

Our Needs

In 2017, the Building Committee worked to develop a plan. They examined recommendations given by the Visioning Team for Accessibility & Worship – and concluded: our current facility is preventing us from fulfilling our mission & being a fully welcoming congregation due to numerous shortcomings with regard to accessibility.

They then reviewed the work done for the 2012 master plan & program statement as a starting place to create a new program statement – appropriate for our project & focused around our accessibility goals.

Worship Space

This Visioning Team reported that the sanctuary is a striking structure with many beautiful elements; however, many parts are looking old & tired, & the room presents problems regarding a range of theological, aesthetic & functional considerations, in addition to multiple accessibility issues.

- The music area is only accessible via stairs, making it inaccessible to anyone with mobility challenges. Also, it's a very cramped space for our choir, especially when there is added instrumentation to enhance our worship.

*God calls us
to care for, cultivate,
and improve all
that He has
entrusted to us.
This is what it
means to be
a good steward
of all of
God's gifts.*

- There is no wheelchair accessible seating in the sanctuary without having a restricted view or sitting in front of the first pew.
- Because the altar is up on steps, there's no accessibility for those using wheelchairs or with mobility challenges—restricting some from actively participating & also from volunteering in worship roles.
- The emergency exit from the sanctuary is not wheelchair accessible.
- The sanctuary flooring is old & tired looking, & the pews are uncomfortable.
- The space is dark with minimal ambient light.

Restrooms

Our current restrooms are not truly accessible. While they may be able to accommodate a wheelchair entering the door to the restroom, a wheelchair cannot roll all the way to a toilet. In addition, restrooms are not logically located throughout the building – some being in places without much traffic, & no restrooms located in other high traffic & necessary areas. We do not have any family restrooms either. Finally, in the Sunday School (former preschool) space, we do not have restrooms that accommodate our needs for allowing children to go to the bathroom & still have appropriate supervision in the classroom.

Kitchen

In addition, our current kitchen has concerns regarding space, accessibility, & safety.

- The space itself does not have an efficient layout & is too small.
- Both the range & oven provide safety issues: for them to operate, one must turn on the gas on the wall next to the oven before lighting. For the range, that means using a lighter to light up to 10 burners (while the natural gas

remains emitting); for the oven that means lying on the floor to light it. In addition, the range hood does not meet code.

- The dishwasher is unsafe too. When opening after a cycle, the hot steam rising is dangerous. In addition, the heavy racks must be removed to unload the machine. It's a dangerous process for many, & prohibitive for others.

Nursery & Sunday School Area

The dedicated areas for the youngest in our midst have their own challenges.

As previously mentioned– the bathroom in the Sunday School area is one such problem.

Additionally, our nursery area is not the first impression that we want to make for visiting young families, & not the representation of how we want to care for children. The room is small, dull, & a mishmash of toys & furniture. It also does not have a sink or toilet in or connected to the space.

Miscellaneous Compliance, Safety & Accessibility Issues

There are additional issues on the property to be addressed in order to be the safe, efficient, & welcoming church we desire to be:

- The unsafe ramp out door 10 is too steep & the railing next to it is open.
- The main entrance is at an incline & difficult to navigate with mobility challenges & in winter weather.
- The roof over the sanctuary is 50+ years old. Some sections need to be repaired; others may need to be replaced.
- The lower level HVAC system is inefficient & doesn't heat or cool properly. Costs to operate it are high & parts are expensive because of its age.