

# A *Wide Door* FOR EFFECTIVE WORK

*A Motion of the  
Smyrna First  
Leadership Team*



Dear Smyrna First Family,

This motion comes as a product of many hours of prayer, seeking God's will, and working diligently in faith to produce a vision for our church's future as a gospel witness to the city of Smyrna. We've been here a long time and we will be here for many, many years to come.

As you take time to review the following pages, I know that you are thinking and praying just as I have been and that you will be seeking God's will for our church just as our Leadership Team has been. Together, I believe God has opened a great opportunity before us. I invite you to humbly join me in considering the information in this booklet and preparing for the time that we will together uncover all that God plans for Smyrna First in the next phase of our ministry and life as a church.

I am so blessed to be your pastor and am excited about the days ahead!

With GREAT affection,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Hamilton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

*"...a wide door of effective work has opened to me..."*

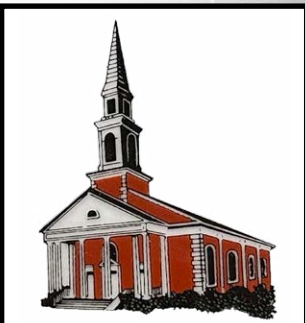
## I Corinthians 16:9



**1886** - Smyrna First constructs her first building.



**1924** - Almost 40 years later, we build and move into what was known as the rock church.



**1961** - We build our current sanctuary, in use for over 60 years.

As the apostle Paul considered his ministry in Ephesus, he decided to stay because God had clearly opened a door for ministry. Such a door is being opened for Smyrna First right now.

Smyrna First has a long history of doing what it takes to reach her community and has, in wisdom, sought the Lord's leading concerning the place of worship, building and moving whenever the need or opportunity was there. Today, we find ourselves in another moment of opportunity.

The city of Smyrna has always expressed interest in our campus. Until now, no viable offer had ever been made. **However, the Lord has opened a door and the time has come for us to consider a serious offer from the city of Smyrna to purchase our campus.**

From the birth of First Baptist Church in 1884, God has placed us in the heart of Smyrna to be a beacon of light to our city. Today we have an opportunity to be a beacon of light well into our future. Through purchasing our current location, our city leaders will have the chance to make the Village Green an even more inviting place for people to gather. And for our church, the opportunity is filled with just as much promise, and maybe even more.

# WHY CONSIDER A MOVE?

## LOCATION

Less than a half-mile from our current location, this move keeps us right in the heart of our city. Next to SouthState Bank, our church would have a prominent location on Atlanta Road. We would have great neighbors on every side, and the nearness to Taylor-Brawner Park would give us ministry opportunities for fellowship and community outreach.

## FACILITIES

Our current building has been a great ministry tool that has served us well, but a new building would meet the needs of our future. A new facility will be designed for future ministry while also meeting everyone's needs. Less steps and stairs will make classrooms and our worship center easier to access. ADA compliant restrooms will help us care well for everyone. A new facility addresses security needs that helps us keep all of our children and adults safe.

## FINANCES

With the sale of our present location, we would immediately pay off our debt of \$1.6 million. The tithes and offerings used to pay this debt will be redirected to our mission of making disciples. We will conduct a building campaign to raise \$1,000,000 so that we all have skin in the game. **But when we move into our new facility, everything will be paid-in-full.**

# DETAILS OF THE SALE

The City of Smyrna and First Baptist Church of Smyrna have negotiated the following figures. The offer must be finalized by vote of the City Council. Following a positive vote of the city, Smyrna First will receive an official offer.

**Sale price of the Church's Property: \$15,800,000**

**The City's Commitments:**

**Roadwork on Atlanta Road (turning lane and traffic light):  
\$250,000**

**Cost of demolition on Atlanta Road property: \$100,000**

**The Church's Commitments:**

**Purchase of 5.5 Acres on Atlanta Road: \$3,300,000**

**Payment for the lease of the campus during the two years of  
construction: \$300,000**

The official offer from the city will precede the vote of the church body on July 23, 2023. The church will have all specific information necessary to make an informed decision on the sale and relocation of the church campus.

# COMMON QUESTIONS

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**How have the church's interests been represented in negotiations with the city?**

**Smyrna First partnered with a godly, professional, experienced negotiator that helped keep the church and our interests at the center of the conversation.**

**Has the church already been sold?**

**No. The city will make a formal offer and the church body must vote to approve the sale of our property.**

**Why are we just now hearing about these negotiations?**

**There has never been a formal offer from the city until now. Through the years, there has been lots of interest but no offer to consider. This is a legitimate offer that the church should know about. On a transaction of this size, it takes time to work through the details so that everyone can be involved.**

**Is this enough money to relocate our campus?**

**Smyrna First has listened to experienced consultants that can help us build a facility that will meet our needs and allow us to continue doing ministry. We believe the sale of our current campus will pay our debt and provide enough to pay for a new campus.**

**When would the sale of our campus close?**

**If the church votes to approve the motion to sell our campus on July 23, 2023, we will accept the city's offer and the sale will close within the next few weeks.**

**Do we know what the city would do with our current property once they purchase it?**

**This is a good question to ask the city. They hope to expand the downtown area with more inviting spaces to create an attractive location for the growing population of Smyrna.**

**Where is the proposed new property?**

The land is located on Atlanta Road between SouthState Bank and Reed House, less than half a mile from our current campus.

**Is the proposed new property big enough to accommodate a church our size?**

Yes. With proper planning, the 5.5 acres is plenty of room for us to build everything we would need for ministry.

**What will happen to our current ministries, like CWE?**

They will continue. Our new campus will be designed to not only continue ministry, but to see it thrive.

**Will we have green space?**

There will be some green space on campus, but the majority of our field events would take place in public parks, which helps us be with and minister to the people in our city.

**Will traffic on Atlanta Road hurt attendance?**

No. It will help attendance. Atlanta Road is a main artery to the city and thousands of vehicles will pass directly by our campus regularly. In addition, the city is putting in a turning lane and stop light to help vehicles exiting our campus.

**What will our new church building be like?**

We will contract with a design firm experienced in building churches to help us create plans that will serve every member of Smyrna First.

**Will there be enough parking at the proposed new property?**

Yes. We will have plenty of parking on our property, plus we will have access to both the bank and Reed House for any overflow parking we may need.

# MOTION & VOTING

**First Baptist Church will sell our current facility to the City of Smyrna for \$15,800,000. First Baptist will purchase 5.5 acres of land on Atlanta Road from the City of Smyrna for \$3,300,000. During construction, First Baptist will pay the City of Smyrna \$300,000 to lease the present church campus.**

**The church will vote on this motion by secret ballot during the 10:45 a.m. worship service on July 23, 2023.**

**To cast your vote, you must meet the following membership requirements:**

- 1. You must be present during the worship service on July 23, 2023.**
- 2. You must be a member in good standing.**
- 3. You must be at least 13 years of age.**

"The developments concerning our future church location may seem sudden and immediate to many. In reality, I strongly believe God has assembled just the right cast of people, orchestrated just the right circumstances at just the right time as a result of much prayer and effort. The Leadership Team unanimously endorses this motion and greatly appreciates your careful consideration and prayer for what God has next."



**Jack Austin**  
**Leadership Team Chairman**





# TIMELINE

## **June 11, 2023**

First Baptist Church of Smyrna informational meeting announcing motion to sell and relocate church campus.

## **June 18 - July 1, 2023**

In-home informational meetings. Meetings will be scheduled by Study Group and are open to all church members. Meeting times and locations will be posted.

## **July 9, 2023**

Church-wide Q&A and discussion about the sale and relocation of the church campus. 5pm in the Sanctuary.

## **July 23, 2023**

Church members will vote during the worship service by secret ballot on the motion to sell and relocate the church campus.

*Unless the Lord builds the house,  
those who build it labor in vain.  
Psalm 127:1*

## **PRAY AND CONSIDER**

Every major decision requires that we seek the Lord through prayer and God's word. This decision is no different. As big a decision as it is, we earnestly hope that every member would diligently seek the Lord for wisdom, discernment, and peace in this new opportunity.

## **INFORMATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Leadership will host informational meetings in member's homes between June 18 and July 1. These meetings will be open to all members and you may register for any meeting using the church app. All meeting dates and locations will be published. Additionally, there will be a church-wide Q&A hosted at the church on July 9 at 5pm in the Sanctuary.

## **PLEASE ASK QUESTIONS**

We want every member to be as informed about the details of this opportunity as they can be. Your pastors, staff, deacons, and Leadership Team are happy to take time to answer your questions, listen to you, and help you get all the information you need. Let us know. We want to spend time with you!

# NEXT STEPS

## If motion is **AFFIRMED**:

- The offer from the City of Smyrna will be accepted and the sale of our current property and the purchase of the new property will go forward.
- The current church debt will be paid in full. The church will continue to meet in the current facility for the next two years.
- The Move Team would be appointed by the church body to begin the process of designing and building our new facility with a chosen design firm and construction company.
- After all plans are approved, construction on the new site will begin and the church will eventually move into a brand new and fully paid-for facility.

## If motion is **DENIED**:

- The offer from the City of Smyrna will be rejected and the church will remain at the current location.
- Church debt would continue to be paid monthly until the current loan agreement matures in 2028. The church would refinance the loan for an additional number of years and would owe approximately \$1.3 million in debt.
- The church would appoint a special projects team to contract with a design firm to help establish a ten year plan for renewing our current campus.
- After prioritizing renovation and ongoing maintenance projects, the team would gather quotes and the church would begin raising money to pay cash for new project costs.
- A conservative estimate for bringing the church up to modern standards both inside and outside the facility is somewhere between \$2-5 million.

[smyrnafirst.org](http://smyrnafirst.org)

