

9-14-23

Dear Wynne FUMC Church Family,

I wanted to take an opportunity to share with you the updates to the building and campus that as we do each Sunday during announcements, as well as some important things that you need to be aware of. This past week Parker Environmental and Safety Environmental Solutions arrived and began the preliminary asbestos cleanup of our education wings and Sanctuary classrooms. This was necessary for BluSky, our cleanup and demolition contractor, to come in and move any remaining items and fixtures that we were able to salvage to sealed and secure places in the building so that asbestos abatement and cleaning can begin this upcoming Monday. It is the goal of BluSky to begin having heavy equipment arrive onsite in the upcoming days to start removing heavy debris and demolishing the parts of the buildings that are necessary in order for our engineering firm to fully assess the damage and salvageability of our buildings.

As a result of the work that is beginning and will be taking place, there will be no access permitted to any FUMC buildings, apart from the church office house for anyone other than construction personnel. In the upcoming days the section of Forrest St, between Bruce St. and Falls Blvd. be also closed and barricaded to provide adequate safety and staging areas for construction contractors and equipment. Anyone needing to stop by the church office will be able to access the parking spaces closest to the office house from Falls Blvd.

I know that many members of our church have wondered why it seems like it has taken so long for work to begin. There have been many speculations and rumors going around town as to why things did not start immediately. I have heard some doozies! In fact, a lot of work has been taking place every day since the storm began. As I shared with you at the beginning, after initial cleanup and inventory of the campus, there would be a slow season of movement. This is due to the magnitude of damage and investigative work necessary on the part of insurance and their team of structural engineers to thoroughly examine our situation. Now that insurance has finished their preliminary report, the church has retained its own structural engineering and architectural firm, and a building committee has been selected, we are now able to begin the fun part of moving forward. Simply put, our rebuild process is not going to be a quick and easy procedure. Some steps cannot happen before other necessary steps take place first. This is a large-scale, multi-million-dollar construction project and will take between 9 months for first phases seeing completion and possibly up to 3 years to fully complete. Please be patient, and excited, throughout this process.

I want to say thank you to those of you who have given your time to help clean and organize things at the church campus and KC Hall. Thank you to those who have been present and worked to keep other church members informed and remembered that our goal as the church is not to exist for the sake of a building, but for God's Kingdom. A huge thank you to those who have gone out from our church to lend a helping hand to those in our community who have lost much more than we have. You have my deepest gratitude, and I am honored by your willingness to give of yourself.

While this feeling of displacement from our original meeting place is not optimal, it, in no way changes our responsibility, mission, or the work that we have before us in our community. God has blessed us greatly with neighbors who have opened their doors for us to

house our church activities as well as our Methodist Day School. He has also given every single one of us a testimony as to His goodness and grace throughout all of the devastation our city has experienced. Please do not allow gossip and idle talk to take the place of the words of love, hope and peace that the Gospel of Christ first spoke in us. We have the message of salvation, that should be our only goal! Let each of us take advantage of this opportunity and find where we can connect and help serve our neighbors! The Boy's and Girl's Club afterschool programs, Backpack 363 Feeding Ministry, Library afterschool tutoring program, and many other opportunities in our community need help to continue rebuilding and moving forward. We, the people of Wynne First United Methodist are the church, not the building, its just bricks, wood and steel. We are filled with the blood of Christ and given the privilege of sharing the love of Christ as we tell His story. We still have much work to do, let's get our hands dirty!

You're Gonna Change The World!!!

Brother Matt