

Report of the Sanctuary Renewal Taskforce

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Santa Barbara, CA

Taskforce Members

Pastor Truls,
Dennis Lewis, Ed Lenvik, Susan Malde,
Linda Vogel, Keith Nolan, Sarah Kreitzer,
Richard DeSmidt, Rolly Lockre, Jean Weeks,
Phil Wilson, Karen Wilson,
Dorothy Burkhart, Tom Johnson.

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The renewal taskforce was established by the Church Council in the fall of 2012. We were asked to explore the idea of renewing our sanctuary.

The taskforce members appointed by the Council are Pastor Truls, Ed Lenvik, Susan Malde, Linda Vogel, Keith Nolan, Sarah Kreitzer, Richard DeSmidt, Rolly Lockre, Jean Weeks, Dorothy Burkhart, Tom Johnson.

The taskforce met numerous times reviewing material provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and reading a number of books dealing with church and worship renewal. A number of our meetings were devoted to discussion and exchange of ideas on what makes a welcoming and inspirational space and what we see as the positive and negative aspects of Trinity's sanctuary.

The two documents that provided the most help to us were:

Worship Space and the Christian Assembly
Renewing Worship published by the ELCA
(Credit *WSTCA* in the following...)

Re-Pitching the Tent by Richard Giles
(credit *RPT* in the following...)

In addition there was a study done by Trinity member Philip Wilson dated 5/25/2010 that was referred to by the taskforce during our research and deliberations.

Also, the Trinity Lutheran Church Long Range Plan: 2011 to 2016, identified as a Worship Goal to ..."*Update worship space to make the sanctuary more inviting, intimate and useable.*"

The results of our deliberations is a list of what we feel are achievable renewal items that can make for a better environment for receiving the Lord's word and reaching out to the community.

Goals & Strategies

To further Trinity's long Range Plan and it's Purpose Statement which reads:

God's purpose for Trinity Lutheran is to Build Relationships to Share God's Love.

One of the principle goals being:

Update worship space to make the sanctuary more inviting, intimate and useable.

The following are our recommendations to renew Trinity's worship space:

"When it comes to the environment of worship, we should never underestimate the influence of our building upon the way we think about God, about each other, and about the relative importance of the activity we have come together to engage in. Our places of assembly need to speak clearly to us of what we are about as the people of God. Such clarity is required, not only in sign and symbol, but also in the very form and shape of the interior spaces, the texture of the walls and floors, the beauty and excellence of the artifacts we use, look at and handle. God forbid that we should impoverish our environment at the very point and in the very moment when we are in greatest need of every assistance at our disposal to attune ourselves to the presence of God." (RPT pg. 57)

Narthex (gathering place or commons)

The Narthex presently feels cold, it appears messy and cluttered and is not inviting either to members or guests. This should be a significant transitional space between the church and the world.

- Needs to be made larger, more generous and more welcoming. It needs to be warmer in feeling. Such things as increasing ceiling height, changing lighting, using warmer materials such as wood might be considered.
- Needs to be more useful.
- Needs to connect with the Nave and the outside entry patio in a more open manner.
- Display of topical materials either in Narthex or at the outside patio needs to be in a specific and more permanent area.
- From outside patio to Narthex should be more open, transparent and inviting.

Nave Worship Space

A hospitable worship space generously accommodates the assembly, it's liturgy and a broad range of activities appropriate to the life of the congregation and the surrounding community.

- The worship space needs to me renewed so that it is warmer in feeling and a hospitable space to be in. A hospitable room is not only a good place to worship, it is a good place to be.
- It needs to accommodate all ages and abilities and especially the needs of children.

Baptism Font

Trinity's baptismal font seems to be insignificant and at times lost in the assembly space. The bowl to hold the sacred water is small and insignificant and is normally empty.

- The baptismal font should be moved to a location near the entry to the Nave.
- The font should be larger than we presently have and it should always be filled with water.
- It should be accessible to the assembly at all times.
- Lighting at the font and moving of the water would be desirable.

"Create a distinct area for baptism . . . This area should be near the entrance into the assembly area to signify the importance of baptism as the sacrament by which we are admitted into the priestly community. The font should always remain full to the brim, and the blessed water used lavishly and as often as possible. Members of the community should be encouraged to touch the water every time they enter the assembly, and to sign themselves with the cross imprinted upon them at their baptism." (RPT pg. 124)

Choir & Music

- The choir and therefore the organ should be removed from the balcony and brought down to the front of the sanctuary.

"When musical leaders have an integral place within the main assembly space, rather than being separated in a balcony or transept, the sense of unity of the assembly may be heightened and congregational song strengthened. Planners should consider

configurations that enable musical leaders to be seen and heard without obscuring the primary symbols of ambo, table and font. Flexible seating and flat floors are conducive to various spatial arrangements.” (WSTCA principle S-12).

- To improve the sound in the sanctuary the “popcorn” texturing should be removed from the ceiling and the use of carpeting should be reduced or eliminated. As many surfaces as possible should be hard (non-absorbent).
- Piano and harpsichord should be brought down from the balcony.
- Provision should be made to allow the choir to sing from different locations in the sanctuary as the needs of the service dictate. They should have an integral place within the main assembly space.

Nave Seating

The present arraignment of furniture in the sanctuary is static and not very inviting.

- The present pews should be replaced with chairs. This will provide flexibility in seating different size groups as well as where the choir can sit at different services.
- Chair seating will present the opportunity to more easily accommodate other than religious services in the sanctuary.

*“An assembly sitting in tidy rows facing the same way will expect to be instructed and entertained, whereas an assembly sitting in a semi-circle, or facing one another in choir formation, will expect to participate and to exercise ministry. Flexible seating is therefore essential if a real process of liturgical formulation is going to be stimulated every time the assembly meets for worship. Not only do we need to break free from centuries of captivity in serried ranks of pews, but we need also to be frequently ringing the changes in our seating plan to denote different “moods’ of the assembly appropriate to different seasons of the Church’s Year, ;and to ensure that we never settle down for too long in any one place, but instead, as God’s pilgrim people, are constantly re-pitching the tent. For large parts of the year an antiphonal arrangement may be appropriate, at other times an arc of seating embracing the ambo, at other times a complete circle. **For all these reasons, the removal of fixed pews is a non-negotiable top priority. Flexibility is the key to a place of liturgical assembly which never dates, for while there is space there is hope.**” (RPT pg.175-6)*

- Some of the chair seating should have arms to make it easier people of all abilities.

Raised Chancel Area Platform

The current raised chancel area feels to large and the activities that take place on it seem distant and separated from the assembly. Options were discussed that either reduced the size of the raised platform or that reduced the size while pushing a portion of the platform out more into the assembly area (in conjunction with chair seating arrangements).

- In conjunction with new seating and placement of organ at the front of the sanctuary reduce the size of the raised platform to give it more intimate proportions.
- Possibly push portion of platform out into the assembly seating area again to bring it into closer proximity to the assembly.
- Provide space on platform for choir when the service warrants their location in the chancel behind the altar.
- Provide space for larger performance groups to assemble on platform.
- Provide for kneeling rail for communion. The goal of easy access and a sense of gathering around the table suggest a careful re-examination of the placement and use of altar rails

Pulpit & Ambo

- The current fixed, raised pulpit should be removed and replaced with a lighter, freestanding (and possibly) moveable pulpit/ambo (lectern).

“Whether called an ambo, reading desk or pulpit, the place of the word best fulfills its role when it is dignified and human-sized. It visually expresses the authority of the word of God without overly elevating the reader or preacher or separating them from the congregation. Proclamation is aided when everyone in the congregation can see and hear those who stand at the ambo and when its size and design are proportionate within the worship space as a whole.”

“The distinction between the place of reading (lectern) and place of preaching (pulpit) may suggest an artificial hierarchy of ministries and of scripture readings. Although reading and preaching occasionally occur in other locations within the assembly, the proclamation of the word of God is honored by the creation of a single focal point.” (WSTCA principle S-9)

- The placement of the ambo/pulpit should be in closer proximity to the assembly and should be of appropriate size and dignity. It should be easily visible to the entire assembly.

Altar Table

If other changes are made to the raised chancel area (to accommodate the organ pipes, etc or to reduce the size of the raised area or to push a portion of the raised area out into the assembly area) it might be necessary to move the present altar.

- Construct a new altar (table), lighter in appearance and more furniture like.

The altar is the holy table of the Christian family. Carefully crafted of worthy, solid material, its size and shape are proportionate to the size and shape of the worship space. The mensa or top of the table accommodate the bread and wine of the eucharist and those who minister around it. The table itself is the primary symbol, making secondary symbolism unnecessary. The altar can be vested with a white cloth (fair linen) and paraments that compliment its shape.” (WSTCA principle S-10)

- Design altar so that it could be moved as necessary for different kinds of service and activity in the sanctuary.

Space for Worship Leaders (pastor, etc.)

The place for the minister and assistants needs to be distinct, but not overly separated or elevated.

- Seating for worship leaders should continue to be on the platform but should be visually closer to the assembly.

Lighting in the Nave:

The existing formal lighting in the nave should be changed to be more in character with the space, be more visible or attractive and better define the scale of the space for the assembly.

Flooring:

- Hard surface flooring is preferred to better serve the sound from the choir.
- hard surface flooring should reflect quality i.e. no vinyl sheet or tile. Wood or stained and waxed concrete are some examples of preferred flooring.
- With hard surface flooring provide loose carpet for special occasions and children’s worship. Carpet could be easily folded or rolled for storage.

Restrooms:

Restrooms need to be refinished and be made accessible. Accessibility is the least we should do for our ageing members and guests who visit.

- Accessibility changes will probably require taking part of the present Brides Room.
- If Brides Room is lost the women's restroom should accommodate an area for relaxing, dressing, etc.

Other Changes to the Sanctuary:

- The character of the sanctuary could be made warmer. This might be accomplished by the painting of certain walls a color other than the present white. Other materials might also be introduced onto the walls.
- If the organ equipment and pipes are moved to the front of the sanctuary their enclosure being made of natural finished wood would help to warm up the space.
- The windows to the outside on each of the side aisles could have the decorative concrete panels removed and the window replaced with a obscure or stained glass to let more light in. Another option would be to put clear glass in an look out to a small fenced garden.

Other use of the Balcony:

If the organ and choir are removed from the balcony other uses could be made of that space rather than closing it off from the sanctuary.

- Storage from the narthex below if the narthex is remodeled to be made more open and friendly.
- If chair seating is provided in the nave the balcony could be cleaned up and pews placed there for overflow use. It may be that the current stairs to the balcony do not meet current building code standards. Architect could determine that.

Conclusions:

Should the Council accept the Taskforce's recommendations and choose to move forward with the sanctuary renewal the Taskforce recommends the following:

- Inform the congregation of the work of the Taskforce. Possibly schedule a information session with the congregation. This might be done after an Architect is retained.
- Retain an Architect or liturgical consultant to develop preliminary designs based on the Taskforce's recommendations. Preliminary design drawings will enable the Council and Congregation to see *what could be* and offer them a chance to participate in the design development. Drawings will also enable cost estimates to be developed.
- Research with organ designers/builders the possibility of moving the church's organ from the balcony to the front of the sanctuary. The organ designer/builder would work with the Architect on placement of pipes and console.
- Retain testing lab to sample and test the "popcorn" ceiling finish and resilient flooring to determine if they contain asbestos. Their recommendations may require testing of other existing building finish materials as well.