

Built Theology:

Analyzing Lutheran Church
Architecture through its
Liturgical Elements

WELS National Conference on
Worship, Music, and the Arts

Gustavus Adolphus College
St. Peter, Minnesota
July 29th, 2008

By: Todd Dvorak



Compare and Contrast



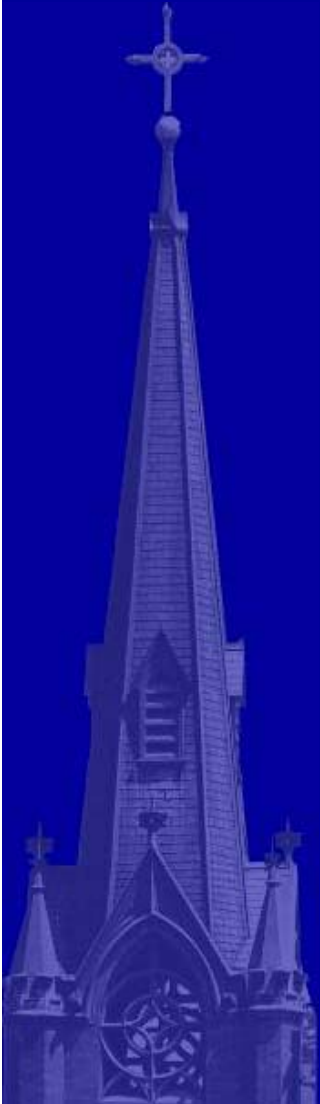
St. Paul, Appleton, 1908



St. Paul, Appleton, 1957

Christian Worship Manual, Chapter 5:

“The congregation’s called and elected leaders will want to be determined that their worship space, like their worship rite and their worship music, matches the theological emphases of God’s Word and is in step with the worship principles of Lutheranism..”

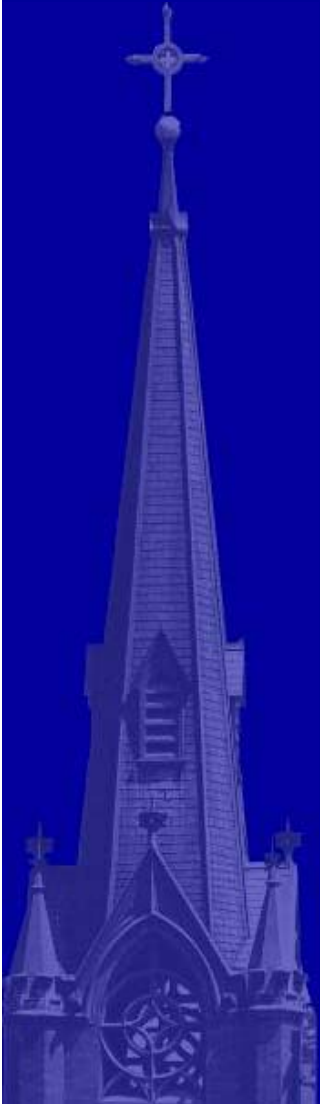


History of Lutheran Church Architecture



Steven J. Schloeder,
Architecture in Communion

"The goal [of the architect] therefore should be a building that speaks to the whole human being-- body and soul, will and intellect, head and heart, rational, emotional, and aesthetic faculties-- as well as to the parish community and civic community at large. What is needed is an architecture of transcendence, an architecture that provides the human soul with an environment that encourages both corporate and private prayer."



Introduction

- Development of Lutheran Architecture since Reformation
- New concepts of "domus dei" and "domus ecclesiae"
- Application of theology to architecture with liturgical elements
- Current trends / needs for Liturgical Design

Influence of Martin Luther

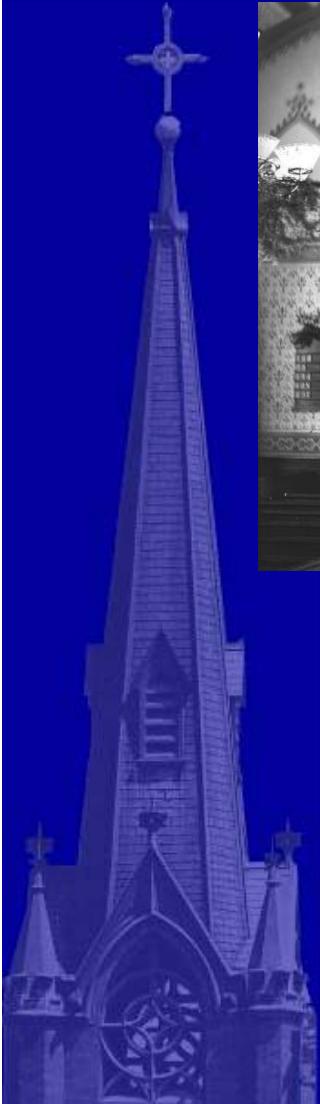
Luther's Main Objectives for the Reformation:

- Wanted proclamation of Gospel as primary function of church
- Active participation of the congregation during worship
- Return a worship environment similar to Early Christian Church
- Encourage use of music and art



Four Liturgical Elements

- Word of God: Sermon: Pulpit
- Holy Baptism: Water: Font
- Holy Communion:
Bread/Wine: Paten/Chalice
- Assembly of Believers:
Worshippers in church



Pulpit

- Often Raised for visibility
- *Schalldeckel*-- Sounding Board
- Lecterns used for Bible Readings as the basis for the Sermon



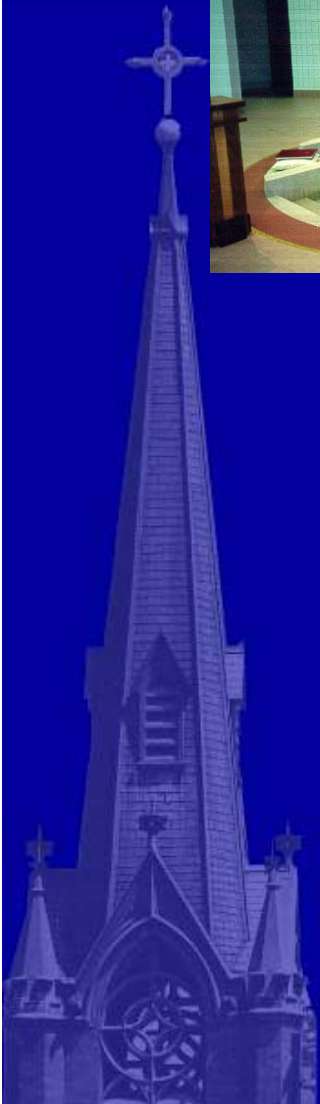
Pulpit at St. Mark's, Watertown (right)

Baptismal Font

Immersion font, Catholic church, New Berlin, WI
Marble font at St. Mark's, Watertown (right)



- Made of marble or wood
- Can be the size of a bowl or full immersion pool
- Lutheran church usually celebrates baptisms during the worship service

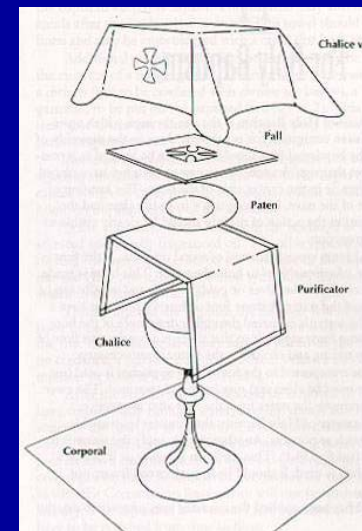


Altar Table (with reredos) at First German Lutheran, Manitowoc, WI (photo from 1955)



Holy Communion

- Celebrated at Altar Table
- Table is either attached to wall (and reredos) or pulled away from wall

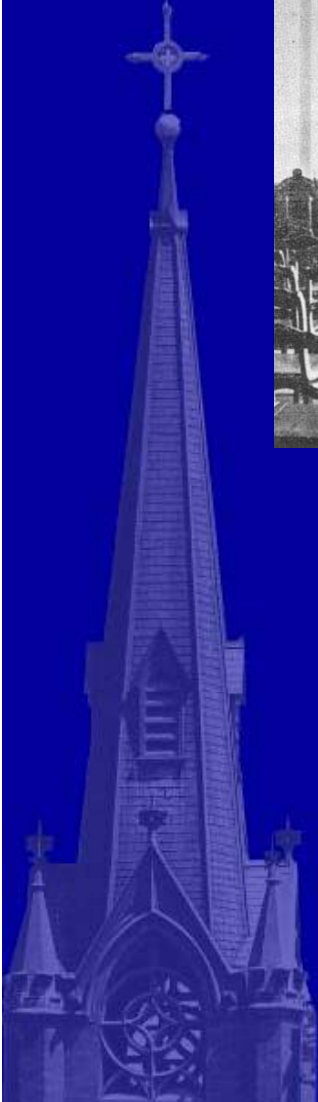


Assembly of Believers

Zum Kripplein Christi, Dodge, Co., WI (top)
St. Trinity Parish, Leipzig, Germany (1892) bottom



- Sit in pews, sometimes chairs
- Location of assembly called nave
- Seating orientation usually in rows split by center aisle

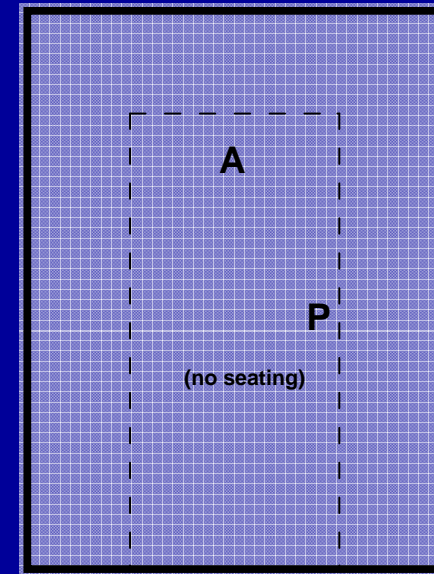


Reformation, 1500s

Interior view, Schlosskirche, Schloss Hartenfels, Torgau, Germany (1544)



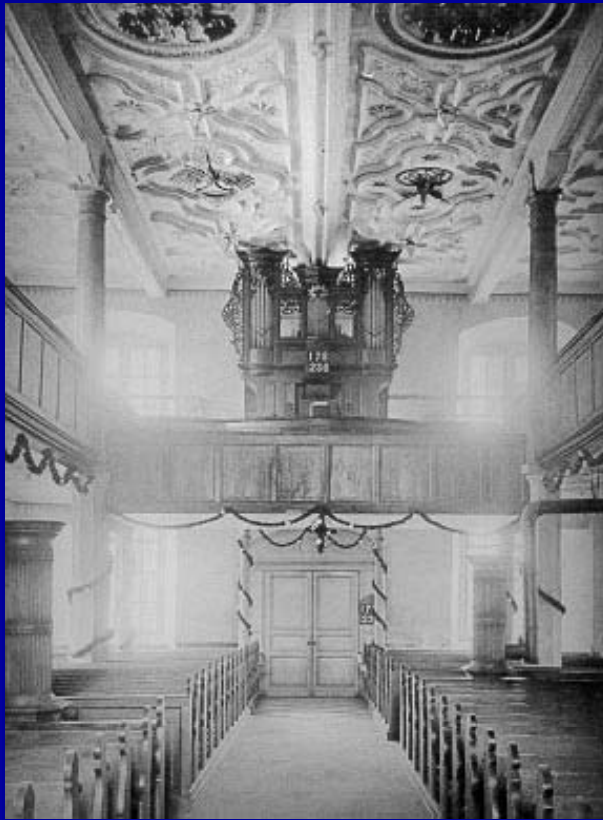
Floor Plan of Schosskirche
Pulpit (P) on right; Altar (A) in back



- Dedicated by Luther in 1544
- Gallery on sides with pulpit attached to column
- Simple altar table placed on bema

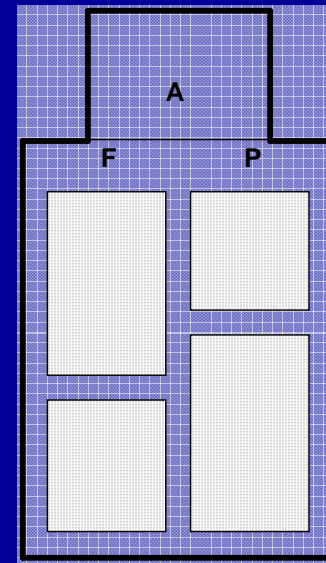
Following Reformation, 1600s

Interior west elevation, Zum Heiligen Geist,
Nidda, Germany (1618)



Floor Plan of Nidda

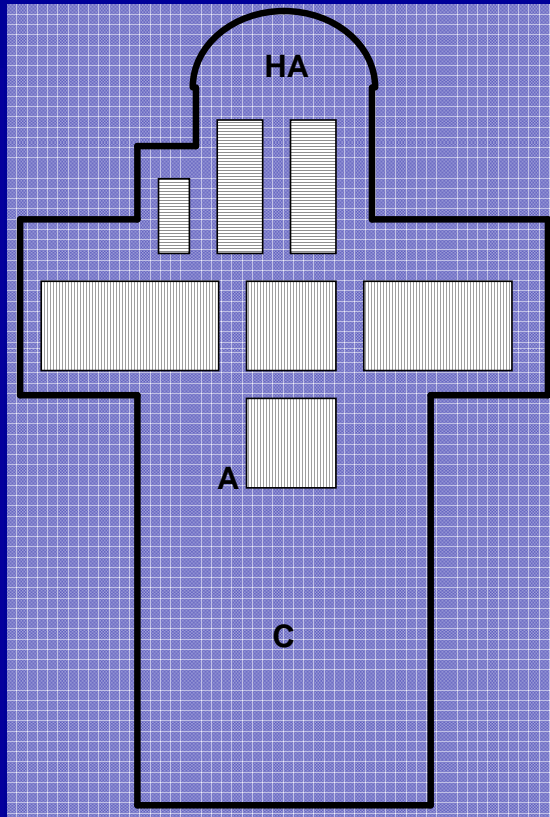
Pulpit (P) right; Font (F) left; Altar (A) back



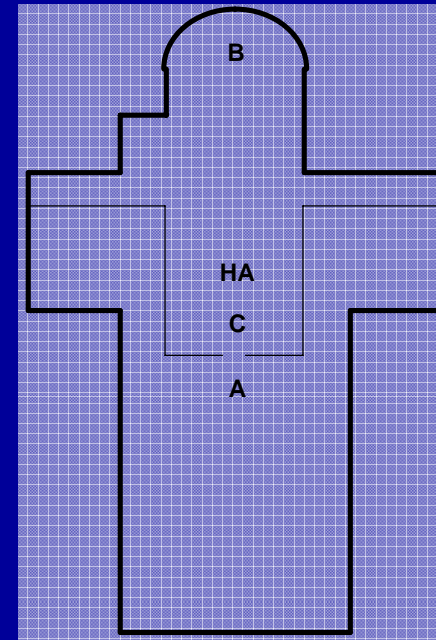
- Considered first Puritan style "meeting house"
- Triangulation of liturgical elements
- Does have defined chancel

Adaptations, 1600s-1700s

Floor Plan of St. Pierre, Geneva: HA (high altar)
A (altar), C (choir), and B (Bishop's Throne)



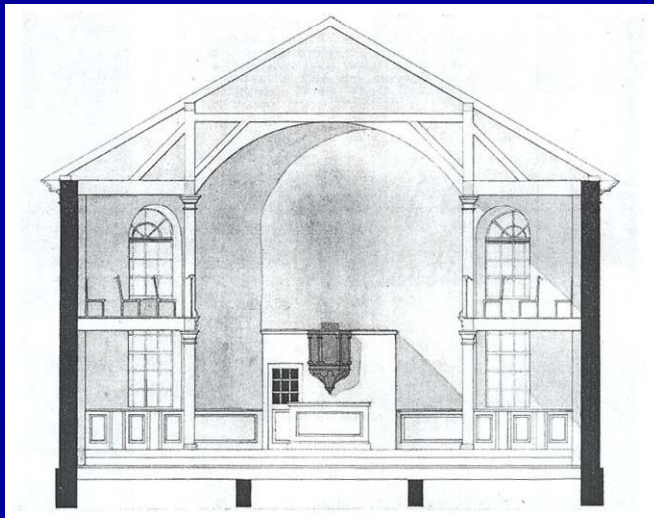
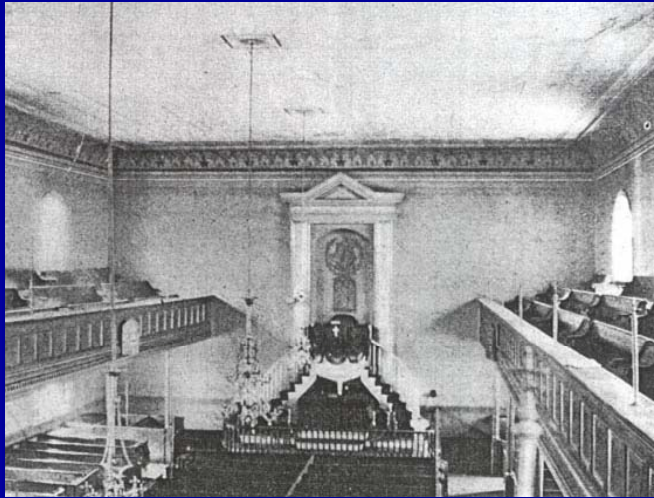
St. Pierre, Geneva, before (right) and after (left)



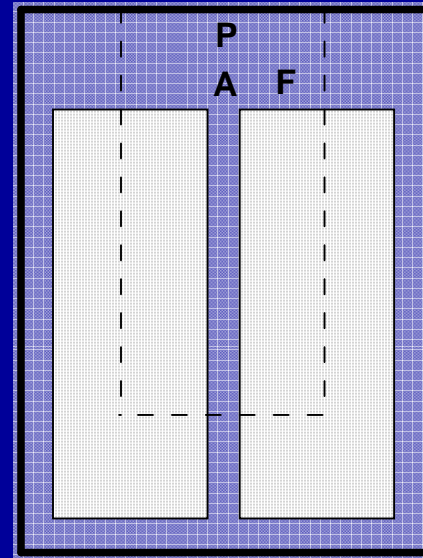
- Separation between congregation and clergy removed
- Sightlines improved
- Encouraged active participation

Greek Revival, mid-1800s

Photo of Grace Lutheran, Milwaukee (1876)
Section view of St. Mark's, Watertown (1855-87)



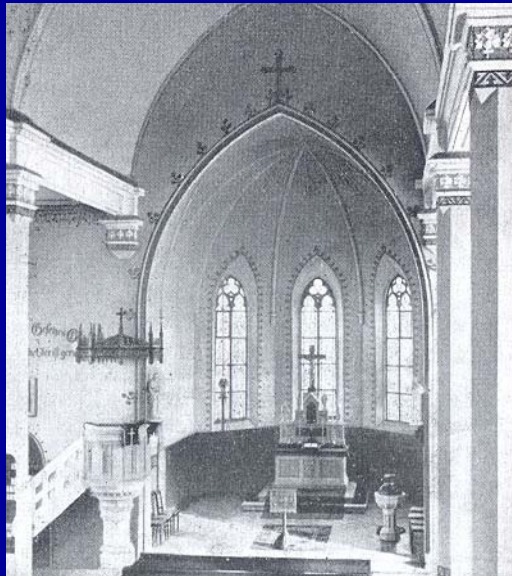
Typical Greek Revival Layout: P (pulpit)
behind A (altar) and F (font)



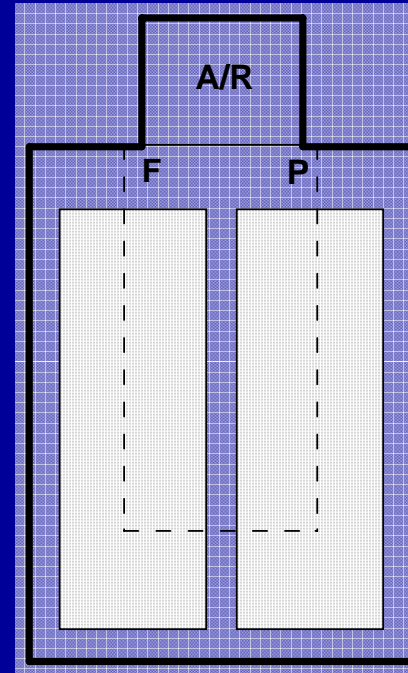
- Liturgical elements clustered in front, contained by communion rail
- Pulpit rises above altar and font
- Reflects Pietism influence in worship and architecture

Gothic Revival, mid-1800s

First German Luth., Manitowoc, WI (photo 1905) top
St. John's, Planitz, Germany (1874) bottom



Typical Greek Revival Layout: P (pulpit)
behind A (altar) and F (font)



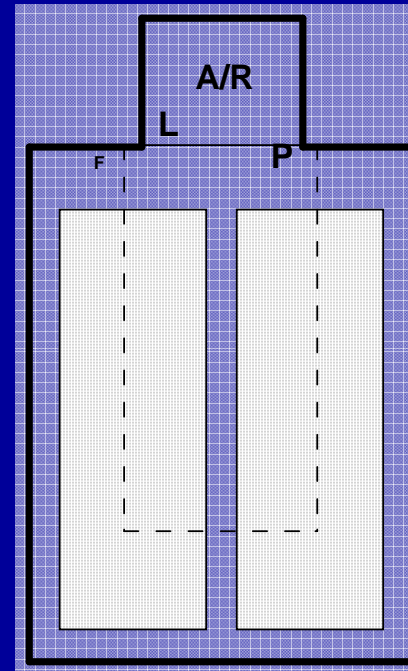
- Return to triangulation of liturgical elements
- High Pulpit predominates
- Altar and reredos in chancel

Changes to Gothic Revival

St. Paul's Lutheran, Fort Atkinson, WI (photo 1999)
St. Paul's Lutheran, Franklin, WI (photo 1999)



Revised Gothic Revival Layout: P (pulpit) behind A/R (altar/reredos) and L (lectern)



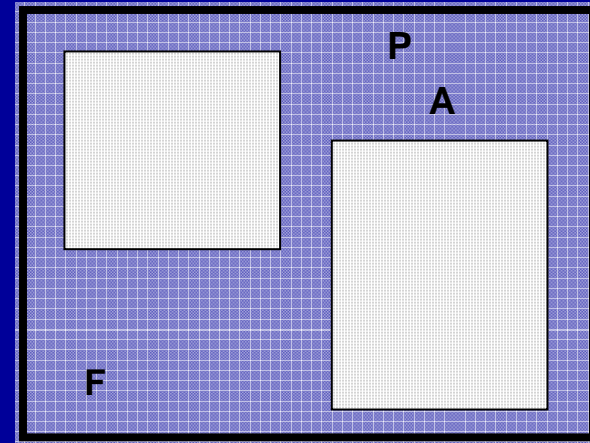
- Addition of lectern, separating location of Word of God
- Font moved away from liturgical center

"Domus Ecclesiae" Movement

Our Saviour's Lutheran (ELCA), Jackson, Minnesota (built 1979)



Domus Ecclesiae: P (pulpit), A (altar table) and F (font)

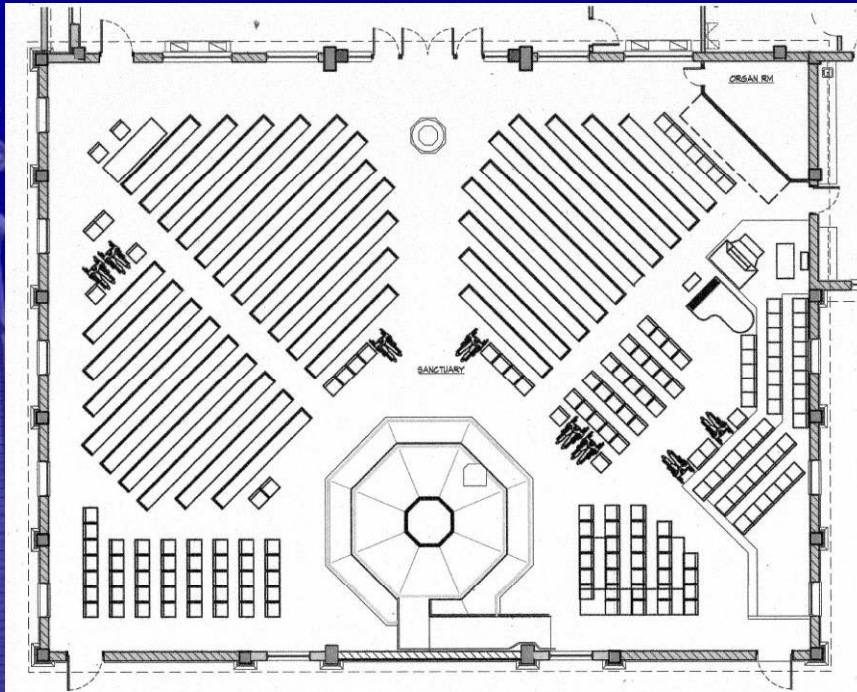


- All seating, furniture, and liturgical elements are movable
- Creates a multi-purpose space called a "centrum"
- Plan is asymmetrical

Current Trends

Design / Layouts

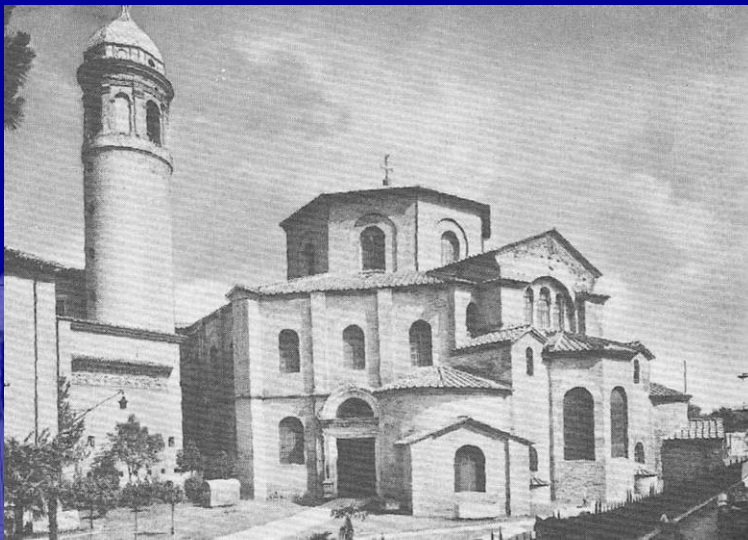
- Seating arrangements
 - Radial seating
 - Good sightlines (65' rule)
 - Combination of pews and chairs
 - Music area integrated into nave (no balcony)



Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church,
New Berlin, WI 2004



Proposal for Prince of Peace, Traverse City, MI



San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy, A.D. 548

Current Trends

Historical Perspective

- Understand your congregation's heritage
- Understand our heritage
- Celebrate the past



Reconfiguration Precedents

Cross Lutheran Church (ELCA), Milwaukee, bema with liturgical elements (photo 1999)



Cross on partition wall separating chancel from nave, Cross Lutheran Church



- Fire gutted the church in 1995; reconstructed in 1996
- Liturgical elements placed on movable bema
- Chancel separated from nave

History of Lutheran Church Architecture



Reconfiguration Precedents

Sherman Park Lutheran (LC-MS), Milwaukee; Low altar in foreground, high altar in background



Baptismal font's new location in front of thrust platform



- Deep chancel reconfigured in 1996
- High altar remains; low altar added for celebrating communion
- Original font placed in center

St. Paul's Fort Atkinson (photo circa 1950), top
St. Trinity Parish in Dresden, Germany (1871)



Considerations

Baptismal Font

- Return font to centrally important location
- Consider removing cover and/or having the element of water visible
- Fonts near entrance have good symbolism, but usually offer a poor location, especially existing churches

Lectern, St. John's, Jefferson, WI (photo 1999) top
Church interior, St. John's, Two Rivers, WI (1960)



Considerations

Lectern

- Lutheran Churches before 1920 rarely had lecterns
- Move lectern to a less prominent location
- Consider removing lectern, and placing the font in its location



Considerations

Pulpit

- Retain high pulpits with schalldeckels for historical significance
- New churches should maintain a more balanced pulpit
- Encourage pastor and congregation to use whatever location feels most comfortable

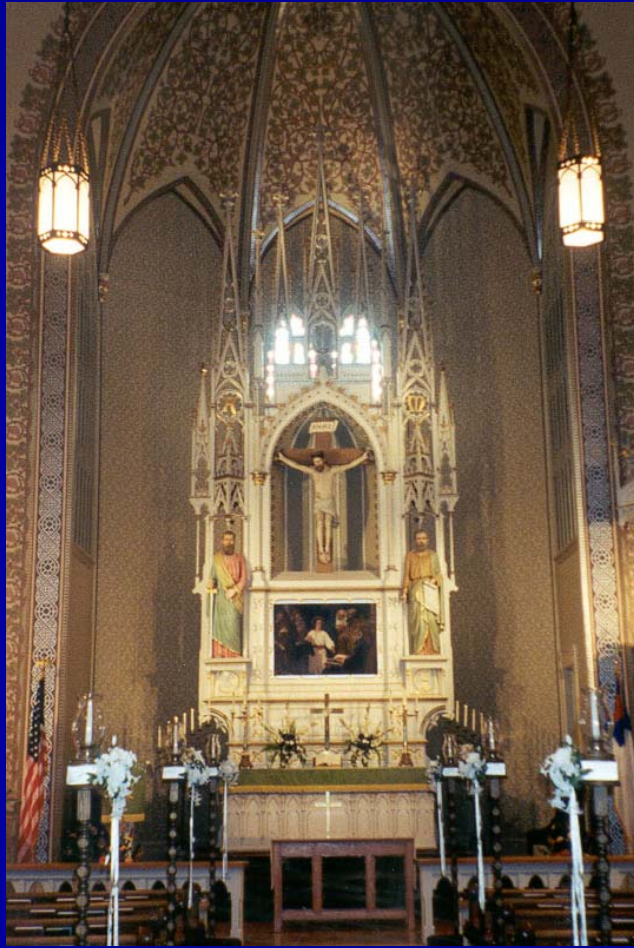


Pulpit, St. Paul's Lutheran, Fort Atkinson, WI (photo 1999)

Other Considerationss

Altar and Reredos

- Retain reredos for artistic significance
- Consider detaching altar and reredos, moving altar forward
- Avoid adding "low altars", since that may confuse altar's purpose



Altar and reredos, St. Mark's, Watertown, WI (photo 1999)

Movable chairs, Modonna della Stada Catholic Church
Zion Lutheran, Columbus, WI, (photo 1978) bottom



Other Considerations

Assembly Layout

- Consider flexibility and impermanence of chairs
- Retain historical significance of pews if original
- Use sight lines and sound transmission as guides

Other Considerations

Miscellaneous

- Flags do not have a spiritual significance for worship
- The need for communion rails should be determined by congregation
- Maintain consistency of symbols, such as number and location of crucifix

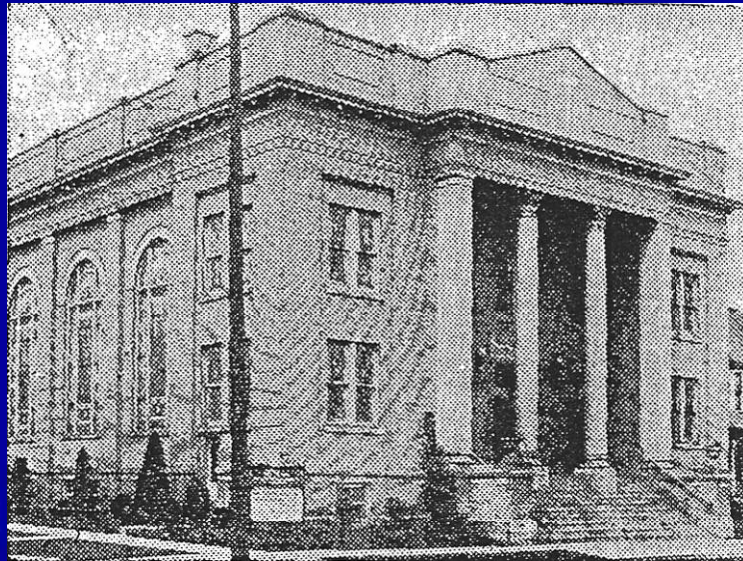


Chancel, St. Paul's Lutheran, Franklin, WI (photo 1999)

Current Needs

Accessibility

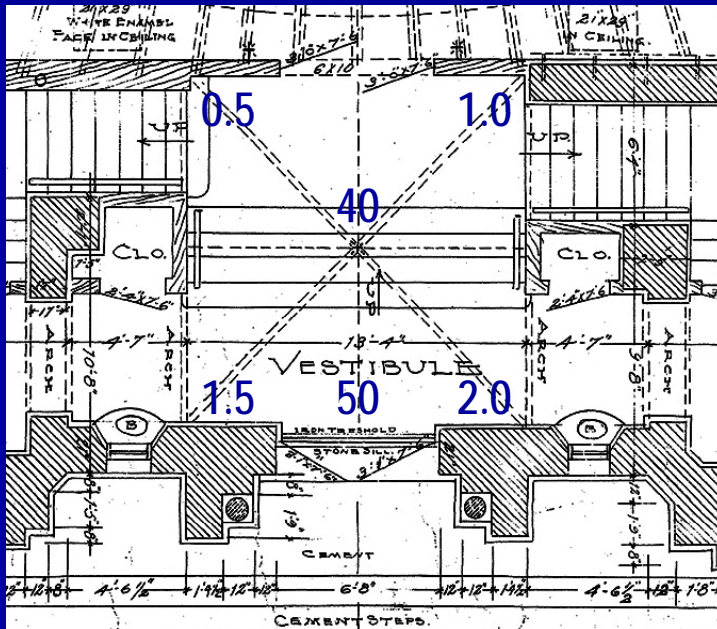
- Consider visitor experience
 - Parking Lot– stall location
 - Entering into narthex– stairs
 - Pew Spacing / Notches
 - Communion Rail– kneeling
 - Access to sacraments
 - Accessibility for called staff



Original Mount Olive Lutheran Church,
Appleton, circa 1925

Current Needs

Audio / Visual / Lighting



Light Density Reading, St. Paul
Lutheran Church, Appleton, WI 2008

- Technology's influence
 - To Powerpoint or not to Powerpoint
 - Quality speakers
- Proper Lighting
 - Good lighting to read
 - Good lighting for accessibility

Questions / Comments

E-mail me at tdvorak@hoffman.net if
you would like a copy of the
presentation

