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Dear Salem friends,

Greetings from the third row on the lectern side of the sanctuary! You've probably seen my family of seven worshipping there (minus my husband, Matt, who plays the bass guitar in the band at the late service).

Salem has been an important part of our lives for 10 years, and that's why I am so honored to be a member of the "Dream Team" at Salem. This team is tasked with shepherding our vibrant community through the important work of dreaming the possibilities for Salem's future, first and foremost as it relates to our buildings and campus overall.

On Feb. 19, the stewardship team's Jim Roy spoke to the congregation about the work the Dream Team's been doing—work that started with all of you last spring when we began to imagine our future. With green dots and red dots and valuable feedback from all members of our community, a vision for that future began to take shape.

We began evaluating architecture firms last fall. Each firm submitted a proposal to partner with Salem in evaluating our current facilities and developing a master plan that will further our mission in the future. SFS was chosen to be that partner.

As you know from a letter you received a few weeks ago, the price tag for this study is \$35,000. Raising that sum in about a month is a tall order, and you may be wondering what we will receive for that \$35,000. I'd like to provide some detail here.

The first step in the process, which accounts for about a third of the cost, is a feasibility study that will produce a written report detailing the current structural, mechanical and electrical condition of the three buildings on our campus, as well as the current occupancy capabilities and code compliance issues for each. We can't begin to know where we can go until we know for sure where we are today. A major piece of this step is to determine the fitness of the sanctuary building for continued use, renovation and/or expansion.

Next, SFS and the Dream Team will set up meetings with ministry teams and various Salem members to gather programming and space needs that will help us determine priorities for our physical space. We hope that this will ensure that the steps we take with our buildings meet both the immediate needs of our growing community and give us the kinds of spaces we need to further Salem's mission.

I am so excited for this part of the process. When SFS met with the Dream Team last fall to present their capabilities, they showed us no fewer than seven possible future campus maps. The ideas were exhilarating; I left that meeting so excited for possibilities I would never have dreamed for our community's story. And that was before the SFS team has even had a chance to talk with Salem members and hear about the amazing ministries we do together. Imagine the creative ideas they will have for us once they've heard more about our life together!

With the input they receive from those meetings, the SFS team will put together various master plan options for our consideration. No ideas will be off the table. Among many ideas, the SFS team's master plan options will consider:

- Renovation and expansion of the sanctuary

- Replacement of Luther Hall with educational, fellowship and possible administration space that fits our growing needs
- Replacement or renovation of Koinonia Hall to fit the overall plan
- Parking needs
- Desire for green space
- Options for making Salem accessible to those with special needs, such as wheelchair-accessible bathrooms and classroom space

At the end of this step, SFS will deliver site and floor plans, as well as order of magnitude cost estimates for each option. Salem will then select an option and SFS will further flesh out those ideas into a multi-step master plan. A 3-D model of the selected plan will be rendered so we can all clearly see what the future looks like. More detailed cost estimates and more detailed floor plans will show how this master plan can be implemented to further Salem's mission. And all of this will be broken down into phases that should allow Salem to achieve its ministry goals with appropriate facilities on a schedule that allows for steady growth and fundraising in each phase.

Our pews are pretty full each Sunday, and people are engaged in vibrant ministries. Why is all of this needed? If you've been downstairs on a Sunday morning, you've probably seen our youth room overflowing with high schoolers. That's because our youth ministries are growing by leaps and bounds, and our space doesn't comfortably accommodate them. We aren't able to host large Kansas City Lutheran Youth Coalition (KCLYC) events because of space concerns. Our Sunday school rooms are small, dark and don't offer us the environment we will need for the more vibrant and energetic program we've planned for next year and beyond. They also aren't accessible to wheelchairs. We don't have appropriate space to host community groups so we can be the community center we all said in the spring we would like to be.

I imagine you've got big dreams for Salem. I know I do.

I dream of clapping my hands in worship alongside a hundred or more kids from Salem and the surrounding community for a raucous, fun-filled and faith-building Vacation Bible School every summer.

I dream of looking to my left and right in worship and seeing ALL God's people—regardless of their skin color or country of origin or disability or sexual orientation or family status—worshipping, growing and sharing their gifts with the world in a place where all are welcomed, valued and celebrated for exactly who they are.

I dream of walking into a Sunday school space teeming with the noise and activity of kids learning about the love of God in ways that connect their heads, hearts and hands with faith and service.

I dream of a place where our junior high and high school students find community and teach all of us how to live our faith every day.

What are those dreams worth to me? What are your dreams for Salem worth to you? Now is the time for us to take out that pledge card and decide. I know it's scary to make that leap of faith for my family, to make that additional pledge toward this \$35,000 goal. We've got kids in braces, aging vehicles, a sewer pipe that needs replacing in our back yard. We made a pledge to Salem to help meet the church's budget for 2017 already. It's scary to go beyond that. After all, it's not like I can offer 10 percent of that \$35,000. Can I even offer 5% of it? 2%?

But I can't shake those dreams. The ones I have, and the ones I imagine all of you have too. Our dream at Salem is bigger than my fears about finances. And if I can offer my small part, maybe you can, too. And so can enough other people to add up to the goal.

So at our house, we will take out our pledge card and spend time in prayer to determine what we can do to help Salem take this step toward dreaming our future together. I hope you will, too.

Sincerely,
Lorel Brown