

CHURCH OF ST THOMAS MORE
Interior Design Team
Minutes of the Meeting of April 21, 2009

Attending: Father Mike Ratajczak, Phil Goscienski, Pat Goscienski, Mary Castle, Ann Ericksson, Mario Diaz, Sondra Parks, Lorraine Doering, Chris Smith, Douglas Lynn, Kathy Quinn and Consultant Robert Habiger

Absent: Diana Diaz, Charlene Buhlert

The meeting opened with the reading of the Prayer of Dedication at 7:00 PM.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as submitted.

The purpose of the meeting was to continue the discussion of Robert Habiger's Liturgical Program, Version 4, and beginning on Page 28.

We discussed the design of the ambo. In the first bullet point under "Considerations", Robert Habiger told us this matter will be addressed by the architect and designers so that ample area around the ambo will be available. In the second bullet point regarding having the ambo to be raised and lowered, we would like this to be a requirement. However there is a cost consideration in such a design. Also, devices, both electronic and pneumatic can cause disruptive noises. We decided to keep this item under "Requirements" with the provision that there be no noisy or disruptive mechanical device. The important thing to keep in mind is that the ambo shall be accessible to people with disabilities.

The seventh bullet point regarding location of the ambo is to be moved from "Considerations" to "Requirements".

The last bullet point regarding a small book light for the readings at the Easter Vigil is to be eliminated as we no longer have the readings in darkness. The entrance of the Paschal candle signals the return of the light at Easter and so the lights are turned on in the sanctuary before the readings. We can make arrangements for a small light to be used in special circumstances for certain readers as required.

Further discussion under Program Requirements led to the matter of having two extra stands near the ambo for readings at Palm Sunday and Good Friday. These stands should be compatible in design with the center ambo. They should be portable as they can be used to display the Book of the Dead and the Book of the Elect. The ambo will be in a permanent place.

In other comments we agreed that the ambo should not obstruct the view of the altar. Our present space is insufficient and in the future we may have the procession of cross and candles with the book of the Gospels from the altar to the ambo.

Phil Goscienski asked about incandescent lights and what the code requirements are. Robert Habiger replied that he is addressing this matter already. He does not recommend the use of fluorescent lights as they distort colors. He prefers to use quartz halogen bulbs and LED's (light emitting diodes) as they provide a whiter, cleaner light. He will use the best available lighting.

On Page 29, we discussed celebrant and deacon chairs. These will be compatible in design with some special mark (arm rest or higher back) to designate the celebrant's chair. Although we will have two deacons in the future, we will have one deacon's chair. It would be a rare event when both deacons would be present for the same liturgy. In that event, we will use compatible ones from the congregation chairs.

We will need two tables, with drawers, to place between the chairs. This item is no longer a consideration; it is a requirement.

On Page 30, we discussed the credence table and agreed it could be a wall shelf as well as a table. We are to keep in mind that we have twelve Eucharistic ministers now and may require sixteen in the future. Committee members praised the idea of the built-in credence shelf as illustrated.

With regard to the gifts table, the placement of the table is now a requirement, not a consideration. In addition, we agreed that the table should be movable and complementary to other furnishings.

The committee took a short break at 7:55 and returned to discussion at 8:05.

The baptismal font as described on Page 30 was considered. The first item was the matter of wet floors and the possibility of accidents. Robert Habiger told us that one church uses special rugs that are provided by the families of those being baptized. As many as 30 rugs are laid end to end to give the newly baptized a safe path. We have our people wear sandals and they are escorted to the place where they are to change clothing. This can be a sacristy or other room, such as a rest room, in the new church.

We held a detailed discussion of the design of the new baptismal font as we looked at illustrations and details on Page 31. We asked if the font would be raised or at floor level. For full immersion, the area should be at least seven feet by three feet. Robert Habiger told us that, ideally, the person being baptized is held under water while the priest says the full "...Father, Son and Holy Spirit" blessing. This requires the priest to also be in the water. However, the person being baptized can choose a simpler method such as having the water poured over his/her head.

Douglas Lynn pointed out that "Living Stones" tells us that there not be separate fonts. In that case, the smaller font used for infant baptism is to be connected if only by a small waterfall, with the larger immersion font. Robert Habiger told that even those churches that do not plan full immersion baptisms choose to have such a font incorporated in their new church. At times, they use the full immersion method later.

Again, the matter of disabled persons was addressed. It would be difficult, if not dangerous, to lift such a person into the water. Rather, they can be accommodated by sitting next to the font and having the water poured over their head. Robert Habiger told us of a design that incorporated small drains in the floor next to the font for such occasions.

We discussed the plumbing requirements which can be difficult. Robert Habiger told us he gets the specifications and goes to a fountain manufacturer. They make the pump and other items and deliver the "sled" ready for installation by a plumber. The matter of minerals in hard water was addressed. We were told there are odorless chemicals which can take care of this problem.

We discussed the possibility of children falling into the water and being injured. We agreed that this can be a serious matter. It is also an insurance issue. Robert Habiger recommends the use of a clear Plexiglas cover set three inches below the water level. It is invisible and deters anyone from entering the water. Another solution is to place a decorative metal screen below the water level; he prefers the use of clear Plexiglas.

On page 32 we discussed the new tabernacle. This presents a design problem as we will not be finishing the chapel when we complete the sanctuary. However, the tabernacle must be visible and accessible. Ideally, it will be placed in its permanent position and the new chapel will have access. Father Mike does not wish to have a clear glass wall between the chapel and sanctuary.

Robert Habiger told us we should have 100-200 square feet of space around the tabernacle. Perhaps a decorative screen can be placed, temporarily, behind it. Pat Goscienski asked if the tabernacle could be designed so as to be accessible from both sides: sanctuary and chapel. Robert Habiger said he does not like the idea of two doors, if it is simply for convenience. It should be a sculptural element, free-standing.

Douglas Lynn pointed out that we should design the chapel now as if we could build it now, and then design the tabernacle. Father Mike agreed and said he wants the tabernacle in its permanent space.

Robert Habiger asked if the tabernacle should have a complementary design to blend with the sanctuary design. For example, if we are emphasizing granite/wood, should we have a bronze tabernacle? No decision was made at this time. We will place the red candle designating the presence of the Blessed Sacrament on the wall near the tabernacle.

In a discussion of cantor stands on page 32, we decided to have "Considerations" become "Requirements" except for the third item – "ability to adjust the top up/down..." We will keep the requirements of having the design in harmony with other furniture, with the addition of a shelf.

The next meeting of the Interior Design Team is set for May 12 at 7:00 PM with the following monthly meeting set for June 9.

The meeting closed at 9:00 PM with prayer led by Father Mike.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Quinn