

architecture program for future chapel for the christian community in the d.c.-baltimore area

Updated 9.23.2013, 10.8.2013, 11.19.2013,11.30.2013, 12.17.13



Created by the Design Group of The Christian Community in the Greater Washington-Baltimore area:

Rudolf Heirman

Nicola Hain

Kathy Chaney

Carol Kelly

Patrick Kennedy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Images and Gestures of the Building	3
Artistic Qualities and Questions of Approach	4
Project Budgetary Guidelines	5
Landscaping Program	6
Architectural Program Elements and Details	7
General Requirements, Parking, Walkway	7
Building Addition Upper Level	8
Entry, Bookstore Social Space	8
Sanctuary	9
Vestry/Sacristy	10
Music/Theater/Puppet Plays	11
Building Addition Lower Level	12
Consultation Room	12
Antevigil, Vigil, Kitchen	12
Laundry, Bathrooms, Children Area, Support Spaces	13
Existing Building Present Office Upper Level	14
Church Office	14
Priest Office, Guest Room, Existing Bathroom	14
Existing Building Present Office Lower Level	15
Youth, Bathroom, Kitchenette	15

cover art: "Lavender Calla Lily" by Tracey Harrington-Simpson

Images, Gestures and the Spirit of the Building

The overarching or guiding image for our work emerged out of a deep conversation about the time and place in which we live. The busyness and hectic “rush” hour of the work-day world in the D.C. area is so poignantly visible, audible and palpable at our site on Colesville Road. The beltway itself is right up the road, and all of us know so many individuals who have the daily, near constant experience of being overwhelmed, of “drowning” under their to-do lists, of doing all they can to “keep their heads above water.”

We then ask: What does our work in the Christian Community bring in response to this reality? How will our site and the chapel we build work with these powerful forces that can so easily lead to anxiety and a sense of being overwhelmed? Asking these questions allowed the spirit of this future chapel to emerge on its own. The work is to create a counter-stream to this hectic pace and energy, to follow what the central worship service in The Christian Community does: creatively carve out the space for inner devotion, reverence, quiet concentration and subtle transformation that leads to an experience of peace – in community. One image that came was of a river and its eddy-- the counter stream. To create an eddy of creative peace within the flow of an ever-hectic culture.

The second image was creating a space for the One who calmed the raging forces of the storm out on the waters,

They went to him and woke him up, shouting, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. ~ (Luke 6:24)

In addition to this spirit of gentle power and centeredness, our site and chapel should lead us to be rejuvenated, strengthened and inspired to *re-enter* the stream of life. We wish to create a place that leads to an experience of inner peace, not as a refuge or retreat, but as a foundation for true freedom and a wellspring of creativity.

A third image has been a source of real inspiration in terms of the *form* of this future chapel: the Calla Lily. Its free, flowing form, range of color; its harmony between creating inner space while at the same time reaching up and out to the world around; its lack of a ‘fixed’ geometry and its gentle beauty all speak of the form elements we see connected to the future site.

Above all we are called to build a sacred space in which the earth, the community, the human being and the higher, divine forces of the universe can come into a new union and harmony.

Artistic Qualities and Questions of Approach

Our Design Group's Process and Approach

As part of our Design Group work, we had the opportunity to imagine and talk about the artistic qualities essential for our proposed chapel and community spaces. In beginning this process, we focused on general structural elements and materials, and how these might be used to create a beautiful interior space and a building with presence and integrity. We looked at many examples of how Christian Community congregations throughout the world have designed and built sheltering spaces within which to hold the sacraments and congregational community. As we deepened our own discussion, however, we came to grasp the great importance of considering the sacred intention of this chapel as a living entity and process, inviting and awaiting our imaginative engagement. When a human being encounters a powerful work of art, the individual stands poised in a dynamic balance of interaction with the artist's created image and implicit message. How might we attempt to bring this soulful and life-filled interplay to our own design conversations around the experience of approaching and being within our chapel building? What might the space itself ask of those within it? As we imagined ourselves in these as yet undefined places, our conversations became meditative and phenomenological in approach. We contemplated visual, aesthetic, and even functional and practical elements in a qualitative and experiential way. Knowing that the clarity of our own vision may help to inform the work to follow, we gathered our thoughts around specific aspects of a created space and structure, while maintaining a sense of possibility and openness to the means used to achieve them.

Essential Qualities for Different Aspects of the Project:

Materials—Aliveness, depth, integrity of materials, human hand apparent in the craftsmanship. Reclaimed and re-enlivened materials transformed by new use.

Space—A chapel that reverently holds changing light/darkness, sound/silence, openness/enclosure, horizontal/vertical, sense of order/sense of mystery. Warm, welcoming and flexible community spaces both large and small, open or enclosed to suit function, connected to natural world through access, windows, natural light. Consideration of physical location, including geographic/topographical space.

Time— a building that itself reveals a vision of a path opening up to the future but with elements that honor the history and tradition of Christian Community sacred architecture as well as the history and chronology of local congregation, surrounding local community and wider culture.

Process – How we work together, organically unfolding the project connected to the life of the congregation and with the input of the priests and design group members.

Movement—Natural flow and transition, “breathing spaces” moving between levels, spaces, and outer to inner. Configurations manifesting organic forms and patterns. Sensitivity to quality of movement dependent on area.

Mood—Awareness of the soul quality of spaces, including transition spaces. Spaces that anticipate the dynamic interplay between perceived aspects of the space and the human perceiver.

Project Budgetary Guidelines

Budgetary Goal for Chapel and Site Construction:	950,000
Total Funds Already Available	450,000

Building/Site Components:

1. Site Preparation, Stormwater management, Parking
2. Landscaping
 - a. walkways
 - b. planting/raingarden
 - c. water feature
3. Building
 - a. Existing
 - 1) new design, changes
 - 2) upgrades/repairs
 - b. Addition (chapel)

Professional Services:

1. Architects
2. Engineers
3. Consultants (such as for acoustics)

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAM

Our gardens and natural environment on our property will speak to the world of the spirit of our community and its relationship to the earth. In addition, through the gardens and landscaping we give back to the community around us. For these and other reasons, the care and design of our site and gardens is an essential element of our overall design program.

General Requirements

1. The relationship to the natural world is important. It is to be expressed not just with the building's siting and setting but also in how the exterior space is to be used, whether for gatherings or quiet contemplation.
2. The neighborhood/city should gain by what is created here by the building and the landscaping.
3. Landscape Design is to be based on the same approach and qualities as the building; they are to stand in harmony; the landscape architect is to be part of the team with the architect, engineers, builder and craftsmen.
4. To be conscious of the need to transition from the outer mood to the inner mood.
5. To create a path to the chapel that enables one to shed the daily concerns and to focus on the spiritual.
6. To be conscious of the water element and incorporate it into the feel of the landscape as well as the actual water element, perhaps as a flow form; to have creative solutions to drainage, i.e., storm water management, rain gardens, etc.
7. To create inviting, winding paths through the garden that are accessible to all.
8. To design with native plants in interesting combinations with cultivars for color and texture throughout the seasons, as well as habitat for insects and birds.
9. Good, attractive visibility from the fast-moving traffic is important.
10. To have a clear directional walkway to and from the front entry for the chapel building and the offices for all modes of transportation, whether car, bicycle or foot; handicapped accessibility is to be taken into account.
11. The existing trees are an important asset and are to be incorporated as much as possible; small trees could be transplanted.

Specifics (may overlap)

1. Safe play area for young children
2. Gathering area for youths
3. Conversation area for small groups of adults
4. Meditative area
5. Overflow area for gatherings that can extend the interior social space

ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAM ELEMENTS AND DETAILS

General Requirements:

1. The building needs to have a gesture of an eddy in swift flowing waters; to convey a spiritual presence that expresses our service.
2. The building needs to make a statement that is bold, designed in context with its location, both local, national and international *and* have an inviting gesture.
3. The building, as well as beautiful signs and banners, are to indicate exciting lectures, plays, concerts and art exhibits.
4. The building needs to express our care and attention to detail in form and quality.
5. The building needs to show honesty of materials, genuine details, excellent craftsmanship, as well as ease of maintenance.
6. The building and its materials are to be constructed so that they are in harmony with the earth and the planets, designed for minimized waste and use of energy.
7. Spaces need to be flexible, supporting multiple tasks and uses, and for not yet determined future needs.
8. The landscaping is to make a “layered” statement that can be understood by the fast moving traffic, then as one approaches closer, a gesture that is welcoming and also contains something of the sacred. This can include the roof as a “green roof”.

Parking

1. The parking lot itself will need to communicate that this is a unique place, in harmony with nature and leading to the sacred.
2. The parking material is to be pervious and to direct water to sustainable landscaping and, if needed, holding tanks.
3. There shall be a minimum of 22 parking spaces.
4. The parking area should be beautiful and welcoming, open, user-friendly with easy flow and separation of vehicular traffic and pedestrian walkways.
5. The entry/exit to/from the parking area should address safety concerns.

Walkway and Exterior Landscaping

1. To have a clear direction to and from the front entry for the chapel building and the offices for all modes of transportation, whether by car, bicycle or foot.
2. To be conscious of the need to transition from the outer mood to the inner mood.
3. To create a path to the chapel that enables one to shed daily concerns and to focus on the spiritual.
4. To be conscious of the water element and incorporate it into the feel of the landscape as well as the actual water element, perhaps as a flow form.
5. To create inviting winding paths through the garden that are accessible to all.
6. A partially covered walkway for protection that also serves as a clear indicator for entry is to be considered.
7. The existing trees are an important asset and to be incorporated as much as possible; small

trees could be transplanted.

8. The relationship to the natural world is important. It is to be expressed not just with the building's siting but also in how the exterior space is to be used, whether for gatherings or quiet contemplation.
9. The neighborhood/city should gain by what is created here by the building and the landscaping.

BUILDING ADDITION

UPPER LEVEL

Entry

1. Exterior: welcoming; covered, with seating; invites a breathing moment, gives indication of who we are, clear entry indication and signage.
2. Interior - Foyer:
 - a. the space should be inviting, light-filled, open, colorful and incorporate seasonal display/plants
 - b. transition space between public and private space to social room and others; space for people to adjust and gather themselves
 - c. leading space to social space and also easy and friendly handicapped access
 - d. the space should have clear, concise directional indicators
 - e. be a gallery space
 - f. should have adequate place for coats, umbrellas; a place to sit
 - g. easy access to bathrooms and consultation room
 - h. the space shall be sound insulated.

Bookstore/Cafe

The possibility of incorporating such a space with some seating indoor and outdoor seating has been proposed.

Social Space

1. The overall space shall be approximately 720 SF.
2. Its main functions are to accommodate community meetings, lectures, workshops, study groups and announcements after service; for festivals it also needs to have a "niche" for seasonal decoration, such as a Christmas tree, and be designed spacewise and acoustically for group singing.
3. It should also provide areas for private conversation and quiet space.
4. At the same time that it needs to be a gathering space after service, it also needs to be a transition space that allows those to leave quietly who do not wish any interaction.
5. It should also be designed so as to facilitate as much social interaction as possible.

6. It shall have views to and from the street – it is important to have an open public face; i.e., to be visible from the street; to awaken curiosity and interest.
7. It shall also serve as an exhibition space/art gallery
8. It should provide much daylight from various angles.
9. It should incorporate a half “kitchenette” to serve hot and cold beverages, snacks for self-service (sink, small refrigerator, no cook plate, etc.), built-in filtered water dispenser, cabinets for tablecloths, napkins, dishware, etc.
10. It should also be comfortable for community meals (five 8-person tables or so)
11. It should incorporate a niche for a small library - bookshelves; reading nook
12. Sufficient storage for chairs, tables, presentation material, music sheets and festival items.
13. There needs to be an interior connection to the existing building.

Sanctuary

1. *The spirituality of the sanctuary*

Essential to building the sanctuary will be careful collaboration and work between priest(s), design group members and the architect. Understanding how the inner meaning and intentions of the rituals and sacraments are supported and expressed in three dimensions will take considerable efforts. For now, we can let a first, simple picture stand for what happens in the sanctuary as it is expressed in space.

Where the altar is and where the sacraments are celebrated is the center of the life of the community. One way of describing what takes place is as follows: Quiet and attentive expectation is the mood before the service begins. First, the candles on the altar are lit. Music resounds. A priest and two servers enter and the service begins. Carrying the chalice, the priest walks three steps up to the altar. There, almost all the activity and words are spoken during the service, with the priest facing the altar painting and altar wall just like the congregation; all face in one direction. There is a blessing energy that streams from the altar in the East towards the congregation in the West, expressed especially strongly when the priest periodically faces the congregation and says the greeting, “Christ in You”. This stream of blessing that comes from the altar meets the devotional energy, attention and listening coming from the congregation. The meeting point of these two streams is the place of communion, the ‘heart’ of the chapel, in between altar area and congregational seating. At communion, both the priests and the congregation rise and move towards each other meeting in this heart-space in an act of giving and receiving and culminating in the words and experience of peace. Light, sound, color, space, height and depth, materials - every detail plays an essential role in creating a space in which such a sacred service can happen. Such a picture of what happens in the sanctuary must be complemented by personal observation and further, contemplative inquiry in order to get a sense for what will be needed.

2. *Physical parameters of the sanctuary*

- A. All physical items such as lighting, color, shapes, entry, and materials shall support the ability to be attentive, mindful and focused on the sanctity at the altar. The quality of the space needs to be meditative. All items such as the altar space, location of the altar, design of the altar, steps, location and design of the lectern, and seating need to be studied in great detail.
- B. The size shall be a min 860 SF for the congregation; altar space is additional; it shall

accommodate 80 - 120 people, with 5 - 20 children at children service, 30 + at adult service regularly attending. It will need to feel intimate and not empty when there is smaller attendance.

- C. The orientation to the cosmos - N,W,E,S and the interplay of high and low spaces is of utmost importance (Altar in East)
- D. In the altar space, how the light is brought to the space through lighting the candles, the way flame, smoke, scent arises and moves up is to be considered. The wall we face – the shape and color experience related to darkness/time of the season shall be part of the design considerations. A discussion on how the altar painting is to be part of the wall is of significance.
- E. The question of lighting is to be studied. Not only the type of lighting, but diffuse, obscured or direct is important as well as quality, color, location and its direction. This includes natural as well as electric.
- F. Another very important aspect to be accomplished is the acoustical properties of the sanctuary. It needs to work very well for the spoken word as well as for music. It shall be a top rated acoustical space for small concerts both instrumental and singing. So well known that outside groups will want to perform here.
- G. The entrance to the sanctuary is also to be studied carefully both from the priest view facing the congregation as well as the congregation entering the space (most likely from the social space). It can be located on axis with the altar but can also be located on the side. There does not need to be a direct path to the entry door, but it does need to be clear. Ideally, the entry door shall be large and with hand-forged hardware to indicate the living element, i.e. the human spirit is alive in the entry.
- H. The connection to the vestry has to be subtle from the congregation's experience; i.e. no direct view into the vestry.
- I. It should be contemplative, supportive and practical from the priest and server perspective.
- J. The musicians area is to be studied for the type of instruments and space required as well as the number of musicians to be accommodated. Shall the area be raised is to be considered. The acoustic quality of the space is to be considered.
- K. Only chairs shall be used for the congregation to allow for most flexibility.
- L. HVAC must be quiet, comfortable, with no perceivable air movement.
- M. The flooring material can be wood or stone but must feel warm and be quiet when walking on it; it also has to be easily maintained.

Vestry/Sacristy

1. Vestry

- A. The purpose of the vestry is storage of the vestments and dressing of the priests.
- B. The vestry shall have a direct entrance to the sanctuary, but it cannot allow view or light to come into the sanctuary; the door shall close quietly and with ease.
- C. Size can be approx 120 SF.
- D. The vestment storage needs to be designed for both daily, easy access and longer term storage. The storage for priest vestments and server vestments needs to be separate.
- E. It shall have a well thought through and studied storage system with drawers, 10'-12' of hanging storage, pull-out hanging rods, etc. as storage for antependia.

- F. A space for ironing and hanging the vestments.
- G. A space for 5 chairs/or seating.
- H. It has to be sound and odor isolated (i.e. through HVAC or windows from social space or kitchen/coffee).
- I. There shall be indirect or high daylight - no outside exposure.
- J. There shall be no hard floors but easy maintenance.
- K. It shall be located adjacent to the sacristy.

2. **Sacristy:**

- A. The purpose of the sacristy is the preparation for the service by the priests and servers. The priests and servers need separate spaces. It shall be located adjacent to the sanctuary and vestry.
- B. The size can be approximately 60 SF.
- C. The priest needs a private, intimate space to gather inwardly. The space can be open visually but not exposed to foot traffic; it should have a meditative, prayerful quality, allowing quiet..
- D. The servers shall have a small area for their preparation.
- E. There shall be an altar flower preparation area with small sink if possible.
- F. There shall be a private access to a non-public bathroom.
- G. It has to be sound and odor isolated.(i.e. through HVAC or windows from social space or kitchen/coffee).
- H. There shall be indirect or high daylight - no outside exposure.
- I. There shall be no hard floors but easy maintenance.

Music Performances/Theater Plays/Puppet Shows

1. The location is still to be determined; a possible location for a stage is opposite of the altar/the other end of the sanctuary transforming the raised musician platform which will reorient the audience from the altar direction.
2. A sufficient space for an upright or grand piano stationed permanently.
3. Curtains, theater lighting, etc. will need to be incorporated.
4. An adjacent costume/storage room and preparation room is needed; the minimum size shall be 50 SF.
5. The design here shall be of high quality.

BUILDING ADDITION

LOWER LEVEL

Consultation Room

1. Location: could be on either level; Size: 75 SF.
2. It shall accommodate three chairs, a table, and a mini-altar.
3. Natural light and a connection to the outdoors is very important.
4. Providing privacy is a must both visually (at the entry/exit) and acoustically (conversation).
5. The path to the room shall be beautiful, graceful and calming.

Ante-vigil Space

1. To serve for end-of-life work in the wider community.
2. Location: could be on either level; 80 SF.
3. It shall have an open, supportive quality.
4. It could double as a consultation room.

Vigil Space

1. Location on either level; approximate size 160 SF.
2. An access to the sanctuary is desirable; less of an importance if it can also serve as a mini-chapel. If possible, a separate interior path that allows bypassing the social room is most welcomed. Also a separate path to a secondary exterior entrance is good.
3. Arriving to the vigil space via contemplative path that creates a neutral realm is very important. Perhaps it can go through a contemplative courtyard (zen-like quality) that is visible from the inside of the vigil space.
4. A ramp from the parking area for casket rolling and handicap access is required.
5. The vigil space shall be of sufficient size to accommodate a casket and 12 - 20 people standing around it in a semi-circle.
6. Acoustic privacy is of utmost importance.

Kitchen

1. The location can be on the lower level; approximate size minimum 150 SF, and it shall be close to an exterior door for bringing in supplies and taking out refuse.
2. Daylight is important as well as a connection to an herb garden.
3. An open design is desired to welcome activities and social interaction with generous storage. Separate areas shall be provided for cooking, baking utensils, pots, pans, dishes, utensils, and tablecloths for approx. 40 people, located so as not to interfere with cooking and food preparation area.
4. Appliances: double oven, standard refrigerator/freezer, dishwasher, reverse osmosis filter at sink (92 gallon capacity).

5. A possible dumbwaiter for bringing food up to and dirty dishes down from social space.
6. It should be easy to maintain and clean.
7. A small seating area adjacent that can also serve as a cooking classroom.

Laundry Area

1. Washer and dryer with adequate space for air drying vestments, table cloths, etc.
2. If possible, outside area for drying as well.

Bathrooms

1. Location: can be on the lower level.
2. Single use and multi-use; above minimum code requirements.
3. Family friendly, baby friendly.
4. Easy to maintain but have artistic design.
5. The youth area needs one full bath.

Children Area

1. Location: lower level; minimum size 210 SF.
2. The purpose is to offer sunday school for school age children and other multi-purpose uses, such as childcare.
3. It needs access to kitchen/kitchenette and bathrooms that can be shared with the youth.
4. Providing daylight is very important.
5. There needs to be access to outdoors and a play area.
6. It shall have a welcoming, friendly, light-filled atmosphere.

Support Spaces

1. Mechanical room as required; generous size; clean and functional.
2. Utility Room with slop sink.
3. Storage Space for additional items such as chairs, tables, long term storage, etc.

EXISTING BUILDING PRESENT OFFICE SIDE UPPER LEVEL

Note: Existing residential side (right side) to remain priest housing.

--There shall be an interior connection to the addition

Church Office

1. Size: 110 SF.
2. It shall accommodate: 1 desk, 1 copier, file cabinets, storage for office supplies, book shelves.
3. Sufficient separate document storage shall be considered.
4. Clear access by the community is important.

Priest Office

1. Size: 90 SF.
2. It can also serve as a study and consultation room.
3. It shall accommodate: a desk, two chairs, shelving, file cabinet and storage.

Guest Room

1. Size: 80 SF min.
2. The intended usage is for interns, guests - short and long term.
3. It shall accommodate two single beds, a dresser, a desk with a chair and shelves.
4. A small clothes closet shall be provided.
5. Access to full bathroom is essential.

Existing Bathroom

1. To be studied for adequacy of location and materials.

EXISTING BUILDING PRESENT OFFICE SIDE LOWER LEVEL

--There shall be an interior connection to the addition.

Youth

1. Size: min. 260 SF; 8' ceiling minimum.
2. Activities: weekend religious instruction; weekly gatherings possible, games: ping-pong; artwork: tables.
3. Gathering space: couches, chairs, rug.
4. To accommodate ever-changing needs, the use of flexible walls is to be studied; the space needs to be adaptable.
5. Storage is needed for games, art supplies, misc.
6. Close access to kitchenette and bathrooms is desirable; can be shared with the children area.
7. Direct daylight is important.
8. Aa possible seating area for 30 youths is to be designed.
9. Direct access to outdoor covered area is essential.

BATHROOMS/KITCHENETTE

1. To be designed to accommodate youth and children areas.