



The process of erecting our new Sanctuary Addition began with a long-range planning study conducted in conjunction with the 10th Anniversary of Holy Cross in 2005. A fundraising campaign to assess the feasibility of such a project resulted in pledges of \$1.3 million toward a project which eventually cost \$1.5 million.

Ground was broken in March, 2007 and the first services were held in the new Sanctuary at Holy Week and Easter, 2008.

The architect was Brad Mollet, AIA. His other recent work includes the new South Dakota Governor's Mansion in Pierre and the new flagship store for Gunderson's Jewelry at Lakeport Commons in Sioux City.

This brochure explains the symbolism and features in our unique Sanctuary.

### Shape of Sanctuary Floor Plan

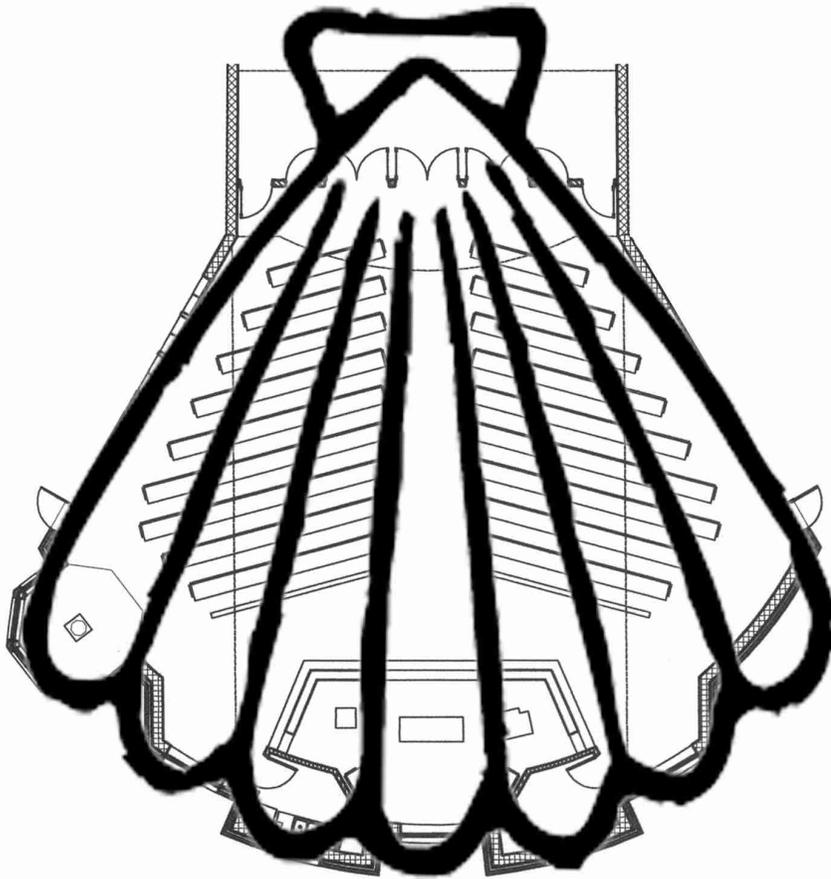
The classic shape for a Christian Sanctuary is cruciform, meaning that if viewed from above it takes the shape of a cross. There was not room on our property to add a Sanctuary with this traditional plan. So, our architect chose another shape from Christian symbolism: the Baptismal shell. If viewed from above, our Sanctuary is in the classic shape of a Baptismal shell, with the entrance doors to the Sanctuary forming the top of the shell, and the curved south wall forming the curved bottom of the shell.

In Christian symbolism, the Baptismal shell usually has three drops of water beneath, symbolizing the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in whose name we are baptized (Matthew 28:19). In our floor plan, the role of these three drops is taken by the three largest windows, above and to either side of the Chancel. The first of these signature windows to be installed, above the Altar, represents God the Son. The window to the east will represent God the Father, and the window to the west will represent God the Holy Spirit.

The main body of a church in which the congregation gathers is called the Nave. The name comes from the Latin word for "ship" (from which we also get "navy"). This term was probably applied to church buildings due to their typically long, narrow, ship-like dimensions. Symbolically, the Church is pictured as a ship or ark, sailing the ocean of time. The massive wooden beams and ceiling of our new Sanctuary are reminiscent of an ancient ship—and probably not unlike the roof that was upon Noah's Ark!



**Holy Cross Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
Dakota Dunes, South Dakota**



**As this overlay superimposed on the floor plan shows, if viewed from above our new Sanctuary is in the classic shape of a Baptismal shell, with the north entrance doors to the Sanctuary forming the top of the shell, and the curved south wall forming the curved bottom of the shell.**

### **Baptismal Font and Baptistry**

A prominent and unique feature of our new Sanctuary is the Baptistry. Appropriately, the shell theme is also found here, in the plasterwork of this alcove. The arch of the Baptistry is in the stylized shape of a shell. Also, the ceiling of the Baptistry is a canopy in the form of a shell over the entire space, with the bowl of the shell turned down, as if pouring out water. In the center of the Baptistry is the Baptismal Font.

The eight stained-glass windows in the Baptistry depict the life of Christ, to symbolize that through Baptism we are united with Christ in His life, death, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5). These windows were originally installed in 2004 in our former Sanctuary, which is now our Fellowship Hall, and were moved to our new Sanctuary to this space which was specifically designed for them.

The Baptistry is a half octagon and its floor extends into the Sanctuary to form a complete octagon. Since ancient times the octagon has been associated with Baptism. According to tradition, this shape represents the new birth (Titus 3:5) and new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) which God works in us through Baptism, with seven sides representing the first creation in seven days, and the eighth symbolizing the new creation in Christ. The reason this same octagonal shape is also found in the entryway atrium of the Sanctuary addition is to symbolize that the Sacrament of Holy Baptism is the “entrance rite” through which we are incorporated into Christ’s Church.

### **Cross and Crucifix**

Paul says in Galatians 6:14, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is therefore customary for the largest, most prominent piece of artwork in a church to be a cross. Our massive cross is richly crafted of oak and poplar. There are five copper inserts, at the end of each radius and in the center, to represent the five wounds of Christ, in His hands, feet, and side (John 20:25-27, Luke 24:39-40). Our Savior’s sacrifice for us on the cross is also beautifully depicted in our processional crucifix, which is customarily placed adjacent to the pulpit, to symbolize that, “We preach Christ crucified” (1 Corinthians 1:23). The lighted cross surmounting our steeple, which is same cross that formerly adorned the tower of our original building, is a testimony to the world that this is a Christian church, where our worship is focused on the cross of Christ.

### **Stained-Glass Windows**

The massive cross above the Altar is artistically incorporated with the Altar window, which is the signature artwork of our new Sanctuary. It is really four windows in one, with panels featuring detailed scenes of the nativity, ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection of our Lord.

The three largest windows representing the Persons of the Trinity will also depict the primary work of each Person: Creation (Father), Redemption (Son), and Sanctification (Holy Spirit). And these three windows will

together tell the entire story of Scripture, starting “in the beginning” at the top of the east window, with Genesis and creation, and ending at the bottom of the west window with Revelation, and the Second Coming of Christ and the “new heaven and new earth” (2 Peter 3:13).

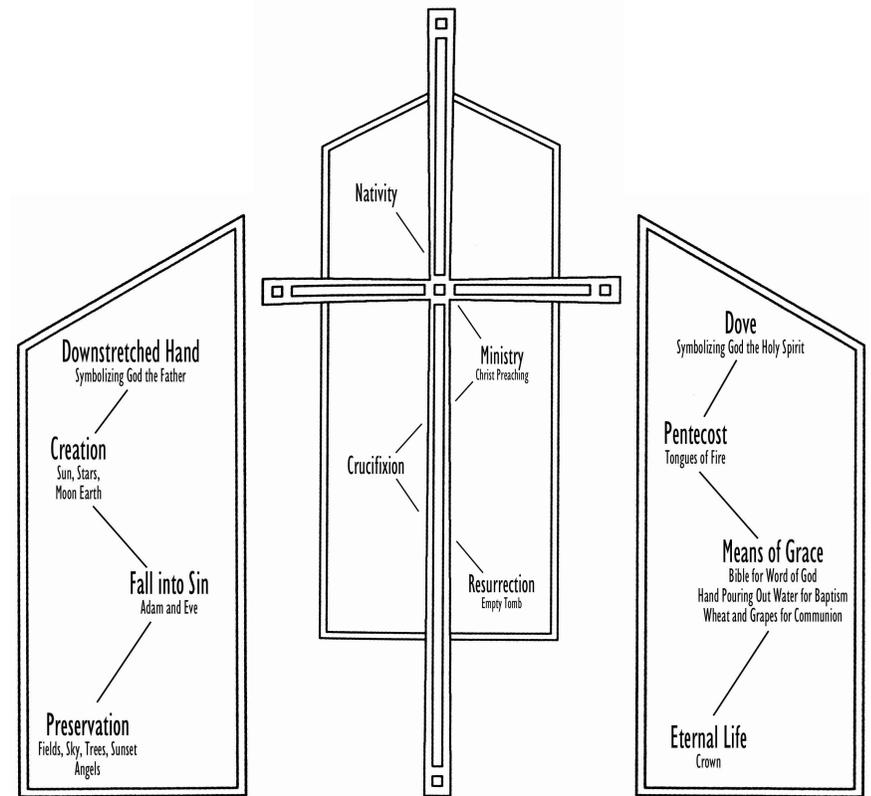
The beautiful “red ribbon” device, as seen in the center window which has now been installed, will be repeated in each of these three windows and connect them to tell one unbroken story. The ribbon can be thought to represent a ribbon in the pages of a Bible, and it is red to symbolize the blood sacrifice of Christ for our salvation, which is the unifying theme running throughout Scripture.

A conceptual plan has been adopted by the congregation for future windows in our new Sanctuary. The two smaller, square windows above and on either side of the Altar will depict the two Sacraments, the east window being a Baptismal shell to signify Holy Baptism, and the west window a Communion chalice to signify Holy Communion.

The three windows of increasing height on the east wall will portray additional scenes from the life of Christ and major festivals of the Church. The shortest window will be the Epiphany (Matthew 2:1-11), the center window the Baptism of Christ (Matthew 3:13-17), and we will use the height the tallest window to portray the Ascension (Acts 1:1-12). Because the single window on the west wall is adjacent to the Baptistry, it will depict the classic scene of Jesus with the little children (Mark 10:13-16).

To complement the two windows representing the Sacraments, the large window in the Coffee Bar area, which is now frosted glass, will represent the Word of God. This will also provide a stunning point of visual interest as worshippers enter through the archway from the entryway atrium, immediately signifying that this is a house of divine worship in which, as the ancient prayer says, we “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest” the Holy Scriptures. The window on the landing to the balcony will depict musical praises rendered to the Lord, perhaps with symbols such as a harp, organ, and choir. Finally, the two small clerestory windows in the Hearth Room will depict Luther’s Seal and the logo cross of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

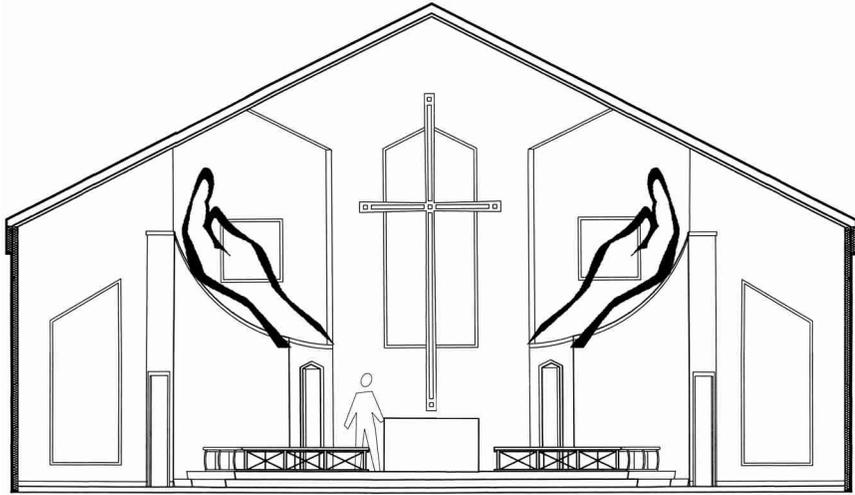
The congregation determined that all these windows will be designed and crafted by Bovard Studios, Fairfield, Iowa, one of the largest firms in the nation, whose first design for us is the stunning new window above our Altar. Windows will be installed as donations are made. They do not have to be donated or installed in a specific order or in groupings. If you are interested in donating a window, please speak to Pastor Vogts.



The three largest windows in our new Sanctuary represent the three Persons of the Trinity, and the primary work of each Person: *Father* (Creation), *Son* (Redemption), and *Holy Spirit* (Sanctification). Together, these three windows will tell the entire story of Scripture, starting “in the beginning” at the top of the east window, with Genesis and creation, and ending at the bottom of the west window with Revelation and the “new heaven and new earth” (2 Peter 3:13). The beautiful “red ribbon” device, as seen in the center window which has been installed, will be repeated in each of these three windows and connect them to tell one unbroken story. The ribbon can be thought to represent a ribbon in the pages of a Bible, and it is red to symbolize the blood sacrifice of Christ for our salvation, which is the unifying theme running throughout Scripture. If you are interested in donating one of the remaining windows in this set,, or another window, please speak to Pastor Vogts.

## “Praying Hands”

Many members and visitors have inquired about the significance of one of the most unusual features of our new Sanctuary: the “slopes” on either side of the Altar. These actually represent hands lifted up in prayer, as Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:8, “I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer.” These enormous “praying hands” mark our Sanctuary as a “house of prayer for all people” (Isaiah 56:7). And it is also significant that the large cross is cradled between these uplifted hands, to symbolize that we cling in faith for our salvation to the precious cross of Christ.



**The “slopes” on either side of the Altar in our new Sanctuary represent hands lifted up in prayer, as Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:8, “I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer.” The large cross is cradled between these uplifted hands to symbolize that we cling in faith for our salvation to the precious cross of Christ.**

## Chancel

Though sometimes an entire Sanctuary is referred to as the “Chancel,” properly speaking the Chancel is the area from which the minister conducts the Divine Service. “Chancel” is derived from the Latin word for “screen,” which in early Christian times separated the Chancel from the Nave, and of which the Altar Rail is a remnant.

## Altar

The most prominent furnishing in the Chancel is the Altar, which represents the sacrifice of Christ and upon which is enacted the Sacrament of the Altar which “proclaims the Lord’s death until He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26). Traditionally, the top of a Christian Altar, including ours, is adorned with five crosses to symbolize the five wounds of Christ, with four cross in the corners to represent the wounds in His hands and feet, and one in the center to represent the wound in His side, as if He were laid out upon the Altar as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:9). Covering the top of the Altar is the Fair Linen, a large cloth of fine linen, which represents the cloth in which our Lord’s body was wrapped for its rest in the tomb (Matthew 27:59). It is customary to “reverence” or bow slightly when approaching the Altar. Such reverence and respect toward the Altar is symbolic of reverence and respect toward God Himself.

## Pulpit and Lectern

The next most prominent furnishing of the Chancel is the Pulpit, from which the Word of God is preached (Nehemiah 8:3-4). Complementing the Pulpit is the Lectern, from which the readings of Holy Scripture are read. The Pulpit may properly stand on either side of the church, with the Lectern on the opposite side. The Altar, Pulpit and Lectern are traditionally adorned with paraments of fine fabric and embellished with symbols (Exodus 26:1).

The seats for the clergy are called Sedilia (si-DILL-e-ah), from the Latin word for “seat.” Traditionally, Sedilia are large and imposing, like a throne, not at all to honor the clergy themselves, but to symbolize that they serve, as our Liturgy says, “in the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Our Sedilia are another beautiful, custom designed feature of our new Sanctuary, finely crafted of oak and poplar. They are also very similar to the “choir stalls” commonly seen in medieval churches for the clergy.

## Altar Rail

Enclosing the Chancel is the Altar Rail. As noted above, the Altar Rail is a remnant of the screen which separated the Chancel from the Nave in early Christian times. In those days it had a very practical function. Christianity arose in the warm Mediterranean climate, where public buildings, including churches, were often open-air, and so to prevent animals from invading the Chancel it was fenced off with a railing. Although many churches today do not have an Altar Rail, it

symbolizes the holiness of the Sacrament of the Altar (Hebrews 9:2). It also provides a convenient place for the venerable custom of kneeling to receive the Sacrament, a position of humility by which the communicant confesses, “Lord, I am not worthy to have You come under my roof” (Matthew 8:8).

The practice of receiving Holy Communion at the Altar Rail is also a public declaration of one’s faith. Martin Luther says, “The Altar and the Chancel were invented for this purpose. The communicants ought to be seen and known openly, both by those who do and those who do not commune, in order that their lives may be better observed, proved, and tested. For participation in the Supper is part of the confession by which they confess before God, angels, and men that they are Christians” (*An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg*, Luther’s Works, Volume 53, pages 33-34).

In addition to receiving Holy Communion at the Altar Rail worshippers come to it also for other purposes, such as presenting the offerings, Confirmation, and entering into Holy Matrimony.

## **Credence Table**

Also in the Chancel is the Credence Table, from the Italian for “credenza,” a small side table on which traditionally the unconsecrated elements of Holy Communion and now also the offering plates are placed.

## **Sanctuary Lamp, Altar Candles, and Paschal Candle**

The “eternal flame” is properly called the Sanctuary Lamp. It is kept burning at all times to symbolize the abiding presence of God, like the seven lamps that burned continuously in the Tabernacle of the Old Testament (Leviticus 24:1-4).

As with the Altar Rail, the use of candles in worship had a very practical origin: So that the minister and congregation could see to conduct the service. They now have a symbolic value, just as we continue to adorn with candles birthday cakes and dinner tables on special occasions, although such candles are not needed for lighting purposes. Lighted candles are a symbol of Christ as the Light of the world (John 8:12). They also express our joy as we celebrate our redemption. Two candles traditionally stand upon the Altar, to symbolize the divine and human natures in Christ. Traditionally, Altar candles are real candles of at least 51% beeswax.

The name of the Paschal Candle (PASS-cull) comes from the Hebrew word for Passover. It is an ancient custom for a special, large Paschal Candle symbolizing Christ to be lit at the first Easter service. The lighting of this candle, also called a Christ Candle, symbolizes the return of Christ’s soul into His body, which had lain lifeless in the tomb. The Paschal Candle is located near lectern during the Easter season and lit for services from Easter through Ascension, to symbolize Christ’s 40 days teaching His disciples after His resurrection (Acts 1:3). It is extinguished on Ascension Day during the Gospel Reading, at the point when it says He “was taken up into heaven” (Luke 24:51). For the Advent and Christmas seasons this same Christ Candle is the centerpiece of our Advent wreath. During seasons other than Advent, Christmas, and Easter, the Christ Candle is located near the Baptismal Font and lit during Baptisms to symbolize Christ, the Light of the World (John 8:12).

## **Missal Stand**

Also upon the Altar is the Missal Stand, a bookstand upon which the Pastor’s service book (called in Latin the “missal”) is placed.

## **Sacristy and Vestry**

The Sacristy (SACK-ris-tee) is a special room in which are kept the accouterments necessary for divine services. Our Sacristy is located west of the Chancel and features cabinets, a sink, and a cooler for storing flowers. It also includes a Piscina (the east bowl of the sink), which drains directly into the ground and is for the respectful disposal of consecrated Communion wine and Baptismal water and the residue from washing sacramental vessels. The Vestry (VEST-tree) is where the clergy and other participants vest themselves for services. Our Vestry is located east of the Chancel.

## **Organ and Choir Loft**

Helping to lead congregation’s worship is the Organ, which is traditionally located for acoustical purposes in a loft at the rear of the Sanctuary. New speakers were added to our Johannus Digital Organ and an interesting modern touch is that there is a cable running from the Organ console in the loft to the Altar, with foot pedal switches at the Pulpit, Lectern, and Baptismal Font, so that when necessary the Organ can be controlled by the Pastor via MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface). The loft also provides a place for the choir, soloists, and other musicians, and our Choir Loft has extremely fine acoustics.

## **Cornerstone**

The Cornerstone west of the Sanctuary Addition main entrance features the name of the congregation, the year of the addition's erection, and a simple cross to represent the focus of our faith and the congregation's name.

Sealed inside the cornerstone are copies of the *Holy Bible*, *Luther's Small Catechism*, and the *Book of Concord*, along with letters from the Pastor and the Congregational and Building Committee Chairman.

Church cornerstones are symbolic of Christ, who is often referred to in the New Testament as the true Cornerstone upon which our faith and His Church are built (Matthew 21:42-44, Acts 4:10-12, Ephesians 2:20, 1 Peter 2:4-7)

## **Bell**

Our "new" Bell is actually 130 years old! It was originally cast in 1878 for a Presbyterian church in New York. It is of both very high quality and very large size. Church bells have been used for over 1,500 years to call the faithful to worship.

## **Prayer Garden**

A point of interest upon exiting the Sanctuary is the Prayer Garden visible through the Gathering Room patio doors. This Prayer Garden reminds us of the "lonely places" where Jesus often withdrew to pray (Luke 5:16), the mountainside where He spent the night in prayer (Luke 6:12), and Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32), where the night before His death He prayed in great earnest (Luke 22:44). It also is reminiscent of the garden near Mt. Calvary, where His body rested in the tomb (John 19:41-42).

The flowing water is another symbol of Holy Baptism, "the washing with water through the Word" (Ephesians 5:26). And it symbolizes the "living water" of the Gospel (John 7:38, Revelation 7:17). The theme verse for the Prayer Garden harkens back to the Lord miraculously providing the Israelites water in the wilderness (Numbers 20:1-13): "He opened the rock, and water gushed out; like a river it flowed in the desert" (Psalm 105:41).

We give thanks and praise to God for our beautiful new church building in which to worship Him!

*Written by Pastor Kevin Vogts*