



FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

A VISION FOR THE STORY'S FUTURE

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THIS IS OUR MOMENT.

WILL WE SETTLE FOR MORE OF THE SAME?
OR WILL WE STAND UP AND SEE
THAT GOD HAS APPOINTED US
FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS?

God has given us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to honor the past and to shape the future by taking one courageous leap of faith today. Together, by God's grace, we can reach new generations in the heart of Houston with the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that our children - and our children's children - may establish their lives on the firm foundation of His Truth.



FROM THE PASTORS

Seldom does a moment in time bear lasting significance for many generations to come, but I believe we are living in such a moment right now. In recent years we have seen seismic shifts in our cultural, political, and religious landscapes that have led us all to wonder what we can do today to secure a better world for our children tomorrow.

Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this? - Esther 4:14

Around 2,500 years ago, a Hebrew man named Mordecai feared what might become of Israel's children and grandchildren when he spoke these words to his cousin, Queen Esther. In those days, the Israelites' future was very much in doubt as their enemies conspired to destroy God's plan to save the world through Abraham's family tree. Emboldened by her cousin's inspiring words, Esther put her life on the line to secure a future for Israel's next generation.

Although much has changed since Esther sat on the throne, God's salvation plan - and His people - remain under threat today. The most recent data suggest that churches across America are currently facing multiple existential threats:

- In 2020, only 47% of people belonged to a church, down from 70% in 1999.

- Only half of young adults (18-29) believe in God, an all-time low.
- Nearly two-thirds of young adults who were active Christians in their childhood have entirely withdrawn from church involvement as adults.
- Denominations are in a tailspin. The United Methodist Church, for example, lost over 300,000 members in 2019 and 2020 and is expecting 30% of its U.S. churches to close by 2030. These somber statistics do not include the hundreds of churches that are exiting the UMC in 2022 as the denomination splits over fundamental theological differences.

We need not look far to verify these statistical trends. In many of Houston's most historic and traditional neighborhoods, the only Protestant churches that remain are those belonging to denominations, such as the UMC and the Episcopalian Church, that have departed from biblical authority on important social issues and instead have aligned themselves with destructive, dogmatic secularism.

We don't yet know how this shift will impact our communities, but this much is clear: **it doesn't have to be this way.** God has given us everything we need to do something today that will change everything tomorrow. What if God has been so generous with us, as Mordecai would say, *for such a time as this?*

Since 2015, The Story Church has reached thousands of skeptical, unchurched Houstonians.

Instead of compromising on biblical Truth, our message has been consistent and clear: God's love is real, the Bible is trustworthy and true, and nothing in this world can compare to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Imagine what it would mean to the River Oaks community to have a vibrant, Jesus-centered church like The Story that is uncompromising on Biblical Truth and untethered to any wayward denomination. Imagine if our church offered an elite Christian school that shaped the hearts and minds of future generations? And what if we doubled down on our commitment to Christian education by establishing a world-class seminary-level academy where adult believers can study the Bible, grow in faith, and even discern God's call to ministry? What would be possible if a church like The Story had a stable home where we could stand the test of time?

HOW MANY LIVES MIGHT BE CHANGED TOMORROW
IF WE ACT WITH THE COURAGE OF ESTHER TODAY?

This is our moment. God has brought our church so far over the past seven years, and I know that The Story has only just begun. Pastor Geo and I, along with all of The Story's Board members, staff, and lay leaders, are praying that you will see how God has blessed you to be a blessing...**for such a time as this.**

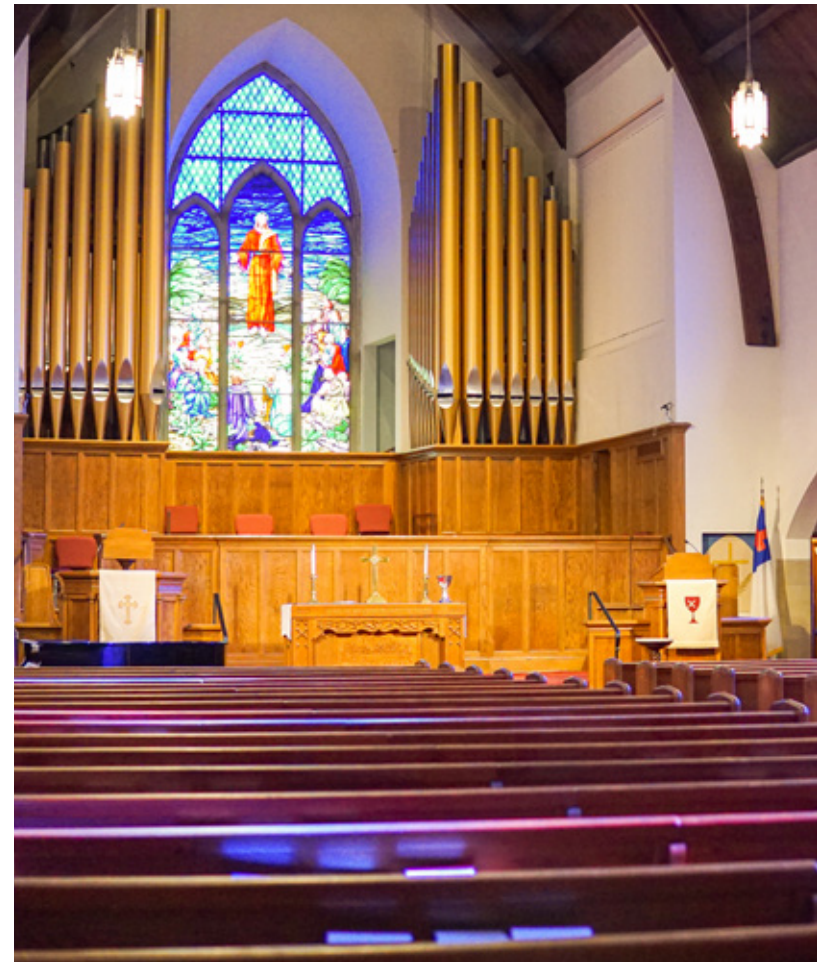


GOAL 1. ESTABLISH THE STORY CHURCH IN THE RIVER OAKS COMMUNITY

After spending the last seven years as nomads, our church is searching for a permanent home. In 2015, The Story began in a gym in River Oaks, and something about that neighborhood and our message just...*clicked*. Even after our recent move to the Museum District, the majority of our members live within a mile or two of River Oaks. With our lease at 4910 Montrose set to expire next year, we will have to move somewhere - so why not go back to the place where The Story began?

Easier said than done, right? Properties large enough to accommodate The Story are hard to come by “inside the Loop”. But as Jesus said, “What is impossible with man is possible with God” (Luke 18:27), and **He has come through yet again by opening the door for The Story to acquire a beautiful, historic church facility in River Oaks.**

Earlier this year, Bethany Christian Church (3223 Westheimer Rd) voted to close their church and sell their property. Because The Story attempted to negotiate a short-term lease with BCC in 2021, our leaders were already familiar with this beautiful facility. Sitting on 3.3 acres of land, this property offers 40,397 sq ft of building space, an immaculate sanctuary with seating for 615 people, an ample, gated parking lot, and a charming playground and lawn.



For so many reasons, Bethany's property would be an ideal home for The Story for many years to come, but let's state the obvious: real estate in River Oaks is notoriously expensive. For instance, the one-acre, vacant lot next door to BCC recently sold for \$300/SF. At that rate, Bethany's property would cost in excess of \$43 Million.

However, because the BCC members feel strongly about selling to a church (as opposed to a high-rise developer), they were willing to accept The Story's offer of \$162/SF, or \$23 Million. In early September, the leaders of our two churches agreed in principle on the terms of a deal and are working to iron out the contract details.

Even though it's a discount, \$23M is still a huge number for a relatively new church like ours! Do we really have the capacity in our congregation to afford this property? And even if we can do it, does that mean we should?

After doing our preliminary due diligence, we believe the answer to each of these questions is an unequivocal **YES!** It won't be easy. It may even seem impossible at times. But may we never forget that *nothing is impossible with God!* If we all come together to seize this once-in-a-generation moment, The Story will finally have a stable home to continue inspiring nonreligious people to follow Jesus for many decades to come.





GOAL 2. INVEST IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION TO SHAPE YOUNG HEARTS AND MINDS WITH GOD'S TRUTH

One of the most exciting aspects of The Story's acquisition of BCC is that we're not merely purchasing a property; we will also be incorporating the Bethany Christian School as part of our church! Originally founded in 1967, BCS is a full-time preschool (18 months through Pre-K) that has touched countless lives over the years.

This is another amazing example of how God works. Since The Story began in 2015, several of our leaders and staff have expressed a strong desire to offer Christ-centered, Bible-based, early childhood education to families and children throughout the week. Now, God has given us the opportunity to inherit and expand an existing school with deep roots and a great reputation in River Oaks!

But our investment in Christian Education will impact adult learners as well. Plans are in the works to utilize the ample space in our new home for the launch of a seminary-level academy with two areas of emphasis: *Biblical Studies* and *Christian Apologetics*. Students of the academy will grow their faith in Christ, increase their knowledge of Scripture, and discern God's call to ministry.

GOAL 3. RAISE \$25M WITH A FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Long-term debt has a way of distracting congregations from their God-given purpose. It's just too easy for churches and pastors to lose sight of their mission and vision in the interest of collecting enough money to pay down their debt. We are convinced that acquiring BCC will only make sense if we can do so while maintaining the same laser-like focus on our mission *to inspire non-religious people to follow Jesus*.

To make this dream a reality, we are initiating our *For Such a Time as This* campaign with the goal of raising \$25M (\$23M for purchase price + \$2M to cover expected renovations) in commitments to be paid out over the next five years (1/23-12/28).

The debt from this purchase will be financed and paid as pledges are fulfilled. As The Story's congregation continues to grow in our new home throughout the five years of *For Such a Time as This*, we anticipate that more commitments will come in to help our church meet this goal.

ESTIMATED TIMELINE

PHASE 1: SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2022

RAISING MOMENTUM (& money!)

Objectives: (1) Host multiple Town Hall meetings where The Story's pastors, Board members, and other leaders will communicate our vision for 3223 Westheimer and field your questions. (2) Distribute **For Such a Time as This** campaign materials. (3) Raise \$25M in 5-year pledges. (4) Continue talks with local banks.

PHASE 2: OCTOBER 2022 - MARCH 2023

SEALING THE DEAL

Objectives: (1) Negotiate and sign the Purchase/Sale Agreement by October 31. (2) Complete all necessary inspections. (3) Negotiate lease-back agreement with BCC for their limited use of the sanctuary for 3-5 years. (4) Choose a bank and secure financing. (5) We anticipate closing the deal on or around March 31, 2023.

PHASE 3: APRIL - JULY 2023

PREPARING THE WAY

Objectives: (1) Continue to HQ and worship at our Museum District facility. (2) Complete minor renovations, HVAC upgrades, and cosmetic updates to 3223 Westheimer. (3) Install sanctuary technology. (4) Execute grassroots outreach/marketing campaign to announce The Story's move. (5) Work with leaders of Bethany Christian School to develop a vision and strategic plan for the school to flourish under The Story's leadership.

PHASE 4: AUGUST-NOVEMBER 2023

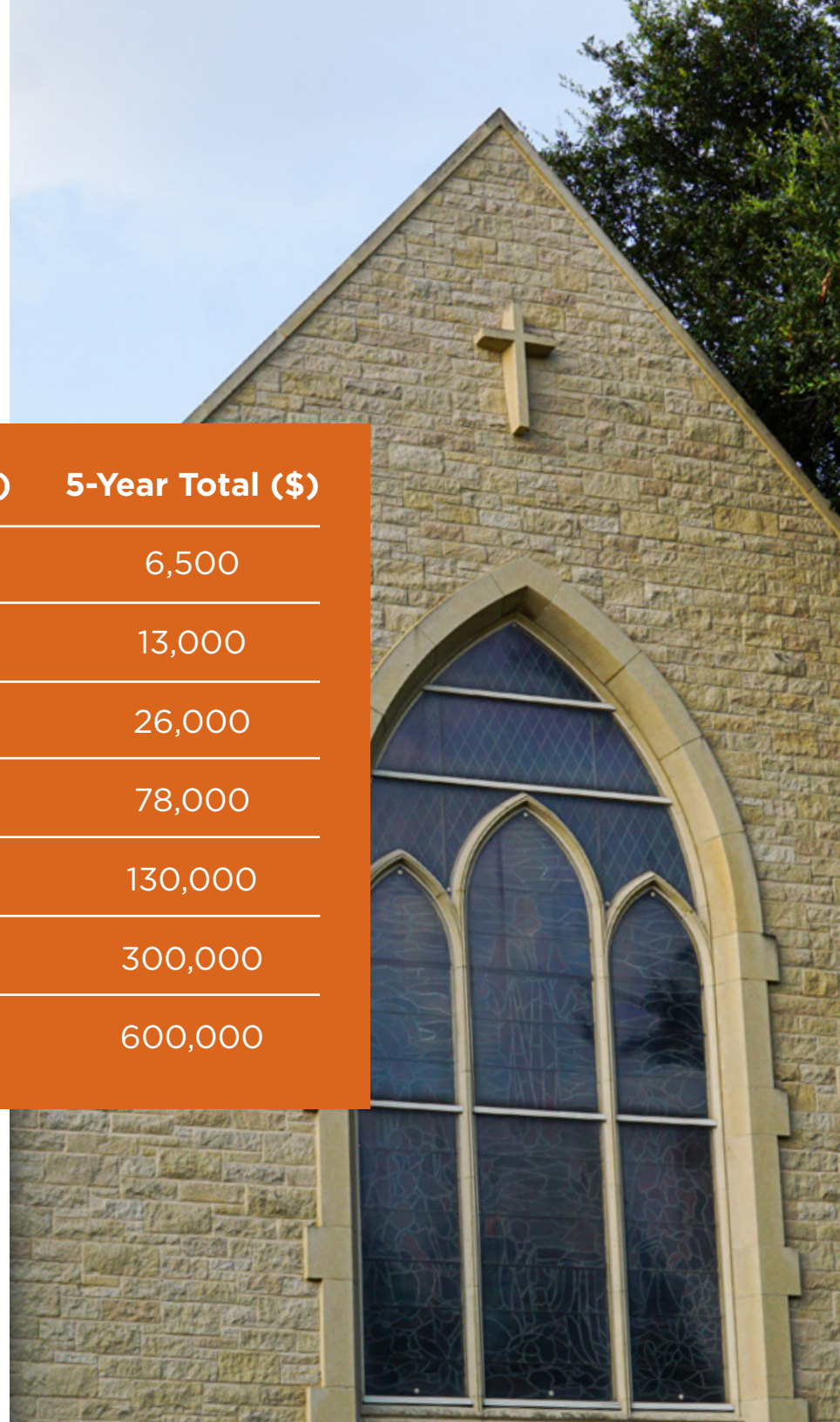
MOVING IN

Objectives: (1) Relocate all main campus staff and ministries to 3223 Westheimer. (2) Host multiple "Open House" gatherings for church members and community neighbors to tour the facility and meet church leaders. (3) Hold Grand Opening in the fall or winter of 2023!

YOUR GIVING POTENTIAL

Weekly (\$)	Monthly (\$)	Annually (\$)	5-Year Total (\$)
25	108.33	1,300	6,500
50	216.65	2,600	13,000
100	433.33	5,200	26,000
300	1,299	15,600	78,000
500	2,167	26,000	130,000
1,150	5,000	60,000	300,000
2,300	10,000	120,000	600,000

**This chart illustrates what the impact of your gift could be over the span of your 5-year pledge amount. No matter what you can give - your impact is significant!*





FAQ

How will this change our church?

Obviously, a move of this magnitude is going to bring some changes along with it. As our footprint grows, so will our budget. We anticipate around a \$500K/year increase due to mortgage, utilities, and insurance costs, some of which will be offset by school revenues. However, we also expect our congregation to grow substantially during our first few years at 3223 Westheimer, which will mean greater incoming financial support.

While some things about The Story will change, the most important things will remain the same, such as our mission to inspire non-religious people to follow Jesus. It may take us a while to feel completely at home inside the more formal architecture of our new facility, but we know that it's our God, our people, and our mission - not the bricks and mortar - that make The Story so special.

Since The Story is a relatively new congregation, is there a chance we won't be able to secure financing for a deal this size? If so, what would we lose?

There's always a chance things won't go our way. The Story's lack of financial history and rising interest rates are two of the factors working against us. However, our preliminary talks with local banks have been promising, and as long as we meet our pledge goals, financing should not be a problem. If, for any reason, we need to walk away from the table, we will forfeit \$100K in earnest money.

How will this affect our Timbergrove Campus, as well as our plans to launch new campuses and new churches in the future?

Our investment in 3223 Westheimer will not diminish our commitment to our growing campus in Timbergrove and other ventures we plan to launch in the future. If anything, we believe a thriving main campus with long-term stability in River Oaks will have greater capacity to develop emerging leaders and, once they are ready, to send them into the mission field to plant new campuses and/or fully-autonomous churches.

HOW TO PLEDGE

Thank you so much for prayerfully considering your commitment to The Story's *For Such a Time as This* campaign. Be sure to check out Pastor Eric's message series in October, as he'll be casting our vision for The Story's future at 3223 Westheimer. **On Sunday, October 30, the entire Story community will submit our Pledge Cards together.** If you are unable to join us in person, you can still join in on the action by submitting your Pledge Card online by visiting thestory.church/vision. Once you've submitted your commitment, you'll be able to set up one-time or recurring gifts using one of the various methods below.

WAYS TO GIVE

In addition to dropping your donations in the offering boxes at both of our campuses, you can contribute in the following ways:

CHECK OR DONOR ADVISED FUND

Checks can be made payable to The Story Church with "BETHANY" in the memo line and can be mailed to:

The Story Church ATTN: Finance Office
2429 Bissonnet St. BOX 610
Houston, TX 77005

TEXT TO GIVE

Text your full name and pledge amount to (713) 487-9105

IRA DISTRIBUTIONS

Required distributions can be directed to fulfill your capital campaign commitment.

STOCK GIFTS

This can be a very beneficial way to give a gift without paying capital gains taxes on the appreciation or the gain over your original cost.

EMPLOYER MATCHING

Many employers have matching gift programs to eligible charitable programs. Please contact your Human Resources representative directly to inquire about matching program requirements. The Story will fill out required paperwork as necessary.

For stock transfer instructions, Tax ID information, or any additional questions, please contact the Finance Office at:

giving@thestory.church

NOW TO HIM WHO IS
ABLE TO DO
IMMEASURABLY MORE
THAN ALL WE ASK OR
IMAGINE, ACCORDING
TO HIS POWER THAT IS
AT WORK WITHIN US.

- EPHESIANS 3:20





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thestory.church/vision

Questions? Email giving@thestory.church

