

Future Facility Vision

St. Laurence Anglican Parish, Calgary

January 2007

"An Intentional Community"

St. Laurence is an Anglican congregation that feels called to create an intentional community seeking to practice a renewed Christian spirituality in order to deepen members' experience of God and share this path with others as a response to the growing hunger for meaning and hope in the surrounding community and society.

We imagine this vision being fulfilled through an intentional community life shaped by the practices of:

*... **thanksgiving** (vital worship centered in the Eucharist)*

*... **contemplation** (deepening faith through the disciplines of silence, meditation, and prayer)*

*... **compassion** (works of mercy and justice)*

*... **healing** (personal and corporate wholeness and pastoral care)*

INTRODUCTION

The community of St Laurence has completed an extensive ministry visioning process. The end result of that process was an optimistic plan for the future that addresses our spiritual practices as Christians both within and outside the walls of our building. The Future Facilities Committee (FFC) was formed to examine the steps needed to match our church building and its grounds with our vision to be an intentional community (see above).

We are blessed with a well maintained and loved "home". We recognize that any changes should be preceded by careful assessment of all aspects of the facility. The church facility must be scrutinized, saving the best from the past while being open and receptive to changes that will help us accomplish our vision.

The process of examining our facilities began in September with a study of the book *Repitching the Tent* by Richard Giles. This book is a historical and modern discussion of worship space and was useful as a basis for our own discussions. The FFC then participated in several real and virtual site visits to look at various worship spaces. A visit from the Diocesan Architect gave us a practical lesson on some of the planning issues we may encounter. Of particular interest was a frank discussion about accessibility. Finally, there have been several meetings of the FFC to develop this vision for the St. Laurence facility (work that was begun as part of the book study).

We recognize that various parts of the St. Laurence building and property are related. For example, the sidewalk, entrance, and narthex combine to form a "path" from outside to inside the building. Similarly, a labyrinth or other structure outside the building could be considered as "related" to the worship space inside the building. However, for the purposes of this report, the building and property have been divided into the following areas:

- **The Transition Space** consists of those areas of the property in which people coming to St. Laurence experience a transition from the world beyond the confines of St. Laurence to the "holy space" that has been created within the St. Laurence building. This area includes the parking lot, the sidewalk, and the lawn and gardens around the building.
- **The Community Space** consists of those areas of the building that are used for various "community" functions – gatherings of the whole community or groups of community members or support functions and groups. This area includes the narthex, downstairs hall and Sunshine Room, classrooms, kitchen, offices, storage, mechanical, etc.

- **The Worship Space** consists of the areas in the building that are used for the regular worship activities of the congregation including the sanctuary, the nave, the chapel and the choir loft. Although there is a sense in which the whole St. Laurence property is a sacred space, these are the areas of the building that are traditionally thought of as “holy” spaces.

A. VISION STATEMENTS

Before listing the detailed Vision Statements relating to each of the above areas, three overriding principles that form part of our vision and apply to all areas are described.

- **Accessibility** refers to our desire to make all areas of the building available to those who have limited mobility for any reason. However, it also includes an up to date sound system for those who are hearing impaired, large print materials for those with sight limitations, and scent-free zones for those with allergies. Our baptismal covenant calls us to treat every person with dignity and respect and so, in all cases, accessibility will only be achieved to the degree that personal choice and independence are honoured.
- **Hospitality** refers to our desire for our facility to reflect our open invitation to all and the warm welcome they will receive when they arrive.
- **Flexibility** refers to our desire for our facility to be able to accommodate different sizes of groups of different ages doing different things. As much as possible our facility should incorporate multi-use space so that it will be used during the week as well as on Sundays. Our worship space should also be able to accommodate different styles of worship with varying numbers of participants.

The Transition Space

1. Our transition space begins the transition from the world outside to the sacred space inside our building.
2. Our transition space “announces” the St. Laurence community to those who pass by our doors.
3. Our transition space enables those who come to our facility to quickly, easily, and conveniently find their way into the appropriate area of the building.

The Community Space

1. The narthex part of our community space is focused on welcoming and hospitality.
2. The narthex (entrance) is an extension of our worship space (and, as such, may be used for liturgical purposes); to accommodate different styles of activities in the two different spaces, it can be separated acoustically (though not necessarily visually) from the worship space.
3. The program areas of our community space (classrooms, meeting rooms, Sunshine Room) are as adequate and flexible as possible to accommodate different sized groups of different ages for different purposes.
4. The support areas of our community space (kitchen, offices, storage areas) are upgraded and enhanced to reflect the other changes in our facility.
5. Access is no longer a problem for our people with physical limitations.

The Worship Space

1. Our worship space is a place to experience the majesty of God as well as God among us.
2. Our worship space is a place where all feel the welcome and support of the community.
3. Our worship space allows us to gather as an intimate and connected community, to worship together in the Eucharist.
4. Our worship space reflects our belief that all are participants in the liturgy and there is no separation between worship leaders and the congregation.
5. Our worship space is open and light with a simple beauty and dignity.
6. Our worship space reflects the story of God’s unconditional love for our community.
7. Our worship space is adaptable for different worship formats, as we become more deliberate in the practice of our Christianity.

B. IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

In the following section, some implementation suggestions that could be included in the final plan are listed. In each case, these suggestions are for illustration only – an individual suggestion may or may not be included in the final plan.

The Transition Space

- a. Install a lighted free-standing sign visible when driving in either direction to enable communication with the surrounding community.
- b. Install “directional” signage both inside and outside the building.
- c. Install lighting and upgrade parking.
- d. Enhance the landscaping to create a “park-like” space that will encourage use (through such items as meditation areas, benches, and a courtyard) and provide a focal point for both the congregation and the surrounding community.
- e. Establish an “obvious” entrance that is visible from both the parking area and the street.

The Community Space

- a. Expand the narthex to provide room for exercising the practice of hospitality.
- b. Add lots of natural light and bright colours to the narthex to make it as warm and inviting as possible.
- c. Install furniture in the narthex that is capable of accommodating a diverse range of uses – including coffee hour, group meetings, and overflow seating from the worship space (which will have implications for the sound system)
- d. Provide additional storage areas.
- e. Modernize and upgrade the kitchen (e.g. installation of a dishwasher)
- f. Move the administrative offices to the front of the building to aid in the practice of hospitality.
- g. Add office space for staff such as Youth Leader, Christian Education facilitators, and/or an Associate Priest.
- h. Construct an elevator or ramp system and a wheelchair accessible washroom.

The Worship Space

- a. Arrange the altar-table, the ambo (lectern), and the baptismal font to be the major focal points and pieces of furniture in the worship space.
- b. Include art or other symbols that speak to our spirituality as an intentional community.
- c. Remove the altar rail and lower or eliminate the platform for the altar.
- d. Install at least some flexible seating to provide for increased adaptability in the worship space.
- e. Replace the yellow window glass.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is not possible at this time to estimate the financial consequences of any of these suggestions. This will require assistance from a professional architect and engineer. Any structural changes (e.g. to improve accessibility) would result in a requirement to upgrade other parts of the building to bring it up to current standards.

NEXT STEPS

This document outlines a vision for the St. Laurence facility. It also suggests some possible steps that could be taken to begin to implement this vision. However, there are many questions that remain. Some of them are:

- What would a fully accessible building look like? What work needs to be done in order to make this transition?
- What would an expanded narthex look like and what role would it play in making the facility accessible?

- What other parts of the building need to be upgraded?
- What can be done to increase the flexibility of our facility?
- What cosmetic changes could or should be made?
- What would be involved in upgrading the landscaping, the signage, and the parking lot?
- How much would any changes to the building cost?

Answering these and other questions will require consulting with a professional architect. Also, given the age of our building (approximately 40 years), it would be prudent to have a structural/engineering report completed to assist with making decisions.

The next step would be to determine acceptable sources of funding and the priority of the suggested implementation possibilities.

Once a facility plan has been developed and adopted, the required processes (Parish, Diocese, and City) can begin for individual projects that will be required to implement the plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Future Facility Committee recommends:

1. That this facility vision document be presented to the Annual General Meeting of Parishioners in February 2007 for adoption.
2. That an expenditure of up to \$5,000 be approved to engage a professional architect to develop concept sketches of different approaches to implementing this vision.
3. That an expenditure of up to \$5,000 be approved to engage the appropriate professional(s) to prepare a structural and/or engineering report of the facility.
4. That the Future Facility Committee develop a process (perhaps including a parish weekend and/or a survey of all parishioners) that
 - will be conducted following consultation with an architect and engineer, and
 - results in a comprehensive facility plan (including priorities, budgets, and a fund-raising plan) to be presented for approval at a Special General Meeting of Parishioners later in 2007.

This document has been prepared by the Future Facility Committee of St. Laurence with the support and encouragement of the clergy and wardens of the Parish.

Committee Members: Ian Burgess, Denis Gardiner, Deb Koning, Janet Pedersen, Ross Phillips, George Pinsky, Eileen Proudfoot, Ruth Seltner, Margaret Smith, John Warkentin, Arnold Wright, Art Yeske, Steve Koning (chair)

Wardens: Bruce Jantzie, Al Rallison, Wayne Stewart, Ken Townend

Clergy: Anna Greenwood-Lee, Don McLeod, Vic Cabel