

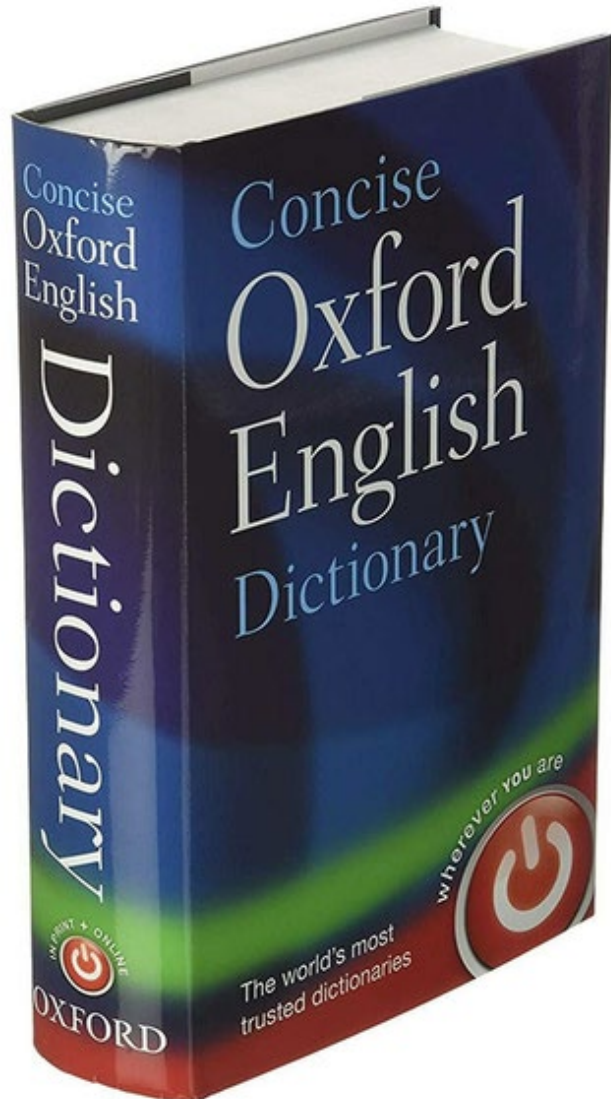


Sustainable and Vital Congregations: Discerning and Planning for the Future



Central States Synod

What is a church?



Oxford English Dictionary -
church, n.¹ & adj.

A building for public Christian worship or rites.

When most of us think about the word “church” –
we think about the building

chorus: We are the church, the body of our Lord. We are all God's children and we have been restored

1. The Church is not a building where people go to pray, it's not made out of sticks and stones, it's not made out of clay

2. You can go to worship but you cannot go to church; you can't find a building that's alive no matter how you search

3. The church it is a people, living out their lives, called enlightened, sanctified, for the work of Jesus Christ



“We are the Church”
Jay Beech

What is a church?

CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, and CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS
Central States Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

†S6.01.

The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

The importance of our buildings

Notre Dame Cathedral
before and after the 2019 fire



Questions we need to ask:

- How do our buildings **help** us fulfill our purpose as the church?
- How do our buildings **hinder** us from fulfilling our purpose as the church?

Additional questions:

- Who or what have we built, invested, and maintained these buildings for?
- How do our buildings invite people to gather for worship?
How accessible are our spaces?
- How do we practice hospitality with our buildings?
- How do our buildings serve the community?
Do they sit empty most of the week?

Chapter 9.71.a -

Title to property shall reside in the congregation.

According to the ELCA Constitution, the property belongs to the congregation, not the synod. Therefore decisions regarding the building need to be made by the congregation.



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

**CONSTITUTIONS,
BYLAWS, AND
CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**
of the
**Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America®**

as adopted by the Constituting Convention
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
(April 30, 1987)

and
as amended by subsequent
Churchwide Assemblies and Church Councils
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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ELCA



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Real Estate Discussion
Central States ELCA
January 16, 2025

January 16, 2025

What is Narthex?

- We buy, sell, lease and renovate church property
- Provide access to capital
- Loan guarantees
- Provide homes for start up churches, rapidly growing churches, churches in decline, daycares, and Christian Schools
- Passion for sacred spaces



Items for Discussion

Current Trends in Church Real Estate

Revenue Generating Ideas

7 Smart Property Management Ideas

The Redemptive Real Estate Movement...

- Real Estate and Kingdom should work hand in hand
 - Financially
 - Spiritually
- Business for Kingdom Purpose

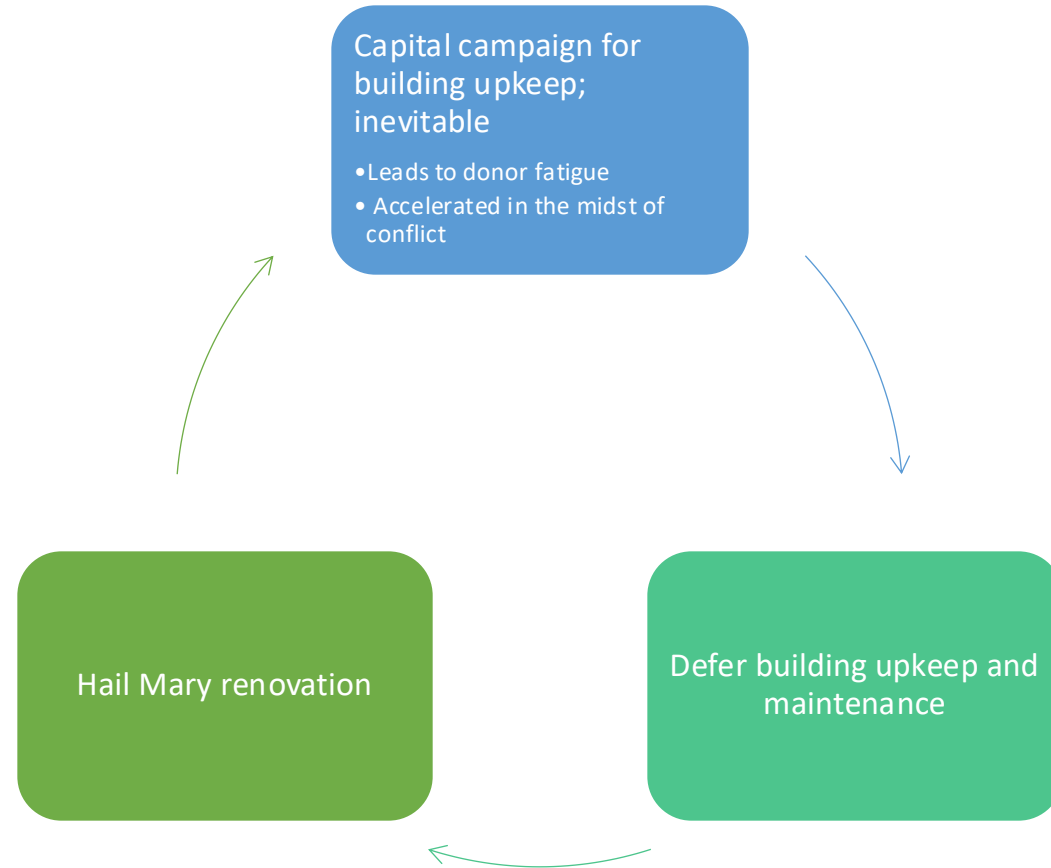


Current Trends with Churches

- Think of the property as an asset not a burden
 - The old way: Build it, finance it, try to get paid off
 - Reality: It never gets paid off, churches are difficult assets
 - The new way: Sell, lease it, and maximize it
 - Churches need to be nimble and flexible
- Churches are defensive assets; we are called for offense not defense



A common cycle...



What if...we thought of the building as a Revenue Generating Opportunity:

Sell the building; invest proceeds in ministry

Lease space to groups in need

Daycare; the best kept secret in ministry

Christian Counseling

Government partnerships; Head Start, Healthcare programs

Homeschoolers and Christian Educators

Basketball leagues and Soccer Fields

Pattern Disruption in our thinking...



Playing offense means to
attract activity to your space.
Activity leads to energy and
Kingdom opportunity

*Churches with sustainable revenue streams are less dependent on donors. Finances become more predictable.

7 Pro Tips for Church Property



Become a Property Ninja...

- 7.) Walk the foundation after a good rain
- 6.) Mind the parking lot
- 5.) Get multiple bids
- 4.) Renovate to your strength/Don't get hijacked along the way
- 3.) Get the roof inspected every year
- 2.) The plumber in your congregation doesn't know electricity
- 1.) Paint and Carpet