April 18, 2021

The following is part of an email from Kathy to one of our members. Kathy is a former moderator of our church. She is now living in Mesquite and has been following our discussions on the church building. Having been in many leadership positions at our church, she is keenly aware of the difficult, emotional decisions we are facing and wanted to share some of her observations.

From: Kathy

Date: April 29, 2021 at 4:10:14 PM PDT

Subject: note of encouragement I hope

Hi. I wish we could be discussing this over coffee or a walk on the parkway. We are just starting to get out after the pandemic and it's still weird.

I wanted to share a story from Albuquerque that I hope offers a little encouragement in the church building situation. I'm sending it to you as a friend but you can share if it's appropriate.

I belonged to a group that met every Wednesday to sew quilts for some different shelters. ABQ has a large poor population so it was a never ending job. They met in a conference room, in a strip mall that was owned by a Lutheran Church.

In the strip mall, the Sanctuary was on one end, classrooms behind it, the big conference room was in the middle, the church offices at the end. Other businesses were a fabric shop, a Mexican restaurant, Insurance, a Chinese restaurant and a couple of others. I don't know the history, but the church actually owned the mall and the pastor managed a ground crew. (I'm not advocating this, just want to give you the complete background).

The church originally charged our group rent but when they discovered what we were doing -- they said 'no charge'. They also had major charity projects of their own -- one I can remember was buying wheelchairs with appropriate wheels for third world countries. They were also active in community food drives, coat drives and other things. And it wasn't a huge church.

Well, the day came that the church had saved enough money to build a building outright. The pastor said 'that's fine, build the building, but I will not be moving with you'. He wasn't the only person in the church that felt this way. The reasoning was that they could not continue to do the charity work they

did if they had the expense of a large building and lost the income from the strip mall. They voted to stay and continue to be active in the community.

I go to a Presbyterian church in Mesquite, in a mall complex that also is home to Grace Baptist and a Lutheran church (separate facilities within the same complex). The church isn't large. Mesquite doesn't have a lot of kids so not many class rooms needed. And it's fine. The church is surrounded by different clinics and insurance offices.

I love the windows in the church in Salt Lake, the organ and the wall at the front of the Sanctuary. I even love the scary back stairs behind the organ. It's a great building and I understand the angst of deciding what next steps are. But it is a building and the church is the wonderful people who will be guided to do what's best.

On another note. The UCC church I attended in ABQ was built much like the SLC building, on a sloped lot (meals and meetings on lower level with a walk out, they did have a room for coffee hour next to sanctuary). They attempted to put an elevator in but to do that they would have to bring everything up to current code such as more handicapped bathrooms and updating the fire suppression system. They could afford the elevator, but not the rest which drove the price up 5x. When I left they were attempting to buy a golf cart to transport people from the sanctuary to the lower level.

A friend of mine went to a gorgeous Episcopal church there. It was new, modern and elegant. At that time they were struggling to make payments and the National Organization was helping them.

Building issues seem to be a problem for many churches. Good luck and prayers to all of you working on solutions.

(The rest of the email included personal comments for the recipient).

Take care and tell everyone hi.

Love

Kathy