

FAITH UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Pastor Dan's comments, based on a recent sermon
October 2005

Sam and I live in a well-constructed 1952-vintage house. It was well-built from the start. So was the building that houses Broadview Community Church.

Sam and I are planning to make some big updates on our house this winter, expanding our kitchen and adding a second bathroom. While under construction, we'll be 'camping' upstairs in the church for a few months.

Maintaining a good, strong house is a bit like maintaining a good, strong faith. It takes patience and effort to keep a home in good shape; it takes patience and effort to keep discipleship to Christ in good shape too.

At Broadview, we could probably post a sign outside that says 'under construction' and never take it down. There's always something to do in terms of building up a church community. That's a good thing! We all have something we can do. There are things on the church grounds and beyond that need done week after week, year after year, weeds and litter, mowing and pruning, and all legs and arms, all hands and feet, all eyes and ears and minds and hearts are essential to keeping things both beautiful and functional. We always need people to sign up to host coffee hours- that shared informal time together is important! We are still finishing up building improvement projects that take months, even years to accomplish. The top floor did get carpeted recently, though finishing touches await the edges of the walls and floors; and we still have handrails to install on the stairways to enhance our access for all. Fortunately, we've recently rented out the top middle room to the Northwest Dance Network, and Sam and I will be rent the corner room while our house is getting remodeled.

Opportunities for building up a sense of community and for learning are always under construction too. We are all invited to participate in Broadview's next fun social: the Stewardship Dessert and Dancing event on Saturday, November 19. And as followers of Jesus we never stop learning- which is why we have two different adult study and discussion groups going, an exciting new focus for the Sunday Club children and youth, and why we're utilizing the 'linking list' to organize care groups, do yoga, have music jams, 'book and sweater swaps', and conversational Spanish get-togethers. In so many ways, we continue to grow.

Our mission work is under construction! Grassroots Hurricane Katrina relief work, Northside Neighbors for Peace and Justice, involvement with and financial generosity extended outward to all kinds of groups making a difference, from the Seattle Crisis Clinic to the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

Evangelism outreach efforts are under construction! Our first Broadview-specific radio ads debuted in early October on both FM 94.5 and AM 1090 (how many of you heard one or more of them?), and over \$1,000 has already been pledged to make the next round of national GOD IS STILL SPEAKING television ads possible, including ads on Spanish language stations. We are saying to the wider community that here, God welcomes, regardless of what you wear or how

you look or where you came from. Our extravagant welcome is a work in progress too! We are learning of late to talk our walk here, to be courageous evangelists, to actually say what it is we love here, and tell people what it is we stand for. We know that what we say is important, but that words are never enough. In Jesus' day, the priests and scribes were known for their fine words, but came up short on deeds. So we have to keep asking: are we following through with what we say we'll do? Or are we making promises we later feel we cannot keep?

As GK Chesterton once put it, "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting. Christianity has been found difficult, and left untried." We have a long way to go. Are we EVER finished? No, not in our own lifetimes. We are, after all, a small but mighty faith community UNDER CONSTRUCTION!

But take heart! We baptized ones are initiated in water, and sustained in a love that is rock-solid. With time-honored scriptural stories undergirding this house's foundation, we will continue to be a faith community under construction. We are utilizing quality material.

To be in Christ is to stay strongly connected, and clear about our purpose. Let's keep that up! They say that just showing up is half the battle! Come back, return, stay steady for the long haul! Don't falter! If you've gotten ANYthing at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you CARE, then . . .keep on building up the faith that is ever under construction. To believe is to do and to do is to care. Keep on doing, keep on caring.

Our faith is under construction. Thanks be to God that it is!