No Need to Leave Campus on Sunday

By Peter M.A. Haddad
Staff Writer

With the new Mercy and Joy Fellowship convening on campus, EMU students can now choose from three Sunday morning services without leaving campus.

Shalom United Methodist Church, that strives to take worship campus for students and recently mentored by the Rev. Aaron Saufley, a.m. in the Science Center, is pas-services for off-campus students. and work, and also provides trans-every aspect of congregational life dentists alike, involving them in dward Chapel; services are given, involving them in all aspects of congregational life and work, and also provides trans-portation to its Sunday morning services for off-campus students.

Discovery Christian Church, which has services beginning at 11 a.m. in the Science Center, is pas-tored by the Rev. Aaron Saufley, who told Weather Vane, "We real-ly began as a church that met on campus for students and recently started involving them in every aspect of congregational life and work, and also provides trans-portation to its Sunday morning services for off-campus students.

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"All of us are really, really involved... We also try to be a wel-coming congregation, as more than a third of our people come from non-Mennonite back-grounds," Saufley said.

Discovery Christian Church is a peace and justice-oriented church that strives to take worship

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**PHASE II from pg. 1**

have approximately $600,000 toward the project.

The last meeting of the Phase II planning committee was in May, said Amy Springer, assistant dean of Student Services. She said they have met seven or eight times.

"The theater space is not just a performing place for an audience, but for students to learn the art of theater, design, sound, communica-tion, and art," said Springer. "So the main idea is that we are working at it so that we can incorporate the theater, art, and communications in an education space."

As to why fundraising for Phase II didn’t continue after Phase I was completed, Gunden said they didn’t have enough donors to move ahead into the second phase. "But probably the biggest issue was the stock market and the economy affecting what we could raise, and we were happy that we weren’t in the middle of a fundraising campaign during those down times."

Another reason for the delay, said Springer, is that the scope of the project has changed. "When the first phase was essentially over, I don’t think we had much of a communication department. For the first run through, I don’t think they called for the Advanced Production Lab, and there might not have been even a call for an art gallery. The people who were working on the initial plan are not the people who are at the table now."

Springer said the challenge is to keep momentum going despite unknowns in the environment. "Because of transition and change, it takes time to get a new rhythm going.

Another concern is the transition in presidential leadership. "We need some stability in the presiden-tial leadership," said Springer. "When you have a major capital campaign, major building project, the president takes that lead role and champions that effort."

Even Barbara Graber, co-chair of the Theater department and a member of the planning committee for Phase II, agreed with the reason that the project is still in process. "We really need to wait until Loren Swartzendruber comes on board, because we are making decisions that a president needs to be present to make, and Beryl as an interim director would love to have it pushed ahead faster, but I understand why we are waiting."

Meanwhile, some leg work is proceeding. Over a year ago, a doc-ument entitled "A Case Statement for Eastern Mennonite University" was developed dealing with fund-raising issues from a campus wide level, listing several funding needs and opportunities. "Commons Phase II was included, as was student financial aid and recent program develop-ment," said Springer. "Part of the purpose of the document was for it to be taken to our donors and to get some feedback on it. From there, we could create a list on the outside perspective of what we should be prioritizing in terms of our fundrais-ing."

Phase I donors were interested in the athletic programs at EMU, said Gunden, but "also with some core of supporters interested in the arts." He will be going back to all the core donors, he added.

The only evidence of continuing activity on Phase I has been the creation in the summer of 2002 of a new office suite for the Theater and Communications departments and two new classrooms, all in the old gym/old student center area.

According to Gunden, the funds for this project came from a $490,000 federal grant to be used on Phase I. During the time, the project was presented with collaborat-ing with architects and keeping the project focused. "We were pulling communication and theater out of language and literature. So we needed to create office space in a major way. We have used part of those funds to create that office space. We have also used part of those funds to support the planning phase, said the architectural and consultant fees."

Theater productions, the department heavily benefited from Phase II, were introduced to EMU by Myron Augsburger back in the 1970s, but they came with great controversy. "At that time, it was believed that if you played an evil character, it rubs off on you," recalled Graber. "Now we have been using improvisations, but we still do not take those situations and characters lightly."

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