



# EAST END UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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## August 2023 REBUILDING UPDATE

### Rebuilding Committee August Update

The building committee has some important news to share this month regarding our progress with FEMA. At a recent meeting, we learned that FEMA has categorized the project under a new funding model, which requires us to document the costs of rebuilding in a new way. FEMA's first-round estimate of what it would take to rebuild the original church structure is significantly below what we believe the actual cost to be. However, FEMA has acknowledged they left out a number of key building components and need more documentation to corroborate the costs. Our next step is to bridge that gap to secure a more appropriate level of funding.

This means that unfortunately, the road home has lengthened once again. The building committee plans to seek two cost estimates to present to FEMA to show that their number is an underestimate. One will come from our architect EOA and general contractor American Construction. EOA will use the actual footprint of the original church and map out additional space that current building codes would require (e.g., a wider sanctuary and larger bathrooms to meet accessibility needs), annotating each additional space with its corresponding regulation. American will then price the resulting total square footage. At the same time, our FEMA consultant DCMC will use EOA's drawing to get an independent assessment from another cost estimator. We believe the resulting numbers will help us convince FEMA that their current estimate needs revision.

These additional steps will take time, and we are not sure exactly how long. But we will have an initial draft of our documentation ready to review with FEMA meeting at a meeting on September 7th. Given the anticipated back and forth with FEMA as we lobby for additional funds and gather support for that request, we may not have a funding final answer in 2023. Although these additional steps are time-consuming, they are necessary to meet FEMA expectations and secure this vital funding. We cannot rebuild without FEMA's financial support, and we are confident that our plan going forward will increase the level of funding that FEMA will authorize. That increase can make all the difference in what we can build.

Of course, we are all disappointed with this new development. Even as we appreciate Warner as our temporary home, we all yearn for a permanent one back on Holly Street. That day will come, and we are excited for the moment when we can finally put the first shovel in the ground. Thank you for sticking with East End along the way. We have much still to be grateful for: vibrant ministries for all ages, continued growth and new visitors, and outreach and ministry with the community. We continue to be the church, even as we wait for the building, and that requires our continued involvement and excitement.

To that end, we will hold town halls on September 17 and 24 to discuss this FEMA update and the path forward. We hope you will attend and bring your questions. If you have questions or concerns in the meantime, please contact the building committee at [eastendrebuiding@gmail.com](mailto:eastendrebuiding@gmail.com). As we near the 3.5-year mark of this journey, may we continue to cherish each other and move forward together.