

Common questions and answers



*an Autumn Ridge Church capital initiative, 2010-2012
in support of Compassion Evangelical Hospital, Guinea, West Africa
and the CENTER at Autumn Ridge, Rochester, Minnesota*



AUTUMN RIDGE CHURCH
Loving God. Serving people.

How does support for Compassion Evangelical Hospital fit into the Sharing Hope initiative?

The first \$150,000 (3%) pledged in the Sharing Hope initiative will go toward construction of surgical suite facilities at Compassion Evangelical Hospital (CEH) in Guinea, West Africa. Autumn Ridge Church invested in the lives of the people of Guinea by helping to build CEH last year. The hospital is now operating at capacity but services are limited to non-surgical procedures. The Sharing Hope initiative will build and outfit a surgical wing. CEH is positioned at the commercial crossroads of northern Guinea. This strategic location places it between two large Muslim people groups, the three million Maninka (the adopted people group of Autumn Ridge Church), and the four million Pular (or *Fulani*). These two groups are 99.999 percent Muslim with only a few dozen known Christian believers in each. Guinea has profound spiritual needs. Only one percent of the population of Guinea is evangelical Christian, with far fewer in the Muslim north. Guinea also has profound medical needs. One in ten children die by age one. One in six die by age five. One in 60 pregnancies ends in maternal death. Most people live in rural areas with no access to health care. Completion of surgical suite facilities at CEH is a crucial goal. Surgical capabilities will provide for better and more advanced care. Importantly, patients at CEH will often pay for surgical care, helping to defray costs for clinical services to the poor.

Why not give more to CEH?

The Autumn Ridge Church congregation, in partnership with other U.S. churches, has a long-term commitment to CEH, has given substantially in the past, and will continue to give in the future. The tangible goal of providing surgical suite facilities is the next step in this process. Because of political instability and a strategy that avoids the appearance of western paternalism, measured gifts over time have been recommended rather than large gifts that are difficult to manage in a third world nation.

How does support for the CENTER at Autumn Ridge fit into the Sharing Hope initiative?

The Autumn Ridge Church Building Implementation Committee (BIC) was assembled to undertake a set of studies starting in May 2009. The committee analyzed current facility needs and determined what facility limitations may hamper our ability to share the Autumn Ridge Church experience with new guests over the next ten years. **Four studies were**

undertaken. The church pastoral staff was first surveyed to understand where current facility limitations create obstacles to serving current attendees and new guests. A second survey regarding space limitations was shared with lay leaders in multiple ministries. Third, a set of interviews was undertaken with vision leaders at the church, asking about facility concerns and opportunities. Fourth, a detailed facility use analysis was undertaken to study patterns of facility saturation.

Results of these studies are summarized online at the church website (AutumnRidgeChurch.org, see “the CENTER” button). **These studies all pointed to the same conclusions.** The present building is serving well. Creative reconfiguration of attendance has been achieved by the enhanced Emmaus service. This increase in Saturday evening attendance has relieved some pressure on facilities in the short term. **However, patterns of facility saturation are now evident. Projected growth of 40 percent or more over the next 10 years will overwhelm three key ministry areas:**

1. **Kids ministry space limits (nursery, classroom, recreation) are already hampering ministry.** Facilities are often near or at capacity, such that young families with children will increasingly be turned away, marking a major change in the Autumn Ridge Experience and its family-friendly tradition. **By adding multi-purpose classrooms for adult and student education, kids ministries can expand to classrooms on both levels of the current education wing, as originally conceived in the site master plan.**

2. **Gathering spaces are often filled past capacity.** This is notably true for the Common Grounds Café and lobby, where greeting, meals, and special events often exceed comfort levels. The warm Autumn Ridge Church welcome will increasingly be lost due to overcrowding.

3. **Recreation facilities will expand the scope and effectiveness of ministry at Autumn Ridge Church.** Not implemented in Phase 1 due to fiscal constraints, the Salem Road campus lacks multi-purpose recreation facilities and playground space. This deficiency limits service to all ages, and prevents the church from sharing recreation resources as an avenue of ministry in the community. Multi-purpose gymnasium space can provide for sports and recreation, as well as provide flexible space for socializing, worship events, banquets, student ministry events, festivals, regional conferences, community service projects, disaster relief, and a host of other creative opportunities. An outdoor playground will expand service to kids. A welcoming recreation facility can also be intentionally shared with public and private schools and community sports leagues to demonstrate

hospitality. This exemplifies the church mission: Loving God. Serving people.

How will this help reach people with the Gospel?

The CENTER at Autumn Ridge is designed to facilitate outreach.

First, Autumn Ridge Church families take seriously their responsibility to provide **an environment that attracts children to honest and vital relationships with Jesus Christ.** If the church fails to communicate the essence of Christianity to its children, the congregation can have little expectation of influencing those outside the church. **The CENTER will allow improved outreach to children by releasing both floors of the current education wing to create an integrated kids education function.** This consolidation will create safe, integrated space for childcare and instruction. **Children will also be served through remodeled interior recreation space and an outdoor playground.** In addition, **kids and families will have access to new gymnasium space, including basketball and volleyball facilities.** In all these ways, young families and their children will feel welcomed to visit, commit and serve at Autumn Ridge. These are the initial steps toward discipleship.

Second, **multi-purpose classrooms will allow adult and student ministry education to relocate to a spacious facility surrounding the open recreation area.** Classrooms on two levels will feature flexible partitions and balconies allowing conferences, worship events, break-out sessions and training events to be hosted at Autumn Ridge Church. These functions create new opportunities to welcome those outside the Autumn Ridge Church family to visit and use the facilities. *Influencing guests for Christ starts with welcoming guests!*

Third, **more spacious interaction facilities will enable better greeting and welcome of guests.** A creative new lobby space will allow better way-finding, reduced crowding and provide opportunities to meet friends. This will reduce crowding between services and improve flow to special displays. New lobby space will include game room and lounge functions attractive to students. **The CENTER at Autumn Ridge should be known as a destination for Rochester community events.** This model of friendship evangelism can assist the Autumn Ridge Church congregation in expressing Christian faith through both word and action.

Fourth, the **multi-purpose gymnasium and playground facilities in the CENTER create new opportunities to integrate physical activity, health,**

fitness, exercise, organized competitive sports, and fun into the mission of Autumn Ridge. Serving people includes meeting both spiritual and physical needs. Gymnasium space will allow church ministries to connect with kids, students and adults who prefer to interact socially through sports and recreation. Some people interact best through physical activity. **Autumn Ridge Church is missing an opportunity to connect with these individuals, whether young or old.** After a long day in the classroom or home school environment, kids will benefit from the opportunity to learn, exercise and socialize in an active setting. The CENTER will create such opportunities for service to church members and guests. **In addition, the CENTER will be shared with community groups in order to demonstrate hospitality in the name of Christ.** This could include open gym hours and informal sports teams and leagues. Public, private, and home school teams that lack sufficient sport facilities may wish to use the CENTER. Sharing of the current Autumn Ridge Church Common Grounds (election polling) and auditorium (community concerts) has been extremely successful. This creates a model for the CENTER at Autumn Ridge.

Fifth, the availability of a large, multipurpose space creates opportunities to welcome and serve the community in ways that create interest in Christianity. Food bank functions, Red Cross disaster relief, homeless outreach, public education events, community banquets, wedding receptions, concerts and youth retreats are possible with the addition of the CENTER. The auxiliary kitchen in the CENTER and the existing Autumn Ridge Church commercial kitchen will allow full meal preparation and catering options for the Common Grounds Café and the CENTER.

How will this help Christians grow in their walks with Christ?

The Autumn Ridge Church pastoral staff have stated that improved ministry to kids, informal social interaction, and recreation offer the three highest priorities for discipleship. The principle embodied in the design of the CENTER at Autumn Ridge is *“today’s guests are tomorrow’s disciples.”* **Preparing to serve the community in 2020 requires planning ahead in 2010. Discipleship begins with a visit. Making that visit memorable is a goal of the CENTER.**

How will the CENTER help in expanding nursery and early childhood space?

The CENTER has been designed with multi-purpose classroom space that will allow relocation of adult education activities from the current education

wing. As a result, the first floor of the education wing will be remodeled and dedicated to nursery through pre-kindergarden ministries and the second floor of the education wing will be dedicated to the K-5 grades. A budget for limited remodeling is included.

If the congregation is short on space for children’s ministries, why not build more classrooms and less gym?

The first priority of the CENTER at Autumn Ridge is indeed multipurpose classroom space. With the unfinished second floor, the CENTER has capacity for eventual relocation of student ministry functions (middle school and senior high) from the existing building. This has the added benefit of supporting the potential enlargement of the sanctuary as envisioned in the master plan.

The CENTER is also designed to provide recreation facilities. These functions include gymnasium space, but also lobby, game room and lounge capacity, along with needed storage and kitchen. If limited by finances, the configuration of the CENTER could include less gymnasium space. The CENTER conceptual plan as proposed represents the most efficient construction approach and least expense per square foot. Alternatively, phased construction of the CENTER is plausible, and is being studied as a contingency. Though less efficient (some components would need to be built and then later demolished), such a strategy is possible.

There are many gym facilities in this community (Rochester Area Y, RAC, Dan Abraham Healthy Living Center, Rec Center, National Volleyball Center). Why does the church need to build another facility? How will the CENTER be different?

The vision for the large spaces of the CENTER at Autumn Ridge is not adequately captured in the word “gymnasium.” The space will truly be the CENTER for countless activities. Designed with an intentional open configuration, curtains will allow temporary portioning of spaces only as necessary, with the ability to quickly open the entire space and adjoining classrooms to create a unique community center atmosphere. The CENTER will be in constant flux, changing hourly and daily. For example, within a week, activities in the “gymnasium” might include six half-court basketball games, a local high school volleyball team practice, an overnight lock-in recreation event for students, or a kids club activity. One gym might be configured with chairs for a women’s event while a separating curtain would

allow the other gym to be set up for a book fair. While Operation Christmas Child is packing in one half of the facility, a Red Cross safety course could be offered in the other. A regional conference could occupy the sanctuary, while breakout sessions fill classrooms in the CENTER, and the gymnasium could become a cafeteria serving 400 people. Later in the week a student ministry worship event in half the space could spill out that evening into the other half where games and café tables are decorated with sparkling lights. Dads and daughters could fill the gym the next day for a family volleyball tournament, while younger family members enjoy safe nursery facilities and the outdoor playground. The following morning seniors could assemble for low-impact exercise followed by breakfast. **The CENTER at Autumn Ridge will be unique in its flexible and multi-purpose design.**

There is a significant recession. Is it wise to take on additional financial debt at this time?

The financial plan for the CENTER involves a three-year commitment to cover all new expenses with cash, including the first \$150,000 to build surgical facilities at Compassion Evangelical Hospital in Guinea, West Africa, one of the Autumn Ridge Churchbold initiatives. **This plan is not intended to incur new debt.** Current attractive construction costs make this the ideal time to invest in this new wing, pay with cash raised in the Sharing Hope initiative, and continue to finance the approximately \$3M loan remaining on the original Salem Road campus. Olmsted County, and Rochester in particular, have been blessed with exceptional economic stability relative to much of the country. **To whom much is given, much is expected. Rather than seeing 2010 as a time for closing doors, Autumn Ridge has the opportunity to invest in the future while enjoying unusual bargains in design and construction pricing.**

Unemployment is predicted to rise through 2010 and into 2011. People may make pledges today but be unemployed tomorrow. How will the congregation plan for this risk?

Autumn Ridge Church has been in existence for over 150 years. The congregation has seen God's faithfulness through troubled financial times. The building on 16th street was built in 1979 and the cornerstone was laid on June 1, 1980. During that time the church was advised that it was fortunate to obtain a second mortgage on the parsonage at an interest rate of 17 percent.

More recently, the congregation was set to vote on the purchase of our current property on September 16, 2001. The date of the vote was moved back one week to September 23, 2001 because of the international uncertainty created by the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Undaunted, the congregation voted to move ahead.

The first three-year capital initiative “Imagine A Place...” raised \$4.1M with an average weekend worship attendance in 2002 of 1,162. The current financial model is for a three-year initiative to raise \$4.7M with an average attendance of 1,650. Thus, the average weekend attendance has increased 42 percent while the capital initiative goal has increased 12 percent. Allowances have been made for the sluggish economy. God can provide for the continually expanding ministries of Autumn Ridge Church.

Many unemployed or underemployed contractors are part of the Autumn Ridge Church family. How can their skills be used?

As was the case for the original Salem Road project, church members employed in fields related to construction can encourage their employers to competitively bid for roles in this project.

Autumn Ridge Church has members with building trade skills. Some may be willing to volunteer to assist in the CENTER project. Is this possible?

Yes. The proposed design of the CENTER at Autumn Ridge also calls for cost savings by creating shell structure, but not final finish, for the classrooms of the second level of the facility. Several areas of the original Salem Road building were completed through skilled volunteers and professionals from the congregation offering their services at discounted prices.

Why not wait to build when the economy is more stable?

The current depressed construction industry creates a major incentive to undertake this project as soon as possible. Materials and labor are available at discounts if the work is initiated within the first half of 2010.

When could the ground breaking take place?

Construction could begin as soon as the first half of 2010, with completion in less than one year.

What is the cost of the project?

The estimated cost of the Sharing Hope initiative for Compassion Evangelical Hospital and the CENTER at Autumn Ridge is \$4.7M. The first \$150,000 will go directly to Compassion Evangelical Hospital. This will enable the hospital to complete the surgical wing and will permit the hospital to become self-sustaining. The remaining \$4.55M includes construction, fees, furnishings and a contingency. The bidding process may bring further price reductions.

How will this vision be paid for?

Payment to Compassion Evangelical Hospital will be the first goal. While there will be a requirement for short term construction debt for the CENTER at Autumn Ridge (the building may be completed in 2011 but not all funding will be available until 2013), the plan is to require only minimal additional long-term debt, if any. Construction will not start until it is known how much has been pledged by the congregation. No additional debt will be incurred without the approval of the congregation.

Funding will be through the faithfulness of God's people who attend Autumn Ridge Church. All will have the opportunity to make a three-year pledge. The congregation will step out in faith. Commitments will be made before the Lord, indicating what each will give toward the Sharing Hope initiative between March, 2010, and February, 2013. Giving does not imply equal amounts, but equal sacrifice. The amount chosen is between the giver and God. The church will provide statements indicating amounts pledged and given.

What are the additional operating costs for the CENTER at Autumn Ridge?

It is estimated that approximately \$8,000 per month will be needed for extra operating costs related to the CENTER.

How will the cost for this proposal impact current ministry budgets?

It is anticipated that Autumn Ridge Church will continue its current practice of wisely spending resources. While the church is never able to fund all of the ministry opportunities that arise, God has proven faithful in supporting expanded ministry in the community.

What if more is pledged than is required?

Any such funds will defray remaining principal on the current mortgage.

Where can I get further information or make a comment or suggestion?

- Visit AutumnRidgeChurch.org
- Click on “the CENTER” or “Sharing Hope” and note blog postings
- Send email to center@autumnridgechurch.org

Building Implementation Committee

Bill Price

Lloyd Johnson, Project Manager

Greg Lappin

Claire Farm

Paula Edwards

Jim Maher, Chair



Sharing Hope Development Committee

Carla Nelson

Lance Fleming, Chair

Steve England, Project Manager

Dave Swanson

Ron Schaap

Bob Stanhope

