

**A REPORT ON THE
FEASIBILITY STUDY
CONDUCTED FOR**

**PILGRIM BAPTIST CHURCH
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA**

April 25, 2005

**PREPARED BY
THE JAMES COMPANY
17860 Bearpath Trail
Eden Prairie, Minnesota**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ITEM	PAGE
Table of Contents	2
Foreword	3
Summary of Findings	4
Recommendations	7
Chart of Gifts	9
Tabulation of Responses	10
Appendix	16
Persons Interviewed and Selection Criteria	16
Letter of Invitation	17
Case statement	18

FOREWORD

In March of 2005, Pilgrim Baptist Church asked The James Company of Minneapolis to undertake a feasibility study to help determine the climate for conducting a capital fund appeal to raise the funds necessary to expand and improve the Pilgrim facilities.

David Jones, Rebecca Larsen and Deb Krieg of The James Company conducted interviews with thirty-three individuals or couples in March of 2005. Forty individuals or couples agreed to be interviewed but seven did not keep their appointment. Those interviewed represent a sample of active members of the congregation. Included in the Appendix is a roster of those interviewed and the criteria by which they were selected.

This report includes a summary, recommendations, and a tabulation of significant responses to the questions asked.

We acknowledge with appreciation and thanks the work of Ms Elzena Wiley and Ms Fannie Carson who arranged the interviews. We thank Pastor Gill and the leaders of the congregation for the opportunity to serve the people of Pilgrim Baptist Church. We especially thank those who were interviewed for their candid responses.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

1. How long have you been a member of Pilgrim? Why did you join?

The persons interviewed have been members from 3 years to 98 years. The median length of membership was 25 years.

Reasons for joining included the following: moved to area, neighborhood church, friends invited me, programs for children and youth, the people.

2. How would you evaluate church life and the various ministry programs at Pilgrim? What are the strengths? What could be improved?

Many people see positive momentum building over the past year. Many like Pastor Gill and appreciate his skills and vision. A number of individual ministries were mentioned as strengths.

Past conflicts, pastoral changes and the resulting loss of members are the primary negatives facing the congregation. Some feel the conflict has been resolved and want to move on. Others feel that many people have been hurt and healing is still needed. Ministry to youth is the program most often mentioned as needing improvement. Some would like to see another full-time youth minister.

3. What are the strengths of Pilgrim's facilities as they are now? What are the weaknesses?

The two things most appreciated about the current facility is the worship space with the stained glass windows and the historic nature of the building. Some also mentioned the location as a strength.

Many people noted the lack of accessibility as the primary weakness of the building. The general age and condition of the building is also a weakness. Depending on the respondent's involvement, specific facilities such as the kitchen, nursery or choir room were seen as needing improvement.

4. What are your thoughts and feelings about the proposed plan (Phase 1 AB) that has been developed?

Generally, people seem to like the plan although most were not aware of the details and hadn't given it much thought. Two people were surprised and upset that Phase 1 did not include a new sanctuary. They said others felt the same.

Several people questioned whether or not the plan provided enough new space and if it provided more parking.

What part of the plan is most important?

Most stated that the elevator /accessibility is an important part of the plan. New and improved bathrooms were also mentioned by many. Youth space, nursery and classrooms were also mentioned.

What part of the plan is least important?

None mentioned

5. Is raising \$1,500,000, or more, over three years, toward the proposed total building and renovation cost of over \$3 million a reasonable and realistic goal for Pilgrim?

Although most church members do not have the detailed knowledge to know for sure, their answers reflect their perception of the congregation and their faith and confidence that this can be done.

Two-thirds of those interviewed felt that Pilgrim could attain the three year goal of raising \$1.5 million. This seems to reflect the feeling of positive momentum at Pilgrim, the fact that the money is there and that it is a faith matter.

Of those who don't know if reaching the goal is possible, many cite the conflict and change of the last several years and the resulting loss of members. Some, however, sense the positive momentum.

Only three felt that it couldn't be done.

6. Are there any significant issues in the congregation or about this proposed building project that need to be addressed before asking members to make a commitment to a capital fund appeal?

The responses to this open-ended question focused on three primary issues:

a. Finances - Several people voiced questions about the money raised in the last building fund appeal. There seems to be a need for clarification as to what was raised in the last appeal, how it was spent and what remains of the funds. It is very important that this issue is settled before going to the people with another appeal. One person expressed similar concerns about the regular giving.

b. Congregational climate - Many people feel that Pilgrim is still in a transition period after several years of frequent and sometimes painful pastoral changes. There is the impression that many left the congregation in frustration or anger but few are certain what the true membership of Pilgrim is at this time. On the positive side, people admire Pastor Gill and feel that he is providing the vision and leadership the Pilgrim needs at this time. There is a feeling on the part of most that Pilgrim is moving in the right direction.

c. Building concerns - There is still a need for more clarity regarding the proposed building project. In addition to details about the building itself people want to be certain what will be done and why. In the words of one person "We need a clear understanding of the project and what it will mean for our ministry." Most seem to want to move forward and not delay the effort further.

7. Can you suggest names of people who might lead this appeal by serving as a General Chairperson - people who are highly respected, have excellent leadership skills and who get things done?

A number of names were suggested and will be shared at the appropriate time.

**8. Would you be willing to consider such a leadership role?
Would you be willing to work as part of a task group(Publicity, Telephone, etc.)?
Contribute financially?**

Yes No Don't know

Would you be willing to consider a leadership role?	10	14	7
Would you be willing to work as part of a task group (publicity, telephoning, dinners, etc.)?	18	4	9
Contribute financially?	25		8

A number of people said that they would consider a leadership position in a fund appeal and many others said they would work on task groups. Of those responding “don’t know”, several said they wanted to see the final project before committing. Others said they were busy with other obligations at work or at church. Almost all said that they would contribute to a fund appeal.

Individual names will be shared with Appeal leaders at the appropriate time.

9. Can you suggest individuals or families who might consider a leadership gift of \$50,000 to \$150,000 or more? Would you consider such a leadership gift?

Several of those interviewed felt that there might be people in the congregation who could make gifts of this size. It was noted that there are many professionals with means but only a few mentioned specific names. Only two people indicated that they would consider a gift of this size.

All names will be kept in confidence and will be shared with discretion at the appropriate time.

10. Is 2005 a good time to conduct a capital fund appeal?

The majority of those interviewed felt that the fall of 2005 is a good time to conduct an appeal. People seem to feel that this project has been in the planning stages for over 10 years and it is time to move.

Those wanting to wait felt that more planning was needed, and more stability in the congregation.

11. Other comments or questions:

A verbatim list of all responses is included in the Tabulation of Responses section of this report on page 14. Readers are encouraged to read the responses carefully for they represent the candid final opinions given at the end of the interviews.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our interviews, we believe there is a general awareness of the need for certain improvements to the facilities of Pilgrim. However, in analyzing the interviews, it is clear that there is a significant lack of awareness of the Master Plan and how it will be phased. There seems to be a need to clarify the vision and mission of Pilgrim so that the members see how the expanded and remodeled facilities support that vision. For example, Phase 1AB of the Master Plan devotes a great deal of space to youth. It is important to be clear about the vision for youth ministry at Pilgrim, who will use the facilities and how they will be used.

It is somewhat difficult to determine what the fund raising potential might be for this project. Several issues need to be thoroughly examined in order to develop an achievable fund raising goal for the capital appeal. These issues, which include the clear communication of the vision and phasing of the project, clarification of the results of the last appeal, and obtaining up-to date membership and giving records, will impact the financial goal to be raised in a three-year appeal.

Specific Recommendations

1. Vision and Goals - Clearly articulate Pilgrim’s vision for mission, program priorities and congregation and community needs and be able to demonstrate how the proposed expansion and renovation is “critical” to making this happen. It will be important to have the Deacons, Trustees, staff, Expansion Committee and congregation unified under a common vision if this project is to proceed. People will look to Pastor Gill to articulate the vision and lead the communication and fund drive activities supported by broad based lay leadership.

2. Communication - There must be a significant increase in communication regarding the need for this project and the process being followed to complete the Master Plan. Communication should take many forms and include as much visual material as possible. True communication is two-way and thus there should be ample opportunities provided for members to express their opinions and concerns and have their questions answered. A Communications Sub-committee of the Expansion Committee should be formed and charged with the responsibility of informing members and getting feedback.

3. Timing - The appeal should be scheduled based on the clarity and understanding of the vision, the degree of agreement and enthusiasm for Phase One of the Master Plan, the “readiness” of the congregation, and the enthusiastic support of the pastor and leaders. It will, in our opinion, be difficult, but not impossible, to bring all of these components together for a capital fund drive in the fall of 2005.

Two possible time lines for fund drive planning and implementation:

Activity	Objective	Option 1 (2005 Appeal)	Option 2 (2006 Appeal)
Congregation Communications	Move members from awareness to understanding to interest.	May - Aug.	May - Dec. 2005
Identify, research and visit major gift prospects	Secure major gifts	June - Aug.	Oct. - Dec. 2005
Conduct building	Secure Congregational gifts	Sept. - Nov.	Jan. - Mar. 2006

fund appeal

4. Major Gifts - The ability to secure several major gifts of five and six figures will determine, in our opinion, whether or not the Phase One plan can be completed as currently envisioned. A Major Gifts Task Group should be assembled soon and work should begin on identifying possible major donors and developing a strategy.

5. Financial Goal - When an appeal is conducted, the appeal goal should be set with all of the above issues in mind. Based on our feasibility study, current giving of the congregation and our limited knowledge of the community, a fund raising goal of \$1,500,000 would be difficult to obtain without a minimum of \$750,000 to in major gifts (See Chart of Needed Gifts on the following page). We believe goals in the following ranges might be attainable:

Building Goal -	\$1,000,000
Faith Goal -	\$1,250,000
Inspired Goal -	\$1,500,000

Factors Determining a Successful Fund Appeal

1. A strong spiritual foundation.

Prayer

Biblical guidance

Recognition of God's power (*"Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain."* Psalm 127:1)

2. A clear vision.

Vision for the congregation's ministry (What is God calling us to do?)

Vision for the project (How will this effort help us to do God's work at this time?)

3. Strong and committed leadership

Pastor - Spiritual leader and interpreter of the vision

Lay - Organize, motivate and ask.

4. A positive congregational climate

Trust in leadership

Conflicts managed in a healthy way

Outward focus rather than an inward focus

5. Availability of financial resources

Size of the congregation

Economic diversity in membership

CHART OF NEEDED GIFTS

In order for Pilgrim to raise \$1,500,000 over a three period, the follow gifts will be necessary. Some of these gifts will come in the form of cash and assets such as shares of stock as shown in the top part of the chart. Many other gifts will be made over a three year pledge period.

Number	Gift/pledge	Total
	Cash/Asset Gift	
1	\$200,000	\$200,000
2	\$100,000	\$200,000
4	\$50,000	\$200,000
5	\$25,000	\$125,000
8	\$15,000	\$120,000
10	\$10,000	\$100,000
	Weekly Pledge	
5	\$50	\$39,000
15	\$40	\$93,600
20	\$30	\$93,600
30	\$25	\$117,000
25	\$20	\$78,000
25	\$15	\$58,500
50	\$10	\$78,000
200		\$1,502,700

TABULATION OF RESPONSES

1. How long have you been a member of Pilgrim? Why did you join?

The persons interviewed have been members from 3 years to 98 years. The median length of membership was 25 years.

Reasons for joining included the following: moved to area, neighborhood, friends invited me, programs for children and youth, the people.

2. How would you evaluate church life and the various ministry programs at Pilgrim? What are the strengths? What could be improved?

Strengths:

Pastor Gill (14)

Feeling of renewal/improved climate (10)

Choirs (4)

Worship services (4)

History/reputation (4)

Giving/stewardship (4)

The people (3)

Youth ministry (3)

Strong core group (3)

Programs (3)

Family Night (3)

Service to the community (3)

Women's involvement (2)

Spiritual strength (2)

Boy Scout program (2)

Bible study (2)

Well educated members

Diverse economically

Improvement needed:

Programs for teens/youth (11)

Transitions/pastoral changes(9)

Members have left the congregation (9)

Programs for seniors (2)

Evangelism efforts (2)

Commitment of members (2)

Two congregations (split by worship times) (2)

Communications

Awareness of community needs

Involvement of members

Accountability (of leaders)

Lack of a youth minister

General organization

Childrens' programs

3. What are the strengths of Pilgrim's facilities as they are now? What are the weaknesses?

Strengths:

Worship space (10)

Historic building (5)

Location (4)

Stained glass (3)

Organ

Building paid for

Building sturdy

Flexible Fellowship Hall

General appearance of the building

Cozy

Adequate

Weaknesses:

Lack of accessibility (20)

Age and condition of the building (10)

Too small (6)

Bathrooms (5)

Nursery too small (2)

Kitchen too small (2)

Need youth space (2)

Need pew cushions (2)

Inadequate meeting and classroom space (2)

We need to move (2)

Fellowship Hall

Balcony needs work

Parking lot

Electrical system

Need receptionist at door

Need choir room

4. What are your thoughts and feelings about the proposed plan that has been developed?

I/we like the plan (5)

This can excite the church, show that the church is moving (3)

We need the renovation/updating (2)

Anything that happens will be a blessing

The priorities are right

Well thought out

We want a new sanctuary first

Need strong leaders to make this happen

How does it address Pilgrim's program, facility and staff needs?

Does it provide for more parking? (2)

We need a larger kitchen

Will it be large enough?

Are there enough classrooms?
It addresses the needs
We need a lounge on the main floor
Is there enough room in the corridor to get a casket out?
Will there be space in the sanctuary for wheel chairs?
We need more choir seats
A Trustee room is needed

What part of the plan is most important?

Elevator/accessibility (23)
New/improved bathrooms (9)
Youth space (5)
More space in general (3)
Nursery (3)
Classrooms (2)
Media room
Choir room
Wider hallways
Improve the Fellowship Hall
Storage space

What part of the plan is least important?

None mentioned

5. Is raising \$1,500,000, or more, over three years, toward the proposed total building and renovation cost of over \$3 million a reasonable and realistic goal for Pilgrim?

Yes (21)
Comments
Take care of regular budget first
The preparation of plan and goals are important
We have the resources
We are growing and committed
Anything is possible - it is a good cause
Only if it is for a sanctuary
A challenge - we must not let regular giving go down.
People must see progress
For sure!
If we break ground in 2006
We are doing this for God and must have faith and patience

Don't know (11)
We've lost a lot of members
We don't know what our membership is
Some members have left
The congregation is coming together
In the past we could get money from outside sources

If everyone would tithe. It may take longer than three years
We must know the congregation - exactly what the membership is
Some wealthy people have left
We are on an upswing - the enthusiasm is there
We raised it 1928 and there was less money then
If we are committed - we have lots of professional people
Show how doing at one time saves money
We have lost a lot of members and some are retiring
The climate (in the congregation) is uncertain. Keep the proposal visual
Anything is possible if it is God's will and the congregation is willing to step out in faith

No (3)

We need to build up the congregation first
This has been on the boards for ten years and not much money has been raised

6. Are there any significant issues in the congregation or about this proposed building project that need to be addressed before asking members to make a commitment to a capital fund appeal?

Members need to know the regular budget needs and what is expected. The staff has taken pay cuts - We need to pay better.

We need to use the words "improving" and "updating" rather than "expanding". We are not filling the place now.

We need to see visible progress. There have been no changes in the last 5 - 10 years. Houses went down and nothing happened.

I'm impressed with Pastor Gill. He's a spiritual leader and a business person. He's on top of it all.

We are still in transition.

We need a youth minister.

We must see what will be built. What about a new sanctuary?

We haven't gotten over issues of the former pastors. Need to stress evangelism.

Where did the money already raised for expansion go? Have we gotten to the core of healing?

What happened to the money from the last campaign? Was it used for operations? This needs to be addressed.

People want to move on.

People want this and soon. Keep the funds in a separate account.

What are the plans for youth ministry staff?

Healing is taking place and members are coming back.

The last campaign raised \$700 thousand and only \$200 thousand is left.

Show the advantages. Tell how the facilities will help our worship and service.

There has been no reporting of results of the last appeal and no accounting of the funds.

Some people are afraid to have their names on a membership list.

Money hasn't been used well in the past - we need better accounting.

We need a clear understanding of the project and what it will mean for our ministry.

We need to revisit the pledges from the last appeal and to bring closure.

We are still in a rebuilding period with a new minister.

7. Can you suggest names of people who might lead this appeal by serving as a General Chairperson - people who are highly respected, have excellent leadership skills and who get things done?

A number of names were suggested and will be shared at the appropriate time.

	Yes	No	Don't know
8. Would you be willing to consider a leadership role?	10	14	7
Would you be willing to work as part of a task group (Publicity, Telephone, etc.)?	18	4	9
Contribute financially?	25		8

Comments:

If the project is tied to community outreach.

It will take convincing

I'm supportive but I travel a lot

9. Can you suggest individuals or families who might consider a leadership gift of \$50,000 to \$150,000 or more? Would you consider such a leadership gift?

Several of those interviewed felt that there might be people in the congregation who could make gifts of this size. It was noted that there are many professionals with means but only a few mentioned specific names. Only two people indicated that they would consider a gift of this size.

All names will be kept in confidence and will be shared with discretion at the appropriate time.

10. Is 2005 a good time to conduct a capital fund appeal?

Yes (21)

Comments:

The sooner the better (4)

Don't put it off (3)

Get started (2)

Its time

Start but provide good information

We have waited a long time

If the structure is in place for the campaign

Things are fresh now - a new pastor and friendlier place.

Don't know (2)

Comments:

Only if for a new sanctuary.

Let the membership and giving figures tell.

No (7)

Comments:

Too soon need a mission statement, program plan and outreach plan.

Spring may be better

We need to capitalize on the new energy first.

We need a year to come up with a plan.

2006 would be better - we need a year to educate people about stewardship.

I wish we knew accurate membership numbers.

This is our first year with our new minister and don't need too many issues. We must be sure that we are of one accord.

11. Other comments or questions:

Pastor Gill and Keith McCutcheon are doing a good job.

Don't build a new sanctuary on St. Anthony.

We must be a purpose driven church.

We must drop the image of a snooty clique. Contact former members and invite them back.

I applaud the tenacity of the Expansion Committee and thank them.

Having professional help (with the fund raising) is good.

This time we have to do it - lets get it right.

Make sure everyone is involved.

There is a new spirit for the past five or six months - a new feeling of hope.

We can do it if we unite and put God first.

Leave the sanctuary as it is.

Think of Pilgrim as a community center.

This time we need to track gifts and pledges. We need a special treasurer for this.

I would like to be a part of this effort.

Regular communication is important. There should be no hint of secrecy.

Be serious and set deadlines. Don't buy another model.

There is a lot of diversity in our membership.

Keep up the good work and keep the people informed.

We need a larger copy of the master plan (so we can see the details).

I'd like to see Pilgrim take off.

We have always had a good Building Committee. We need to understand the segregation of duties - who has the responsibility. The Deacons are viewed as the decision makers but its really the Trustees. The Deacons help the pastor.

I enjoy Pilgrim and love the new Minister of Music. The Education Pastor does great Bible teaching so everyone understands - he values all levels of ability.

I want to make sure the money raised goes to the actual building project. Too many projects raise the funds but don't get the work done.

I work with non-profit construction projects at Wells Fargo. There is a person at Wells Fargo who works just with churches. There may be state or federal funds because of the historic nature of the building.

A question for the planning team: What kind of structure is needed to attract young families long-term to Pilgrim? What is the strategy? How do you get them here? Then when we get them - what do we have for them?

We are the oldest African-American church in the state. We need to be asking ourselves, "Can we bring in young people?" We are looking inward, we need to be looking outward.

APPENDIX

LETTER OF INVITATION

March , 2005

Dear ,

Pilgrim Baptist Church is preparing to conduct a Capital Fund Appeal in the near future. The purpose of the Appeal is to make possible an addition and a number of renovations to our building by seeking special gifts and three-year pledges for these capital improvements. This Appeal will help us to improve our facilities which house the programs and activities that we offer to our members and to the community and to make our outreach to newcomers more effective. The enclosed case statement outlines the proposed goals of our Appeal. Please review it.

The congregation has engaged The James Company, a stewardship consulting firm, to help us prepare for a possible Appeal. The James Company staff will be conducting interviews with members of the congregation during the next few weeks. The interviews are strictly confidential and are designed to gather background information and opinions which will help in planning the Appeal. No financial commitments will be requested at this time.

We are asking you to help us by agreeing to be interviewed. ___(name)___, a member of the congregation, will be contacting you soon to arrange a time for an interview.

We are grateful for your commitment to and support of God's ministry at Pilgrim. We hope you will choose to be part of this study. Your cooperation in this effort is greatly appreciated.

Yours in Christ,

enc:

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

The following persons were interviewed during a two-week period in March of 2005. One or more of the criteria listed below were used in their selection. This was not intended to be a pure statistical sample but rather a representation of the active, supportive membership of the congregation.

1. Members of the congregation who are regular in attendance and active in at least one activity besides worship.
2. People representing a variety of ages, length of membership and life situations.
3. A strong sampling of people who are significant financial supporters of the congregation.
4. A strong sampling of former elected leaders of the congregation.
5. People who are well connected to others in the congregation.

Alexander, Doris
Bellamy, Mr. & Mrs. Christopher
Black, Nina
Boyd, Mary
Brown, Richard and Irene
Burley, Ray & Elvira
Dodd, Minister
Echols, Mr.
Fields, Marcia & Quantrell
Garth, Sharon
Gillespie, Rev
Hayden, Andrea
Jordan, Alexander
Leftwich, Leroy
Long, Art & Beverly
Massey, Gloria
McNeel, Sandie
Moore, Clifford & Lynn

Owens, Jimmie
Patterson, Oralee
Reid, Kenneth & Stephanie
Rinehart, Deacon
Robinson, Mary & George
Robinson, Evelyn
Scott, Earl
Sims, Erma
Swygart, Willie & Ramona
Tate, Jeffrey
Watson, Craig
Waynwood, Beverly
Webb, Karen
Weddington, Martin & Sallie
Wilson, Ruth
Wright, Gloria

