

3rd Meeting on Worship Space

St. Mark's Worship Space Meeting—June 2nd, 2009, 10am-12:30pm

Rev. Lorraine Dierick, Rev. Bonnie Campbell, Corby Varness, Mary Venske, and Jim Campbell met with the Rev. Janet Campbell and Brenda Sol to discuss the St. Mark's church worship space--what things may be done to improve or change it for better use and to more be in context with modern worship in the Episcopal Church. Rev. Campbell was asked by Bonnie (after approval from the Bishop Committee, to work with us as a convener for our planning and thinking, due to her expertise on worship space/liturgy design).

We supplied Janet with the summaries of our first two meetings from last August and January this year. We then discussed our worship space in context of how we use it for worship now. As part of this we talked about Total Common Ministry and how it affected our worship service and experiences. We then discussed several items for changes and how/when any changes could be implemented for either trial or permanent use.

[The common themes we are working with are to make the worship more inviting and community centered and fit better with out TCM principles, and to improve issues with safety and access.]

Bonnie, Mary and I had lunch afterward with Janet and agreed to try to get this information discussed with the church community during June, and decide what we want to do next. Janet said she could visit us for a Sunday service and discussion after worship in July, likely when Corby is here for sure (we know there is vacation time planned, so maybe at her preaching time), so we all can participate fully.

A list of ideas for changes discussed follows below. The intent is to involve everyone in this process. There will be time devoted to just talking about these ideas, then when we change anything it will be on a trial basis (for those items that are easily reversible). At the end of that time things will be replaced in the former locations. Then we can compare the "before and after" and decide which is best for worship. Nothing will be moved just for the "fun of it". Each change will be done thoughtfully and with purpose to enrich our worship experiences.

Simple Early/First Changes:

- 1) **Narthex Doors:** Open both doors from the narthex into the nave for worship—no cost and provides a more open, inviting entry into the church for all who enter. Can be done now.
- 2) **Baptismal Font:** Place the baptismal font in the back of the church in the center of the aisle, and always have blessed water in it for those who enter. This provides everyone of their baptism, and it is one of the few nice pieces of furniture/art we have. No cost--can be done anytime after explaining to everyone as best we can how/why this is important to do.

- 3) **Paschal Candle:** Move Paschal candle to rear of church near the font when not used after Easter Season (put away during Lent only, as a minimum). It should be lit for funerals and also for baptisms (?), and have a real use most of the year, not just stored away. No cost—could be done any time.
- 4) **Baptism Icon:** With the font and candle, can place a nice baptism icon on the wall nearby to emphasize the area for baptism. (The ark poster on the wall in the narthex could also be appropriate to use, although it looks nice where it is.) Cost would be to purchase something new for this—done in conjunction with the font and candle moves.
- 5) **Modesty Screens:** Remove the “modesty screens” presently in front of the first row of pews on either side of the nave. Janet explained that our worship space setup has nave, chancel and sanctuary spaces divided by chancel and altar rails, placing an emphasis on hierarchy between the general worshippers and those performing the service. She said we also have a 4th division with the modesty screens in place. With almost no use of the first row of pews except by people who come for funerals or weddings, this is not necessary. Doing this also can allow for a easier handicap access space to sit, especially when we mark the space as such (signs). No cost—could be done as a trial for some period (like July and August) and store upstairs. This would make other changes involving the lecturn/ambo and the chancel area below easier to make. It also would allow easier adding of a row of chairs in the front for a full church (funerals and weddings).
- 6) **Lecturn:** Move down into the nave in front of the first row of pews and closer to the wall on the right side of the nave (same side it is on now). This makes the service readings/psalms and preaching done from this within the nave and not separated from the people in the chancel area. This is another change that would fit well with other chancel area changes. The lecturn is another of the few pieces of nice art we have and it would be seen easier there. No cost—could be done after explaining why this is a good change to make, and as a trial for maybe July/August. [The bishop’s chair would be moved out to ??]

Next Changes (may be not permanent changes, but not all easily replaceable either): Would be implemented as part of other chancel/sanctuary area changes after careful explanations to the congregation and gather all to help as can to make the changes. Could be done on a trial basis for some period, but the pulpit/chancel rail changes would be permanent.

- 1) **Pulpit/Chancel Rail:** Remove the pulpit and re-place/fill in the chancel rail to become the altar rail—move it back enough to establish a place to kneel for receiving communion. We could also make kneelers for this. This makes, with the above changes, only one division between the nave and sanctuary (no chancel anymore). This also makes it easy to get to the altar rail for communion—no steps and close to the nave. Cost—some minor cost for moving and repairing the rail. It is now only made from finished 2” x 4”s. {The sound system box would moved to the left wall away from the rail and could have a box made to enclose it.}
- 2) **Altar:** Move the present altar down into the chancel area maybe 6’ from the new altar rail to get much closer to the congregation. No cost for this move itself.
- 3) **Credence Table:** Place a small table next to the altar to use for this purpose while trying this out. Leave present one on the wall.
- 4) **Candles:** no changes for now??

- 5) **Flowers:** could obtain a couple of plant stands to place next to the altar.
- 6) **Organ:** Move to the back left of the sanctuary. No cost, or slight cost to set up electrical outlet nearby.

Final Changes (permanent changes, if earlier ones work well with the congregation):

- 1) **Old Altar Rail:** Remove. No cost.
- 2) **Chancel/Sanctuary Floors:** Level off at the sanctuary area height, so the whole area is one height—16" above the nave. This would be done with one intervening step at the front where the altar rail goes and also at the door to the sacristy. Cost—\$2-3k for materials, including 2" x 10"s, plywood decking, and new flooring (carpet or wood).
- 3) **Altar:** Use present one, or make/purchase new smaller one of proper materials. Either no cost, or the cost of the new altar.
- 4) **Credence Table:** Continue to use the small table next to the altar, or move existing one forward closer to the altar. No cost.
- 5) **Candles:** Leave as is?? Candle stands move closer to the altar?
- 6) **Aumbry:** Move from the sacristy and mount on the wall near the sanctus light, or get a new one if the present one does not look very nice. Either no cost or the cost of making a new one.

Other Changes to Consider:

- 1) **Pews/chairs in chancel/sanctuary area:** Remove or have less of them; only need enough for those actually serving.
- 2) **Back wall with large cross:** Try out several different ideas using colored papers to see what looks best. (This does need to be dealt with somehow, as the cross and also all colors of flowers "disappears" when looking at that wall.) Costs for permanent changes—depends on what is decided to do.
- 3) **Bishop's Chair:** Have a specific comfortable chair for the celebrant (presider) that is vacated for any bishop visits.
- 4) **Nave Walls and Ceilings:** find out about repairs and repainting. Did not discuss colors. Janet said the church should look like we care about it and want to keep it maintained and nice. This does not mean extravagance, but neat and clean and respectful to God. Costs—unknown.
- 5) **Sound System:** Find out about wireless mikes and also "pizo"/flat mikes that rest on flat surfaces. If we can get a wireless mike for the celebrant/person presiding at the worship it will help for all concerned. The flat surface mike could be placed on the altar for use during the Eucharistic Prayer part of the service. Costs—unknown.
- 6) **Preaching:** We discussed where to do this, either at the ambo or in the middle of the aisle in the nave. We could get an easily movable stool for the preacher to sit on, and also a mike stand so they did not have to hold a mike. A wireless would work, too. The intent is to preach within the worshipping people. Costs—minor.