



# Faith For Generations Building Project

## Missional Data



PERSPECTIVE RENDERING LOOKING NORTH

Missional Data Prepared February 27, 2026

## Faith for Generations: Building for Growth at Concord United Methodist Church

Concord United Methodist Church stands at a pivotal moment in its 160-year history and its vision to be the most welcoming, helpful, and courageous church possible while living out its mission to **Share Christ, Serve Others, and Grow In Faith**. After navigating the challenges of COVID-19 and denominational transitions, the congregation is experiencing unprecedented growth, particularly among young families with children. Current data reveals that nursery facilities are over capacity, 104 new children have visited since 2024, and in-person worship attendance in early 2026 has reached its highest level since before the pandemic. Simultaneously, the church's CADES (Concord Adult Day Enrichment Services) dementia ministry operates a maximum limited capacity due to facility restrictions despite growing community need. At this time in the life of Concord United Methodist Church constructing a new wing for preschool and children's ministry while renovating existing space to expand CADES is not merely aspirational—it is an urgent missional necessity.

## Worship Resurgence and Demographic Shift

The worship attendance trends tell a dramatic story of recovery and renewed momentum. Following COVID restrictions in 2021, Concord experienced steady growth that was disrupted in 2024 by denominational controversies. However, the fall of 2025 marked a turning point:

Year	Total Average	In-Person	Online
2023	921	598	323
2024	876	613	263
2025	804	559	245

Table 1: Annual Worship Attendance 2023-2025

More significantly, the first five non-weather Sundays of 2026 reveal remarkable acceleration:

Year	Total Average	In-Person	Online
2023	959	646	313
2024	948	642	306
2025	840	533	310
2026	891	<b>683</b>	208

Table 2: First Five Sundays Comparison

The 2026 in-person attendance of **683** represents the highest level since before COVID—a **28% increase over the same period** in 2025. This is not simply a numerical rebound but represents a fundamental shift in the congregation's composition toward younger families actively seeking deeper spiritual formation.

## Children's Ministry: Growth Beyond Capacity

The children's ministry data provides the most urgent evidence for expansion:

- **104 new children** have attended Concord since 2024, with 13 visiting in just the first two months of 2026
- **Nursery facilities are over capacity** on Sunday mornings
- Current spaces are **inadequately structured** to meet developmental needs of youngest children
- Children's ministry operates in the **oldest and most distant** part of the campus, creating hospitality barriers for visitors
- Parents express consistent concerns about **emergency accessibility** due to distance from worship areas

A critical natural experiment demonstrates the impact of proximity: when Wednesday evening children's activities were moved closer to other church activities, attendance and engagement increased directly and measurably. This change cannot be replicated on Sunday mornings due to severe space limitations.

## The Young Family Phenomenon

New member data reveals a striking demographic trend that validates the need for enhanced children's facilities:

Year	Percentage Ages 20-35
2023	16%
2024	5%
2025	18%

Table 3: New Members in Young Family Demographic

The February 2026 new member class further confirms this trajectory: four families with young children participated, representing 38% of class attendees. This concentration of young families represents both opportunity and responsibility.

Community Care Night (Wednesday evenings) has grown from approximately 135 persons to 150 persons since August 2025, with **younger families and students driving the growth**. Approximately 25 elementary children participate weekly in Crescendo music ministry, while parents simultaneously engage in worship, Bible studies, and discipleship groups.

## Student Ministry: Momentum and Leadership Development

Student ministry has experienced a 34% increase in engagement between 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. Key indicators include:

- **20 students** participated in Holston Conference Assembly in 2025 (compared to only 1 in 2024)

- Wednesday night student worship attendance increased **29% from January-February 2025 to the same period in 2026**
- Students are proactively requesting more Bible study and small group time
- A Student Leadership Team has been created with students involved in ministry leadership
- Students are recognizing their gifts and eager to teach others about Jesus Christ

This spiritual depth and numerical growth among students signals a rising generation of committed disciples.

## Adult Discipleship: Intergenerational Community

Adult discipleship data demonstrates the breadth of Concord's growth:

- **37 active groups** ranging from traditional Sunday School to specialized support groups
- **Deeply Rooted** scripture study averages 45-50 persons per session, with ages spanning 20-85
- Growth in spiritual depth evidenced by participants consistently inviting others
- **Open Door Ministry** launching March 1, 2026 specifically for newcomers and families of younger children
- Increasing demand for Sunday morning spaces for spiritual conversation and faith formation

The diversity of ages in adult discipleship groups, particularly the 20-85 age span in Deeply Rooted, reveals an intergenerational community hungry for deeper biblical engagement. The emerging need for Open Door specifically highlights how new families require accessible entry points into the community's life.

## The Facility Gap: Current Limitations vs. Future Potential

### Children's Ministry Space Inadequacy

The current children's ministry facilities present multiple barriers to effective ministry:

**Location Barriers:** Children's ministry operates in the oldest section of the campus and is furthest from worship areas. This geographical isolation:

- Creates anxiety for parents concerned about emergency access
- Communicates unintentional messages about children's place in church life
- Presents hospitality challenges for first-time visitors navigating an unfamiliar building
- Prevents the natural integration of family ministry

**Capacity Constraints:** With nursery facilities over capacity and 104 new children visiting since 2024, the church cannot adequately serve those already coming, much less accommodate continued growth.

**Developmental Inappropriateness:** Current nursery spaces are not structured for the developmental needs of infants and toddlers, compromising both safety and age-appropriate spiritual formation.

## **The Proposed Solution: New Wing for Children and Preschool**

The new building project addresses these limitations with strategic, growth-oriented design:

### **Children's Ministry Expansion:**

- Growth from **3 to 6 larger classrooms** for Kindergarten through Fifth Grade
- **More than doubles** Sunday School capacity
- Worship space accommodating **115 children** (more than twice current attendance)
- Modern, age-appropriate facilities in proximity to main worship areas

### **Preschool Enhancement:**

- Capacity for **32 additional children** on alternating schedules (20% increase)
- Over 10% of preschool families attend Concord United Methodist, and preschool is a common way young families find their way into the life of the church.
- Addresses long waiting list that currently turns families away
- Expands 60+ year preschool ministry legacy to serve more families
- Creates entry point for unchurched families to experience Concord's community

### **Strategic Location Benefits:**

- Positions children's areas near worship spaces, facilitating family integration
- Creates welcoming first impression for visiting families
- Enables rapid parent response in emergencies or pastoral moments
- Demonstrates institutional commitment to children as full members of faith community

## **CADES Ministry: Meeting Growing Dementia Care Needs**

Concord's CADES program represents a critical ministry to one of society's most vulnerable populations. Currently licensed to serve 19 persons, the CADES executive team recognizes that 15 is the maximum for effective care in existing facilities.

### **The Dementia Care Crisis:**

The need for dementia ministry has never been greater. The Alzheimer's Association projects accelerating numbers of persons living with dementia in coming decades. Churches are

uniquely positioned to provide trusted, compassionate care that recognizes personhood beyond symptoms. Faith communities serve as "hubs of information" and provide "spiritual and emotional support so that the caregiver doesn't fall into depression," according to USC's Family Caregiver Support Center.

### **CADES Expansion Potential:**

By renovating space currently used by preschool and children's nursery (which will move to the new wing), CADES can **double or triple its current census**. The projected capacity of effectively serving **35-40 participants each day** represents:

- 133-166% increase in ministry capacity
- Opportunity to serve 20-25 additional families daily
- Expanded respite care enabling family caregivers to maintain employment and self-care
- Enhanced specialized programming for varying stages of dementia
- A respected model for other congregations developing dementia-friendly ministries

### **Renovation Investment:**

The \$1M cost estimate for CADES renovation is a strategic investment that will multiply ministry impact for decades. This renovation is not separate from the children's building project but intrinsically connected: the new wing makes the renovation possible, and both together represent comprehensive facility stewardship.

## **Biblical and Missional Foundations**

### **The Great Commission Mandate**

Concord's 160-year history demonstrates consistent faithfulness to Jesus' command: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Previous generations made costly decisions to fulfill this mandate:

- 60-year process to build at Old Concord location
- Bold move to Kingston Pike in late 1950s to reach new populations
- Multiple expansions through subsequent decades responding to growth

The current moment demands similar faithfulness. The Great Commission does not pause when facilities become inadequate—it calls the church to respond with vision and sacrifice.

### **United Methodist Mission Alignment**

The United Methodist Church's mission "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" finds concrete expression in this building project. Discipleship happens at every age and stage:

**Children (Preschool-5th Grade):** Adequate, age-appropriate space enables spiritual formation during critical developmental years when faith foundations are established.

**Students (6th-12th Grade):** Current growth in student ministry (34% increase, 29% worship attendance growth) positions Concord to raise up the next generation of Christian leaders.

**Adults (20s-85+):** Deeply Rooted and other adult groups create intergenerational community where spiritual depth flourishes across life stages.

**Seniors Living with Dementia:** CADES expansion embodies Jesus' teaching that "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). Persons with dementia and their caregivers are not peripheral to mission but central to it.

## Wesleyan Social Holiness

John Wesley insisted that "there is no holiness but social holiness"—faith expressed through concrete care for human need. The building project reflects this Wesleyan heritage:

**Preschool Ministry:** For over 60 years, Concord's weekday preschool has served church members and the wider community, providing Christ-centered early childhood education. Expansion enables this ministry legacy to continue and grow.

**CADES Dementia Care:** Wesley's concern for the vulnerable finds contemporary expression in specialized ministry to persons with cognitive impairment. Research shows that dementia-friendly churches provide trusted care that social services often cannot match, identifying isolated individuals and offering spiritual support alongside practical assistance.

**Family System Support:** The project recognizes that ministry to children strengthens entire family systems. When children experience excellent care and spiritual nurture, parents engage more deeply in their own faith formation.

## Stewardship and Financial Responsibility

### Current Project Costs

#### New Building (Children/Preschool Wing):

- Projected cost: \$12,500,000
- Working with The Christman Company and Brewer Ingram Fuller Architects
- Guaranteed Maximum Price finalized Fall 2025

#### CADES Renovation:

- Projected cost: \$1,000,000
- Renovating space vacated by children's ministries moving to new wing

**Total Project Range:** \$13,500,000 total cost with over \$1,000,000 of contingency built in.

## Capital Campaign Strategy

A 2023 Horizons Stewardship feasibility study found this project feasible for the church based on capital campaigns in 2023, 2025, and 2028, and every three years thereafter until the debt is paid. On February 26, 2026, Rhodes Logan of Horizons Stewardship affirmed his evaluation that the project remains feasible and advisable.

Currently, over \$4.5M has been raised with \$1.6M remaining in pledges to be fulfilled by June 2028.

## Return on Investment: Ministry Impact

Financial investment in facilities is not an end in itself but a means to expanded ministry:

### Quantifiable Capacity Increases:

Ministry Area	Current	Projected	Increase
Children's Worship	50-55	115	109%
Children's Classrooms	3	6	100%
Preschool Capacity	160	192	20%
CADES Daily Participants	15	35-40	133-166%

Table 4: Ministry Capacity Expansion

**Stewardship of Growth:** The current influx of young families represents a divine opportunity that requires faithful response. Failing to provide adequate facilities when families are seeking spiritual community is poor stewardship of God's missional provision.

**Multigenerational Impact:** Investment in children's facilities today creates disciples who will lead the church for 50-75 years. Investment in dementia care honors those who built the church's foundation and supports families navigating one of life's most difficult journeys.

## Addressing Potential Objections

### "Can We Afford This?"

The better question is: "Can we afford NOT to do this?" The financial cost is significant but manageable through the phased capital campaign approach. The missional cost of inadequate facilities is far higher:

- Turning away families with young children when nurseries are full
- Communicating that children are not priority through facility location and quality
- Operating CADES below effective capacity when community need is accelerating
- Missing the window of opportunity when young families are actively seeking church community

Churches that fail to invest in facilities during growth seasons often experience decline as families go elsewhere. The financial investment required now is substantially less than attempting to rebuild momentum after missing this opportunity.

# "Why Not Wait Until After Growth Is More Established?"

Current data shows growth is already happening—and being constrained by facility limitations:

- Nursery facilities are over capacity NOW
- 104 new children have visited since 2024
- In-person worship reached highest level since pre-COVID in early 2026
- CADES operates below potential capacity while community need grows

Building during growth enables acceleration. Building after growth peaks leads to debt service on underutilized facilities. The time to expand is when current facilities cannot accommodate those already coming.

## "Is This Just About Numbers?"

Absolutely not. This project is about faithful discipleship at every life stage:

**Spiritual Formation:** Age-appropriate facilities enable effective Christian education for children during formative years when faith foundations are established.

**Hospitality:** Welcoming spaces near worship areas embody Jesus' instruction to "let the little children come to me" (Matthew 19:14) rather than isolating them in distant, inadequate facilities.

**Dignity and Compassion:** Expanded CADES capacity honors the personhood of individuals with dementia and provides Christ-centered respite for exhausted caregivers.

**Intergenerational Community:** The project strengthens bonds across age groups, from infants to seniors with cognitive impairment, reflecting the full diversity of the Body of Christ.

Numbers matter because every number represents a person created in God's image whom Jesus commanded us to serve.

## "What About Other Ministry Needs?"

The building project complements rather than competes with other ministries:

**Adult Discipleship:** Continues to flourish with 37 active groups and growing participation in Deeply Rooted and other offerings. This expansion has the potential to create more ministry space for adults as well.

**Student Ministry:** Experiencing strong growth (34% increase) within existing facilities. Future expansion may be needed but is not the urgent constraint today.

**Missions:** Concord's commitment to local and global missions continues. The building project is missions—serving children, families, and vulnerable seniors within the community.

Effective ministry requires setting priorities based on current needs and opportunities. The data clearly indicates that children's facilities and CADES expansion are the most urgent facility needs for Concord's current missional context.

# **The Cost of Inaction**

## **Ministry Opportunities Lost**

Every Sunday that nursery facilities operate over capacity, some families experience:

- Anxiety about child safety and care quality in overcrowded spaces
- Difficulty finding their children in distant, confusing facility layouts
- Impressions that children are not genuinely welcomed or prioritized
- Decisions to visit other churches with more adequate children's facilities

Each family that chooses another church due to facility inadequacy represents:

- Lost opportunity for lifelong discipleship of children and parents
- Reduced missional capacity as potential servant-leaders go elsewhere
- Diminished diversity and vitality in the congregation's life
- Foregoing of financial stewardship those families would have contributed

## **Demographic Reality**

The window for capturing young family growth is not infinite. Current demographic research shows families moving to the Farragut area are comprised primarily of young families who move here for the schools and retirees. Moreover, research shows that young families establish church patterns when children are below the age of 12. The current influx of ages 20-35 is a time-sensitive opportunity. Delaying facility response risks missing the window entirely as families establish connections elsewhere.

## **CADES Waiting List**

Operating CADES below potential capacity while maintaining a waiting list means:

- Families struggle without respite care, leading to caregiver burnout
- Persons with dementia miss opportunities for socialization and dignity-affirming programming
- Concord's witness in the community is limited by inability to serve all who need care

## **Leadership and Vision**

Churches that fail to act decisively during growth seasons communicate uncertainty about the future. Bold building projects during growth communicate:

- Confidence in God's continued faithfulness
- Commitment to the mission for coming generations
- Recognition that present opportunities require present action
- Invitation to the entire congregation to participate in something larger than themselves

# Conclusion: Building on Faithfulness

Concord United Methodist Church stands at a crossroads remarkably similar to those faced by previous generations—moments when following Jesus required costly decisions to expand ministry capacity. The move from Old Concord to Kingston Pike in 1960 was controversial and expensive. It was also essential. That generation's faithfulness created the foundation for Concord's next 70 years of ministry.

Today's generation faces a parallel decision. The data is unambiguous:

- In-person worship attendance in early 2026 reached the highest level since before COVID (683 average)
- 104 new children visited since 2024, with nursery facilities over capacity
- Young families ages 20-35 represent 18% of 2025 new members and 38% of the February 2026 new member class
- Student ministry engagement increased 34%, with Wednesday worship up 29%
- CADES operates below its potential capacity while community dementia care needs accelerate.

The proposed building project—a new wing for children and preschool ministry plus renovation to expand CADES—is not aspirational. It is necessary. It is faithful. It is the next chapter in Concord's 160-year commitment to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The question is not whether Concord CAN build. The question is whether Concord WILL build—whether this generation will demonstrate the same faithfulness and vision as those who built Old Concord, moved to Kingston Pike, and expanded through the decades since.

The evidence demands action. The mission requires response. The time is now.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).