

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECOMMENDATION AUGUST 2015

*After more than two months of discussion, deliberation and discernment, the Board of Directors of Metropolitan Community Church of Portland voted at its July 2015 meeting to recommend to the congregation the sale of 2400 NE Broadway, Portland, Oregon.*

### **Why is the Board recommending the sale?**

MCC Portland has owned 2400 NE Broadway since 1977 – a year after our founding in 1976. We were proud to be the fifth MCC to purchase a church building. At a price of \$87,000, it was a major investment and a step forward in the history of our young church. A few years ago we celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our building dedicated by President William Howard Taft on October 3, 1909. We're the fourth congregation to be stewards of this building. But at just under 40 years of age, we are a young church in an old building.

There is great love for this building, its beautiful charm, and its history. We've made many repairs and improvements including spacious restrooms, modern kitchen, improved administrative offices, improved accessibility and expanded sanctuary, just to note some of the major projects of the past decades. Another major improvement was the installation of the massive "Heart of God" stained glass window following the Christmas Eve fire in 1988, which has become a beautiful visual focus of our building.

For many years, however, during times of both prosperity and hardship, questions have repeatedly arisen about whether this building does or does not suit the ministries to which we are called. While we have not exceeded capacity for Sunday worship, the unusual configuration of our building spaces makes it exceedingly difficult to hold simultaneous activities – for our own ministries or activities of other groups who wish to share our space. While some renovations could alleviate this problem in small ways, they would not resolve the lack of dedicated parking – including only two handicapped spaces, which also serve our neighbors. With the increasing awareness of living in earthquake country and retrofitting a 106-year-old building, the cumulative costs of trying to resolve the many issues inherent in our current building would be prohibitive and would be poor stewardship of our congregational resources. We believe we have reached a point where the building at NE 24<sup>th</sup> and Broadway has served its purpose and is, in fact, becoming a liability. Our ministry is limited by its inflexibility. It was designed and built to meet the needs of 1909. We need something different for our ministry to thrive now and beyond.

We also find ourselves struggling with uneven weekly cash flow that is often insufficient to pay our bills in a timely fashion and maintain our obligations. The building and property is our largest asset, presently valued at over \$1.2 million. With the commercial real estate market in Portland very strong at this time, it would be doubly advantageous to list the building for sale, to liquefy its equity, and seek new ministry facilities better aligned with our needs at this time, and better suited to a vision for something new and more congruent with the church we seek to become.

## **What happens next?**

The recommendation to sell the building and property will be placed before a special congregational meeting for vote at the end of September (see dates below). Prior to voting, *during August and September*, there will be two very important happenings:

**1. Congregational conversation and feedback.** There will be multiple avenues allowing ample opportunity for input, feedback and congregational discernment:

- *Survey* both on-line and paper versions. Coming soon. Stay tuned!
- *Listening posts* with BOD members. If you want to have a one-on-one conversation with a Board member, contact our church office to sign-up at an available time.
- Two informational forums held on Sundays after church (see specific dates below).
- Written input/feedback can be e-mailed directly to “board@mccportland.com.”

**2. Identifying needs for a desirable ministry facility.** We will begin the process of articulating our needs and dreams for a different facility, so that, should the congregation affirm the recommendation to sell, groundwork for a building search can be underway.

## **When?**

Here are several specific times of opportunities to share your thoughts and to hear others:

1. Sunday, August 16: Monthly “Coffee Talk” with BOD members after church. Sign-up in Fireside Room; limited to 5 people.
2. **Sunday, August 30: Informational Forum #1**  
Following worship for information and Q&A only; no vote taken.
3. Tuesday, September 1, 7PM-9PM: Monthly BOD meeting; open to the public.
4. **Sunday, September 20: Informational Forum #2**  
Following worship with updated information and Q&A only; no vote taken.
5. **Sunday, September 27: Special Congregational Meeting with Vote.**  
All are welcome to attend MCC Portland congregational meetings. Only current members-in-good-standing of MCC Portland are eligible to cast a vote.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** A “yes” vote on September 27 ***WILL NOT*** mean immediate listing or sale. It will be a “green light” affirmation for the BOD to proceed. At this time it is impossible to predict how long such a sale might take.

*Respectfully Submitted: Board of Directors, Metropolitan Community Church of Portland*