



SOW

BUILD

GROW

# IN THE HANDS OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE...



Dear Friends & Family of First Presbyterian Church,

You remember Matthew 13, when Jesus, speaking of the Kingdom of God, compares it to the mustard seed. It is the smallest of seeds that grows to be the largest tree in the garden, where even the birds make their nests. Our Lord is giving us a picture of God's providential hand at work to build his kingdom in ways bigger than we can imagine.

That has been happening at the corner of 2nd Avenue and 9th Street since 1866. From its humble beginnings with 8 members, and, more recently, through darker days when God's hand was more difficult to discern, the Lord has, by his surpassing wisdom and grace, faithfully preserved and grown his church in ways that his people could never have imagined. Consider this: Five years ago we sought a pastor, and some of us even wondered whether we would have the people and resources to continue in ministry. Since then, the Lord has brought us 2 pastors, membership has grown by 300%, worship attendance by 500%, and most of us are wondering where we are going to put all these people. It began like a mustard seed - the ordinary desire of 8 people to have a church in their new town. And now, in the hands of God's providence and in the shadow of those who have been faithfully proclaiming the gospel in this location for 150 years, we find ourselves in a place that offers potential for ministry greater than any of us have imagined.

As we enter into this next phase of our life as a church, we believe that God's faithfulness to this church compels us to do more than build a big building to house a big congregation. We believe that we are being called, again, to something more significant than that; something that will not simply feed the congregation of First Pres but offer the blessing and shelter of the gospel to our community, our region, our university, our denomination and the Church at large.

And so, we invite you to participate with us as, in faith, we set about the work before us of sowing into our current facilities in order to build this historic property into its full potential for ministry so that we might grow gospel-saturated community far beyond it...or, for short, to **SOW, BUILD, GROW.**

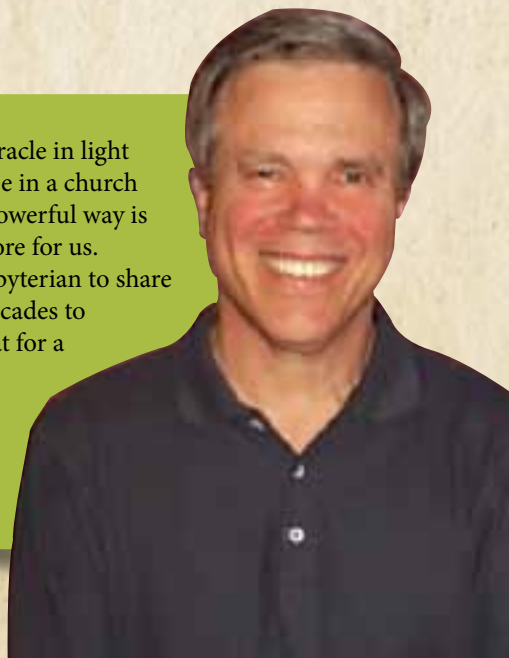
Lead Pastor,  
Scott Bowen



SOW.

“What is happening is nothing short of a miracle in light of where we were just 5 short years ago. To be in a church where the Lord is working in a visible and powerful way is evidence to me that he has much more in store for us. Taking this step of faith will allow First Presbyterian to share the gospel in a deeper and lasting way for decades to come. What could be more exciting than that for a church?!”

- Bill Price,  
*Sow, Build, Grow* Campaign Chair



**T**he idea of sowing is that you put a seed in the ground in one form, and it comes up in an entirely new form. This has been happening throughout the 145 years of First Presbyterian Church’s ministry.

Those original 8 members did not know that they were forming a church that would one day sit in the shadow of a university that would educate and send out students from every state of the union and every corner of the world. Members who prayed for youth in the midst of an aging and shrinking congregation did not know that their prayers would be answered with the arrival of too many students to fit in the sanctuary and too many kids to fit in the nursery.

At the start of the next phase of our church’s life, this is what we prepare to do - sow. We give in faith to the work of the Lord at First Presbyterian Church. But as we do, we are not simply looking to build a new building. Our vision is for something bigger than that! We envision our faithful giving in this season as the next step in the Lord’s work to transform a congregation once concerned with survival into a sending and equipping body that exists to grow the presence of gospel-saturated, missionally minded community in Auburn/Opelika, in our region and in the larger Church.



BUILD.

“The progress taking place at First Pres is exciting. For so many years there were very few young people. Until now, it has not been an issue of how to nurture this group. Each Sunday, nursery is full, as well as the school age classes. These areas continue to increase rapidly. These young people are a very important part of the growth at First Pres. With the expansion program we be able to provide programs and opportunities for these youths to grow and a place for them to raise their families.”

-Janie Corlee, *member 13 years*



The initial result of sowing in faith will be that First Pres is able to build the site which we have called home since 1866 into to its full potential for ministry. This is a necessary step as we seek to strengthen the congregation for what is ahead. The growth of our physical property will include:

- A 350 seat sanctuary
- Children/Youth classroom wing with 6 additional Sunday School rooms
- 3 new nurseries for newborns, infants and toddlers
- Outdoor meeting & community space
- A paved 95 car parking lot
- 4 staff offices, plus conference room
- 6 new adult classrooms
- Expanded and renovated kitchen space
- 6 new restrooms (3 men/3 women), plus in-nursery facilities

In short, as we sow in faith we will witness a total transformation of what we are able to do on this piece of property which the Lord has given to us. But more important than any building we will build is the opportunity for ministry that will be made possible by the buildings. These include:

- 250% more space to gather for worship, the hub of our life together
- the ability to split children up into age appropriate learning groups to more effectively engage them with gospel-centered teaching.
- Greatly enhanced nursery space, complete with restrooms and check-in stations which allows us safely and efficiently to care for increased numbers of kids and their families.
- Space for concerts, outdoor teaching series, casual after-church lunches and picnics, movie nights and other events that advance gospel-saturated community among the membership and increase our presence in the community.
- Parking for as many cars as code allows
- Office & waiting space for Restoration Pastoral Counseling, as well as future staff
- the ability to offer more teaching opportunities to adults and students
- increased space and facilities for congregational meals

**P**ictured below is an artist's rendering of the new, 375 seat sanctuary, with the roof of the education building seen in the rear. At First Pres, we have staked our existence on the fact that the Lord works with power by his Spirit through his Word to build his Church. The sanctuary, where God's people gather under his Word, is at the very heart of our life together. So we seek to build a space that is large enough for us to gather together (and to bring neighbors & friends), but still small enough that a sense of community and personableness is maintained.





# GROW.

“My sophomore year, a friend visited First Pres one Sunday. There were no flashy videos or lighting and the preacher’s sermons were forty minutes of exposition in a black robe. This church did nothing right to attract college students according to common belief. Yet, I loved it and I invited my friends and they too loved it. Within a year, the church had tripled in size ...because college students were not just attending, but joining. The church became the place where I ate on Wednesday nights, played softball during the summer, led and partook in Bible study. First Pres became where I filled up and poured out, both spiritually and physically.

All of this made me realize one thing: power lies not in spectacle, but in the Word and the sacraments. First Pres transformed my view of the Gospel, from the door one walks through to the room one lives in. Now that I am in our nation’s capital, everything I do is shaped by this view of the Gospel I learned at First Pres in Opelika.”

- Joe Knight, *Auburn graduate*



**R**emember the mustard seed (and the kingdom to which it points)? It does not grow from nothing simply to be big, but to provide shelter for the birds. In a similar way, we don’t believe that the Lord has built up the ministry of First Pres in its current location for 150 years just so that we can be big, but so that we can grow the presence of gospel-saturated, missionally minded community beyond our current location. This is the ultimate goal of our sow, build, grow campaign: to build the current location to its full potential for ministry so that we can then:

- grow the presence of gospel-saturated, missionally-minded families in our community (through increased discipleship)
- grow the presence of gospel-saturated, missionally minded churches in our region (through church planting)
- grow the presence gospel-saturated, missionally minded young men and women in the larger Church (through sending Auburn graduates into the world having experienced God working by his Spirit through his Word in his Church).



After 150 years of ministry on the corner of 2nd and 9th, this is the season for us to honor our past by maximizing this property for ministry, and to look toward our future of ministry in the region and the world that far surpasses what 8 original members or 230 current ones could ever imagine as they step out in faith to sow, build and grow. And it all begins as we sow in faith. We invite you to be a part of what the Lord is doing.

The following is a breakdown of gifts needed for a successful campaign. Pledges may be fulfilled over the next five years.





## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q.** How much will the project cost? **A.** Our estimated cost is \$1.5 million.

**Q.** Were there other options considered? **A.** In early 2011, a committee appointed by the Session met to discuss any and all options before us in the face of our space problems. Everything from doing nothing to moving locations altogether was on the table, but the current plan was unanimously agreed upon as the best way to 1) preserve and honor the 150 year legacy of ministry at this location and 2) make room for continued growth in a kingdom-centered way. Once we decided on this plan, alternative construction options were discussed - some cheaper and some more expensive than the current plan, which we felt addressed the most needs in the most economical way.

**Q.** Will the church be taking out loans? **A.** The Session is committed to being good stewards of our financial resources. We will not borrow money that is not pledged to us. We will need to take out a bridge loan to cover the costs of construction until the pledged funds come in (3-5 years).

**Q.** Will the current facilities be renovated? **A.** Yes. The entire office and nursery wing will be turned into office space, the kitchen will be expanded and updated, new restrooms for men and women will be added in the current parlor/library area, and the current sanctuary will be transitioned into adult classroom space, while maintaining the integrity and tradition of that space (see below).



**Q.** Why not leave the current sanctuary as a chapel? **A.** The short answer is, 'space.' There is simply not room on the current property to build the facilities we need and keep a chapel. Therefore, we will add adult classrooms in the current sanctuary. These will be done in such a way that the structure of the building, including the windows and front doors, will not be touched.

**Q.** Where will we meet during construction? **A.** The current facilities will not be effected by the construction of the new building. We will lose the parking area on the side of the sanctuary, and will therefore need to use the back lot more efficiently.

**Q.** On many Sundays, we already have 350 people here. Shouldn't we build something bigger? **A.** Our leadership is committed to preserving and building community that is large enough to be viable and self-supporting, but small enough that people will know and be known by others, and where elders can shepherd effectively according to their calling. For this reason, the choice of a 350 seat sanctuary is intentional. We will be able to have 2 services if necessary, but the ultimate goal is to create a network of smaller churches rather than one large church.



For more information call  
**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OPELIKA**

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or

Contact Bill Price, Campaign Chairman

334-663-1752

To mail your donation, send to  
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