

CHURCH BUILDING NOTES

a newsletter on designing and maintaining your church

HELPFUL TIPS FOR YOUR BUILDING EXPANSION PROJECT

- *Relocating or expanding – How much property do we need?* One acre per 100 people minimum, for one level buildings (Wetlands and easements can affect this.)
- *What building and site features affect church growth the most?*
- **Parking lot** – figure 2.25 people per car. Make sure you have enough for those special days. Paved, striped, and well-lighted parking lots are more inviting than muddy, graveled, dark ones. Handicapped and visitor signs are also important.
- **Sanctuary** – when you reach 80% capacity, growth will probably diminish or decline. Solutions: multi-services, expand, or relocate. Adequate lighting and comfortable temperatures are also important. Evaluate your A/V equipment and update as needed.



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FOYERS



NEW COMMUNITY CHURCH OF GOD

THE HEART OF THE CHURCH

One Sign of a healthy growing church is a congregation slow to go home. Visiting with old friends and greeting new ones usually takes place in the area just outside the sanctuary – IN THE FOYER. Therefore, we believe the foyer can be called the heart of the church. The foyer plays a big part in making visitors feel welcome. In small foyers people feel crowded and will rush to get out, prohibiting members from meeting them.

Churches are built for people. It is our job at HULL-STEPHENS AND ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS to design them in such a way that people will feel welcome and comfortable and want to return. We must eliminate any barriers, whether visible or invisible, that might keep visitors away. Let's look at the foyer and surrounding areas of the church to see how we can make them inviting.

Areas associated with the foyer, such as the entrance make the first and maybe, most lasting impression. As

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visitors drive into the parking lot, handicapped parking signs and a carport shows them that the church cares about them. It tells them the church wants to protect them from inclement weather as they exit the car and enter the foyer. The carport should have adequate allowance for buses, vans, and trucks. When visitors see the barrier free entryway, they will realize that this church is a church that welcomes all people.

Coat racks seem like a small item but are a true necessity. They should be near the entryway, easy to find. They need to be out of the way, but open, to allow good circulation. Ideally, they are out of view of the entry doors. In some high crime areas isolated coat check rooms are needed.

Rooms must be clearly labeled to eliminate any embarrassment to our visitors who might become lost. The sanctuary should be clearly visible from the foyer, nursery and restroom areas.

In the foyer, the information center can be a major point of interest or it can be an eye sore. To the visitor, it is the best source of information available at a quick glance. A bright eye catching, inspirational, informative information center can make a visitor feel welcome without any words being spoken. On the other hand, a bare unkept center gives the impression of not much happening or an uncaring attitude toward the church.

Bulletin boards in the foyer serve as a point of information, and reminders to the members. It gives the visitor an idea of what is happening in the life of the church. Suggestions for bulletin boards are:

- Church activities: the time and description of the event. Pictures from the same activity that happened last year encourages attendance again. They also bring plenty of smiles and warm memories.
- A clearly drawn and labeled layout of the church building will quickly show people where certain rooms are. It can show where the person is now so he can decide how to get to where he wants to go.
- Pictures of parishioners: It is easy to remember faces but hard to remember which names go with the faces we have met. This is a clever way of putting names with faces. Everyone enjoys seeing friends in print on a bulletin board. Many churches also include photos of missionaries that they support.
- Past events, mission trips, church colleges, certificates, awards, memorials, and more, can be attractively displayed on bulletin boards. Some churches have electronic information boards flashing their information.

Whatever the congregation decides to do here is okay. The key is color and keeping it current, neat and attractive.

If the church is large enough, an atrium can enhance the area beautifully. An atrium is usually located in the center of the foyer. It is several stories high and is most often surrounded with lots of glass. A Biblical garden, containing plants mentioned in the Bible may circle the atrium. Mirrors on the walls and ceilings reflect the lush interior, giving the garden, or other interior design, an added dimension. A small waterfall and/or inspirational artifacts, such as sculptures and paintings, add to the overall effect. An atrium provides an unusual and interesting meeting area or lounge for small groups.

The foyer is a transition space from the outside noisy world into the sanctuary. An inner foyer, or narthex with subdued lighting will help in preparing worshippers as they enter the sanctuary. A foyer can also be used as overflow space, if ample room is provided. P.A. speakers will be necessary then, as well as glass panels or closed circuit TV to see the sanctuary.

Ushers and greeters work in the foyer area. This is an excellent place for storage of their supplies, either in attractive cabinets or in adjoining closets or rooms. It is nice to have a comfortable place to sit in the foyer while waiting for a ride home. Having a vestibule leading into the foyer cuts down outside air and noises.

The foyer has many important functions. It welcomes new and old friends, informs us of what's happening and where, helps prepare us for our worship service, and finally bids us farewell as we leave. Truly, the foyer can be called the heart of the church. ☩CBN

F.Y.I.

Preliminary drawings may take two months to complete. Most church projects require a preliminary review by the local Planning Commission. This will take between two and four months. It includes a "public hearing". It is wise to "make friends" with your neighbors.

After preliminary drawings are complete, detailed drawings will take three to four months.

Allow one month for bidding and 6-12 months for construction.

Hull Stephens and Associates Architects can help you get qualified and reputable contractors for bidding and/or construction.

Mission Statement: Determine client's needs . . . Strive for excellence in providing quality service in all areas of the architectural design process.

HELPFUL TIPS. . . (Continued from Page 1)

- **Nursery** – Young parents like a clean, well staffed, odor free, safe environment near the sanctuary. A mother's nursing room may be helpful
- *How much Christian Education space is desirable?* **Christian Education** spaces should handle up to 80% of the sanctuary seating. An evaluation should be made to see if you need to upgrade technology. You may want to give consideration to space for a Day Care, or other ministries.
- *How large should the fellowship hall be?* **Fellowship Hall** space should handle at least 67% of the sanctuary seating. Even though round tables promote better fellowship than rectangular they take more space.
- *Would a family Life Center meet needs and attract more people?* Seating at rectangular tables: (round tables accommodate less)
Elementary gym – 216
Junior High gym – 320
(this size is adequate for church league play)
Senior High gym – 450



WEST FLINT CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

(Two junior high basketball or volleyball courts can simultaneously use this space.)

Care should be taken to eliminate noise problems in the gym with proper design and sound absorption.

Other questions to consider:

- *Is the kitchen adequate? Is it large enough? Is it well equipped?*
- *When should we build? Are we overcrowded? Do we need to start new ministries? Will a more attractive and functional facility help us meet our needs better? Is our building unsafe?*

- *Is our building barrier free? Are the restrooms barrier free? Would a "private" family restroom be helpful for those needing special assistance?*
- *How much can we afford?* Banks usually say: "Three times total yearly income, less indebtedness." Then add building funds and property sale.
- *Do we need a professional fund raiser?* Most professional fund raisers can raise more than you can. Hull-Stephens and Associates Architects has a list of the names of several church funding organizations available to anyone who asks.
- Hull-Stephens and Associates can provide attractive renderings (sketches of your future building) to help your people see your vision.
- We can give you guidance on contractor selection. We can oversee the entire construction process. †CBN



DAVISON MISSIONARY CHURCH

RECENT CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

- New St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church
Detroit, Michigan
- First United Methodist Church
Durand, Michigan
- Oakland Chinese Church
Auburn Hills, Michigan
- Grace Church of the Nazarene
Detroit, Michigan
- Swartz Creek United Methodist Church
Swartz Creek, Michigan

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Our web site provides extensive information about the church design process, our firm, services we provide, our staff, and our projects. Many resources can be printed from the web site, or you can request information using our Resource Request form.

A complete client list of over 1,400 projects is available along with some testimonials. A new feature is the **Projects Under Construction** section. Here, you can

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view pictures of a few projects from start to finish. We hope a visit to

our site will be beneficial to you. Let us know your comments and suggestions. †CBN

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- **Foyers – The Heart Of The Church**
- **Did You Know?**

Past newsletters can be obtained as long as they last, by contacting Hull-Stephens and Associates Architects at: 810/635-4090 E-mail – cathy@hsaa.com

DID YOU KNOW?

HULL-STEPHENS AND ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS has been specializing in designing churches for almost 40 years.

They have designed over 800 church projects:

- ◆ In 290 cities, 15 states, 5 foreign countries, and 41 denominations
- ◆ Almost 120 churches have returned to them for additional projects.

They have:

- ◆ Provided workshops on church design and construction for several state and national organizations.
- ◆ Written articles on church design and construction for leading national church magazines.

They have resources for: church furniture, stained glass, church funding organizations, steeples, baptistries, and many other church related projects. Call, write or e-mail (info@hsaa.com) Hull-Stephens and Associates Architects for assistance in any facility related concerns.