

## A PARKING PROBLEM? PROBABLY NOT!

The Bethlehem Board of Trustees is in negotiations to buy three properties close to the church that combined could add up to 86 parking spaces to handle the extra parking needed for the building's expansion.

The Trustees and Administrative Council were granted permission by a 61-0 vote at a Church Conference on April 7 to negotiate for and buy property for parking until Dec. 31, 2020.

Bethlehem owns a home on East Main Street and is seeking to purchase a home next to it. Together, that combined space would hold 24 to 32 parking spaces, according to Transportation Resource Group Inc. engineer Joe Eberly, a Bethlehem member.

The Trustees also are in negotiations for two properties that front onto Maple Street. Together, Eberly said, they could add as many as 54 spaces.

In addition, White Rose Credit Union at 160 E. Main St. has agreed to allow church attendees to use its 20 parking spaces on Sundays.

“It now looks like we’re in a position to acquire three properties for the purpose of parking that we never could have imagined, even two month ago,” the Rev. Roger Mentzer said. “We took some reasonable risks, spending money on architects and engineers and capital campaign fund directors, and now, because of our faith, God is revealing some opportunities that we’ve been praying for and now they’re happening.

“These properties would satisfy our parking needs into the immediate future. If growth continues, as we expect, it is a problem that we’ll have again, a wonderful problem, so let’s pray for that problem.”

Money from the Endowment Fund would be used to purchase and tear down the homes and engineer and build the parking lots. Money raised during the capital campaign would not be spent on the parking lots.

Other close-by properties are being considered for adding even more parking later.

“We continue to look at other properties,” building project Steering Committee Chairman Walt Reamer said. “We intend to keep working on this issue.”