



Our Needs

[Number 2 in a continuing series](#)

Because the issues at hand are complex, we have decided to deal with them in installments. Contemporary writers might call this a “blog”, but I confess to disliking the sound of that word intensely. So let’s just call it a Dickensian serial. Whether it turns out to be “Great Expectations” or “Oliver Twist” is yet to be determined.

Despite many changes in the congregation over the last two decades, our needs have remained remarkably the same since we built here in 1981. That’s because of the nature of the site, 4 acres on a long and narrow lot; the original City Council motion which gave us permission to build here but essentially prevented us from using the back acre; and the original design of the building, which despite its many beautiful features—the peaceful setting, the lovely courtyard, and the stunning sanctuary—has severe limitations. The sanctuary is a multi-purpose room, and it works about as well for us as it does for junior high schools. And the fact that you have to walk through the sanctuary to get almost everywhere else is more than just an annoyance. It makes simultaneous programming extremely difficult, and programming is one of the keys to sustaining the collective life of a congregation.

The following list has appeared, in one form or another, since 1995. As with football rankings, people will argue about whether number 10 should be number 9, whether a youth lounge is more or less important than a gift shop. The truth is, all of them are important and the goal must be to meet as many of them as possible:

- **Religious School in 2 sessions**, one in the morning for toddlers through 7th graders, and one in the afternoon for older students, so that parents don’t have to drive back and forth three times on Sundays. Given current enrollment, a single morning session would require 16 classrooms, five more than we have now.
- A **sanctuary** that is separate from the rest of the building, so that people don’t have to walk through it to get to classrooms and the library.
- A **sanctuary** that has Ark line-of-sight seating for at least 700 at high holidays, so that no one is forced to watch the service on a monitor.
- **An expanded social hall** that does not include the sanctuary, so that banquets can be set up while services, weddings and bar & bat mitzvot are going on simultaneously in the sanctuary.
- **A library/chapel** which will accommodate alternative services, including services for children.

- **A gathering space**, other than the lobby, where adults can socialize while their children are in school.
- **Expanded office space**, creating authentic office space (rather than closets) for the Rabbi, Temple Administrator, Director of Education, Asst. Director of Education, education assistant, two office workers and a receptionist, and a reception area that can monitor the front door.
- A dedicated space for **youth**.
- **Adult Education** space, so that programs can go on at the same time as religious school without either interfering with the other.
- A dedicated **gift shop**.
- A **kitchen** which is laid out so that people can work together in it.
- More **storage**.
- And—if legally and politically possible—more **parking**.

All of this to be done in a way which...

- Meets current **building codes**,
- Is **environmentally friendly** ("green") and **ADA compliant**,
- Receives the support of the **neighbors** (both Rau Lane to the south and Shaker Square to the north), the **Worthington Planning Commission** and **Worthington City Council**,
- Can be done with the **financial resources** we already have, and those we can reasonably expect to acquire,
- Preserves the essential character of the **"sanctuary in the garden"**, and...
- Receives **enthusiastic support** from the congregation.

Is this possible on our site at Olentangy River Road? That's what we are working to determine. The first step is to see if we can conceptually re-design the building so that it is functional as well as beautiful. We think our architect, Phil Markwood, has done it.

NEXT: The Architectural Concept—The Sanctuary in the Garden

John Stefano
January 21, 2010

Meeting Dates reminder:

Congregational Response Sessions, Sundays, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.

February 14

March 7

April 25

Annual Meeting, Sunday, May 23, 5:00 p.m.

The Working Group

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