

EMPC No Barriers Project -FAQ

1. What is it?

The proposal is to add an elevator to the exterior of the building at the current location of the garage. As part of the project we will renovate the adjacent space to have better access to the church building. The renovations will improve the welcome center, align the offices, and move the nursery for easier usage. Also the bathrooms will be updated to be fully ADA accessible and have more capacity. This will become the new main entrance to the building.

2. Why an elevator and not just ramps?

Ramps are fine for small and gradual elevation changes. East Main would need about 100' of ramps for access to the primary floor. An elevator allows people to connect all levels (basement, ground, main floor, second floor) for wheelchairs and strollers. It will also be suitable for funeral services.

3. How will access be controlled for the JAM level?

The Walnut Street entrance to JAM will move to the double doors with the three-level staircase. These doors will lead directly to the proposed elevator entrance from the alley. This plan would help create a single, secure point of entry for registration and check-in.

4. What about Cornerstone access?

After consultation with architects and engineers, we believe the proposed location is the best way to meet building code requirements, stay within a reasonably attainable budget, and accomplish most of the project's goals. We understand that limited accessibility to the Cornerstone area is a concern, and we do not take that lightly. If needed, we have contingency plans to move youth programs to accessible floors. Keeping the elevator as close to the sanctuary as possible was also an important priority in this proposal.

5. What about the stuff in the garage?

We have been clearing out items in the garage that are no longer being used, and the church has not had a van for several years. We are working on a plan to relocate the remaining items, such as tools and supplies, to a storage area in the building with an outside entrance.

6. Where will the library and Becomers Class go?

While the library has been a valued resource, it is currently used less frequently than in the past. To make the best use of our available office space, we are considering reducing its size and relocating it to a smaller area.

The Becomers Class could be relocated to the current Living Room. The groups that presently meet there have indicated a willingness to move to other spaces if needed.

7. It seems like a lot of money?

The project is budgeted at \$1,000,000 and we understand that this is a significant investment. The budget reflects the cost of improving accessibility through a centrally located four-level elevator, updating bathrooms so they are safer and more welcoming, and addressing the reality that

construction costs have risen significantly in recent years. Our goal is to make these improvements in a way that will serve our congregation and community well for many years to come.

8. Why can't the elevator be on Walnut Street?

Our first choice was to create the new entrance on Walnut Street. However, after consultation, we learned that building and egress codes, setback requirements, and existing structural limitations make a Walnut Street elevator unworkable.

9. What about parking?

With the removal of the garage, we anticipate gaining approximately six to eight additional parking spaces on that side of the building. On Sundays, the spaces along the alley side of the building are designated for accessible parking. The lots currently used by the church will remain available, and the Grove City College parking lot may also be used on Sundays when GCC is not in session.

10. Will worship or ministries be disrupted during construction?

We expect there may be some temporary inconvenience during construction, but every effort will be made to minimize disruption to worship, ministries, and church activities. Our hope is to plan the work carefully, communicate clearly, and keep the life of the church moving forward as smoothly as possible throughout the process.

11. How will this project be funded?

The majority of the project will be funded directly through immediate donations and pledges over a three year period. To move forward the project needs \$700,000 of \$1,000,000 estimated cost pledged by November 22, 2026. Our desire is to approach this project with prayerful discernment, careful planning, and faithful stewardship. We are committed to keeping the congregation informed as plans develop and to pursuing a path that is both responsible and sustainable for the church.

12. Why not wait?

There is a gap between our calling and desire to welcome all people and the current state of our facility. Now is a good time when considering the stability of other significant facility costs such as the roof, or significant HVAC needs. The current limits of location and plumbing in the bathroom area make a small upgrade very difficult.

13. That's a lot of money that could go to Missions?

An adequate facility is part of our mission as a church. We are currently limited for funeral services and events. Also we believe this project should be funded out of an abundance of giving beyond the normal tithes and offerings that the church receives.

14. What's the next step?

There will be a congregational vote on Sunday August 30th at a 10am meeting. Volunteers are working on plans for the project, fundraising, and financing. At the meeting Covenant Partners can discuss and vote on the proposal.

15. I can't attend the August 30th meeting, can I still vote?

Unfortunately, no. The by-laws and rules of order only allow Covenant Partners to speak and vote in person. Absentee and proxy votes are not allowed. We still welcome other friends of the church to attend the meeting so they can show their support for the project.