

Report on the Space Usage Committee

By Sabeth Fitzgibbons

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The Space Usage Committee convened, at the request of the Executive Committee and the Priest-in-Charge, to examine pressing issues around need for more space for Christian Formation programs on Sunday mornings. The Committee was asked to examine the issue and come up with creative short- and long-term solutions. The Assistant Priest convened the Committee. The Committee met on November 30 and December 7, 2009, for a total of 3.5 hours.

Committee participants:

Randy Bowlby, as Vestry liaison to the Property Committee
Murray Daniels, on behalf of the Music Committee (attended only 12/7)
Evelyn Hausslein, representing Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program
Peter Koso, on behalf of the Property Committee
Beth Murnaghan, representing youth programs
Sabeth Fitzgibbons, clergy

Chris Giguere, director of Lexington Playcare Center (our tenant), was also invited and was unable to attend either meeting. She offered her input in a personal meeting with Sabeth.

The issues to be addressed were defined by the group as:

- The Sunday nursery space, currently in a LPC room quite far from the sanctuary, is not ideal in location or amenities.
 - The challenge: looking at ways to move the nursery closer to the worship space, while maintaining adequate space for the 4-8 children we have every week and allowing for future growth in the population.
- Two of our Sunday morning youth groups do not have adequate or appropriate space. The J2A and YAC groups currently meet in LPC rooms, where they take their own chairs in with them and move the furniture around to make the space usable.
 - The challenge: find or create spaces that are more appropriate for these two groups (and maybe others). Ideally, in the long-term, have dedicated space for youth groups.
- Proposing short-term solutions that would be of such desirable quality and aesthetics that they would not become temporary or 'throw-away' solutions when a larger, more comprehensive improvement plan (like a capital campaign) comes along.
 - The group decided that, to be good stewards of both space and money, this consideration needed to be part of the solutions proposed.
- The sanctuary has many issues to be addressed as we hope it will become more welcoming and warm-feeling.
 - The group decided this was beyond the scope of its conversation because it needs much conversation and input from a larger segment of the congregation.
- The building leaves much to be desired in terms of accessibility for persons with disabilities.
 - The group decided that this also was beyond the scope of its conversation because it has been examined by Welcome Team and Property Committee, and those groups are investigating possibilities for short- and long-term improvements in that respect.

Having defined the issues, the group began to examine space available vs. space needed and discovered that we actually need more rooms than are available.

The Great Hall

The Great Hall proposal builds on some investigation done by the Property Committee in 2008. The Property Committee collected information and created a cost proposal for improving the Great Hall with updated lighting, industrial carpet (the kind that you can vacuum liquids out of), and closing off the alcove on the southeast (Meriam St) end of the hall with a permanent wall. See attached documents and drawings of this proposal.

The Space Usage Committee suggests expanding the Property proposal further by suggesting:

- the creation of permanent, lit, shelved storage space for the Food Pantry behind the new permanent wall,
- a small storage area for the hall behind the new permanent wall,
- the addition of retractable “accordion-panel” walls that could divide the hall into three rooms, and
- the addition of different lighting zones for the new rooms (so that, for example, you could watch a movie in one without dimming the lights in the entire hall).

This solution would create two more meeting spaces, which could be utilized by youth groups on Sunday morning, as well as by many other groups (maybe even the vestry) at other times of the week. It also leaves the full room available for use for functions where the larger space is needed, like Annual Meeting, Patriot’s Day Pancake Breakfast, etc. On Sunday mornings, even with the walls extended, there would still be a fellowship space available nearer the kitchen for those who would like to linger over coffee.

This proposal still leaves two exits from every “room” in case of fire. It also preserves the elevator access for handicapped usage as well as Food Pantry usage. It does have a yet-unaddressed Safe Church concern about needing windows into classrooms where children and youth are with adults.

Peter estimates that this work could be completed by the end of summer 2010, at the latest. This proposal is something that could happen relatively quickly and be a lasting improvement to our facility.

See attached documents for a sketch of this proposal and an updated cost proposal.

The Nursery

The Nursery proposal was motivated by the question of where to locate the nursery for easier access by parents, and for future growth. This Nursery proposal is a short-term solution. The long-term solution for a growing nursery is planned, dedicated space.

The group examined several possibilities for shifting users around in existing space to make it possible for the Nursery to be on the same level as the church. The group measured different rooms to inform the discussion with more data (see measurements on attached document). The

group also considered impacts on other regular users of rooms, including the choir and Music Director.

Possibilities examined:

- shift all the offices on the hallway toward the rector's office and make the **choir room into the nursery**, which would mean
 - Conference Room is eliminated
 - Assistant Priest moves into Conference Room
 - Music Director moves into Assistant Priest's office
 - Choir rehearsal space moves into Music Director's office
- Shift Music Director's office into Choir Room and make **Music Director's office into the nursery**
 - This would require creating a lockable "office" space for the Music Director
 - Logistical questions about whether the file cabinets would all fit in the Choir Room
- Make **library into nursery**
 - Shift books into downstairs hall where the coat racks are, or into storage temporarily
 - Furniture to use in other locations in the church, or to storage
 - **Rite-13 to meet in Music Director's office**
 - Harpsichord would need to move out

The group recommends the final option. It allows the Music Director to stay in her office, although it asks her to make it available for Rite-13 (current users of the Library during Christian Formation time) on Sunday mornings from 10:30-noon. The harpsichord, which is the Music Director's personal property, would need to move to another location to allow for enough seating for the Rite-13 group (currently 13 members).

Other Notes

This group of people did an excellent job of defining the issues, looking for creative solutions, listening to one another with respect, and being in dialogue. The Holy Spirit brought just the right people together for this conversation.

The diocese has resources available for space planning (an architect Peter Koso knows).

Peter Koso has offered to be available to the Executive Committee and/or the Vestry for further discussion, conversation, and visual aids about this proposal.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Ad Hoc Space Usage Committee,
The Rev. Sabeth Fitzgibbons