

## Alternative Service Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why are we looking at an alternative service?**

The primary purpose for adding an alternative service is outreach to those who are not currently at Starmount Presbyterian Church. With the apartments being built adjacent to our property, the elementary school opening down the street and the thousands of jobs coming to the Triad area, we want to give people a choice of worship offerings. Currently our blended service is a “take it, or leave it” single option but adding an alternative service with a different style will allow us to meet the worship preferences of a broader set of people.

### **Where will the alternative service be held?**

We looked at using the Sanctuary, the Fellowship Hall and the Chapel.

- We ruled out the Sanctuary for two reasons:
  - we expect the service to start small (15-25 people); and,
  - our research and the feedback from Laura’s seminary research project indicate that some people find the traditional Sanctuary overly formal.
- We ruled out the Fellowship Hall for several reasons:
  - the space would need to be made more worshipful;
  - the HVAC is very loud which would make hearing during the service difficult;
  - the space is used for a variety of activities that would conflict with a worship service (meals, workshops, Preschool consignment sales, etc);
  - renovations would be more extensive and more expensive.
- While the Chapel is also formal, we believe there are changes that could be made with minimal cost that would create the feeling we want for the new service. The changes we envision to the Chapel would also make the space more flexible for other activities (e.g. Maundy Thursday service, stations of the cross on Good Friday, VBS, Bible studies, prayer groups, etc.) The Chapel is not a space that Starmount uses regularly and one goal of the updates is to bring the Chapel back into the active life of Starmount.

### **What changes would be made to the Chapel?**

We have been consulting with Church Interiors, a company based in High Point, that has helped churches up and down the East Coast renovate their worship spaces. At a high level:

- the flooring would be replaced
- pews would be replaced with chairs to allow more flexibility in the space (the majority of the pews will be donated to a Montagnard church that is renovating space to become their worship space)
- overhead light fixtures would be replaced to provide more light
- electrical outlets would be added to enable technology within the service
- the Chapel would be painted
- acoustic panels may be needed to absorb sound

### **What would an alternative service look like? How will it be different from the existing service?**

The alternative service will be more interactive. Our and Laura’s research indicates that some people want to participate in worship rather than attend worship. The alternative service may

have more music but the style of music will also be different – different instrumentation and more praise music. There will be less corporate prayer. The sermon will feel more like a Sunday School lesson where there is congregation participation. There will be opportunity in the service for some sort of Connection activity which allows for engagement with the message and builds relationship among congregants. A Pray ground would be available in each service. We expect the format of the service to evolve over time to meet the needs of those attending the service.

#### **When will the alternative service be held?**

We looked at several options - a weeknight, a weekend night and early Sunday. The churches we spoke with that had tried a weeknight service or a Saturday evening service ultimately discontinued those services. They found that Sunday morning worked the best. So, we will kick-off this new service once a month at 8:45am on Sunday. We plan to start the monthly offering in September, with a weekly offering for Advent.

#### **Who will lead the alternative service? How will we prevent staff burnout?**

Initially the existing staff will lead most of the alternative service. We will hire someone to serve as the music worship leader. The increase in Laura's hours from 20-25 to 40 hours was intended to provide time to "lead" this alternative service. Laura would continue to have responsibilities in both services. Having the two worship services on Sunday mornings will minimize the impact on the existing staff.

#### **How will we pay for the Chapel updates and the alternative service?**

The Chapel updates are estimated at \$50,000 and the annual operating budget for the alternative service is estimated to be \$70,000. Since we are committing to two years of funding to make sure the service has time to succeed, the operating budget is \$140,000 for a total project cost of \$190,000.

Funding for these initiatives will come from several sources:

- Gifts from Starmount members and congregants in addition to their annual pledges. Gifts to the Chapel updates will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$25,000 by anonymous donors. Gifts to the alternative service operating budget will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$70,000 by anonymous donors.
- Congregants have the opportunity to participate in the Sponsor a Chair campaign with their name being added to a commemorative plaque that will be located outside the Chapel.
- The Mission Ministry has pledged \$10,000 in each of 2025 and 2026 to this outreach program.
- Salem Presbytery has grants for Growth and Transformation projects and Starmount will be submitting a grant application in the coming weeks.
- Lillian Steele Endowment Fund, if needed. Note, no endowment funds will be used for the Chapel updates.

**Many years ago we had a second service that was eventually discontinued? How will this one be different?**

When the second service was discontinued it was in the midst of a large exodus of members from Starmount and church leadership believed that combining the service would unite the remaining members in the midst of turmoil. Similar circumstances aren't currently in place but current church leadership is aware that this is something we need to stay on top of as the environment can change quickly.

**How will we keep a new service from splitting the church?**

With the timing of the two services there will be a 15-minute period between the two services that will allow the opportunity for connection on Sundays. It will be important to have other Connection opportunities to deepen those relationships. While there may be some members attending the existing service who choose to switch to the new service, the goal of this new service is to spread the Good News to people who aren't currently attending worship services at Starmount.

**What impact will the alternative service have on the Alliance Church that is currently using our chapel?**

The Alliance Church will continue to use the Chapel as they have since the late 1990s. When we discussed with Alliance Church our desire to use the Chapel on Sunday mornings they offered to move their service to a later time. In addition, they offered to provide volunteers to help with any manual labor Starmount might need to update the space.

**How will we measure if the alternative service is a success?**

When we started our research last fall, we thought we needed to have specific objectives – a certain number of people by a certain date, a specified dollar amount of increased revenue. As we spoke with other churches, we learned that the true measure of success defies traditional metrics and is more observable than measurable – high energy, new people involved with church life, etc. As new people get involved the rest takes care of itself. So, while we will monitor items like attendance and keep the service open to evolution based on the needs and desires of attendees, we are moving forward believing success will be evident “beyond the numbers”.

**How will the alternative service impact the existing service?**

Our intent is to continue the existing service as it is.