

The Vision Team will host its third and final Q&A session this Sunday, May 17 after worship in the Community Center. All church members are invited to attend, especially those who may have missed our last two Q&A sessions.

These sessions are important because the church has scheduled a church-wide conference for Sunday, May 31 after worship to vote on the proposed Vision Plan, entitled **Building Community**. This is your opportunity to learn more about what is being proposed, how you and your family can be involved, and how important it will be to gain support of the congregation to make this vision happen.

So what is **Building Community**? Essentially, the Vision Team is proposing five initiatives, or directives, for the church to pursue over the next 5 to 10 years. These five directives include:

1. Spiritual Discovery
2. Outreach for Growth
3. Staff Development
4. Facilities Improvements
5. Affordable Childcare

The members of the Vision Team have been working over the past two years to formulate these five directives. Here is a brief description:

Spiritual Discovery: Over the past several years, under the leadership of Russ Dean, Park Road has become a hub for Open and Relational Theology dialog. In fall of 2025, we hosted the first of several planned conferences on campus that will explore our Christian faith through the lens of Open and Relational thought. Russ has written several books to date on these ideas, and with funding from our new vision plan, **Building Community**, we plan to host several follow-on conferences in the years ahead. In addition, we intend to invest in Park Road University, our Sunday school offering that will deepen our faith understanding and explore new ways to connect our faith with nature.

Outreach for Growth: This directive will help fund a refresh to our church website's design and functionality, enabling us to reach virtually those potential members who are now in close physical proximity to our campus. We intend to build a podcast studio in our proposed childcare facility (see below) that will be open to all church members, and potentially, to those outside our membership (for a fee). In addition, we intend to fund lunch outings for members and parents night out events for families.

Valuing our Staff: This directive will augment our staff compensation in areas where we currently do not budget. This includes tuition assistance for continuing education, merit bonuses, staff retreats and assistance with existing student loans. Our church is blessed with a talented and engaging staff, and in order to continue to attract and retain them, we needed to augment our church budget to allow our Pastors to creatively compensate them.

Facilities Improvements: The buildings and physical plant on our corner of Park Road and Ashcraft Lane require constant maintenance and renovation. This is simply a necessity for

any church with a history going back 75+ years. In order to be good stewards of the buildings our predecessor families left us, we need to make several improvements on our campus. Most of our current needs relate to roofing and parking lot resurfacing, but there are many smaller projects which require special funding outside our annual budget that the Administration Committee has identified. The **Building Community** plan will fund these projects for the next seven years.

Affordable Childcare: This is the big signature project of the **Building Community** vision. We are proposing to build a new Child Development Center on our campus to replace the one we currently operate (built in 1958). The new building we envision will help us grow our enrollment from 130 to 200 children, ranging from infants to 4-year-olds. We are planning to enroll these 70 additional children from families that would not otherwise afford our tuition (currently set at \$1,500 per month). We are proposing to do so through two new partnerships, one with Care Ring and the other with the YWCA. These partnerships would place children from families in low- to middle-income levels, helping to diversify our enrollment and returning our CDC program to its original mission—to provide quality early childhood development to families of all economic means.

The sum of these five directives is estimated to cost \$9 million. This is a large sum, but the Vision Team is proposing we tackle this challenge through two campaigns. The first is a Congregational Campaign, focused exclusively among our membership with a goal to raise \$3 million. Twenty years ago, a similar Vision process at PRBC raised \$3.0 million to build the Community Center on our campus. We think we can match that goal today.

The second campaign would be a community campaign, enabling us to raise \$6 million or more from outside foundations and endowments. There is a growing demand for childcare throughout Charlotte and the Carolinas, indeed, nationwide. With the rising cost of living in all respects, childcare has now become a luxury item, affordable only to those in the upper middle class. Additionally, the growth of childcare facilities in Charlotte has not kept pace with the city's population growth. There is now a very keen interest among Charlotte's philanthropic community to fund projects that help address affordable childcare, projects just like the one we are proposing at Park Road. A steering committee has already begun meeting to coordinate a Community Campaign to meet this funding challenge. We are optimistic we will meet our funding goal.

In summary, please attend this Sunday's Q&A session after worship (Sunday, May 17 in the Community Center). The Vision Team will be on hand to present and discuss these five directives to our proposed vision plan, and we encourage all members to attend, ask questions and provide comments and suggestions on how best to accomplish it. These are very exciting times for our church, and we want you to be a part of it.

See you on Sunday,

The Vision Team