

A Cross Monument for Southwest Florida

Have you ever seen a Cross Monument next to an interstate during your travels, especially lit up at night? Do you remember the emotions that came over you at that time? It's special! There is an opportunity for the church members in our circuit to provide such a monument to our Lord along Interstate 75 in Port Charlotte, Florida. We have an opportunity to remind the world of the gift our Lord gave to us with his death and risen body.

Dwayne Leininger came to Florida three years ago and joined Lutheran Church of the Cross. You know how the Lord sometimes calls you for one of his special requests? Well, Dwayne has been called to help with His cause. Our church was going to do this on our own but, after some discussion, it was felt that we should do this as a project for all the Missouri Lutherans in our circuit. Lutheran Church of the Cross will provide the land and we have \$38,000 in reserve from a private donor. The project will need about another \$60,000. We will sell pavers for the walkway from the parking lot to the Cross Monument and, for large donors, there will be a bronze plaque with name ribbons to be added as requested.

With all the non-Christian issues we see with our Federal Government and the non-Christian leadership of the White House, we need to act on this project now before they disallow any crosses to be displayed in this country, especially any new ones. It would be great to get donors to help with this project by the end of this year and start the project immediately after the first of the year. We will not proceed with the project until we reach the \$100,000 goal.

Won't you please help with this monumental task of praising our Lord? The enclosed picture and Q&A may be used in any presentations that you might make to your congregation.

Respectfully,

Dwayne Leininger
Cross Monument Chairman

WHY A CROSS MONUMENT?

Q: How did the Cross Monument project get started? It seems that we have been talking a lot and not a lot has been done.

A: Here is a brief history of the important milestones that have taken a long time to develop.

July 6, 2005 Lutheran Church of the Cross received a gift of \$50,000.00 from an anonymous donor designated for a Cross Monument. Several other items of significance were discussed that the gift may be applied toward, but the donors determined that a Cross Monument would enhance the ministry of LCC by providing a dramatic “marker” for us. After all, we will become Lutheran Church of the Cross located at the Cross Monument on Luther Road—you know, the huge cross that you see just off the interstate in Port Charlotte.

April 3, 2006 Lund Architecture, P.L.C. presented several artist’s renderings of possible Cross Monument designs. The donors strongly expressed their desire to stay with the “tried and true” dramatic cross design that is already appearing on the interstate in four or five locations along the eastern half of the United States. This preferred design is what was unveiled on Sunday, August 30, 2009.

December 13, 2006 Attorney Warren Ross presented our petition before the Charlotte County Zoning Board for a variance in our zoning to allow us to build a 75-foot-tall cross. (Our desire was to build 60 feet tall, but Mr. Ross thought we should ask for slightly more in the event they felt they needed to scale it back some.) That request was rejected by a 3-2 vote. Their decision seemed devastating to a dream, but it was determined that another approach may be more acceptable. We pressed on.

April 7, 2007 Bruce Tyson of Tyson and Billy Architects prepared a “Request for Proposal” in order to gauge an estimate of the final cost of the Cross Monument. The initial bid was returned at over \$300,000.00! However, subsequent bids have reduced this estimate to a total cost under \$100,000.00 to complete the job.

August 21, 2007 Attorney Geri Waksler successfully presented our case for rezoning our original 6.2 acres from Agricultural Estates (AE) to Commercial General (CG). This allows us to build any structure to a height of 60 feet. The unexpected supplemental benefit of this decision is that we are now able to build five stories on the eventual senior housing complex. How God blesses in strange ways!

May 29, 2008 Mr. James Potter has donated the cost to provide engineering drawings sealed by the Florida State Seal of the Cross Monument. These drawings have been completed by Cornerstone Engineers, Inc. of Madisonville, Tennessee.

July 14, 2009 Universal Engineering Sciences presented their findings of geotechnical exploration (aka soil borings), and it was determined that from the one drilling site, our location is suitable to build the proposed structure.

September 27, 2009 The Cross Monument project went before the congregation—finally—to ask congregational permission to seek outside funding sources to complete the project.

Q: Why has it taken so long to bring to the congregation? It has been over four years!

A: Indeed! It has taken a very long time to move the project along. Early in the discussion, the Church Council determined that they would not bring a project to the congregation without having completed the prerequisite fact-finding data. Questions such as: What will it look like? Where will it be located? Can we build such a tall structure on our campus? Is the soil adequate to build such a structure? Will it be built within the wind tolerance for hurricanes? How much will it cost? How will we pay for it? How will we pay for the upkeep and the night lights to illuminate it? Your Church Council determined that you deserved to have all this information at the time when you are asked to vote on the project. Therefore, let's take these questions one by one and give answers.

Q: What will it look like?

A: The unveiling tells it all. The base of the Cross Monument is subject to change, but the design is substantially defined. The height is 60 feet. To give you perspective, our existing cross on the top of the church is approximately 30 feet. Our existing light poles in the parking lot are approximately 25 feet. The digital depiction is fairly close to proportion.

Q: Where will it be located?

A: It will be just a few steps south of the existing sign at the entrance/exit on Luther Road. It will tower over us as we enter and as we depart. We will truly be in the shadow of the Cross of Christ.

Q: Can we build such a tall structure on our campus?

A: Yes. Thus, the lengthy efforts to first seek variance and, when that was denied, to seek rezoning. As mentioned, the rezoning accomplished the additional blessing of the benefit to build senior housing five stories tall.

Q: Is the soil adequate to build such a structure?

A: Yes. Thus, the soil boring sample. As with all soil borings, there is plenty of language in their finding that indicates there is a possibility that, once we start digging, we may find some surprises. However, this is a reasonable first step that "passed the test."

Q: Will it be built within the wind tolerance for hurricanes?

A: Yes. Thus, the engineering drawings drawn to Florida State code. It is a huge blessing that "Jimmie" Potter underwrote the total cost for these drawings.

Q: How much will it cost?

A: In one sense, this is yet to be determined. However, the research that has been done has reduced the cost for the first estimate of over \$300,000.00 to under \$100,000.00. This has been accomplished by identifying the supplier of steel and dealing with him directly. Further, Dwayne Leininger has extensive experience in the building industry and he required an itemized bid and required them to "sharpen their pencil." We currently have approximately \$38,000.00 remaining in the original gift. Therefore, it is estimated the cost to complete is around \$60,000.

Q: How will we pay for it?

A: If approved, we will seek OUTSIDE FUNDING SOURCES to pay for it. In the same manner that the original donor caught this vision, we believe other outside individuals will also want to participate in a monument of a lifetime.

Q: How will we pay for the upkeep and the night lights to illuminate it?

A: It is envisioned that a walkway from the parking lot to the base of the magnificent Cross Monument will be necessary. We plan to place pavers that can be purchased in increments of \$500.00 or \$1,000.00 as memorials to our loved ones. Out of these funds will come the cost for upkeep and lighting.