

Well, it finally happened! Can you imagine? By the time you are reading these words our Imagine Center will have been completed and our dedication service will be over. All the new dishes will be put back away and we will be gearing up to use our new space for Vacation Bible School in a few weeks and the Virginia Synod's Junior High Servant Event at the end of July.

This moment has been a long time in the making. In the 1990's this congregation considered building an addition but discerned that it was not the right time. When I arrived in August 2003 it was immediately apparent that a larger fellowship hall was very much needed.

In my annual report for that year, I wrote:

God has plans for us and I encourage each of you to prayerfully consider your part in God's plan for Salem. 2004 will be a year dedicated to discerning God's vision for us. This discernment will involve a review of our 5-year and 10-year goals. This discernment will consider the physical needs of this congregation and the likely need for a building project. This discernment will evaluate the worship of this congregation and the future likelihood of an additional weekly worship service.

God has called us according to his purpose, and we can look forward to astounding actions when God is involved.

Then, a long-range planning committee was formed. They developed our mission statement: Come Receive Grace, Go Share Faith. Charlie Dennison chaired that committee, which eventually discerned that a building addition was a part of that mission statement, and which eventually became the building committee.

Now, in 2011, I certainly feel astounded! I am astonished by what God has been able to accomplish through us. In an era where folks complain that no one has any time, member after member (and even non-members, former members, friends, and family) have stepped up and given of their time. In the midst of a down economy, these folks have stepped up and given gifts large and small – each contributing to the success of this project. Only God can do these things!

However, our work is not done. God still has plans for us. The dedication service is only the beginning of God's plan for the Imagine Center. By God's help we will continue to contribute financial gifts to pay for this mission center. By God's help we will continue to discern the multitude of ministry opportunities God has in store for that space. Can you imagine?

Peace,

Pastor Chris