

Implementing Our Stamford Vision

June 30, 2022 Status Update

For more than a decade, Stanwich Church leadership and members have prayed to discern God's will for how our church can advance His Kingdom in Stamford. Last year, God revealed his plans to us through the provision of 252 Atlantic Street, a generous congregation and a dedicated team of church staff and volunteers working diligently to achieve that vision. *Thank you, Lord, for your guidance and provision.*

Commit your work
to the LORD, and
your plans will be
established.

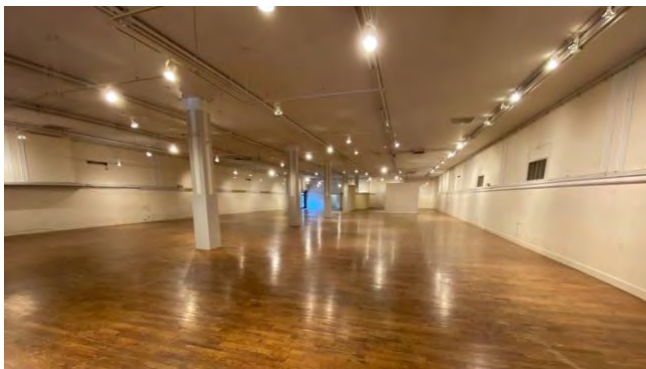
Proverbs 16:3

This past week, we successfully closed on the building! 252 Atlantic Street is now officially the future home of Stanwich – Stamford! Praise be to God!

The building has been fully vacated by the prior owner and we can now begin converting the space into a house of worship. The pictures below provide a snapshot view of the exterior of the building and the 1st floor interior.



The building is located in the heart of downtown Stamford on one of the main North/South arteries through the central business district. It is surrounded by apartments, restaurants and retail outlets and is a short walk from the UCONN campus and dormitories. On street and garage parking is available across the street.



This is what the 1st floor interior of the building looks like today. Plans are being developed to convert the 1st floor of the building into a 3rd space/coffee shop to welcome visitors in the front of the building and a sanctuary that will provide seating for up to 500 worshippers.

But while much has been accomplished, much remains to be done! The purpose of this report is to update the congregation on the status of the Stamford Initiative.

If you have any questions, desire additional information or would like to volunteer your time, talents or treasurer to support the initiative, please reach out to any member of the team or contact Kimberly O'Hara directly at kimberly@stanwichchurch.org.

Background

Keeping the congregation informed of the status of the Stamford initiative is a priority of the leadership team. Prior to the Special Meeting to pray, discuss and vote on the on the path forward, several "Ask the Elders" sessions were conducted to answer questions, seek discernment, and determine a path forward.



Multiple documents have been prepared to communicate the vision and the plans for moving forward. Primary among these was the brochure titled "Implementing the Stamford Vision", which was distributed in February 2022. That document attempted to anticipate and answer key questions about the building, anticipated project costs, the status of certain due diligence activities and the plans for moving forward to fulfill our vision *To Make Christ Known* in the City of Stamford.

Additional background information on the mission, vision and goals for the Stamford initiative can be found on the Stanwich Church website.

This summary report is intended to update the congregation on the progress that has been made through June 30, 2022, and the plans to move forward, complete construction and begin serving the Stamford community.

Due Diligence and Closing

Our offer to the Seller of the building was contingent upon successful completion of several due diligence tasks. These tasks were launched in October 2021 and included a building inspection, an environmental review and identification of other conditions that either needed to be addressed by the Seller or warranted a price adjustment. Throughout this process we relied heavily on the counsel and guidance provided by our realtor, our attorney, and multiple contractors we engaged for advice and expertise.

The due diligence process and resulting contract negotiations with the Seller were difficult and took much longer than anticipated. We had hoped to complete negotiations and close in early 2022. However, once all the issues had been resolved, the Seller then requested additional time to move their extensive inventory of carpets and other items out of the building.

Our due diligence review did result in the identification of a number of issues, most of which had been anticipated. There is old and abandoned equipment that needs to be removed, asbestos that needs to be abated and a roof that needs to be replaced! We solicited proposals from multiple vendors to remediate the identified problems and were successful in negotiating a reduction in the purchase price to address these deferred maintenance items.

As noted above, we closed on the building the week of July 4, 2022.

Owner's Representative

Recognizing the limited construction expertise of members of the church team, we elected to retain the services of an Owner's Representative. An Owner's Representative is a "knowledge worker" who brings extensive construction industry expertise to the church team. The Owner's Representative will help us manage costs, ensure construction quality, and help us keep the project on budget and schedule.

We solicited proposals from three vendors who were recommended to us to serve as our Owner's Representative. We then conducted interviews with each candidate and checked references. The result of this evaluation process was the selection of an Owner's Representative who was brought onboard earlier this year. He has already provided significant value to our preconstruction efforts.

Construction Manager versus General Contractor

With guidance from our Owner's Representative, we concluded that it was in the best interests of the church to obtain the services of a Construction Manager rather than a General Contractor. The Construction Manager will work with the architect and other team members to organize and manage the bid process and provide the Church with a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP). The Construction Manager will then have primary responsibility for organizing and managing the construction effort. Our Owner's Representative will provide oversight over the entire process.

Earlier this year, we solicited proposals from 6 well-known contractors to serve as our Construction Manager. We received 5 proposals, conducted thorough reference checks, and then scheduled the top 3 candidates for interviews. We have some additional evaluation steps to perform at which point we will select a Construction Manager. That decision should be final by mid-July.

"We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, ²¹ for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man." (2 Corinthians 8:20 – 21)

Architectural Plans

As previously communicated to the congregation, we have retained the services of Grandberg and Associates Architects to lead the design effort for the Stamford campus. As you know, Ira Grandberg was the architect for our church home in Greenwich. In addition to the design of the new facility, Ira is also coordinating the multiple reviews with City of Stamford officials to ensure compliance with all City requirements.

With the assistance of an MEP contractor, Ira is completing the initial schematic design for the new church facility. Subsequent phases will include design development and preparation of construction documents. These tasks should be completed in the next 4-months.

If you would like to participate on the design committee to support these critical tasks, please reach out to Pastor Nathan directly!

Timing for Launching Worship Services

Our goal is to launch worship services in the new facility as quickly as possible. However, one of the things we've learned over the past several months is that we need to be cautious:

- **City of Stamford Approvals** - required reviews and approvals from the City of Stamford are difficult to schedule and will likely introduce unanticipated delays in our desired construction timeline. One of our decision criteria for selecting a Construction Manager is their experience scheduling and completing the City's review and approval processes in a timely manner.
- **Supply Chain** – we hear it on the news every night, we hear it from the Construction Manager candidates, and we hear it from others who are performing construction projects – supply chain delays are a real concern. It's unclear at this time how our project may be impacted, but we are cognizant of the issue and will prioritize ordering all long lead-time items as early as possible, so they are available when needed.
- **Phased Implementation** – although no decisions have been made at this point, it is conceivable that we will consider a phased implementation. For example, it may be possible to open the coffee shop before approvals are obtained to launch worship services. Our intent is to be as flexible as possible so we can begin serving the community as soon as possible.

All other things being equal, our goal is to launch full scope operations by **October 2023**. Hopefully, we can begin to serve the community in other ways prior to launching worship services. See the discussion below regarding the Coffee Shop and Community Engagement.

Coffee Shop

Integral to our plan to serve the community and draw the community to Stanwich-Stamford is the coffee shop. As noted in prior documents and discussed at the Special Meeting, our plan is to partner with an experienced restaurateur to run the coffee shop so we can focus our efforts on creating a welcoming and inviting 3rd space to engage with the community.

Launching a coffee shop is a lot of work! A committee has been formed under the leadership of Bob Moss to organize, implement, and oversee the operation of the coffee shop. ***If you would like to participate on the coffee shop committee, please reach out to Bob Moss directly!***

Community Engagement

Last month Pastor Nathan met with the City of Stamford Mayor (Caroline Simmons) and the Special Assistant to the Mayor for Partnerships and Community Engagement (Janeene Freeman) to brief them on our plans to serve the community. Their response was overwhelming enthusiastic!

In addition to worship services, our invitation to the community potentially includes many other activities, including:

- After school chess club for local youth
- Back-to-school backpacking parties
- Christmas party for local youth
- ESL Training
- Small group Bible studies
- Concerts
- Tutoring sessions for youth???
- Other – to be determined!

We are currently trying to assess how best we can engage with the local community. These activities will begin prior to launching worship services. We plan to work closely with City of Stamford officials to understand their view of the community needs and priorities. With assistance from the Missions Committee, we will be providing lists of opportunities for the congregation to get involved.

Budget Update

The earlier referenced “Implementing the Stamford Vision” brochure contained preliminary budget information. Since that document was prepared, we have negotiated a lower purchase price and the Seller has assumed responsibility for certain remedial repairs (e.g., removal of a 6,000-gallon oil tank!). However, we are also learning that prices of some construction items are increasing at an increasing rate! At this time, it is too early to update the construction budget with any certainty. We will update the congregation on estimated construction costs once the architectural design is completed, the Construction Manager is on board and construction documents are completed.

Summary

Church leadership is very excited about the progress made to date and moving forward with construction, community engagement and ultimately launching worship services. Members of the congregation should feel free to reach out at any time to any member of the leadership team to ask questions, provide direction or otherwise engage in the process. While periodic updates will be provided in the Stanwich Church Bulletin, a more formal update will be provided quarterly, or as major milestones are achieved.