



# Plumb Line



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## DEDICATION SUNDAY ISSUE

### We're Here!

After years of fund-raising and hard work on the part of hundreds of dedicated members, we've finally moved into our new church building. For my part, I think I'm still in some kind of shock about the whole thing; I've gotten so used to sawdust and power tools in the new building that it looks downright odd when it's cleaned up and hosting a worship service. No more bare boards in the walls, no coils of electrical wire stacked in Nancy's office; the whole place is dressed up in Sunday best.

Now, the big challenge for Bill, Nancy, and Matthew is unpacking all their boxes of stuff and getting settled in a new place..

### Carpet Finished!

The last little bit of the carpet has been laid in the new building! The carpeting job has been all but finished for a little while, but there was a section of the staircase left to go. The carpet layers were on the job Wednesday, finishing up an excellent job in our new facility.

That nice new carpet sure looks a lot better than bare concrete and floor decking, doesn't it?

### Sound System Cabinets

The world-renowned cabinetmaking team of Foster and Hillin were hard at work the other day, measuring and sawing away at a set of handsome cabinets for the sound system equipment. This is not something that most members will notice, since it's up in the sound balcony, but the audio-visual crew will certainly appreciate high-quality cabinets.

Everywhere you look in the new building, you can see the care and attention poured into the workmanship by the volunteers and professionals involved, and we're deeply grateful to all of them!

### Nursery Raves?

The new facility for preschoolers, toddlers, and bed babies is getting rave reviews from the preschool and nursery workers! Here are some of the things they really like about the new setup:

☞ The little bathroom between the toddler room and the nursery is a lifesaver when it's time for the 'potty patrol.'

☞ The sleeping babies can sleep in peace in the back room while the active babies play in their own room.

☞ Diaper changes are easier with the new arrangement, and you can wash up afterwards without leaving the room!

☞ The floors have an extra inch of padding under the carpet, so toddler tumbles aren't nearly as painful for the little ones.

(I think the extra padding under the carpet is a particularly nice touch; if the little ones just starting to walk could tell us about it, I'm sure they would agree!)

### Lot Lights!

Have you noticed the smart-looking row of outdoor lights along the east edge of the parking lot? They really fit the bill when we're meeting at night in the new building; with a flip of the switch, the whole east parking area is lit up nicely so that we can see where we're going. Smaller lights will be added along the west edge of the property later on, but we're already enjoying the big lights over the main parking area.

There's an interesting story behind those lights, by the way. They came from a Burger King in the area that was involved in some sort of renovation project! Our alert planning and construction folks got wind of the fact that the Burger King was replacing parking lot lights and arranged to buy the old ones, thus saving us a fortune! I shudder to think how much brand-new pole lights cost...

## Furnaces On-line

I'm happy to report that all the furnaces in the new building are up and running smoothly, and all the thermostats are set up for use. There were some initial startup difficulties with the machinery, but the bugs seem to have been ironed out.

Now that everything's sorted out with the furnaces and control systems, we hope to see the Public Service bill drop somewhat; up until now, it's been very difficult to actually regulate the temperature in the various parts of the building. Some furnaces would be running wide open a lot of the time, and some parts of the building still got chilly! Going forward, we'll figure out the best settings to maintain comfortable temperature in the building in the most economical way possible.

I can hear you thinking, "What's so complicated about a furnace?" You should take a peek in the basement of the new building sometime! There are a row of furnaces against one wall, connected by the most complicated maze of ductwork and control wiring I think I've ever seen. I suspect the heating and air-conditioning folks have to have degrees from NASA to work on the silly thing!

## Are We Done Yet?

Now that we've moved in, our inclination is to kick back and relax for a while. Heaven knows we could use the rest -- a lot of people have certainly been pouring every waking moment into the construction effort.

There's nothing wrong with a sigh of relief and a drop in everyone's blood pressure now that we're in the building, but let's be careful not to get too complacent. The whole point of this exercise was not just to build a building; we feel God's leadership to minister to our community, and our new larger building is just a tool that will help us carry out that mission.

When God told Noah to build an ark, it wasn't just because God wanted to play with a boat. God had a vital mission for Noah, and the ark was a piece of hardware that helped Noah do the job. If Noah had just sacked out in a deck chair on top of the ark after it was finished, where would all the animals be? I'm sure Noah felt a great deal of satisfaction when the last board was in place, but that was nothing compared to his joy at loading the ark full of animals and saving them from the flood.

Let's enjoy this sense of accomplishment for a time, and then look forward to even more rewarding times as God works through us and through this facility to reach people all around us.

**All Aboard!**

## Dry-Feet Baptisms?

Gather 'round, folks, and I'll let you in on a secret...

Do you know what there's something Baptist pastors really dread when they're baptizing someone in the middle of a worship service?

Leaks.

Not leaks in the baptistry, although that would make a spectacular mess. Leaks in your hip-waders. Just imagine how hard it is to concentrate on this turning point in a new believer's life while the leg of your hip-waders slowly fills up with water! Then, try to figure out a graceful way to exit the baptistry afterwards with ten gallons of water sloshing along with you! It's been the bane of Baptist pastors for quite a while.

Our pastor can take heart, however -- the new baptistry is designed so that the baptizer stands behind the tank and doesn't get soaked. Pastor Archer can finally retire his hip-waders and not have to rush through a complete change of clothes before continuing with the worship service!

The water system in the new baptistry is a lot friendlier to new believers, too. The baptistry has its own little water heater and circulation system, and that makes it a lot easier to establish and maintain a comfortable water temperature. It's a little difficult for the baptismal candidate to concentrate, too, when the water is ice-cold or steaming hot.

Now that we've got this nice setup for baptisms, let's all work together to share the love of Jesus with the people around us! After going to all this effort, we look forward to seeing that baptistry in constant use!

## Landscaping Awaits!

The heavy work on the building itself is drawing to a close for a while, but you can take a quick look around and see that there is a lot left to do on the grounds. We've got grass, trees, and bushes to plant, and at some point we're going to start work on a retention pond up by the traffic lights.

Get your floppy hats and garden gloves ready -- when the weather gets better, I expect we'll all have plenty of opportunities to pitch in and dress up the church grounds. Just imagine what it will be like -- grassy areas for the kids to run and play on, nice trees, and a beautiful setting for the church building.

## **We'll Never Be The Same!**

I've been told that I'm WAAAY too young to reminisce about the 'good old days.' I mean, I don't remember the Sixties or anything! Be that as it may, I was as intrigued as the next guy when Pastor Archer said our church would never be the same again now that we've followed God's leadership and built this building.

You can look at that statement in two ways, I suppose. On one hand, it sounds terrifying -- we're facing a future that may well be quite different from our past! Human beings are creatures of habit, and we all find it reassuring when we can more or less predict how things will go in the future based on our past experiences. When we open a box of cereal, we expect to find Froot Loops in there, not nuts and bolts. On the other hand, though, we sometimes get so comfortable in our habits that we're blind to some of the possibilities of the future! One of the most fascinating and rewarding things about raising children is watching them learn new things; we really get a kick out of watching children say their first words, take their first steps, and so on. The kids get a charge out of it, too -- they set their fears aside and explore new things all the time, and they grow mentally and physically as a result.

Change is always a little unsettling, but just wait! God has His hand on this body of believers, and He wants to lead us into the future. I think we have a lot in common with the Israelites in the Old Testament; we're poised on the brink of the Promised Land, and all we have to do is follow God's leadership. With Him on our side, we can't lose! The poor Israelites took one peek at the Promised Land and refused to enter, and God kept them in the wilderness for an extra forty years. If we balk at the future God has for us, we'll only be denying ourselves the blessings He has in store for us. There's nothing in the future that God can't handle, people! Come on, let's take His hand and follow where He leads!

## **Where, Oh Where... ...Was The Plumb Line?**

Gentle readers...

My apologies for not keeping the presses rolling. When I look back into the archives, I see that the poor old Plumb Line hasn't come out since last October! All I can say is that the Plumb Line got wrapped around the propeller last fall and its entire staff (reporters, editors, and publishers) has just now come back up for air.

## **Remember When..**

...the construction site was a field of weeds with a couple of survey stakes here and there?

...it rained on Ground-Breaking Day, and we went out after the worship service and broke ground anyway? Kids and adults, digging with shovels, sandbox scoops, and teaspoons?

...the basement was just an enormous muddy hole in the ground?

...SOMEbody (we won't name names) dropped a hammer down in the concrete forms for the basement wall and it was entombed for a while?

...we had nine zillion boards holding up the forms for the basement ceiling, hoping and praying they would support tons of wet cement?

...the steel beams and wooden ribs took shape, and we could see the building moving off the blueprints and into reality?

...the gigantic windstorm swept off the mountains before the roof decking was on? Buildings all around were chewed up by the gale, but God had His hand firmly planted on our wobbly collection of boards and all was well the next morning!

...you could look straight up from the auditorium floor and see the sky through the hole at the top?

...we had to run the tools off an extension cord half a mile long because there was no power in the new building yet?

...it seemed as though the Creeping Wall was NEVER going to be finished?

...the weird fumes from the bathroom paint threatened to run us all out in the yard? Man, now THAT stuff STANK!

...we had an emergency Roto-Rooter call to fish a measuring tape out of the sewer pipes on the night of the Christmas musical? (Yech!)

...Matthew mired his van up to the axles in the mud, and Eddie had to pull him out with his truck?

...we had a whole series of 'dirt mountains' between the new building and the highway? (I'll bet the kids remember!)

...the only sign of the new building most of us had was a Christmas tree ornament with a drawing on it?

## A Joyful Noise?

In case you've been wondering, let me be the first to reassure you. The sound system in the new building is a 'work in progress,' and we appreciate your patience as the audio-visual crew fine-tunes everything. Sound systems are notoriously difficult to set up in a room the size and shape of the new auditorium, and it may take the sound crew a little while to get the best performance out of the new equipment. They have been doing an excellent job of gathering hardware and analyzing the acoustics of the new building, and we have every confidence that they'll come up with top-notch solution. In the meantime, be sure to encourage them as they 'shake out the system.'

The sound equipment is pretty impressive! We've got a couple of amplifiers to drive the speakers, a fifteen-band equalizer to help tune the sound system's performance to the acoustics of the room, and a sixteen-channel mixing board to blend the sound from microphones, tape decks, and all sorts of stuff.

So just exactly what is a 'mixing board,' anyway? In simple terms, the mixing board is the 'brains' of the whole sound system. The mixing board sits in the middle of the whole pile of equipment and is connected to everything. If you sit in front of a mixing board, the first thing you think is, "Wow! Look at all those knobs and buttons!" In the hands of a skilled sound technician, a mixer is really a miracle machine, capable of taking inputs from all sorts of different audio gear and mixing them into a balanced, pleasing sound for the people in the room.

You may not realize it, but a number of our church members went through a series of highly technical training sessions a few months ago on the same kind of sound equipment that we'll be using in the new building! Matthew organized an audio-visual class, and they trained in detail on some really nice mixing gear and public-address systems. Our audio-visual crew takes the job very seriously, and we appreciate their efforts in what is often a thankless job. When the sound is nice, we don't tend to notice it, but when something odd happens we all tend to turn around and make faces at the sound crew -- we need to be sure and commend these folks!

## Piano Lessons

Well, friends and neighbors, brace yourselves -- you're about to get a crash course on piano construction. Try not to giggle too hard while a computer programmer tries to explain piano operation to you...

One of the first things people say about the new piano is, "WHOA! It's HUGE! Why is it so much bigger than our old piano?" As it turns out, there are a couple of reasons we need a big piano for the larger auditorium.

When it comes to pianos, BIG means LOUD. (Stop rolling your eyes, Matthew -- I'm doing the best I can at this explanation business!) When you're trying to provide music for a space as big as our auditorium, there are some calculations you can do that indicate what size piano you need. For our space, the experts told us we needed a seven-foot piano in order to fill the room adequately without hooking the piano up to the sound system. From my limited experience with sound systems, I can testify that trying to boost a piano's volume with an electronic sound system is a puzzling, frustrating mess -- it's much, much easier if the piano provides its own volume.

A bigger piano also provides a much more natural sound and a better tone due to the "speaking length" of the strings. In order to understand the idea of "speaking length," think about a ukulele and a harp. (Work with me, here... and hush, Matthew!) Imagine what 'Amazing Grace' sounds like when played on the ukulele, and then imagine what it sounds like on a harp. Big difference, eh? Both instruments are playing the same notes, but the harp sounds much richer and warmer. Our piano is a six-foot ten-inch model (pretty close to the seven-foot recommendation), so it has a nice big "speaking length" and sounds really nice.

One other thing -- our piano has a specially-constructed sound board that will help it maintain its tone quality over the years to come. The sound board in a piano is not a flat surface; it's actually arched a little bit. Don't ask me to explain why; it just makes the piano sound better. Most piano sound boards are "arched" by a combination of glue and pressure at the factory, and most pianos start to lose that "arch" after a few years when the glue starts to let go and the enormous pressure from the strings begins to take its toll. Our piano soundboard has an extra set of curved ribs supporting the soundboard, though, and this additional support keeps the soundboard precisely arched while taking up a lot of the strain from the tension in the strings. This means that our piano is built to last a long, long time and maintain its "new-piano performance" for many years to come.