

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Facilities-Use Assessment and Revitalization Plan

Overview. --- It's been over twenty years, when the church building was renovated, since there has been a systematic and comprehensive assessment of how the space-use and functional features of our physical space empower us to equip every child of God within our community to follow Jesus. During that time our world, community and Bethlehem Lutheran Church has experienced substantive changes. As a consequence, a current assessment and plan for the future was needed. This and associated documents, provide a high-level view as well as a more detailed description of the proposed changes. The fundamental focus of this plan is how we can better use our physical space to **Build Lasting Community** that follows Jesus.

Implementation Process. --- The first phase was a comprehensive and room by room assessment of how we are currently using our facility and potential changes in our use that would better align our actions within this space with our vision. This assessment and concomitant planning discussions included both Pastoral leadership and leaders of key ministries at BLC and produced this overview document and the more detailed summary of proposed changes. Following affirmation from the Church Council, more detailed discussions and planning is being conducted by designated teams in support of each of the diverse ministries of the church. These plans will form the basis of the implementation plan. A variety of teams with special skills and experience will work with each ministry team and, collectively, will be empowered to implement the approved plans. The overall coordination and management of the implementation plans will be guided by the Revitalization Team and supported by BLC staff. There will be regular updates to the congregation and council.

Implementation Teams. --- Several teams will be involved in implementing these changes. The unique skills, experiences, roles and responsibilities for each team are described below:

- **Ministry Team** – Each ministry of the church offers participants a different and often unique way to be part of building lasting communities that follow Jesus. The most important team involved in any particular change is the team of folks who are most directly involved with the ministry and that community for which the changes are intended to support and enhance. The dedication and devotion of these folks to this ministry and service will infuse and power the efforts needed to complete and embrace these changes. A member of Church Council will be asked to serve on each project team to help ensure communications with and support from the rest of the congregation and the broader BLC community.

- **The Design Team** – Every project requires a plan. Depending on the complexity and extent of the changes, a team of folks may be necessary to assess, design and guide the project. The members of the Design Team have been asked to serve in this role because they offer skills, experience, creativity and empathy for others that will help ensure that the changes help each ministry serve and grow to the fullest. The Design Team will also offer a “big picture” perspective on all of the changes to allow for both unique and complementary expressions of our faith as embodied in our ministries.
- **Painting Team** – Historically, the practice was to paint the walls with neutral colors. Moreover, the most recent application was during the last building renovation. It's time to enhance the look. Establishing this team reflects the large amount of painting that is needed but more importantly, that painting is not a task undertaken casually if one wants to get high quality results. Some folks are gifted as painters while others can offer other gifts.
- **Technology Team** – The experiences of the pandemic have raised both the awareness of “technology” and the necessity of using technology effectively to and engage others in the community. The members of this team would include folks who are currently serving in technologically rich ministries but, would also include other folks either internal or from external settings with unique skills and experiences to address specific needs.
- **The Moving Team** – An important outcome of the revitalization is to create new opportunities and settings for folks to experience moving experiences as they connect with others! However, given all the stuff that needs to be in a place that is different from where it is...we need folks adept and willing to move stuff too. Where practical, we would invite the scout troops who are sharing our space to join in these activities as well.
- **Council Workdays** – The Church Council will be rolling up their sleeves and leading three Workdays to help tackle a very full Revitalization Job Jar. Everyone is welcome to join this team! There is plenty to do and, of course, many hands make light work.

Project Priorities

The initial plan had three assigned priority levels:

Priority 1. Actions that should be taken during the rest of the summer and early fall as the full panoply of activities resume following summer hiatus. These highest priority items are changes that will have the most substantive impacts across all of our ministries and will quickly produce demonstrable improvements.

Priority 2. Actions that will have consequential impacts on the efficacy of a broad variety of ministries that are currently active but, constrained by limitations the proposed changes are intended to address. The resources and level of integration, coordination and implementation complexity varies across these changes and completion for any particular change will vary from a few weeks to several months.

Priority 3. Actions that are intended to position us for greater impacts in the future by more fully utilizing our physical spaces in new and different ways. These changes are specifically designed to allow us to enhance and expand the ministries we offer and strengthen our engagement with the broader communities we seek to serve.

Upper Level

Hybrid Conference Room. --- The highest priority item is creating a more functional and accessible space that is equipped to host hybrid meetings and ministry events. The current “work room” is large enough, has a positive ambiance and was originally designed to serve as a meeting space. There are already amenities built in that further make this an ideal space for the Hybrid Conference Room.

Work Room. --- Creating a Hybrid Conference Room in the current work room, requires relocating the activities currently being performed in this location. The Perrin St. Office is not currently being used and is ideally situated to be used for a new and improved Work Room. The relocation is especially timely post-pandemic because the nature of work that needs to be performed in the work room has changed. The transition into this new space will allow a systematic evaluation and enhancement of the furniture, equipment and storage needs associated with the work room.

Pastor Amy's Office. --- Like the rest of the building, this space needs a new paint job. One that reflects the bright, creative and lively demeanor of its occupant. In addition, the space is lacking a local printer for limited run and high-quality printed output which reduces the effectiveness of hardcopy documents Pastor Amy can offer for communications and instruction.

Narthex. --- During and post-pandemic, the Narthex has taken on a significantly more prominent role as *the* place of initial welcome to BLC. The revitalization efforts will better configure the Narthex to be used more effectively and fully as a gathering and focal point for making connections.

Council Office and Workspace. --- This space will be configured to serve as a temporary work and meeting space for council members. The space should accommodate both offline and virtual computer work and accommodations for small group meetings. It could be a breakout room for events held in the hybrid conference room.

Pastor Hoffman's Office. --- Changes implemented when Pastor Hoffman first moved into this space have it ideally configured to meet her needs.

Worship for Kids. --- This space was originally configured in a hasty and urgent manner using materials immediately accessible. As a consequence, some of the elements (and damage) from its prior use and with no relationship to offering Worship for Kids, remain. In addition, there are some technical issues that make using this space for kids to the fullest difficult. The revitalization allows these challenges to be addressed.

BLC Document Storage Room. --- This locked space on the upper level will be used to store and maintain BLC's essential and appropriate financial documents.

Upper Level - continued

BLC Living Room. --- As BLC continues supporting more varied ministries and increasing its engagement with and connections to outside groups, an element we should offer is a space that creates a "Living Room" vibe. Our Living Room will be used for book clubs, a "bride's room", funerals, weddings and as a comfortable & inviting gathering space. The current sitting room has an eclectic accumulation of furniture and stuff that reflect this and that and assorted things for whatever happened to be done in that space in the past.

Yarn Ministry and BLC Archive. --- Supplies for the Yarn Ministry had been stored in various locations. The current plan is to establish a dedicated work and storage space for this ministry. The new space will include the shelving and cabinets needed to store the materials and a desk and other working surfaces that are needed to support these ministries.

The 100-year celebration included a comprehensive and exhaustive search for and collection of records that documented the history of BLC. These materials are being preserved in a variety of forms and will continue to be available for learning and reflecting on who we are as followers of Jesus. The electronic systems and records used to preserve and access this information will be accessible in this shared work space.

Choir Room. --- As with all other spaces, this area should be assessed by the folks directly responsible for its use who would then share their requests and recommendations for modifications and/or enhancements.

Bell Choir Room. --- The Bell Choir room has space that could be configured and used more fully to include additional storage of music that is currently in the "office" next to the Choir room (aka Choir room annex). The moving associated with enhancing this space would be cabinets or shelves for storage.

Lower Level

The Youth Room. --- This space continues to offer a wide variety of amenities that are well suited for serving our adolescent members. As we continue to envision new opportunities to engage and serve this unique population, changes and enhancements to the physical configuration will surely be identified for this space.

Courtyard Meeting Room. --- This space in the lower level will be reconfigured to be a meeting room with a central table. A second virtual conference system and other equipment will be put in place that would support being used for meetings. The credenza should be sorted through...keeping (and restocking with) what would be used in a meeting room and moving what would not. Tables and chairs should be ergonomically matched. Whiteboard and/or posterboard easels should be available in this space.

Courtyard Sitting Room. --- This space in the lower level will be reconfigured to be a "sitting room". Rather than a central table, it should be a room that was well appointed for comfortable sitting and gathering by small groups. It could include side tables and even a book shelf for the groups using the space.

The West Wing. --- In the lower level there are five rooms in the "*West Wing*" that were formerly used for Sunday School classes. Each of the rooms has an assortment of furniture and fixtures associated with different age students. A continuing challenge for these West Wing rooms has been that flooding can occur from parking lot runoff. The Property Committee has implemented additional remediation steps to eliminate this recurring problem. These five rooms will be configured to support outside groups and/or BLC Ministries.

Community Storage Room. --- The room in the NW corner of the West Wing has been repurposed to serve as a community storage room. Accordingly, there are numerous filing cabinets lining the wall and additional storage units will be moved into this space. Currently, Madrgalia is using the space to store their music and Learning Links will be consolidating their storage of materials from various locations in to this space.

Music Studios. --- The remaining two rooms on the west wall offer a unique opportunity to reinforce the central role of music in our worship life while directly engaging music-lovers from the broader community. During a comprehensive discussion and tour Raelynn offered the exciting suggestion of using these two rooms as *Music Studios*. Raelynn noted that there is a significant need for spaces configured to support musicians in our community and these spaces would be highly prized. There is a Steinway and Sons piano in the south room. Raelynn described this instrument in glowing terms and will be working with the piano technician who maintains our other two pianos to determine what is needed to restore this piano to its full capabilities. Presuming that we proceed with this effort, the middle room would become the **Music Studio: Piano and Voice**. The south room would be designated as **Music Studio: Brass, Woodwinds, Strings and Percussion**. What a wonderful opportunity to enhance and build on BLC's musical tradition!

Lower Level - continued

The Scout and Seasonal storage room. --- In the West Wing, there is a storage room used by the Scout troops that BLC hosts and also by BLC ministries for storage of assorted seasonal and other items. This space will continue to be used to support these activities.

Courtyard Education Rooms. --- These two spaces in the lower level will be reconfigured to be rooms to support instructor-led sessions. The larger room will include a “U” shaped arrangement of three work tables and the smaller room a “L” arrangement of two work tables. Whiteboards and other elements needed to enable instruction will be available in both rooms. These spaces will be designed and scheduled to support the educational offerings of both BLC (e.g., Confirmation) and outside partners (e.g., Learning Links).

Kitchen. --- There are several technical and equipment related issues that should be addressed to ensure the continued safe and sanitary use of the kitchen. Similarly, training and documented procedures must be developed and made available to current and potential new kitchen users.

Fellowship Hall. --- The Fellowship Hall is the largest space in the facility and will continue to be used as the optimum location for group gatherings (e.g., funerals, receptions, group meals). The tables and easy access to other resources makes it an ideal space for scout troops. There are several troops currently using this space and, schedule depending, we anticipate inviting additional groups to use this space. It is also used by Learning Links to sort and pack their supplies during their annual school supplies event.

The Church Street Wing. --- In the lower level there are five rooms in the *Church Street Wing*. The two interior rooms are being configured to serve as the **Quilting Room** and the **Crafts & Assorted Supplies Storage Room**. The three rooms bordering the street have both windows and sinks which offers enhanced settings with broader functionality. These three rooms will be configured to support an outside group or BLC Ministry.

Quilting Room. --- Assorted moves and renovations will allow the Quilters exclusive use of the former Adult Education Room to create a Quilting Room. Shelves not being used in other spaces and additional shelves purchased through a Thrivent grant will provide sufficient storage space for the quilting materials and assorted supplies.

Crafts & Assorted Supplies Storage Room. --- The current Sunday School storage room will be reconfigured to serve as the central storage room for craft supplies currently scattered throughout the facility.

Throughout the Facility

All Rooms. --- A full building walkabout quickly reveals that there are many things common to all rooms that may or may not be copasetic. This includes:

- **Clocks** – Are they working, thematically appropriate and set to the right time?
- **Blinds** – Do they work or in need of repairs or replacement?
- **Painting** – As noted elsewhere in these plans, painting problems and possibilities are pervasive and prominent.
- **Books** – The building is full of books, literally, in every nook and cranny. It is doubtful that this vast library of materials has ever been systematically reviewed. This will allow for a systematic evaluation of these resources and subsequent movement to a space where they will add value and elucidation.
- **Signage** – As we change how our space is being used, we must update the signs that describe what each space is called and how it is used.

All Storage Rooms. --- There are several areas that have become a collection point at random and/or a planned storage area for specific stuff (e.g., Office supplies, Paper goods, Cleaning Supplies, Craft Supplies, Learning Links, Historical Records, SSDM, Property, Music, AV & Presentation, Equipment, Emergency resources,). These should be evaluated with the intent of keeping what continues to offer value, discarding what is no longer needed and donating what has value for others. At the end of all the sorting and moving of all the stuff from various rooms and storage areas, there should be a defined group of storage spaces with items stored by type (e.g., craft supplies, cleaning) or POUS (Point Of Use Storage). This configuration should be maintained by predictable and persuasive processes and supported within budgetary constraints. This optimized and organized milieu should be communicated widely so folks know where stuff can be found before buying more whatever they didn't know that we had.