

Greetings!

It is always a joy for us to be the bearers of good news! Two weeks ago, our Church Council was presented with an exciting opportunity. As many of you know, the development of Chatham Park in the Pittsboro area is beginning to happen, and one of our church members and his business partner are responsible for developing the commercial/residential acreage. The location is close to the Bojangles restaurant on US Hwy. 15-501, just across from Northwood High School. Christ UMC has been invited to be part of that development. Having a church present at the start of this new community is important – and not unlike what we brought to Southern Village over 20 years ago.

At its last meeting, the Council was presented with this opportunity – Christ UMC launching a new faith community in Chatham Park. The Council asked important questions: Does this second campus align with the mission of our church? Do we have the financial and human resources to undertake such an adventure? Will this take away from our existing ministry in Southern Village? In this letter, we will share the answers to those questions.

It is apparent that God has been preparing us for this opportunity. In our 20-plus-year history, CUMC has helped birth several congregations and has prepared many persons to answer God's call to ministry. Specifically, we were helpful in launching New Hope Church and All Saints UMC. We know that Raegan May, CUMC's founding pastor, had dreamed of this church one day having a second campus. And now, here we are, readying ourselves to do just that.

Like the Church Council, you may also have questions about this new campus. Let's address them one-by-one.

1. Does this second campus align with the mission of our church? Our mission of following Jesus by connecting, growing, and serving undoubtedly supports the opportunity of birthing a new faith community. We so want to connect with others. Jesus tells us to! When we look at the current and potential growth in Chatham County, it would only be right for us to want to connect with those persons. Starting a faith community closer to the focal point of that growth makes good sense. In other words, like Jesus, we are going where the people are to help them connect with God, grow in their faith, and live a life of service.

2. Do we have the financial and human resources to undertake such an adventure? The North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church has agreed to support this adventure. For five years, there will be financial support of the "planting" pastor as well as programming monies. Also, the Church Council voted that a portion of the funds that we have been using for debt retirement be earmarked for this new faith community as it is a missional opportunity for this church. Rest assured, we will be debt-free by this time next year. We are excited to announce that Brent Levy will be appointed to serve as the "planting" pastor for the congregation at our new campus. In July Brent will begin devoting one-quarter time to connecting with people in the Pittsboro area. Our Staff Parish Relations Committee will invite one of our part-time pastors to take on the job duties Brent will need to relinquish. We are

especially pleased that Brent will become the pastor for the Chatham Park satellite because it means he will be part of the Christ Church family for years to come. The Council unanimously felt that our church has the resources to “do well” in Chatham Park.

3. Will this take away from our existing ministry in Southern Village? Going to Chatham Park allows us to establish a second campus of Christ UMC. Anything that the Lord does in Chatham Park adds to CUMC’s ministries since this is a *shared* ministry. Presently, we have four faith communities (8:30, 9:45, 11:00, and 6:30), and last fall, we started looking at the possibility of a Hispanic faith community as part of Christ Church. Chatham Park will be our sixth community. We hope and pray that the excitement in Chatham Park will create additional excitement about what God is doing here at our Southern Village campus, too.

The Church Council unanimously voted to accept the invitation to be part of the development in Chatham Park. The faith community there will take on its own character and vision along with the blessing and DNA of Christ UMC. In the weeks ahead, many more details will come your way. More questions will be asked, and we will seek the answers together. Soon, we will provide church-wide meetings for you to ask questions and discover how to get more involved. Starting a second campus takes a lot of prayers, support, and planning. With the Lord’s help, Christ UMC is ready.

In the grip of God’s Grace,

David Goehring
Senior Pastor

Chris Woodfin
Church Council Chair