

Feasibility Study Report

Buck Mountain Episcopal Church

Earlysville, Virginia

September 18, 2013

The Rev. _____ Clark
Buck Mountain Episcopal Church
PO Box 183
Earlsville, VA 22936

Dear Rev. Clark:

We wish to extend our thanks to all for the cooperation and support extended to our consultant and staff throughout the feasibility study process recently completed.

A total of 51 units participated in the survey by completing questionnaires received at a parish meeting or in the mail. This represents an excellent total response rate of 64% among the members of the parish community that were contacted.

Now important decisions can be made to continue the momentum essential to the success of a proposed campaign. We welcome the opportunity to continue to work with you during the exciting phases of growth and development which lie ahead.

Faithfully,

Louise M. Baietto
Capital Campaign Services, Program Director
Episcopal Church Foundation
(800) 697-2858

Feasibility Study Table of Contents

Letter of Introduction and Appreciation.....	2
Table of Contents	3
Feasibility Study Methodology.....	4
I. Introduction	4
II. Elements of a Successful Campaign.....	5
Composite Analysis and Summary.....	6
Recommendations	17
Tentative Case Statement	

Feasibility Study Methodology

I. Introduction

For some time the leadership of Buck Mountain Episcopal Church has been evaluating the parish's programs, facilities, and resources, and assessing the ministry opportunities before the parish. After much study and the involvement of many people, the Vestry authorized the Episcopal Church Foundation to conduct a feasibility study to explore the willingness of the parish to support financially these identified needs.

The facts, findings, and recommendations of the resulting survey, now completed, provide a basis for leadership decisions with regard to the future of a fund drive. A complete description of the goals of the proposed plans may be found in the tentative case statement in the Appendix.

STATISTICAL NOTE:

- ♦ A total of 6 direct mail questionnaires were mailed to the parish community.
- ♦ Of those, 4 were returned: a mail response rate of 67%.
- ♦ Including the 7 who were interviewed by phone, 80 units were exposed to the study. Of those, a total of 51 units or 64% participated.
- ♦ Based on experience, this response rate is an excellent representative involvement from the parish community, lending credibility to the study findings.
- ♦ Of the total that participated, the majority, 57%, attend worship services one or more time(s) per week.
- ♦ Regarding the financial-giving practices of those who responded, the majority, 86%, are regular contributors with a written annual pledge.
- ♦ Buck Mountain rates as the most important charity that respondents donate to, with 59% rating it as such.

II. Elements of a Successful Campaign

There are certain elements which must exist in connection with every successful capital campaign.

1. Recognition and acceptance of the proposal as expressed.
2. Awareness within the parish to the proposed plans
3. Availability of strong financial leadership.
4. Projected timing of the campaign.

These elements are reviewed in this report.

Composite Analysis and Summary

Total of 51 Responses

Note: Not all respondents answered all questions.

Awareness of Need

1. Prior to this survey, were you aware that the parish was considering a capital campaign?

47 Yes 3 No

Ninety-four percent were aware that Buck Mountain Episcopal Church is considering a capital campaign. This is a positive indication that the church leadership has prepared the ground for a major capital campaign.

2. Prior to this survey, were you aware of the needs as expressed in the accompanying proposed plans?

43 Aware 2 Not Aware 5 Aware of some of the needs

Eighty-six percent of the respondents were aware of the capital needs of Buck Mountain Episcopal Church. Another 10% were aware of some of the needs. Only two respondents were not aware of the needs. This is an indication that the leadership has done a fine job of communication.

3. Are there additional needs that seem important to you which are not covered by the proposed plans?

Comments:

- None since we received seed money to get a handicap bathroom in the food pantry
- Lighting for the parking lot
- The sanctuary needs to be enlarged to better accommodate worship. (2)
- Fellowship space is a priority to worship space - now, but nothing should be done now to restrict the ability to accommodate the growth in worshipers that will arise from current improvements.
- A reliable para-transit vehicle
- Outreach, especially Tanzania project
- Capital funding of key programs such as music and Christian Education which are critical to the health and growth of this congregation.
- Worship - Sanctuary and music

Interest in and Support for a Capital Drive

4. Generally speaking, do you favor the parish conducting a capital campaign as outlined in the proposed plans?

34 Yes

1 No

15 Yes, but with some concerns

Sixty-eight percent are in favor of the campaign, with another 30% in favor with some concerns. Only one respondent was opposed to the campaign. This is a sign that the church community is willing to support a campaign.

Comments:

- This small church does so much.
- We were given a vision by _____ and we have really stepped up to that vision.
- I think we have a God-given opportunity under _____'s leadership to do amazing things.
- The good Lord will see that we come up with a good plan. I am outsourcing it to Him!
- This is a God-given unique opportunity to take BMEC to its optimum size.
- It is SO important - you cannot manage status quo.
- To grow, we need more space.
- We are concerned about the approach to putting the plans and estimates together strictly with volunteers.
- Whatever we do, even with our current facilities, they have to be maintained.
- I do not want to support a plan that shows parking in front of the church.
- I do not like that they bounded in the cemetery with the parking and the building.
- Get Deese Hall expanded; the other things are nice but those are second and third.
- I feel badly about the building taking one of our best trees.
- Build in stages
- We are at a critical point in the growth of our church community.
- Small parish and a large undertaking that could lead to severe financial difficulty as there are no reserve funds available.
- It is far too large a debt to be assumed by the congregation or by borrowing.
- The parish must be prepared to put their money where their dreams are for this to be fully realized.
- It is a lot of money for not that much new space.
- A long-term plan for all of Buck Mountain's needs and ministries is not evident. No specific plans are included for future choir needs or for space in the sanctuary, or for endowment of staff to support a larger church. Why build these facilities if we continue to have deficits?
- Doesn't go far enough - will need another campaign within five years?
- We need to be more available for growth.

- Question the need for a basement for expansion

5. Please indicate the level of priority you would attach to each of the projects outlined in the proposed plans by checking the appropriate line under each heading. At present, they are listed in no particular order.

**Select only one option per line and feel free to make comments (use an extra sheet if necessary).*

	PRIORITY				Lack Informatio n
	High	Medium	Low	Opposed	
a. Deese Hall Expansion	<u>39</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
b. Additional Parking	<u>27</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
c. "A Good Sign"	<u>17</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
d. Reviving Our Sacristy	<u>22</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>

Comments:

- Not sure the sign needs to be in the capital campaign - could do this from a BBQ dinner or members could make one, but \$2,000 is not much money
- The lighting is really very poor, as well as the plumbing. The men of the church could do some of the work and save a little there. We could do this without the capital campaign.
- Parking will be required for a building permit.
- Many people who live in Earlysville do not even realize we are an active church from driving by. We need to look successful - that breeds success.
- If you want to draw attention to the church you do need a better sign in a different spot.
- We support the expansion, but there are real issues with the plans.
- We do not need three bathrooms.
- The end of the new parking lot will be over part of the septic field.
- An accordion wall in all classrooms should be installed so they are maximum flexible.
- I am not certain the revamping of the same square footage will do the job for very long.
- As the sacristy is in constant use and the cost is modest it seems reasonable to do it first.
- Christ is everywhere, from our leaders to the least whom we serve, but I'm not inclined to perfume the feet at the expense of the poor. Let our Sacrament have the honor first with which He honors us.

- One of reasons we do not attend regularly is that we are still testing the waters to see if we are a good fit. Not completely comfortable at the church. Unfortunately, having better facilities would make a difference as a draw. Having a draw would bring in more young and diverse (at least economically) families.
- There should be provisions for the handicapped in the parish hall and in Deese Hall. Additional parking should not extend in to the front lawn of the church or the cemetery.
- Parking should be expanded only if it doesn't go into either the lawn in front of the church or the cemetery - I don't know where that will be. For the parish hall they need handicapped access to the facilities; until that is taken care of nothing should be done to Deese Hall except for adding a few more chairs. The sacristy isn't luxurious but has everything that's needed and renovating it won't have an impact on expanding our membership.
- I would just move the beautiful sign out in front of the stone wall.
- Do not support basement plans
- Visually the plan is good and brings the parish hall, possible playground, parking, and Deese Hall into an integrated campus. That is the best idea presented. Growth of Deese Hall is important for another bathroom and more space for better office and Sunday school space. The parish hall could be used much more effectively and extensively with this integrated physical concept of the entire campus.
- I think the signage used now grabs attention better than a more formal sign would.

6. If the proposed total goal of \$522,000 cannot be fully funded by a capital campaign, how would you feel if the parish were to assume prudent long-term debt to ensure completion of these proposed plans?

20 Acceptable 23 Undesirable, but acceptable 7 Unacceptable

Forty-six percent responded that it is undesirable, but acceptable to assume long-term debt; another 40% said it is acceptable. Only 14% responded that long-term debt is unacceptable.

Comments:

- I think debt is there and we need to use it. I have no problem with debt.
- Definitely! That is the way it will be done.
- The Diocese said we could get \$230,000 based on our pledging.
- I don't see how we will NOT get into some long-term debt to get this done.
- If we raise half the money in the campaign, we will get rid of the rest in five years or so.
- I would not want a high debt load.
- The church will stagnate without the identified improvements.
- Debt should be undertaken with considerable thought and discussion. There is no turning back once we have taken it on and we are unaccustomed to dealing with

that burden.

- Seventy families can only do so much. Recognizing that the expansion is intended to draw additional local families into the fold, is there evidence that the improvements will bring additional members?
- I would gladly hold notes, if issued, up to \$20,000, while my opportunity to give is far less than that amount.
- There is no reason to believe that new people would have any interest in paying off a loan or making payments for a debt that others have made.
- Poorly framed question as it assumes that we are prepared to accept the full \$522,000. I don't think that we can afford the full amount.
- As a mission church, and one with a deficit, we do not have income potential to repay a debt. The risk is heightened by concerns for the vicar's wellbeing since she is well liked and considered to be very central to the development of this campaign and to the life of BMEC.

7. In your opinion, what major positive factors does the parish have in its favor for the proposed campaign?

Comments:

- A good minister that attracts a lot of people
- Good relationships with the community
- Buck Mountain has a place for you.
- Inspiring, effective leadership
- Professional guidance and assistance is money well-spent.
- Young families
- A great group of people energized to help.
- Giving to the church is more effective than giving to a single charity.
- Very generous people in our community and the church
- The congregation works together, not in opposing factions
- With this we can grow.
- Enthusiastic parishioners
- Motivated people seeking to do God's work
- Desire goes a long way; enthusiasm too
- A vibrant, growing parish with members who are committed.
- Enthusiastically engaged in outreach and ministry
- Wonderful, dedicated, loving people.
- An active, engaged and excited church community.
- The parish is the object of interest and visits by many who would be more likely to remain if classroom, bathroom, and reception room facilities weren't so limited.
- Support of vestry
- Potential for expansion within the geographic area served
- We do need the upgrades.
- We've outgrown our space.
- The vitality of the congregation
- We are primed for expanding our facilities in order to offer the programs and

- meeting space needed.
- Strong desire to build a productive parish that folks will want to call their home
- Talented, generous and thoughtful individuals involved in the campaign
- Overall strong commitment to the project
- A lot of hard work/workers
- A strong sense of mission
- Parishioners who give generously
- Building and planning committee are experienced and credible

8. What problems, if any, do you foresee for this project?

Comments:

- Raising the money
- There will be differing opinions and issues to address in any community.
- Better management
- There is a perception that things are being decided without input from all.
- Put some acoustic tile on the ceiling - you can't hear yourself think in there!
- Spending money on ourselves.
- Communication and decisions not influenced by large donors or long-time parishioners,
- People being unwilling to hear God's call and take a leap of faith,
- People may not be able to give as much as needed to meet the goal.
- The goal is daunting.
- It is very costly for a small parish.
- The continuous pressure to give when certain members may be doing all they can.
- Not ideal demographics to make long-term plans
- A load of debt that could possibly bury this small church
- Long-term commitment and commitment beyond dreams and survey responses
- Lack of funds
- A lot of money for what we will get for the upgraded Deese Hall
- Lack of strong stewardship among the parishioners
- Burn out of leaders who will have to take on a lot to make this happen
- An unwillingness on the part of some to accept change
- Scale of the project
- Doesn't address lack of space in sanctuary
- Too many differences of opinions delaying progress
- Dreamcatching surfaced a lot of unrealistic ideas

9. What added ideas or suggestions do you have which might be helpful to the leadership in making this important decision?

Comments:

- Communication has to continue
- Put our heads together and find ways to reduce - at least 10%
- I hope we can come up with an acceptable plan without an architect. That is critically important economically and for the timing.
- I know they are creating an FAQ document - the committee needs to have standard answers
- Make sure you can have the accordion walls so you can easily make smaller and larger spaces when you need them.
- I am not sure there is enough storage room here, although the basement will probably become that.
- Can the project be done in steps?
- Use a third-party coordinator
- We need to move forward doing what God call's us to do today and tomorrow. We can't be intimidated by those who don't want change or are afraid of change.
- Good explanations and communication
- Mortgage would be justified. Worthwhile projects that will help the parish grow.
- Concentrate on needs of the current congregants, allowing flexibility and a vision for growth.
- Classroom access off a narrow hallway is not ideal. I like the envelope. It can be filled much better with some thought and consultation, than the draft offered.
- Plans for security systems and cameras, ability to divide the fellowship hall into smaller meeting areas, and a dedicated vesting area.
- Prayer!
- Consider this after a successful outreach and 15% growth in new families attending; current membership does not support this level of fundraising.
- Continue the excellent communication and efforts to include everyone in process.
- We need these improvements to continue the work we are called to do!
- Rethink grandiosity of this plan and bring it down to reasonable and attractive and financially responsible project, in line with past giving, yet hoping for improvement in giving.
- It would be better to scale down, think about the sanctuary.....maybe total reuse of the parish hall (foundation for future church, with current church a historic wedding chapel?).
- Think big
- Do parking project in sections
- Evaluate growth history and projected growth

Leadership

10. If asked, would you be willing to work on a committee in support of the proposed capital campaign?

20 Yes 10 No 19 Not sure at this time

Forty-one percent would be willing at this early date to volunteer. Another 39% are not sure at this time and may be persuaded to participate as the campaign plans are formulated. This is a relatively good response at this stage in the process. It appears likely that an adequate number of workers would be attracted to the campaign.

11. Among individuals you know, who would make an ideal CHAIR for this proposed capital campaign?

(Removed Names for online posting)

The current folks leading

Whoever they choose it should be based on their gifts and experience, not just available and enthusiastic

Include our vestry

Campaign Timing

12. Does a proposed solicitation period for pledges in the Fall of 2013 seem appropriate to you?

28 Yes 6 No 16 No strong feeling

More than half of the respondents, 56%, are in favor of the proposed timing. Thirty-two percent expressed no strong feeling one way or another. The remaining 12% were opposed to the campaign timing. This is an endorsement that a campaign could proceed as scheduled.

Gift Potential

13. Do you think a goal of \$522,000 (as outlined in the proposed plans) can be raised in gifts and pledges?

13 Yes 10 No 25 Don't Know

Twenty-seven percent believe the goal can be attained, while another 52% have no opinion if it can be reached. Another 21% do not believe the goal can be attained. Normally, we like to see at least a majority believing the goal is feasible. Generally when less than half are confident about the projected goal, the proposed goal is usually too ambitious.

If no, how much do you think can be raised?

- \$250,000
- \$300,000 (4)
- \$350,000 (3)
- I think we would have more enthusiasm for a \$450,000 campaign
- Half the amount
- Enough to support all of the other projects but Deese Hall

14. If convinced of the need, would you be willing to contribute to this proposed campaign? (All gifts, regardless of size, are needed and are important to the success of the proposed campaign.)

42 Yes 0 No 8 Not sure at this time

Eighty-four percent would be willing at this early date to contribute to the campaign, while the remaining 16% expressed that they are not sure at this time. No one indicated a negative response. This is a positive and an indication that a campaign can proceed.

15. If "yes," please estimate your possible total range of giving. Gifts potentially could be paid over a three to five year period. *This is not a pledge or in any way binding.*

<u> 5 </u> \$500 or less	<u> 5 </u> \$500 to \$1,000
<u> 9 </u> \$1,000 to \$3,000	<u> 1 </u> \$3,000 to \$5,000
<u> 6 </u> \$5,000 to \$10,000	<u> 10 </u> \$10,000 to \$25,000
<u> 4 </u> \$25,000 to \$50,000	<u> 0 </u> \$50,000 to \$75,000
<u> 0 </u> \$75,000 to \$100,000	<u> 0 </u> \$100,000 and above

Respondents projected donations ranging from a low of approximately \$247,000 and a high of approximately \$549,500. While not indicated in the chart above, some amounts were not given in ranges, but rather in single amounts. For example, instead of \$3,000 to \$5,000, a gift of \$5,000 may have been indicated. The high and low estimates have been adjusted accordingly. These early estimates do not support a primary goal of \$522,000.

Experience tells us we can take the average between the low estimate (\$247,000) and the high estimate (\$549,500) of the pre-campaign projections revealed in the study and multiply by a factor of 1.1 when certain percentages and comments (such as revealed in this study) are attained. Thus the average, \$398,250, when multiplied by this factor (1.1) reveals a suggested goal in the range of \$439,000. This recommendation is made factoring in the reality that additional gifts, not yet identified, will be forthcoming; hence the multiple of 1.1.

Planned Giving

16. In addition to making a gift to the proposed campaign, some parishioners may wish to explore planned or legacy gifts. Check the blank next to the item(s) of interest. Materials will be sent to you from the Episcopal Church Foundation.

 2 Make a gift to your parish through a bequest in your will.

 0 Create a charitable gift annuity (minimum gift of \$5,000).
Benefits of a charitable gift annuity could include:

- receive guaranteed income for life (i.e. current rates of approximately 4.7% annually at age 65, approximately 5.8% annually at age 75)
- receive an income tax deduction now for the gift portion
- receive some tax-free income from the investment until your life expectancy age
- possibly reduce applicable estate and inheritance taxes

- enjoy the satisfaction that at the death of the final income beneficiary, the remaining principal would go to an Episcopal congregation or entity you designate

- 0 Create a Charitable Remainder Trust with appreciated assets (minimum gift of \$100,000)
- 0 Create a Pooled Income Fund gift for life (minimum gift of \$2,500)
- 0 Donate appreciated real property such as a house, vacation home, farm or business
- 5 Send me the *Overview of Planned Giving* brochure which explains planned gift options further
- 2 Add me to the Episcopal Church Foundation e-newsletter on estate planning.

16a. 2 Buck Mountain Episcopal Church is already in my will or estate plans.

Two individuals have already included the church in their estate plans. Several others have indicated they would welcome information. They will receive information confidentially from the Episcopal Church Foundation.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1

The information revealed in this study suggests that a capital campaign for a Primary Goal of \$439,000 is realistic and appropriate. This presupposes that an assertive campaign involving the entire constituency would be launched, and that the type of methodology used by this firm would be followed.

Consideration may also be given to embracing a Challenge Goal, higher than this recommended Primary Goal. Persons could be encouraged to pledge for five years for example.

Recommendation #2

Planned giving activities should be pursued during the campaign in an effort to encourage major gifts to underwrite the future of the church. Such gifts, often deferred and received in future years, are helpful in reducing mortgages or indebtedness. The Episcopal Church Foundation is responding to individual requests for information on planned giving.

Recommendation #3

Review the Tentative Case Statement and make final decisions based on the financial feasibility revealed in the Study. Consider also the prioritization suggested by respondents.

Recommendation #4

Share as soon as possible the revised plans with the congregation and seek increased consensus. Increase significantly all publicity concerning this project.

Recommendation #5

Once the leadership has had an opportunity to review the Study recommendations and revise the proposed plan, a timetable such as the following should be considered to maximize success:

Months 1-2	Determine campaign calendar and budget. Announce goal. Begin materials development (pledge cards, brochures, letterhead, etc.). Recruit and train campaign leadership and support committee chairs. Evaluate Advance Gift prospects.
Months 2-3	Continue to train leadership. Complete materials development. Begin Advance Gift solicitation. Contact planned giving prospects, if appropriate.
Months 3-4	Prepare for and launch the Congregational Gift division. Hold kick-off event. Begin personal solicitations and monitor solicitation efforts.

Months 4-5

Finalize all calls. Set up pledge collection and acknowledgment systems. Hold Celebration Event to acknowledge conclusion of the campaign and recognize the leadership and volunteers.

Recommendation #6

Select professional management to guide and direct the campaign to insure efficiency and the implementation of a proven, successful fundraising methodology.

A Final Word

The Episcopal Church Foundation thanks the leadership of Buck Mountain Episcopal Church for the opportunity to work with the parish family. We enjoyed our work on your behalf and would welcome the opportunity to be of service.

Thank you, and best wishes.

Tentative Case Statement