



"But the seed planted in the good earth represents those who hear the Word, embrace it, and produce a harvest **beyond** their wildest dreams." Mark 4:20



Shining the Light Together Questions and Answers Guide

This booklet provides answers to several questions you might be asking regarding the **Shining the Light Together** campaign. Please know we care about each one of your questions, and we thank you for already taking the first step to learn more about Hope+Elim and this giving campaign by reading this Q&A.

If you have any further questions that weren't addressed in this booklet, please don't hesitate to contact Pastor Jon or Pastor Brian at info@hope-elim.org.

FACILITY UPGRADE QUESTIONS

Q. Isn't Hope+Elim good enough already? Why do we need to continue to spend money on our building?

A. Good enough for us or God? This is God's church, not ours or yours. We don't have the authority to settle or just be "good enough" for the kingdom of God. God has blessed this church with increase, growth, and capacity. This has happened by the grace of God and because of your deep commitment to mission. We're continually impressed by your willingness as a church to be faithful to the harvest God provides (Luke 10:2).

The mission of Hope+Elim is to "reach out to the world around us and share the everlasting love of Jesus Christ."

For Hope+Elim, the goal is to remain faithful to God's mission and expand his kingdom as we maintain being good stewards of what God has given us.

As a church, you have continued to offer your very best to the Lord that often includes sacrifice of your personal preferences for the sake of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. You understand and faithfully embrace the biblical definition of what it means to be a follower of Jesus ("servant" not "consumer.") Your joy, enthusiasm, and ability to adapt has remained constant as Hope+Elim continues to grow and focus on mission – and that's impressive.

Q. What is the primary motivation for upgrading the facility?

A. In Luke 12, Jesus tells a parable to remind us, *"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."* Again, Jesus tells a parable in Matthew 25 and says, *"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"*

These among many others of Jesus teachings speak to the Biblical understanding of stewardship - the idea that everything we have has been given by God to us to manage well. God longs to entrust resources, money, and influence to those who he can trust to be faithful, wise, and work for the growth of his kingdom.

Hope+Elim was blessed with the opportunity to steward an 80,000 sq. ft. facility, and now, three years later, our growth continues deep and wide. Worship, discipleship, outreach, and care ministries among many more continue to expand. A large part of our ability for continued growth is the capacity and resources to sustain it. We want to care for our physical "lighthouse" as good stewards of what the Master has given us.

Fixing large-scale building needs, providing air conditioning for the entire building which is now fully-utilized, and safety upgrades for transportation is not only being good stewards, but are simply wise decisions to care for our people well. Furthermore, upgrades to our worship center and kitchen will allow us to have the breadth of city-wide impact that God has made clear in our vision to reach the lost from various racial and cultural backgrounds.

Simply put, we're on a mission from God!

Throughout the history of Hope and Elim, we have proven that a building is not necessary to carry out that mission, but it can sure help!

Q. What is the rationale for putting more money into a building that has many building partners and operates as much as a community center as it does a church?

A. Hope+Elim is both a church and an epicenter for the community in which we serve. For this reason, we are further enhancing our vision and maintaining our role as a "lighthouse." It is true that the children of this world are shrewder in dealing with the world around them than are the children of light. We are children of the Light. We are to use our worldly resources to benefit others and make friends for the sake of the kingdom (Luke 16:8-10).

Furthermore, God's heart has always been for cities and the people where God's people live. In Jeremiah 29:7, God says to his people, *"Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."*

We believe the call to be a community center which in turn blesses the city strategically extends the mission of Hope+Elim even wider than if we simply kept to ourselves. We believe God didn't give us this facility to keep it to ourselves, but to be generous and serve the city around us (Matt.20:28).

Q. If the vision of Hope+Elim is to be a church focused on outreach and serving those in need, why invest so much money into our facility?

A. We are called to be committed to both reaching out and serving the community around us as well as taking care of the facility we are in. Our call is to reach out to those outside and to develop the people inside. By maintaining and upgrading the building, we enhance our ability to do both.

We believe in the biblical mandates from God that involves both evangelism and discipleship. Growing deep and wide. Jesus was passionate about both! Scriptures give us countless examples of not only financial or material poverty, but spiritual, emotional, and relational poverty as well. We know meeting

needs can happen many ways, while still being faithful to God's heart. Having a giving campaign focused on upgrades in our building and facilities has not and will never come at the expense of giving to those in need. Hope+Elim currently tithes the biblical example of 10 percent (projected at \$90,000 this fiscal year) of its annual budget to dozens of ministries and outreach efforts throughout the city and world. This giving will absolutely continue, as well as the dozens of outreach programs and ministry efforts we are currently doing including homeless and refugee outreach, food distribution, Des Moines public school families support, and much more.

Having an improved, upgraded facility will allow us to meet many more needs in the city both short-term, through outreach events, greater capacity and use of our gymnasium (currently unusable 4 months during the year with lack of air conditioning), our growing preschool on the mezzanine (currently without central air conditioning) increased ability to feed the hungry and provide diverse worship experiences for our diverse community with increase of our audio/video production equipment. The long-term impact will be seen through increased opportunities for community meals, homeless outreach, as well as those in recovery centers and shut-ins throughout the city in need of transportation with the purchase of dependable shuttles/vans.



Q. What kind of ministry and outreach is taking place on the mezzanine and levels 3-5 which are in need of air conditioning?

A. The mezzanine currently serves as our four-day-a-week preschool serving close to 40 families. Level 3 is home to our student ministry (now over 50 students weekly), as well as our mission partners Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Change Course.



At other times, level 3 hosts various support groups including AA and NA from around the city. Level 4 is home to Joshua Christian Academy, a private, Christian education for elementary-aged children, and level 5 is home to Genesis Youth Foundation, a growing ministry serving youth and families from countries all over the world through athletics, the arts, and mentoring. Long story-short: God is growing his kingdom right under our noses!



GIVING CAMPAIGN QUESTIONS

Q. What is a capital campaign, and why is it important for our church?

A. A capital campaign is an effective tool God has used in the past to inspire us to grow spiritually and improve the church's facilities physically. These campaigns have resulted in incredible growth and joy! This campaign will involve much more than fundraising- it will focus on prayer, study of God's Word, building relationships, inspirational worship, and yes- cheerful and faithful giving. Each of these are areas of discipleship that we are all called to continually grow in as followers of Jesus. It's a good time to be the church!
(1 Cor. 13:13; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 9:7; Luke 12:33-34, 48)

Secondly, in the past few years, Hope+Elim has had projected budgets at a deficit, meaning the current expenses of our facility and ministries have outgrown current general fund giving. Past campaigns have shown that an intentional, focused season of teaching, learning, and growing in our Biblical understanding of stewardship and generosity will not only allow our capital project goals to be met, but increase our tithing as a church.

Q. Are we doing this campaign because we are in some kind of trouble financially?

A. Can we grow as a congregation in our financial giving? Absolutely. Are we confident that God will supply our needs as we trust in him for the future

of this church? Absolutely. Hope+Elim is an incredibly generous congregation. We pay our bills, compensate staff fairly (based on a salary survey of thousands of churches), and continue to tithe to dozens of local and global mission partners with 10 percent of all offerings received.

All of us are works in progress, listening to God, and learning to give sacrificially and generously. Ultimately, we trust God. So the leadership at Hope+Elim is not going to use a giving campaign as a gimmick or any tool to pressure you to give more. The leadership of our church is focused on helping all of us grow in understanding and application of God's Word, and finances is no exception. We're going to teach about money and possessions because Jesus does in his Word, and he cares about it, and us, a lot.

In addition, large projects like those we're pursuing require giving above and beyond general fund giving so as to not sacrifice the ongoing ministry of the church.

Q. What is the maximum amount of money Hope+Elim will spend on these campaign capital projects?

A. At the annual meeting of Lutheran Church of Hope on September 24, 2023, the congregation approved expenses up to \$2,250,000 in capital projects. Any amount given over that total will go towards our current debt reduction. Hope+Elim currently has a debt from our original building remodel of \$918,000. We continue to make regular interest payments to this amount each month through our general fund. Paying down this debt also has the incredible benefit of saving us thousands of dollars in annual interest payments to the bank that could in turn be used for mission and ministry.

Q: If we need to do a giving campaign, then why aren't we hiring a professional fundraiser, like a lot of other churches do?

A: Our experience has taught us that we very much prefer homemade giving campaigns rather than attempting to adapt a fundraising company's methods to our context. Plus, we're saving about \$100,000 by doing it ourselves.

Q: Isn't a giving campaign just a sneaky way of doing a fundraiser, but calling it something else?

A: Actually, there's a significant difference: Fundraisers typically include established methods, sales or gimmicks to encourage people to give more, offering recognition and/or rewards for those who do. That's appropriate for a non-profit organization trying to raise money, but not for a church trying to teach people a Bible-based model for giving as a matter of faith and spiritual discipline. Giving campaigns at any campus of Hope do not include pressure, tactics or gimmicks. You won't get your name engraved on a plaque if you give a lot of money. We give offerings at church for God's glory, not our own. During **Shining the Light Together** you'll simply will be asked to pray about what God wants to do through you to accomplish his will for this church. Then, you will be invited to trust God enough to take a leap of faith and give whatever he lays on your heart to give ... not to be recognized or honored by other people, but to honor God!



Q: Can I still give towards Shining the Light Together for Hope+Elim if I worship at another Hope campus?

A: Absolutely. Wherever you worship, you can indicate **Shining the Light Together** OR **Hope+Elim Campaign** on a check or through online giving at hope-elim.org/give.



Q: Do all of the opportunities to give to Hope+Elim through various assets apply to the campaign fund?

A: Yes! For more information, refer to the Bible-Based Giving handout in your packet.

Q: How many volunteers will it take to make this giving campaign work?

A: A campaign leadership team of approximately 50 volunteers just like you started working on this campaign in September and continues to work behind the scenes with various aspects of the project, including vision, strategy, budgeting, design, open house-style events, and communication. They are all volunteers, just like you that are passionate about what God is doing at Hope+Elim!

Q: What are the capital improvements and upgrades that we are seeking to fund through the campaign?

- Installation of central air conditioning on levels 3-5 (Mezzanine also) to allow year-round programming and use by our building partners and church ministries. Currently the space is not ideal for ministry four months out of the year due to heat. This upgrade is about fully utilizing the space God has given us for ministry.

- Kitchen upgrades for equipment to support over 500 meals being prepared for weekly ministry and hundreds more for community events. Gathering around meals was a key aspect to Jesus' ministry and in turn has become a unifying and strategic aspect of our ministry at Hope+Elim to bring all people together in community. The current kitchen is under-resourced and ill-equipped for large-scale, quality, modern food ministry.
- The purchase of two large vehicles/vans/buses to support the growth of our transportation ministry which currently serves up to 50 individuals weekly with the potential to expand to many more group or individual pick-up options. Our outreach is limited by not having enough vehicles with the capacity and quality to transport guests week with excellent hospitality.
- Production upgrades for sound, lighting, and video equipment to modernize The Worship Center and replace other decades-old equipment. Our current projector has reached the end of its projected life-span with a wash-out image, our lighting is limited for larger worship services and events, and our current sound equipment is not equipped for our vision of a gospel choir or any other expansion into multi-cultural worship expressions.
- Large-scale facility maintenance including boiler, elevator, and plumbing maintenance. Older equipment requires more expensive parts, and some maintenance has been deferred for years under the previous owners of our facility.

Q. Can I designate my contribution to a specific project within the campaign?

A. Targeted donations to specific projects are not available for a few reasons. First, the cost of various projects will certainly go up or down from our time of projection to the actual work being done. We don't want to "over-promise" on certain projects and "under-deliver." Secondly, certain bids or costs may cause us to move more quickly in a certain area or later on another depending on cost. Finally, we will seek to honor every gift by carefully budgeting and utilizing all funds with the input and accountability of our senior leadership and church council.

Q: How does a giving campaign work? What should I expect?

A: The **Shining the Light Together** campaign is two years, running from January 2024 – December 2025. You can expect to be surprised if you're preparing for a high-pressure, slick and polished effort to get you to part with more money than you really want to give! It's a pretty simple process ... there are basically three stages:

1. Informational Meetings:

Now, before you run away screaming, rest assured these have nothing to do with making a sales pitch. Info meetings hosts and volunteers are not allowed to ask for money, or even talk about how much a person should give. Instead, we want to provide opportunities for you to get together with other people from Hope+Elim! Meetings will take place at the church (if you're more comfortable with a neutral location), as well as in homes and community spaces throughout the city. If you attend a neighborhood informational meeting, you'll meet people from your neighborhood who are part of your church, and you may or may not have even known it! You'll watch a video where we will explain why we are doing the campaign and walk you through campaign materials. After the video, volunteers from the campaign team will be on hand to answer any questions you might have. That's it! Simple. Easy. Fun. Painless. Meet some people, share some stories, watch a video and get some questions answered.





2. Worship, Prayer and Bible Study:

The Christian fundamentals of prayer and getting into God's Word through worship, study, prayer and daily devotions will serve as the foundation of the campaign. In addition to worshipping weekly, we'll offer financial classes, continue to challenge you to attend your weekly Bible studies and small groups, as well as participate in our combined worship service at 10:00 am and all church Unity Prayer Walk on Sunday, Nov. 12. Also, see the Prayer Guide in your campaign folder for more ways to connect with God during this season.

3. Commitment Sunday and Processional Offering:

Although you may give at any time, on Sunday, Nov. 19, we'll thank God for Hope+Elim, and we'll give offerings to him with thankful and joy-filled hearts, responding to his call through a one-time special offering, or two-year pledge by bringing the commitment card and envelope you receive in your folder to the altar. The commitment card will have a place to offer up your time, talent, or treasure, so everyone at Hope+Elim gifts are important and valuable, regardless of financial circumstances.

Q: If it's that simple, then why not just tell us what we need and see what happens? Why bother with all the work it takes to put together a giving campaign?

A: There are times we've wondered the same thing! However, the truth is, that while telling people what we need financially might be enough to accomplish our giving goals, it would not allow us to fulfill our gathering and growing goals. It is our sincere hope that in the process of this faith journey that you will learn to give cheerfully and connect in a deeper way to God, to one another and to the vision God has so clearly laid before us as a church. These gathering and growing goals are as important as the giving goals, so it's important that we set aside several weeks to develop these healthy habits and allow God the time and space to work however he wants to.

Q: Giving goals have been established for this campaign with the top goal of \$2,500,000. I know all things are possible with God, but what if we don't reach those goals?

A: We feel confident that we'll be able to continue a growing, thriving mission to the city no matter what the financial results of the campaign happen to be. Although we've planned for and are operating with sound financial planning and budgeted projections, ultimately we trust God, not our own plans. He's always made a way to accomplish the vision He's given us, and He won't stop now!

Q: What about our regular offerings? Do we stop giving those so we can give to the campaign fund?

A: Only if God directs you to do that. But, the ongoing ministries of this church need to be funded in order to continue to thrive, so please prayerfully consider your giving to the general fund of the church in addition to and separate from the new campaign fund. We don't want to sacrifice one fund for the sake of another. For some of you, your first step of faith will be starting a monthly tithe to the general fund, which supports our facility, staff, and ministry. For others, God has put you in a financial place to be able to give above and beyond your regular tithe, and make a gift to the campaign.

Q: Could any of the money I give to the campaign ever be used for the church's General Fund expenses?

A: No. The church has a policy on this issue. Every penny you give to **Shining the Light Together** will go to the fund you have designated.

Q: How do I make my offering to Shining the Light Together?

A: We're asking you to pray about giving in one or two ways – a one-time up-front offering and/or a two-year financial commitment to be given in weekly or monthly payments. Then, add those two offerings together on the Commitment Card you'll receive in your folder and bring to worship any weekend. Gifts may also be made online at hope-elim.org/shine, mailed to, or dropped off at the church office any time. If you have questions about online giving, or other forms of gifts, please email info@hope-elim.org or call 515-282-4481.

Q: Why are children and students being asked to participate in this offering?

A: Children are not just the future of the church, they are a big part of the church right now. We want them to participate so they can experience the joy of cheerful giving! Not to mention they'll learn biblical, life-long lessons about generosity during Hope+Elim Kids on weekends, and hopefully your discussions at home. That's why we'll be collecting money during Hope+Elim Kids and student ministry each week of the campaign and they'll be invited to participate in the processional offering with the entire congregation on Commitment Weekend. Just like the grown-ups, this is a guilt-free, pressure-free opportunity to grow.

Q: What if I don't have any money to give? Should I give my last dollar to the church in order to prove my faith?

A: Absolutely not. The church has a responsibility not to take your last coins (Luke 21:1-4 is one of the most misinterpreted texts in the Bible, and we'll do some teaching on that during this campaign). There are plenty of ways to give to the church with the other resources God has given you. The manner in which you give is more important than the amount. No one will pressure you to give more than you are spiritually prepared to give. No one will be counting your offering at the altar. Your offering is a holy thing and an act of worship between you and God, whether it is your treasure, your time or your talent you are giving to God's church.

Q: If I don't have much to give, how can I feel a part of this campaign?

A: This campaign is an opportunity to discover the spiritual discipline of tithing (see next question), or at least to start taking steps in that direction. If you're not giving to the church, try 1 or 2 percent. If you're tithing 5 percent, try 10 percent. This is a faith practice, just like prayer and worship. We do encourage you to give responsibly. We offer financial classes on a regular basis (and will during the campaign) to help you learn Biblical ways of handling your finances.





In addition to financial gifts, God also encourages us to give of our time and talents. Maybe God has blessed you with a flexible schedule to donate service hours to the church. Maybe God has gifted you with skills in construction, administration, or organization. There are over 20 different ministries that operate weekly through the church, so contact us at info@hope-elim.org or visit hope-elim.org/serve to learn more!

**Q: I thought the Bible commanded “tithing?”
Should I base my giving on that?**

A: Tithing – setting aside the first 10 percent of our income for God – is a biblical guideline for giving, introduced in the Old Testament (Leviticus 27:30), and lifted up by Jesus as something good to do (Luke 11:42). Yet, in that same verse, Jesus insists that tithing as a religious action apart from love and justice is incomplete. Jesus wants us to give more than our tithes – he wants our hearts, and reminds us that our hearts and treasures hang out together (Matthew 6:20-21). He wants to set us free from living for things that won’t last, and invest in eternal things. Biblically speaking, then, tithing is not a litmus test for righteous living, nor is it necessarily a maximum offering for believers (Luke 12:48, Luke 19:8).



It is a biblical guideline that many Christians apply as we seek to live out a life filled with freedom, peace and joy – even when it comes to money. In this way, we ask that you give to the campaign as God leads you, in addition to your regular tithe.

Q: OK, so what's the bottom-line. How much should I give?

A: Sorry, but we won't tell you what to give, because we don't know the answer. Only God does. We're not even going to suggest an amount. And we hope you don't decide what to give based on some reasonable calculation, factoring in what you gave last time plus or minus an income change. Nor some other formula for coming up with a number that has nothing to do with what God wants; we want you to discover the joy and freedom of giving God's way ... and that won't happen if you let a human being tell you what to give.

Q: So how am I supposed to know what to give?

A: It's not complicated. It's a matter of faith... God's revelation, not human reason!

STEP #1: PRAY.

Ask God this simple question: "What do you want to do through me to accomplish your will for this church?"

STEP #2: LISTEN TO GOD.

Keep asking until you "hear" God's answer. If you don't get anything – in other words, if you don't get a pretty strong indication in your heart, soul, or mind as you pray each day throughout this campaign – then quiet your life until you can. Be still. Listen. God will write a number on your heart, soul, or mind (Psalm 46:10).

STEP #3: TAKE A LEAP OF FAITH.

Trust God enough to do whatever he calls you to do, believing that he will provide the means to make it happen (2 Corinthians 9:6-11). Now you're giving as a matter of faith – and thus, experiencing the joy and freedom of Bible-based giving without anyone telling you, other than God, what to give! Enjoy the feeling!



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