2016 Van Lunen Fellowship

St. Mark Lutheran Church and School Capital Campaign

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St. Mark Lutheran School is joining Jesus on His mission of building life-changing relationships through Scholarship, Ministry, and Leadership.
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### DEDICATION
Thank you Dr. David Hahn for believing in me and for encouraging me that development would be something I’d enjoy and be good at. Thank you to my Wild Stallions VLF brothers James, Jason, and Chris for the monthly encouragement as well. Most of all thank you to the Van Lunen Fellowship program leadership for helping me become a stronger leader for my Christian school. I’m Forever Grateful!
ST. MARK’S COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

St. Mark has been educating children in the Spring Branch area since 1949. The school doors opened in the founding year of the church. Providing education to the community has always been a deeply held value of the congregation. Our founding church members desired to provide a place where church families could obtain a Christ-centered education for their children. The ministry soon expanded to reach beyond the church families and welcomed families and children from the surrounding community. Our primary school and middle school grew to add an Early Childhood program so that, today, babies as young as 6 weeks old can start their earliest years with us. It is our joy to help guide children into young adulthood before sending them off to high school. We cultivate a strong bond with these children and their parents and celebrate with them as they reach important milestones in life. We have watched with pride as 12 of our students have gone on to become valedictorians and salutatorians at area high schools within the last 12 years.

The church has invested greatly in the day school ministry and is fully committed to its growth and development in the years to come. St. Mark understands that the school is also a primary form of outreach for the church, as the majority of new members into the congregation recently have been families who enrolled their children in St. Mark school and then joined the church some time later. Both the church congregation and school enrollment have grown significantly since 1949. Many building programs have successfully expanded the physical footprint of our campus in order to meet the needs of our community and further the work of our mission.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

The school has always been one of the church’s major ministries and has grown to serve roughly 350 children from infancy through 8th grade each year. Our early childhood program has experienced tremendous growth over the past decade and is a beloved resource in the community, serving children from infancy through preschool. It has built a strong reputation for loving children in a warm Christian environment. Many of these families desire to continue their children’s education at St. Mark and enroll in elementary school and continue through middle school.

Our total school enrollment has increased in each of the last four years, and it will increase further next year. The primary factor inhibiting larger growth is the fact that our existing school facilities are outdated and not able to truly meet the needs of our school. We have simply outgrown our space and are met with capacity issues in all areas.

Our primary education building is fifty years old, and our middle school currently meets in five aging portable buildings that were purchased in 1998. At the time these portable buildings
were placed into service, they were projected to last for just five to eight years, but after eighteen years we are still using the original portables. These structures do not adequately serve our students and have unfortunately dissuaded some families from continuing their children’s education with us into middle school.

While our outdated facilities have not completely hindered the work of our ministry, we know that they limit our potential. We desire to expand the impact that our ministry could have on our community but we are locked into our current space with no room to grow. We strive to offer a quality setting for children to learn and our existing facilities pose the greatest challenge that inhibits our ministry from having a greater influence.

Secondly, the growth of our early childhood ministry (infants through pre-kindergarten) in recent years has displaced a considerable amount of classroom space that had previously been dedicated to elementary school grades. Our early childhood ministry, which involved 83 children in 2005, has grown to an enrollment of 165 children and is at virtually full capacity. We intend to add an additional class of two-year olds for next year, which will place further constraints on our school facilities overall.

We believe that God will continue to bless our church and school with opportunities for even more impact in the years to come. Our founding vision established a foundation for ministry partnerships that has lasted 66 years. However, the health and growth of our ministry to students and ultimately our community will be negatively affected if we are not able to address some of our major challenges.

**KEEP THE PROMISE CAMPAIGN**

These growing pains and challenges have been stifling ministry growth and effectiveness for a number of years and our church began thinking and praying through potential solutions. With the assistance of a professional architect and input from key leaders in the congregation, we developed a comprehensive facility Master Plan for our campus in order to address our challenges for the foreseeable future. The Master Plan was approved by the St. Mark voters assembly in March 2015.

When we consider all the years that the people of St. Mark have worked to establish a ministry in the Spring Branch community, we are reminded of the promise that our founders made to God and this community. We are reminded of how when the founders of St. Mark formed the congregation in 1949, they recognized the importance and committed to the idea of having a vital Christian day school as an integral part of the church’s ministry.

In remembrance and in honor of our founders’ original pledge, we have chosen to undertake a capital campaign that will help us to “Keep the Promise” and address some of the on-going
needs we have faced for years. We are eager to introduce the “Keep the Promise” campaign to both our families in our school and congregation and explain what exciting things are in store for the St. Mark community.

Ultimately, our desire is to support the important work of ministry which God has placed on our church. In order to conduct ministry, we must be equipped with the right tools and having the right tools has everything to do with the facilities that are used by the school and the church on a daily basis. To multiply our ministry impact, we believe that a strategic investment must be made to upgrade our facilities to provide an adequate space to educate children as well as address the needs of our congregation as a whole.

Our founders wisely opened St. Mark Lutheran School in the congregation’s first year of existence with an enrollment of just 18 students, and many of these same families along with others joined together to fund the construction of our current primary education building and gymnasium sixteen years later in 1965. From these humble beginnings, with the dedication and foresight of our predecessors, St. Mark Lutheran School has served thousands of families and has been a blessing to many in securing their Christian foundation and preparing them for higher education and future lives of service and leadership.

We have greatly benefitted from the wisdom and decisions of past leaders and now it is our turn to provide the resources necessary to “Keep the Promise” of St. Mark’s founding members to ensure that St. Mark Lutheran School continues to provide excellence in education for children of the Spring Branch community from infancy through middle school, preparing our children and future generations in the areas of Scholarship, Ministry and Leadership, helping to mold the leaders of tomorrow.

THE FIRST PHASE

The first phase of a long-term plan will focus on building a new kindergarten through 8th grade (K-8) building and renovating the existing church sanctuary as well as updating the music room for the youth ministry.

BUILD A NEW K-8 SCHOOL BUILDING

Our school has always worked closely with the church to serve the local community. This community is changing and transitioning as younger families move into our neighborhood. We foresee a need to adapt to meet these changes and accommodate our growing community. As we plan for the future, we want to make an effort to listen to our neighbors in order to discern how we can best serve them through our church and school. We have strong administrative leadership in the school and a quality faculty and staff. We currently have two sections of kindergarten and 1st grade, and plan to continue to add a second section to each grade one
year at a time. If we are unable to expand our facilities, we will likely be forced to halt this growth and momentum in student enrollment.

Features of a proposed new building would include:

First Floor:
- 3 Kindergarten
- 2 1st grade
- 2 2nd grade
- 2 3rd grade
- Art Class
- Spanish Class
- Learning specialist class
- Large common instructional area
- Restrooms
- Storage
- Conference area

Second Floor:
- 1 4th grade
- 1 5th grade
- 2 6th grade
- 1 7th grade
- 1 8th grade
- Music (band/choir) room
- Science lab
- Tech/media room
- Library
- Restrooms
- Storage

Our current middle school facilities must be replaced with a permanent structure that the church can also use to properly educate students. Eliminating the portables and building a new education center will not only impact the middle school students but allow the elementary school to expand into a more updated facility. We are excited about how our work will be enriched with the new building. The new building would provide these spaces for elementary and middle school and make room for the early childhood program to expand. It is for our students today and tomorrow, for these young ones, that we must *Keep the Promise*.

**RENOVATE THE SANCTUARY**

Stains on the ceiling, an old mounting bracket for speakers that are no longer in use, broken wooden pillars, creaking pews, frayed carpet and dated lighting have all but become commonplace to those of us who call St. Mark home. But while those of us who are at St. Mark every week ignore the signs of deterioration in God’s house so we can focus on the Word proclaimed and the music being sung, guests and visitors are very aware and influenced by the disrepair of our sanctuary.

Aging facilities are one of the worst detractors for a visitor to a church. As a church family we want to offer a sanctuary and worship experience that reflects the thoughtful, God-honoring community that is St. Mark Lutheran Church. We want our church home to be welcoming and inviting and not distracting to a new visitor. We hope that our church makes a good first impression to newcomers who have taken the time to visit us.

Our sanctuary is the heart of our church where we worship, learn, and grow. It is used by multiple groups for a variety of applications. The newly renovated space will update old
systems and provide a multipurpose space that will equip our congregation to conduct our ministry.

Goals of Sanctuary Renovation:
- Increase multipurpose use of the space
- Update flooring
- Update sound systems,
- Update lighting systems.
- Update seating from pews to more functional chairs
- Update paint

We must renovate and update our current faculties not only for our own members’ needs, but for those who are not here yet.
- For that young school family looking for a place to raise their children.
- For that single mother who has just gone through a life-shattering divorce who is "just checking it out".
- For the new family in town who is interested in finding a church and school that are connected where they can not only enroll their children Monday through Friday, but also be fed spiritually on Sundays.
- For the senior members and empty-nesters who now want to pour their heart and soul into the next generation.

It is for our congregation today and those we have not met yet that we must Keep the Promise.

RELOCATE AND UPGRADE YOUTH ROOM
When the portable buildings were purchased in 1998, one was dedicated to the 6-12th grade youth of St. Mark to have a space to learn about their faith and build life-changing relationships during what can sometimes be a difficult time of adolescence. This space was intended to be a short-term meeting location until a more permanent facility could be built for them.

Over the years, our youth have been patient as other projects have taken precedence over their area while three generations of youth have come and gone since that time. Now our youth ministry is once again vibrant, exciting, engaging and growing.

As we seek to grow the number of families in our congregation and provide opportunities for them to raise a godly next-generation, these youth need to be shown that they are a priority and that their presence on our campus is welcomed and wanted. The best way to do this is to bless them with facilities that welcome them with open arms as a valued member of our congregation.
Our youth ministry has been forced to make do in an inadequate space for nearly two decades. St. Mark stands behind the youth and treasures the fleeting window of time we have to be a voice of spiritual influence in their lives. We would like to convert the existing music room on the 2nd floor of our ministry building to be especially suited for youth ministry and give our young people a space to call their own in a prominent location on our campus. It is for the youth of our church, who represent the leaders of the next generation, that we must *Keep the Promise*.

**THE COST**

Our belief is that the initial phase of our Master Plan will allow us to grow capacity to provide a Christ-centered education to 500 students and minister to 1,000 active church members. Each of these families represents life-changing relationships and opportunities to establish St. Mark Lutheran Church and School in this location for another 66 years. Once again, the partnership between church and school will benefit everyone as we seek to impact our community for the Lord together.

Funding estimates for this initial phase of our Master Plan ranges from $10 - $12 million. We foresee that the entire Master Plan could cost as much as $50 million over the next 15-20 years. We would seek to raise the funds from generous contributions of both school and church families over the next 3-4 years with some additional financing as needed. St. Mark is in a strong financial position and is currently debt-free, having recently paid off bank loans with available funds.

St. Mark has an opportunity to do what our forefathers have done many times in the past. We must preserve and protect the resources with which God has blessed us, and steward them properly by maintaining and updating them appropriately. By redefining our spaces to meet the changing needs of those we serve, we will expand the reach of our ministry. We hope that families from both our school and our congregation will all participate in this opportunity to expand our reach, improve our work, serve children and our community and *Keep the Promise*.

**CURRENT PROGRESS**

We currently have a full compliment of campaign materials including:

- Branded Donor folders
- $5 Million chart of standards
- Case for support
- School building layout drawings
- Proposal letter outlines
- Branded thank you cards
- Prospective donor list including top 30 prospects from the feasibility study
We began donor solicitations in November of 2015 and had some significant early success with 3 top donors joining the *Keep the Promise* campaign with pledges of $1 million, $500K, and $260K respectively. Early success gave us momentum into the new year and thus far we have received pledges of $2.4 million. Praise God! We have currently asked for an additional $735K and solicited only 24 donors primarily composed of School Board, Church Board of Directors, and top 10 prospects.

We have entered into the schematic design phase with our architect and hope to have full renderings by the end of summer. The new school building is going to be transformative to our academic program with the increased space and learning common areas.

Our Advancement committee, Building committee, and Prayer committee have worked diligently and provided tremendous leadership. All of the committees have embraced 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 to rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances!

**NEXT STEPS**

The *Keep the Promise* Advancement Committee has completed resource mapping for next 25 prospects. Upon review of our donor worksheet, projections indicate the minimum goal of $4M is achievable. The plan is to establish the campaign goal upon completion of the Top 10 and most, if not all, of the Next 20 by September. Donor Planning continues to be a priority, and a sense of urgency to work through the summer exists.

- Current Pledges/Gifts received $2,400,000
- Solicitations being considered $735,000
- Next 25 solicitations to be made $1,250,000

We are beginning to meet with banks to discuss the possibility of financing a portion of our project since the total cost will be between $10-12 million. St. Mark will be able to do this because of our strong operational budget, being a debt free organization, and seeing our enrollment increase for the 5th consecutive year.

Depending on the generosity of our donors and the ability to finance, we hope to plan a public campaign launch and ground breaking ceremony for the fall. Our hope and prayer is that we can begin building our new school building and remodel our sanctuary in 2016. Although we know the new building may not be ready for the start of the 2017/18 school year we hope to move into it sometime during that year with 400 students.
$5 Million Chart of Standards

Top 10 gifts = 63%  $3,150,000

Next 20 gifts = 25%  $1,250,000

10 gifts at $25,000 = $250,000
25 gifts at $10,000 = $250,000
Many gifts below $10,000 = $100,000

Total  $5,000,000

Committed = $2.40M
Considering = $735K
Sample solicitation letter to Donor:

We want to start by saying a truly heart-felt thank you for your continued support of St. Mark Lutheran School. Over the years, you have been generous beyond expression with your time, energy and financial resources. As a result, you have increased the ability of SML to serve children and families as never before. As parents, you have seen firsthand the spiritual and academic education that takes place inside and outside of the classroom. Because of this, we know that you have a desire to see all students benefit from the highest quality teaching and learning experiences. To that end, we would like to present you with a proposal to help students grow for generations in their gifts through their time at SML and to help our church families grow in their faith.

The Keep the Promise campaign is the first step to implementing our strategic plan. It has been over 25 years since such a significant plan has been prepared and our friends have been asked to support. The primary goal is three-fold:

• Eliminate the portables and build a new education center to house both the middle school and elementary grades with an up-to-date facility.

• Renovate and update the main church sanctuary.

• Reallocate and renovate space for early childhood and dedicated space for the church youth group.

Included in this packet are materials that describe the project in depth and how it advances the mission of SML.

We are pleased to present you with a proposal for partnering with us in this exciting phase of our long-range plan. Your investment will enable students to benefit from the highest quality teaching and learning experiences, and will provide leading facilities and equipment to prepare our students for high school, college and beyond.

We ask you to prayerfully consider a gift of $1,000,000 to the Keep the Promise campaign which would be payable over the next 3 years.

Knowing our teachers, staff, administrators, and board members as I do, as well as knowing God’s hand in this work, I am confident that SML will always be a work for the kingdom of God and a strength to the church of His Son. Thank you for your prayerful and thoughtful consideration of this proposal.

With sincere appreciation,

[Signature]

ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
Scott & Kelly Biar
Campaign Co-Chairs
Pastor Tim & Becky Duerer
Dallas & Sarah Lusk
Bill & Karen Hayes
Colin & Lisa Doyle
Marc & Amy Kyle

STEERING COMMITTEE
Kelly Biar
Chair

BUILDING COMMITTEE
Tim Peterson
Chair

PRAYER COMMITTEE
Fred & Katie Tonn
Co-Chairs