More than a Makeover

GOD DESERVES NOTHING BUT EXCELLENCE

When Judas watched Mary pour an alabaster jar of perfume that was worth a year’s wage on Jesus’ head and feet, he claimed that the money could be better spent helping the poor. Jesus told him to leave her alone because this perceived extravagance was a gift to honor her Savior and a testimony that would be told around the world.

When Israel built the tabernacle, the community spared no expense. They gave their best - the finest metals, the richest wood, and the finest fabrics were used to create a space dedicated to God. All this for a space that only priests were allowed to enter!

What can we learn from these examples and others in the Bible? Because God has blessed us with his very best, he deserves nothing less than our very best.

What can we learn from our own history? The first generation of our Redeemer family gave God their best in the 1950’s by building our current sanctuary. After the 1988 fire, Redeemer’s second generation determined that their best was rebuilding the sanctuary to its original design. Thirty years later, it’s time for our generation to honor our forefathers and decide how this worship space will best serve the next generation of our Church family. We do this by asking, “What is the best that Redeemer Lutheran Church can offer the Lord today?”

While there’s no one correct answer to this question, we believe this renovation is more than just a simple makeover. Ideas have been gathered from a congregational Bible study 17 months ago, our committee’s research over the last 13 months, congregational open forums and surveys last Fall, and ongoing conversations with outside acoustic and worship experts. We’ve learned that our very best includes finding practical ways to serve God’s people better as they worship, discovering impactful ways of making an impression on visitors, and offering God the most beautiful space we can as we address needed maintenance of our worship space that has gone largely untouched for 30 years.

The Church Council has called for two more Open Forums to discuss what our committee has learned. If the suggestions are well-received, we’ll schedule a vote on a recommended renovation project. The Open Forums take place on Sunday, March 4th at 9:15 AM, and Monday, March 5th at 7:30 PM. Both gatherings will be in the sanctuary, and cover the same material.

Over the next three weeks, we’ll share our recommendations on how we can give God our best in three areas:

- Today – Addressing Needed Maintenance
- Feb 25th – Improving the Function of Worship - (acoustics, hearing loop, communion flow, openness, piano placement, font placement)
- March 4th – Making an Impact (chancel furnishings, brightness, wall surfaces, floor surfaces, pews)
NEEDED MAINTENANCE

“I believe that God created me...And I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, spouse and children ...All this God does only because he is my good and merciful Father in heaven, and not because I have earned or deserved it. For all this I ought to thank and praise, to serve and obey him. This is most certainly true.”

- Luther’s Small Catechism

The houses we live in don’t ultimately belong to us. They are gifts of God that will be given back to him someday. Temporary though they are, he has given them to us to use for our comfort, safety, and enjoyment. More than anything, they are the places where we enjoy the wonderful gifts of the families he has given us. A simple way to express our thanks to God is by maintaining them. It’s so natural that we may do so without realizing we are showing our thanks to God in the process.

If that’s true of the 200-plus buildings that we call our own individual houses, how much more is that true of this one space that all 600 of us collectively call God’s House? ...where we gather as a family of faith? ...where together we glorify God for his greatest gift of his Son Jesus? One of the simplest ways to give thanks for God’s House is to maintain it regularly.

Therefore, we begin with the maintenance needs that we would have to address regardless of any changes that would improve the function or beauty of our space.

Blinds – This is how the process began. Two years ago a significant gift was received to go toward the replacement of our bamboo blinds. Some ropes are frayed. Since they need replacement, some suggested we could find a style more conducive to a worship space.

Lights – We had talked for years about this. Once the cost of LED bulbs dropped, we replaced most of the incandescent lights in the seating area. It’s much brighter now! Brightness reveals color. Some people asked recently when the walls were painted pink (rose, really). The answer: 30 years ago. Brightness also exposes blemishes, which leads to the...

Pews – The cushions in the pews started deteriorating years ago. Some of the fabric is beyond cleaning. The laminated wood has chips in many areas. The kind of pews we have in the balcony violate building codes. Many responses in the congregational survey asked that we address the condition of the pews, so the committee did. When researching the cost of replacing the cushions and refinishing and repairing the wood, it was discovered that ordering new pews wouldn’t cost that much more. They would look nicer. And they would serve our worship needs better (more on this next week).

Flooring – Some of the institutional VCT tiles are cracking and need individual replacement (maintenance). With the proposed replacement of the pews, it’s the right time to replace the tile with something better suited for worship space. The carpeting in the Cry Room and balcony were installed after the 1988 fire. It’s time to replace them.

Dossal Curtain – The curtain needs occasional cleaning – a significant project that takes multiple people. And at 30 years old, it will need replacement eventually. The natural question is then, “With what should we replace it?” More on that in the March 4th article.

This is the first of three articles that the Sanctuary Committee, with input from the Board of Trustees, is using to communicate our research. The three articles divide the sanctuary needs into three areas: maintenance, function, and beauty of our sanctuary. The congregation is encouraged to read these articles so that everyone is ready to discuss them at the Open Forums scheduled for Sunday, March 4th at 9:15 AM, and Monday, March 5th at 7:30 PM.

The Sanctuary Committee is Gregg Heiman, Kathy Baechl, Stephanie Ehike, Kathy Heiman, Chris Kohnke, Andy Nygaard, Kelly Rickert, and Pastor Borgwardt. The Board of Trustees is Ross Boelk, Shawn Hoppe, Tim Meyer, and Cody Schoepke. Pastor serves as advisor.