

AN OPEN DOOR FOR HOPE
WINTER 2024-25 GENEROSITY CAMPAIGN
HOPE CHAPEL, STERLING, MASSACHUSETTS

What Do You Do When God Opens a Door?

One day in 2001, I was sitting at my desk at our denomination's regional office when four people I had never met came in to ask me to help them launch a new church in Sterling. Eventually, Christina and I said yes to that open door. We are so glad we did! Hope Chapel began the next year when we started meeting in the local middle school.



Just two years later, God opened another door. A 28-acre tract of land came up for sale and Hope put in an offer. Our offer was accepted, but before we even finished negotiating a purchase and sale agreement, during the last week of 2004, I got a phone call from Lawrence Corley, an architect from Alabama and a key leader of a volunteer network called Builders for Christ. They were offering us donated labor to

construct our building, if we could have the slab ready by Memorial Day. When Lawrence called, we didn't have an engineer, an architect, or a building plan. We didn't even yet own the land. We had no idea how much it would cost nor what we could afford. And we only had five months to figure it all out, get permits, and lay the foundation. Despite how ridiculous it seemed; we stepped through that open door. God did some miracles, and we moved into our current building in February 2006.

And now, 20 years after that first call, God has set before us another open door. It feels very familiar. Just as we were wrestling with space issues from the growth God has lately entrusted to us, Builders for Christ once again has offered us an amazing gift. They are willing to send 900+ volunteers over the summer of 2025 to build a 14,500 square-foot addition to our facility, saving us \$1.5 million in labor costs! The expansion will equip us to serve twice as many people, each one precious to God. Once again, this will require a step of faith. Again, we need to design, permit, finance the cost, and do the site work by this coming May. Can we do it? We have An Open Door for Hope.

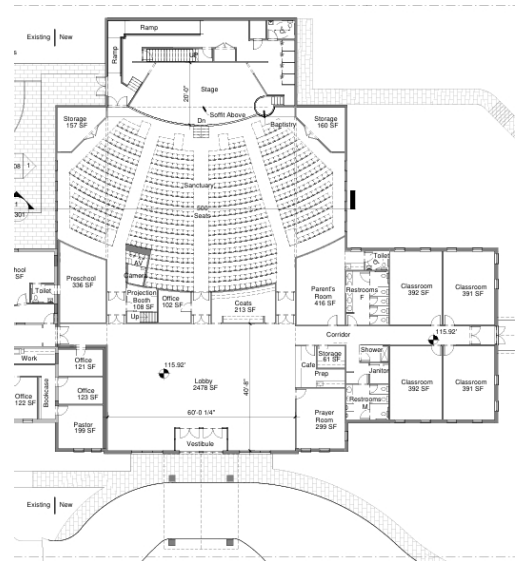
The Challenge: Creating More Space for a Growing Ministry

Clearly, God is not done using us to impact northern Worcester County with the Gospel. He is entrusting us with more and more people coming every week, stretching us to serve them in our 250-seat worship center which we use twice every Sunday. It is a great problem to have! Our youth ministry has outgrown its classroom space and regularly meets in the worship center. Recently 101 teens and chaperones traveled to New Hampshire for a weekend retreat. Lives are being changed as evidenced by the 34 baptisms over the past year.

And yet, there is more opportunity to make a Kingdom difference in our region. If Hope Chapel, through God's grace, is privileged to serve just one percent more of the 50,000+ people who live within five miles of our campus, it will double our Sunday attendance. Just one percent and we will need every square foot of the proposed expansion!

Here's what the new addition will provide. We'll be able to:

- Gather twice as many people in worship in a new 500-seat worship center
- Repurpose our current worship center to serve Hope's growing ministry to teens
- Add much-needed preschool space to serve the growing number of young families at Hope
- Provide four new classrooms for adult discipleship
- Provide additional office space, and
- Provide parking and infrastructure to accommodate everything



Let's Count the Cost

We are proposing a \$6 million expansion. But right off the top, we can subtract \$1.5 million in labor offered to us free by Builders for Christ. The remaining cost is \$4.5 million, but we already have \$600K in dedicated savings, which further reduces our need to \$3.9 million. If we could raise \$3.9 million in gifts and pledges, we would be in our new expansion next fall and debt free in three years. Having no mortgage would free up precious resources which we could immediately pour into ministry. The \$3.9 million is a huge challenge, amounting to 4.3 times our current annual giving.

I need to be crystal clear. The total of \$3.9 million is our prayer, but a minimum commitment of \$2.7 million is our need. If God does not move among us to create a commitment of \$2.7 million in giving above and beyond our regular gifts over the next three years, we will not be able to build the facility we have in our hearts to build. The sum of \$2.7 million is what we need to qualify to borrow the resources up front to construct the new building.

We believe God wants this because a larger facility is an essential tool in being able to fulfill the Great Commission in our own Jerusalem, the 50,000 people who live within five miles of our campus. This belief was confirmed after much prayer, discussion, and discernment by the church on August 25, 2024, when the members of Hope Chapel voted to take a step of faith and proceed with an expansion.



Are You Ready?

Faithfulness requires readiness. The larger building will ready us to serve the additional people who will respond to the life-changing message of the Gospel. Stepping through this open door will be a huge privilege, but also a huge challenge. Whenever God reveals what He is up to, it challenges His people to adjust their lives to join Him. We need to prepare prayerfully to be ready to make the spiritual and financial adjustments He is asking of us.

You will be hearing about this season of preparation in the weeks ahead. The Hope Chapel family, from kids to seniors, will be invited to pray together for an entire month about stepping through the open-door God has set before us. Our prayer will be something like this: "Dear Lord, what would you do through me to accomplish your vision for our church. Help me discern a sacrifice for our campaign that is meaningful and joyful." We will also investigate the Scriptures to learn how God's people have stepped through God's open doors before. We will then have the immense privilege of covenanting with God to partner with Him in what He is doing.

To be clear, stepping through this door will require a huge financial commitment in the millions of dollars. However, we will not be begging you for money. Instead, we will equip you to have an honest conversation with God about how He wants you to participate in what He is doing. Then you will have an opportunity to make a commitment to do what He has revealed to you to do. It will be a challenging but exciting time in our journey of faith. I cannot wait to see what God will do.

The Apostle Paul recognized in 1 Corinthians 16:9 that "a wide door for effective ministry has opened" before him. Paul stepped through that door as he faithfully served. For him, it was the ride of a lifetime. It is my privilege to invite you to embark with me on the ride of a lifetime – stepping through An Open Door for Hope.

I am excited to step through this open door with you. I know we will be glad, and blessed, we did.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Neal Davidson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Blessings,".

Pastor Neal