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MEMORANDUM

TO: St. Paul's Rector, Vestry, and Capital Campaign Committee
FROM: Lionel E. Deimel
SUBJECT: Capital Projects
DATE: April 8, 2010

As choir member, longtime Audio-Visual Coördinator, and more-or-less official chronicler of the projects funded by our last two capital campaigns, I would like to suggest a number of projects related to our worship space that I believe should be incorporated into the next phase of building renovations at St. Paul's. Most of these projects are designed to clean up the loose ends left by earlier renovations. I will describe my suggested projects as briefly as possible. I will be happy to elaborate as may be required to clarify what I believe is needed.

Chancel Seating

When choir stalls were removed from the chancel, little thought was given to seating the choir or the exact arrangement of furniture in the chancel. The large chairs now being used by clergy and the cathedral chairs being used by the choir were all taken out of storage and installed in the chancel. The former are pretentious, uncomfortable, and do not quite match other woodwork, and the cathedral chairs are unstable and, in many cases, in need of repair.

It is perhaps fortunate that we have not yet addressed the chancel seating problem, as the choir has gained members in recent years. Earlier, we might have selected chairs such as those in the chapel for the chancel, but I suspect that smaller chairs are needed to accommodate our larger choir in the limited space available.

In any case, the arrangement and seating in the chancel should be considered carefully and more appropriate furniture purchased and installed.

Balcony Seating

As was the case with the chancel, no real plan was ever formulated for balcony seating. What seating is currently in place largely was salvaged from the chancel and is not even secured to the floor. Seating needs in the balcony should be considered carefully—the choir sometimes sings from the balcony, and worshippers sometimes sit there—and a plan addressing both pragmatic and aesthetic concerns formulated.

Balcony and Related Woodwork

Woodwork in the balcony, including flooring, has not been renewed in decades. When the nave was built in 1930, all the woodwork was apparently dark brown. This color can still be seen on the front of the balcony, on the doors to the narthex, and on the baseboard of the rear half of the nave. All this trim should be lightened to match the rest of the woodwork in the room, as the dark stain now looks quite out-of-place. Particularly because, as I understand it, it would be difficult to lighten the color of the balcony railing, it might be easier simply to replace it. This could be done by installing a new railing employing the quatrefoil motif seen on the antiphonal organ case and in the chancel, thereby eliminating the faux-balustrade design that matches nothing else in the room. The floor of the balcony and the stairways to the balcony should also be refinished.

The recent redecoration of the narthex must be considered only partly successful; the dark wood stain of the doors and other woodwork contrasts with most of the woodwork in the nave, as well as the newly built console in the narthex. The narthex, which is the first part of the building that many visitors see, still seems less welcoming and cheery than it could be. All the woodwork below the ceiling should be changed to match the lighter stain used in the nave.

It is impractical to change the dark stain of the roof trusses over the worship space proper, and the dark color helpfully disguises speakers and electrical cables. Aesthetic continuity therefore suggests that it is reasonable to keep the ceiling of the narthex as it is.

Sanctuary Lighting

Before the cantilevered organ cases were installed in the sanctuary area, the area was well lit with two banks of floodlights inside the arch at the front of the sanctuary. These floodlights are now virtually unusable; they are poorly placed for lighting, and they can heat some of the organ pipes and throw them out of tune. The floodlights should have been repositioned before the organ chests were installed, but this was not done, even though the issue was raised at the time. Moving the floodlights higher on the arch might provide satisfactory coverage. The organ chests themselves created another problem, however, namely dark areas below them. Whether the floodlights, if aimed across the space can light this area adequately or not, I do not know. I suspect not. We have investigated lighting this area in the past, but have taken no action.

Lanterns

Six lanterns in the church do not match the other lanterns. The six are installed in pairs at the crossing, over the chancel, and in the sanctuary. These lanterns were installed as part of the Building the Vision work and were described as having been “found in the attic.” I suspect that they were the original lanterns installed in the nave and were replaced when the church was expanded. There are three problems with these lanterns:

1. They are ugly and do not match the (presumably) newer and more elegant lanterns in the nave and transepts.
2. They are something of a fire hazard. The cones at the tops of the lanterns trap heat that destroys the wiring insulation. One lantern has already been rewired because it shorted out, and the electrical contractor who did the rewiring warned us that the design was defective.
3. The two lanterns in the sanctuary are so much visual clutter, detracting from the beauty both of the east window and the exposed organ pipes. They would become unnecessary if the floodlights in the sanctuary were moved.

I recommend that lanterns in the sanctuary simply be removed. The four remaining “witches’ hat” lanterns should be replaced with custom-made lanterns matching the nave and transept lanterns. This will, no doubt, be expensive, but I do think it is necessary, both for aesthetic and safety reasons.

Downlights

There are eight lighting fixtures on the ceiling (“cans”) that contain lamps pointing straight down. They are installed in pairs in the transepts, in the balcony, and in the nave near the crossing. These fixtures are providing lighting fill in the areas not well lit by the lanterns. The original plan was to install two rows of downlights on either side of the centerline of the main axis of the church, but, due to a mix-up in the bidding process, the lighting contractor was allowed to omit installing most of the fixtures from the work he had to do. (At least two unused mounts for downlights can still be seen on the ceiling.) The result is that worshippers

sitting in nave pews near the crossing enjoy much better lighting than most worshippers at the center or rear of the nave. This really needs to be corrected.

Additional Lighting Issues

The organ case for the antiphonal organ has become a striking feature of the church, but it is poorly lit. The downlights over the horizontal trumpets cast harsh shadows on the organ case, and the case generally is unevenly lit. We should install floodlights pointed at the organ case on a roof truss near the organ case.

There are two floodlights mounted on a roof truss in the chancel that are intended to provide more uniform lighting of the chancel. These are often badly aimed, and I have been told that it is impossible to aim one of them properly. (The fixture is apparently damaged.) These fixtures should probably be replaced. Alternatively, installing downlights above the chancel may make these fixtures unnecessary, while providing more uniform lighting of the chancel.

One or both of the downlight cans near the crossing has lost its lens. If we work on the lighting in the church at all, all fixtures should be inspected and repaired as necessary.

Of course, any new lighting fixtures should be tied into the church's lighting control system. Consideration should also be given to tying the lights over the pulpit and the high altar in to the system. Careful thought should be given to how this is done, however.

Apparently, one of the items to be targeted by the proposed capital campaign is the installation of more energy-efficient fixtures. This is surely a desirable goal, but I hope that we will not get carried away with "greening" the lighting in the church proper. The room needs more candlepower as it is—I mentioned the darkness at the back of the nave—and we need to preserve the ability to dim the lighting, even though we have not made much use of this capability in recent years.

Sound System

The prospect of an improved sound system for St. Paul's comes up frequently. A new system has been bid at least twice by committees on which I have served, and a new system apparently is a target of the proposed capital campaign. I strongly approve of replacing our current equipment and am excited about the technology that is now available, which marries traditional audio equipment with computer components. I do not have time to list all the requirements I would like to see for an improved sound system, but I will offer a few essential concerns, at least from my viewpoint:

1. We should remember that St. Paul's is a church, not a venue for rock concerts. An appropriate sound system should be obtrusive neither visually nor aurally. If at all possible, all speakers should be mounted on roof trusses, where they are virtually invisible. Speakers, conspicuous or not, should be placed in the narthex and in the hallways on either side of the chancel.
2. Any sound system should not *require* an operator whenever it is in use. It takes enough people now to put on a service without having to recruit a team of audio technicians.
3. Permanent audio jacks should be installed liberally, so as to avoid the use of temporary cables as much as possible.
4. Suspended microphones should be provided in the balcony, near the crossing, and in the chancel to record performances.
5. The system should be able to record events in the church, probably on a hard drive, and the system should be tied in with the church's Ethernet network.

Other Worship Space Issues

Permit me to mention a few other issues that I think need to be addressed.

I believe that the condition of our stained glass windows has been evaluated by professionals. There are, I know, some broken panes, and it is probably the case that all our windows are in need of maintenance and repair. This should be a high priority.

I am pleased that we have found a way to make the church cool enough to use in the summertime. Our portable air conditioners, however, are noisy, unsightly, and minimally effective. In the summer, they block walkways; in the winter, they present a storage problem. We should finally bite the bullet and air condition the church properly. Surely, having an air conditioned church is an important of being a welcoming church, at least in the summertime.

There was a good deal of negative comment when the walls around the east window were painted pink. Although most parishioners have ceased to notice the color, visitors cannot help but be struck by it, and I suspect that their opinion is not usually favorable. Although one can make a case for the pink wall, I think that most people consider it, at best, odd. I would like to see it repainted to match the other walls of the room. This, of course, will be more difficult than formerly because of the presence of the organ chests in the sanctuary. (I should add that my view on this matter may or may not be a majority view. The wall was an eggshell color before the most recent repainting, but there is apparently evidence that the original color was some shade of pink.)