

9/24/08 - EDITOR's NOTE: The Rev. Jody Seymour, pastor at Davidson United Methodist Church, sent the following to church members via email Wednesday to explain the church's decision to join the town in the Davidson IB School /Community Center project.

The following article will appear in the September 29 issue of The Dove, but since news travels so quickly these days, I wanted you to be in the know about this ministry opportunity for our future.

Bless you dear flock,
jody

Partnering with Our Community

For over two years, DUMC's Strategic Planning Ministry Team has researched various options for our church's need to add facilities. After working with architects and the City of Davidson, and after a presentation earlier this year to a group of leaders of our church, we realized that all the options we were able to devise thus far had substantial liabilities given our property limitations. The latest two versions of possible building plans necessitated losing a good deal of our already-limited parking and closing off the entrance to Main Street.

While we were studying other options, we learned about the city's plan to partner with the IB School located on South Street to build a community center. In order for the city to build what they truly think is required, they need another partner to share the expense of both new buildings and renovations of the existing space. After a series of negotiations with the city and an informational meeting with interested persons in our congregation, the DUMC Board of Stewards voted to join with the city in this effort.

What this means for our church is that we will have dedicated access to 48,000 square feet of space within the community center at assigned times, with possible access at other times. On Sundays and Wednesdays, DUMC will have dedicated times to use four large classrooms, an art room that can be used as a meeting room, a game room, a fitness room, a multipurpose space that will be used as a cafeteria during school hours, a new gym with locker rooms and showers, and the use of a renovated 350-seat auditorium.

Our investment in this project, which will be completed in the year 2010, is \$1 million plus a share in the maintenance, which is estimated to cost less than \$10,000 per year. The city provides all other expenses. This agreement provides use of the space for 20 years with a guaranteed renewal for another 30 years. DUMC's Finance Committee will work out the details of how to pay this amount depending on what is best for the church. We have some funds already set

aside in reserve and also have existing budgeted funds to help cover a good deal of this expense.

One reason the Board of Stewards voted to move forward with this partnership is that it meets the need DUMC has for more space without investing the \$8 million it would have cost to build adjacent to our present building. Once we begin using the space that will be provided by the community center/IB School facilities, we will also look at the land we own across the street from the school and across the parking lot from our main building as a possible next step.

The Board of Stewards also affirmed that a partnership with our city is a way of saying that we are part of the Davidson community and want to provide for a healthy and safe environment for our citizens. If you would like to see details about this endeavor, a PowerPoint presentation offered from the study committee to the Board is available. E-mail Cherry Stevens at cstevens@davidsonumc.org to request a copy.

The bottom line is that this is a worthy compromise, which allows us time to develop options for our other needs. Your staff and various leaders in our church will be visioning even more ways that we can best use this new place for ministry.