

# **Proposal for the Renovation of the Interior Sanctuary**

Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church

Prepared by:

Ad Hoc Committee for Sanctuary Renovation

Members: David Bolt (chair), Nate Willink, Laura Triezenberg,  
Cindy Bandstra, Brian Ehlers, Marsha Shade, Fred Sternberg (ex officio)

Date:

10/03/2011 – Approved by Ad Council  
10/10/2011 – Approved by General Council  
12/27/2011 – editorial revisions

## **Background**

On February 20, 2011, the congregation voted against a motion proposed by the council related to “Aesthetic Changes to the Worship Space.” The body of this motion centered around a vision planned by the worship committee through the work of a consultant, Chris Overvoorde. There was little opposition to the broader vision of the proposed changes to the sanctuary, however, there were concerns raised about:

- (1) the sequencing of the overall plan over time versus doing all the changes at once. This concern largely related to potential clashes of paint color between the front of the sanctuary and the rest of the sanctuary should only the front of the sanctuary be painted, and to the likelihood of having to repaint portions of the front of the sanctuary in light of subsequent changes later.
- (2) The need, given the overall desire to do all the changes at once, to have sufficient funds at hand to accomplish all of these proposed changes.

At that point, the Administrative Council decided to form an Ad Hoc Committee made up from selected members of several standing committees whose mandates relate in various ways to this matter, as well as others whose particular knowledge and skills may help provide insight for the committee’s consideration.

## **Charge of the Committee**

This ad hoc committee is responsible for submitting to the council a proposal for a renovation of the interior sanctuary that addresses suggested changes related to:

- (1) the space needs on the stage,
- (2) the use of projection screens,
- (3) the refurbishing of the interior (eg. painting, carpeting, refinishing floors)
- (4) the costs of the proposed changes, and the
- (5) financing of the proposed changes

To accomplish this task, the committee is charged with :

- gathering the required information
- evaluating different plans and possibilities
- securing bids on different portions of the plan
- making cost assessments, and
- formulating funding plans

## The Proposal

After visiting other churches, assessing the sanctuary needs, choosing a knowledgeable consultant, and considering options, the Ad Hoc Sanctuary Renovation Committee presented the following proposal to the Eastern Avenue Council. This plan will enhance worship through supporting the growing range of forms available to worship God as God's covenant community. The plan proposed recognizes both the long-term use of these sanctuary changes as well as the importance of worship as a central activity of congregational life. The enhanced worship space will not only support our weekly worship services but will also expand our opportunities for reaching out to populations of diverse ages and backgrounds.

The work of the committee focused on the charge quoted above, specifically: the stage (platform), use of projection screens and refurbishing of the interior for aesthetic and practical purposes. We recognize that the scope of needs and desires for the interior of the sanctuary easily exceeds the plan proposed. Our focus, in order to accomplish this task in a timely manner, was limited to examining the required areas and establishing criteria for why changes were needed to enhance worship at Eastern Avenue. The changes proposed are needed:

- (1) to expand and enhance worship opportunities,
- (2) for practical purposes regarding the life cycle of items, and
- (3) for systems and structures affected by the new renovations for worship enhancement.

### A. Space needs on the Platform

**Goal:** To enhance worship through the variety of worship participants by providing the maximum space and flexibility on the platform.

**Process:** Examine options to increase usable space of the platform within the confines of the existing edges. Expanding the platform beyond its current boundaries would require significant renovation of the pews and other elements of the sanctuary that the committee did not feel added enough benefit for the cost that would be incurred. The current space on the platform is hindered by the amount of space occupied by the both the ramp and the organ console.

**Methodology:** Previously, a significant amount of research had been done by Brian Ehlers regarding the use of space on the platform. This research included interviews with many worship participants and the planning of many varieties of options for platform reconfiguration. These options were reviewed by the committee and two plans were selected as most appropriate for accomplishing the goal established. These plans were then reviewed by Worship Committee and various worship participants for comment before a final recommendation was selected.

**Proposed Renovation:** The proposed construction consists of two major changes:

First, the removal of the existing ramp and railing, rebuilding this area to expand the platform and constructing a new ramp under the south balcony. This allows for expanded use of the main platform and also accomplishes the added benefit of removing an additional visual barrier as described in Chris Overvoorde's vision for the liturgical front.

Second, the relocation of the organ console toward the south balcony. By relocating the ramp and the organ console, the permanent functional elements of the platform are all relocated under the south balcony which currently is the least utilized portion of the platform for active worship participants. This area of the platform is typically used mostly for storage of a variety of items used in worship. Included in this renovation would be the ability to maintain storage in this area, but in a more aesthetically pleasing manner, by creating a visual shield for these items. The main area of the platform would be completely free of permanent items, allowing for the maximum flexibility within the confines of the existing platform edges. Also included would be a complete re-carpeting of the platform, this could be in an accent color to distinguish it from the remainder of the sanctuary. If the whole sanctuary were to be re-carpeted, the platform could match if desired.

## **B. Technical System (Audio / Visual / Lighting)**

**Goal:** To enhance worship through the use of technology.

**Process:** Examine the variety of possible locations for projection screens and projectors along with the aesthetic implications of the screens. The scope of this premise inherently expanded to the examination of the current Audio system and Lighting as natural by-products of providing a visual display.

**Methodology:** After visiting several local churches to understand the implications of adding projection screens in to a sanctuary, the committee recognized that the technical skills required to provide an accurate proposal were beyond the members of the committee. In order to fully and most responsibly establish a proposal, an Audio Visual Consultant (Acoustics By Design) was hired.

**Proposed Renovation:** As proposed by the AV consultant:

### **Video System:**

The video system will utilize two (2) motorized video screens. The screens will be located to the left and right of the organ. The screens will be 105" x 140" viewable image area and coupled with 6,000 lumen projectors. The video screen aspect ratios are 4x3 in format as opposed to the newer 16x9 widescreen format. Due to width limitations of the space between the balcony and organ, a 4x3 format screen will provide better text readability for scripture, song lyrics and pastoral notes

A simple video switcher will be located in the tech booth to switch between computer and video inputs. Computer inputs will be provided on stage with both VGA and HDMI connections. A BluRay player, video switcher, signal extenders and other video electronics will be installed in the new tech booth rack. An owner furnished laptop computer will supply graphics for worship lyrics and will be integrated into the video system. Video projectors will be controlled via a wired remote control in the tech booth. An addition will need to be added to the tech booth. The desk will need to be wide enough to hold a computer monitor, small lighting board and small video equipment rack. The existing booth will remain in its present location and the desk extended toward the center aisle without blocking the doorway.

### **Platform Lighting System:**

The lighting system will provide simple dimming and control of approximately 12 new spot light and flood light fixtures for the platform area. These fixtures will be installed at two (2) different lighting positions at the front of the space to provide front light to all areas of the platform. Lighting bar locations are intended to be installed near the ceiling on the right and left sides of the space tucked up above the balconies. This location will allow excellent lighting of the stage while keeping most of the fixtures hidden from the back of the church.

The two platform lighting positions will have a total of six (6) dimmed outputs each. These circuit bars will each be fed by a single 3 phase, 20 amp circuit. A small dimming rack will be installed in an adjacent storage room to control the house light fixtures. All of the existing lighting loads for the house fixtures will be re-routed to the new dimming rack.

Primary control of the lighting system will be from a small lighting console located in the tech booth. Secondary control of the lighting fixtures will be done at two (2) doorway entries (one at the back of the space and one at the side entrance). These secondary controls will be a simple on/off switch to turn the house lights on and off.

### **Inductive Loop System:**

This will add an inductive loop to the audio system. Several standard loops will be installed in the rear of the sanctuary. Phased array loops will be incorporated into the front of the sanctuary to limit interference on stage.

### C. Refurbishing of the Interior

**Goal:** To enhance worship through aesthetic visual elements.

**Process:** Examine the liturgical center of the church and how it can be altered to create verticality and a greater visual impact of the elements.

**Methodology:** The committee used the previous proposal from Chris Overvoorde as a basis for recommendation. The committee did not feel that the congregation significantly opposed the work of the previously hired consultant and saw no need to redo the work previously done by the Worship Committee. The essence of the consultant's report was to enhance the liturgical center of the church. This would be accomplished through the addition of vertical banners and the aesthetic transformation of the organ chamber. These items would create both verticality that the consultant felt was lacking, and increase the visual impact of the elements (pulpit, table and font).

**Proposed Renovation:** Worship Committee has already implemented the addition of vertical banners. The aesthetic transformation of the organ chamber is most easily accomplished through the method described by the consultant of painting the existing chamber to create a feeling of verticality. The downside of this solution is the painting of the existing wood veneer plywood. This is not ideal for a variety of reasons. There have been concerns raised about the painting of wood, and while the majority of the wood is of low value, we recognize the emotional impact of painting natural wood. We also feel that painting the existing wood may have undesirable aesthetic consequences. The grain of the wood and the existing shapes will likely not have a high quality feel. Therefore, the proposed solution would include rebuilding parts of the lower portion of the chamber with new materials. This solution offers a more aesthetically pleasing and architecturally sound look to the front of the sanctuary. The proposed plan also maintains the higher quality wood in wood finish while using new materials with painted surface replacing the lower quality wood.

### D. Additional Items

**Goal:** To include items deemed practical to consider for purposes regarding a life cycle of particular finishes or systems that would be effected by the physical changes required for the worship enhancement.

- I. **Re-carpeting the sanctuary:** Beyond the re-carpeting of the platform area as proposed above, the existing carpet is over 20 years old and is at a point where it has reached the end of its life cycle. The re-carpeting of the platform would be required for the initial physical changes, and could be done in an accent color to provide an aesthetically pleasing effect without replacing the remainder of the sanctuary. We feel it is necessary to consider the full cost of replacing all the carpet in the sanctuary at this time.
- II. **Re-finishing the wood floor:** Refinishing the wood floor, a regular maintenance item, should be considered during the construction phase.
- III. **Modifying the pews for wheelchair access:** With both the carpet and wood floors being redone and the pews being removed for this work, the church's policy of accommodating and accessibility demands consideration of adding additional cut-out areas within the current pew layout to accommodate wheelchair seating in more areas than the rear of the sanctuary.
- IV. **Repainting the Interior:** The colors proposed by Chris Overvoorde for the organ chamber are colors that would not blend well with the current tones on the sanctuary walls. Also a life cycle maintenance item, the painting of the all the walls of the sanctuary should be considered to create a uniform feeling.

**Cost Estimate Summary**

**Proposed Renovation**

<b>Platform</b>		
Ramp Changes		\$7,000
Organ Console		\$5,000
Carpet		\$6,000
Stage Power		\$1,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$19,000</b>

<b>Technical System</b>		
Video Projection		\$27,500
Theatrical Lighting		\$30,000
Additional Lighting and Electrical		\$40,000
Loop		\$17,500
Audio Visual System upgrades		\$14,000
Tech Booth Rebuild		\$5,000
Laptop/ software		\$3,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$137,000</b>

<b>Refurbishing Interior</b>		
Organ Chamber		\$10,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$10,000</b>

<b>Additional Life Cycle Items</b>		
carpet sanctuary	29,000	
wood floors	5,000	
ADA pew modifications	3,000	
painting sanctuary	25,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$62,000</b>	

Misc/Fees	13,280	6,160
Contingency	16,600	7,700

<b>Sub- Total</b>	<b>\$195,880</b>	<b>\$75,860</b>
-------------------	------------------	-----------------

<b>Combined Total</b>	<b>\$271,740</b>	
-----------------------	------------------	--

## **Sequencing of the Plan**

The remainder of the design, bidding and installation of the plan would proceed with the understanding that all the proposed items in the renovation would be completed as a package. To this end, the renovation would proceed in a manner consistent with current construction practices.

## **Financing of the Plan**

The committee proposes three potential steps for possible funding of the plan.

1. Using existing funds that are already available and either designated for the renovation or which are as of yet undesignated. This may initially fund approximately \$45,000 of this project.
2. Initiating a campaign to fund as much of the plan as possible.
3. Using the opportunity in February to refinance our existing mortgage and fund the remainder of the project through a new mortgage.

## **Next Steps**

Should this proposal be accepted by the congregation, a Design and Construction Team should be formed. This team should include members well versed in this proposal, capable of overseeing and understanding design and construction as well as financing and budgetary oversight.

The timelines for the final implementation would be set by this Team according to financing available, as well as any design and bidding constraints.

## **Final Comments**

The work on this committee was not easy, yet remained joyful. We commend the Administrative Council for the selection of what we feel is a broad cross-section of our church demographic, in the members of this committee. We have engaged in much dialogue and meaningful debate as we argued the pros and cons of the proposal and the methodology. It is our opinion that this plan, while by no means perfect, does represent the best interest of our congregation. Primarily, we recognize the hand of God in our work. As we look back on the months of labor and efforts, we see how we were brought together as a group working toward a purpose and acknowledge that this was not accomplished by our hands alone.

The Sanctuary Renovation Committee  
10.2.2011