

Facilitating Our Future Task Force: Building and Facilities Implications of "Our Future in Focus" Vision

Last February, the North Chapel Board decided to review the changes that might be needed in the church's buildings and facilities in order to meet our newly developed vision for the North Chapel as summarized in the "Our Future and Focus" report. In response, the Facilitating Our Future (FOF) task force was formed, and met through the spring and summer, presenting its findings to the board in July.

The following is a brief summary of the process followed by the FOF task force, the design principles and priorities we developed, and the broad overview plan that we recommended to and was accepted by the North Chapel board.

The Process:

To ensure that the broader community understands the analysis and consultation on which these recommendations are based, we felt it would be helpful to outline the process that the FOF Task Force undertook. These were the key steps:

- Our first task was to create a working group that would represent the diverse interests and views of our church community. The task force members were: Barbara Bartlett, Bob Coates, Veronica Delay, Jack Nelson, Michael Stoner, and Ann Wynia. Chris Bartlett and Anne Dean were co-chairs.
- We began with a physical review of the current building spaces, recording the size, configuration, and condition of all existing facilities.
- Next, we conducted an audit of all current uses, analyzing the church's 2014 calendar to identify 38 different activities – from Sunday service to Pizza Nights. These were recorded by nature of activity, facility used, frequency, etc.
- This was followed by one-on-one interviews with leaders and members of key groups, asking them to identify both positive and negative aspects of their experiences in using the church's facilities for their particular activity.
- We next focused on the four themes of the "Our Future in Focus" report: Celebrate, Broaden, Deepen and Commit. Under these headings, and using the data gathered, we evaluated present and future church use needs against the availability, condition and strengths and weaknesses of current church facilities.
- We then tested these ideas and gained additional input from three outside experts – an architect, designer and a building contractor.
- Finally, the task force made some initial implementation recommendations, including a broad budget estimate, an initial review of additional funding resources, and an initial schedule of proposed timing.

The Principles and Priorities:

The FOF Task Force explicitly resisted the temptation to rush to final design solutions. Instead, we committed to completing the analysis, soliciting community and external input, and then

following that data and information to develop broad principles and priorities that would guide the final design recommendations. These were among the core principles and priorities we developed:

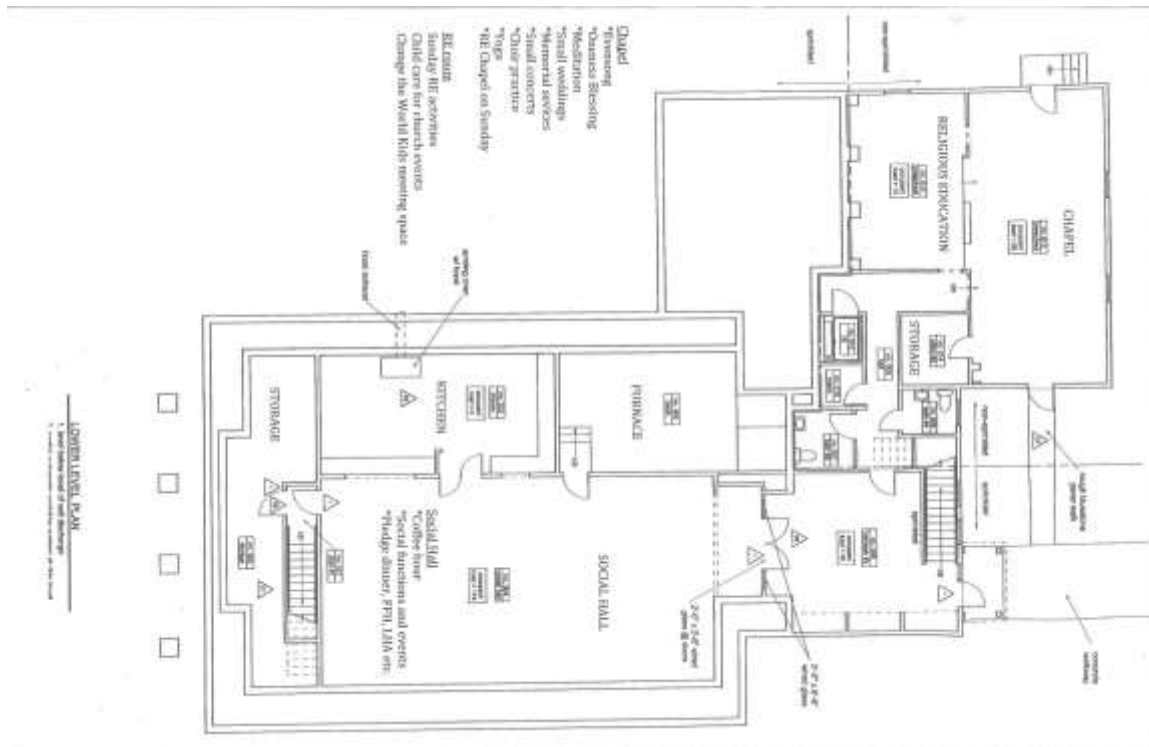
- Overall, we concluded that the community-endorsed vision, coupled with the newly available nursery school space, created an ideal time to respond to the evolving needs of a healthy, growing church community in a carbon neutral home.
- The proposal envisions using spaces in flexible ways for related, multiuse purposes.
- Recognizing our own limitations, we felt it was vital to engage professional design expertise to help with many critical specialized issues we encountered, including energy efficiency, soundproofing, effective use of "dead spaces," resolving design puzzles etc.
- Our analysis surfaced numerous priority needs that are reflected in the design recommendations that follow. These are a few of those priorities:
 - To shift small activities out of the sanctuary due to the energy inefficiency of the space.
 - To improve facilities where the minister can meet with individuals and small groups in a more private, welcoming and comforting environment than is available in the current minister's office.
 - To create dedicated quiet spaces for meditation and other contemplative practices.
 - To make church meeting spaces more flexible for groups of various sizes (from 3 or 4 person discussion groups to 25 member Amazing Grays meetings), different functions (church committees to Covenant Groups) and diverse activities (e.g. small group breakouts to education classes.)
 - To offer visitors a more welcoming entrance to the church offices and meeting spaces, rather than a closed office door.
 - To make use of underutilized "dead spaces," such as the lobby/hanging space outside the church office, and the lobby space outside the social hall.
 - To make all areas more energy-efficient and where appropriate, soundproof.
- It is proposed as a multi-year implementation program, implementable within a manageable \$25-\$30,000 annual building budget.
- However, immediate action is possible in the fall of 2015, particularly for low cost items and activities that can be supported by volunteer labor. For example:
 - Undertake an energy audit; replace all incandescent lights.
 - Initiate volunteer work (e.g. clean and organize Parlors; prepare old nursery spaces for new uses; etc.)
 - Engage architect/designer to prepare a detailed plan and cost estimate.
 - Begin researching alternative sources of funding.

The Plan Proposal

The FOF Task Force's recommendations were summarized in two floor plans that defined the major proposed allocation of the North Chapel's core activities. It deliberately does not represent the final architectural drawings, which will be developed with the help of a professional who will work with the information that the Task Force assembled, and the design

principles it developed. The following are the main design recommendations and the floor plans illustrating them:

- Social Hall Level: Spiritual, Children/Youth and Social Activities
 - Chapel Space: Evensong, Oneness Blessing, Meditation, Choir Practice, Small Weddings, Memorial Services, Small Concerts.
 - Children's Space: RE Classes, OWL Meetings, CTWK Meetings, Childcare during Events.
 - Social Hall (Plus Reclaimed Lobby?): Coffee Hour, Social Functions (e.g. Pledge Dinner, Red Flannel Hash, Anti-Cabin Fever Dinners, Life and Hope Dinner, Etc.)
 - See Sketch Plan:



- Sanctuary Level: Spiritual, Pastoral, Groups and Administrative Activities
 - Sanctuary: Sunday Services, Weddings, Memorial Services, Concerts, Large Community Events, Etc.
 - Library and Parlors: Interest and Support Groups, Committee Meetings, Education, Post-service Discussions, Infant Care during Church Services, Etc.
 - Minister's Office: Private Study, Pastoral Work.
 - Church Office: Office Manager, Visitor Greeting, Church Support.
 - See Sketch Plan:

