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Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ,

During the past year as your pastor, I have seen that the foundation for ministry at Decatur United Methodist Church is grounded deeply in the mission of the church:

“to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

For the past 180 years this congregation has embodied this mission and has proved to be an effective witness for Jesus Christ in our community. Over the summer I have had the great privilege of listening to many of you and hearing many of your stories about this church: from 1963 when the church installed the first indoor bathrooms, to the years of growth in youth ministry, to the founding of SoulFest in 2009, to the Sanctuary Remodel that we were in the midst of at this time last year. One common denominator in all of this is that Decatur UMC has been concerned with being a witness for Jesus Christ in our community.

As our vision team has met over the past few months and continues to meet, I am still impressed by the desire of this church to reach new people, especially young people, with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

While our vision team is still working, I believe that God is leading us to a vision and a next step in ministry that will continue the historic legacy of this church of being a witness for Jesus Christ. Through this vision, I strongly believe that God is leading us to a place to reach more people and to make more disciples as we live into this calling.

Along the way in doing this, we are presently presented with an opportunity. If you have driven by the church in the past week, you likely noticed the for sale signs that are on the property in front of the church. Specifically, the vacant lot in front of the sanctuary and the house that is affectionately referred to as the Buchanan House. These properties have been owned by the bank for quite some time, but they are only now being listed.

Under the leadership of the Church Council, we are involved in a process to purchase this property. On Monday, August 14, the Church Council approved a proposal to send to the District Board of Church Location and Building.

While everything is contingent upon the official processes of the church, the church entered into a purchase agreement on August 14 with Peoples Bank of East Tennessee for the property. Due to the location of the property, the attractive price, and the level of interest in the property, we did this to ensure that the church was able to fully consider a purchase of this property. Simply put, we did not want the Buchanan House and lot to slip away without considering the potential ministry use of the space. As stated above, this agreement is contingent upon final approval by the church and an inspection.

The next step is for us to hold a church conference, on Sunday, August 27 at 1:00pm to make a final decision as it relates to the purchase.

In assessing the property, I see great ministry potential. In our proposal sent to the district, the church council identified that the Buchanan House and adjacent lot can fulfill three ministry needs that will help Decatur United Methodist continue to be an effective witness for Jesus Christ in our community:

1. The structure to be purchased has been recently renovated and will be used as space for the Meigs County Parish Youth Group. It will also be used to host informal community gatherings, such as a coffee house style event for teenagers following Friday football games. The house can also be used for future Sunday School and small group space and for office space for potential future church staff.
2. The vacant lot is already in use by the church for overflow parking. The purchase of this field will secure this parking for future use, and will also allow us to use the field for recreational ministry activities. This could potentially be a prime location for future improvements such as an outdoor pavilion and an additional paved parking lot.
3. The purchase of the properties will also increase the visibility of Decatur United Methodist Church. Our church is very visible from Hwy 30, which runs East to West; however, there is no a church entrance from that highway. The only church entrance is through side streets off Hwy 58, which runs North to South and is the main road through town; we lack good visibility from this direction. This new property places the church closer to Hwy 58, and will allow for better signage and visibility for the church.

I hope that you will be in prayer about this new ministry opportunity. I also hope that you will join us for our Church Conference on August 27. All are welcome to attend this conference, and all professing members of Decatur United Methodist Church are eligible to vote.

As we move toward the Church Conference and these new opportunities in ministry I am reminded of the scripture verse the is set in stone in the narthex of our sanctuary:

“As God’s household, you are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.” (Ephesians 2:20)

In all that we do, Jesus Christ is our cornerstone; Jesus Christ is the source of all we do. This is and will continue to be the foundation and the cornerstone of our ministry and witness in our community. I am honored to be your pastor on this journey, and I pray for God’s vision to be fulfilled in our shared ministry.

In Christ,



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