

MEMO

DATE: February 2, 2008

TO: Session, First Presbyterian Church, Potsdam, New York

FROM: Church Renovation Task Force

SUBJ: Report of Findings

1. The Task Force was commissioned in December 2007 to investigate the church sanctuary facility structures and condition, and make recommendations regarding repairs and/or renovations.
2. With Session approval, Crawford and Stearns, Architects, Syracuse, were retained to make preliminary observations and report to the Task Force. This was done on January 15, 2008.
3. Attached to this memo is a summary of the findings reported by Randy Crawford, January 15, 2008, together with some Task Force rough estimates of possible work to be done.
4. The Task Force recommends that the Session determine one of three courses of action:

a. Short term repair and maintenance:

We raise and spend only those funds necessary for the continued use of the sanctuary facility with no substantial enhancements. However, with evidence of stonework and roof deterioration, some specific minimum projects are needed immediately (within the next 12-18 months) just to maintain our use of the facility: i.e. roof structure and repair, stone repointing, and drainage improvements. In each of these critical endeavors, the Task Force recommends that a firm such as Crawford and Stearns be retained to assess and specify the work to be performed, in consultation with the Session.

b. Long term repair, maintenance, and upgrade

Raise funds on the order of \$1M+, through various sources (external as well as internal), to undertake a thorough study to develop a scope of work, then replace and repair the roof, foundation, external masonry, repair and replace plaster, replace carpeting, install new lighting, augment insulation, and install radiant heating. The study should be conducted by Crawford and Stearns, or equivalent restoration specialists, and is likely to cost at least \$20-30k. This option would have the objective of providing a worship space for year round use, for the next several generations to come.

c. Build another facility

Raise funds internally on the order of \$1M, it would be possible to consider acquiring land and building a new facility, rather than to renovate the present structure. Modern efficiencies could be achieved under this plan that simply are not possible with an older, historic structure.

The Task Force did not have an overwhelming sense of which of the above options would be best to pursue, believing that this decision rests with the Session, with the understanding that whatever funds are likely to be raised for “bricks and mortar” will likely be the determining factor.

5. The Task Force does recommend there are some short term things that can be done at minimum cost to positively affect the operating efficiency of the sanctuary building:
 - a. Provide funding (probably \$100-200) to insulate around basement windows, and other basement “gaps”. Ron Kaiser has said that he can do this work. One or two volunteers could assist.
 - b. Provide funding (probably \$100-200) to install “flaps” in the attic to cover roof joist openings at the top of the slanted ceiling, to reduce air flow in colder months. Again, this could be done by self help.
 - c. We need to see what can be done to improve basement area drainage with self help. Buildings and grounds should pursue possibilities in this regard.

ADDENDUM: Findings of Crawford and Stearns and the Task Force

a. Roof:

Damage sustained in the early January wind storm required immediate attention. Insurers were on site; a repair team subsequently made immediate repairs.

More worrisome: there is evidence of structural member shifting and cracking in the attic, as well as general roof deterioration. The slate roof is essentially original from the late 1800's. A more extensive structural review will be necessary to determine best course of corrective action. This could be carried out at the same time as analysis of roof covering is done, to determine what type of roof renovation materials should be used, and what the detailed cost would be. It would appear, from recent contractor estimates, that overall renovation of the church roof would cost at least \$250-400k.

b. Basement.

The recent thaw has resulted in many wet areas in the basement. There is mold; and items stored down there should be carefully removed and discarded or stored elsewhere, especially anything with paper or cloth content. Analysis of drainage should be made a priority, because water is causing stone and structure deterioration. The main supporting pilings need to be re-pointed and/or repaired;

and the structural support of the floor under the chancel area may require reinforcement.

There is cold air entering from areas surrounding the basement windows. Further investigation is necessary to determine if “leaks” can be effectively dealt with to improve cold weather heat retention. There likely are some self help insulating projects that can be done to provide savings with little outlay.

c. Attic insulation.

Attic insulation is inadequate and improperly installed. Some is upside down. While the “flat” part of the ceiling is the only part of the sanctuary that is insulated, additional insulation could be added for some additional heat retention. Worries about possible moisture problems preclude fully insulating the slanted part of the ceiling. However, seasonal “blocking” of the top cavities of the roof joists would potentially help during cold weather heating. This would be an inexpensive experiment with potential heating cost savings.

d. Exterior masonry:

A number of areas require critical repointing due to moisture infiltration. Where roof water cascades, there should be means of catching and diverting water away from the building.

e. Windows:

The stained glass window storm glazings are sealed, causing too much heat build up during sunny days. These glazings should be vented. In other windows, there are missing sections of wood surrounding the frames that should be repaired. It may be possible to drill some holes in the wood framing or plexiglass to provide venting. The wood frame gaps will require professional attention.

f. Lighting and Wiring:

There are areas of evidence of wiring that is quite old. Any additional new loads should be avoided, unless additional new electrical service is installed. Rewiring of the sanctuary should be considered at some future time. Lighting improvements could be made; liturgical lighting consultants should be considered if it is desired to improve lighting/efficiency. Possible cost of new lighting and wiring: \$50k

g. Flooring:

The carpeting in the sanctuary, while still serviceable, is becoming very worn. It is unknown what is under the pew and aisle areas. Improved room acoustics and heating could result from installing “manufactured” wood flooring with radiant heating. Radiant heating is more efficient, and lower temperatures “feel” warmer because the heat radiates from below. This type of heating would replace the wall radiators. The cost of a flooring project under pews, and replacing aisle areas with new carpet, together with radiant heating would probably be possible for \$100k+