

The LORD Is in This Place

Sanctuary Renovation
St. Paul Lutheran Church • Green Bay, Wisconsin
Dedicated January 31, 2016



The color and the arch of our ceiling are reflected in our new altar.

Fleeing from his home after sins he had committed against his family, Jacob had a dream. He saw a stairway stretching from earth to heaven, and he heard a promise from the Lord: God would be with Jacob, and all peoples on earth would be blessed through his offspring. When Jacob woke up, he declared, “Surely, the LORD is in this place” (Genesis 28:16). Jacob had been shown that where the promise of the Savior is, there is the house of God and the gate of heaven.

In his Word and Sacraments God still proclaims the promise of this Savior. By means of his message of forgiveness, the Lord continually raises his people from the death of their sin and fills their hearts and lives with his peace and strength.

The renovation of our church sanctuary is a celebration of God’s presence among us through his means of grace. With Jacob, we sinners have been shown the grace of God. With Jacob we exclaim, “Surely, the Lord is in this place!”



*He was pierced for
our transgressions
- Isaiah 53:5*

A cross occupies the central place in our chancel. Our life in this world and the next depends on what Jesus accomplished for us by his suffering and death. By the shedding of his blood, he has atoned for the sins of all people.

The top of our font and our altar are cut from Lannon stone.



*All of you who were baptized into Christ have
clothed yourselves with Christ - Galatians 3:27*

*Because I live, you
also will live
- John 14:19*

Located near the Baptism font, the paschal candle is a symbol of the resurrection. It is lit on the Sundays of Easter and whenever there is a baptism or a funeral. *Christ is risen!*



Martin Luther said, "Baptism is so full of consolation and grace that heaven and earth cannot understand it." Though a person is only baptized once, Holy Baptism brings daily blessings. Every day our sinful nature needs to be drowned in repentance before God, and every day our Baptism is a resurrection from the dead (Romans 6:3-6). In our struggle against sin, our Baptism tells us who we are, children of God, through faith in Jesus. The victory is already ours. The font is a symbol for all this. Even before a word in church is spoken, the Baptism font speaks for itself.

Ambo • Processional Cross

The font, altar, ambo, and chairs are made of red oak.



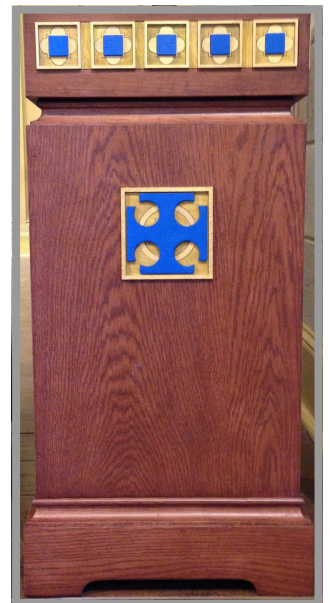
We preach Christ crucified - 1 Corinthians 1:23

Next to our ambo is a raised cross, signifying to all that the suffering and death of our Savior Jesus Christ is at the heart of every sermon preached. When the cross is used in procession, we are reminded of Jesus' gracious promise to be with us who have gathered in his name.

The Lord said, "Say whatever I command you" - Jeremiah 1:7

Good preaching takes hard work, but it is not the preacher that gives a sermon its power; it is the Word of God that he preaches. An *ambo* is a symbol for the proclamation of God's Word. It functions as both a *lectern* (from which scripture lessons are read) and a *pulpit* (from which sermons are preached). When a preacher stands behind the ambo he is inviting the congregation to remember that the message they are hearing from him didn't originate with him. He is preaching the Word of God.

Marked with a cross and decorated in trim that matches the colors behind them, identical pieces serve to hold the paschal candle and processional cross. The placement and the darker color of these pieces demonstrate a connection to the chancel furnishings near which they stand.



Altar



The stone on our altar weighs about 1200 pounds, giving the altar a total weight of 1600 pounds.

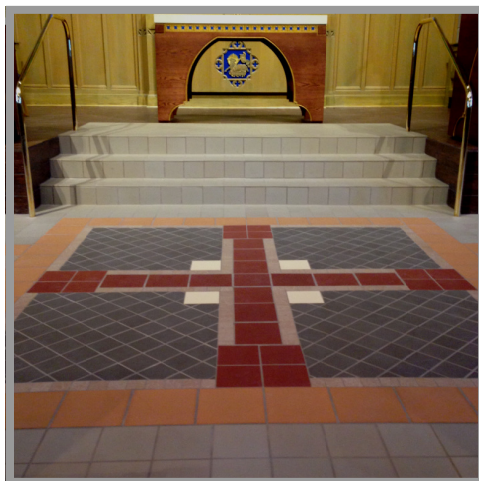


This is my body; this is my blood - Matthew 26:26,28

Sacrifices offered on Old Testament altars foreshadowed the one sacrifice by which Jesus atoned for the sins of the world. The altar in our church is more than a table from which we serve Holy Communion. The altar serves as a symbol of Christ's atoning sacrifice and of God's abiding presence. Our freestanding altar allows the pastor to face the congregation as he consecrates the bread and wine.

Poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins - Matthew 26:28

At the Lord's Supper, God gives and we receive. Together with the bread and wine of Communion we receive the true body and blood of Jesus our Savior. Through faith in God's promise, we receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation. The sides of our altar are designed to indicate that Communion is not something we do for God. The essential action of Communion flows in a downward direction, from God to us.



Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence - Hebrews 4:16

The cross in the floor assures us of why it is that we sinners can approach God's throne of grace. Jesus our High Priest sacrificed himself on the cross, a one-time atonement for the sins of all. Now risen and ascended, he continues to intercede for us at God's right hand.

Chancel



Behind the scenes is a remodeled sacristy with a new floor, water line, sink, and cabinetry.

The front of our church preaches a sermon without words. Baptism, Communion, and God's Word are symbolized by three furnishings of matching color. Each of these three pieces is connected in color to the central cross above and behind them. If God's Son Jesus had not gone to his cross, Baptism could not save us, Communion could not feed our souls, and God's Word could not set us free. But Jesus has suffered and died for us, and now every promise of God is "Yes" in Christ.

When you come to church and your endurance has been stretched thin by the troubles of this world and your heart is weighed down by sin and guilt, "listen" to

that sermon with your eyes. In your baptism, God has proclaimed you his child, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. In Communion, the Lord sets his table for you and serves you the forgiveness and the fellowship with him for which you long. The Word of God you will hear is the truth, and the truth will set you free. Each of these symbols is located in a space that spills out onto the main floor, on which an engraved cross invites you and all your fellow worshipers to approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that you may receive mercy and find grace to help you in your time of need.

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood - 1 Peter 2:9

Each believer has the privilege and the responsibility of proclaiming what God has done for them in Christ. When believers gather together in worship, that message is begging to be heard from them.

By replacing carpeted areas with ceramic tile, we've livened our acoustical environment in a way that enables worshipers to hear not only the preacher who stands up in front of them, but also the preachers who are speaking and singing in the pews around them.



For the hearing disabled, a hearing loop has been installed beneath our new floor.



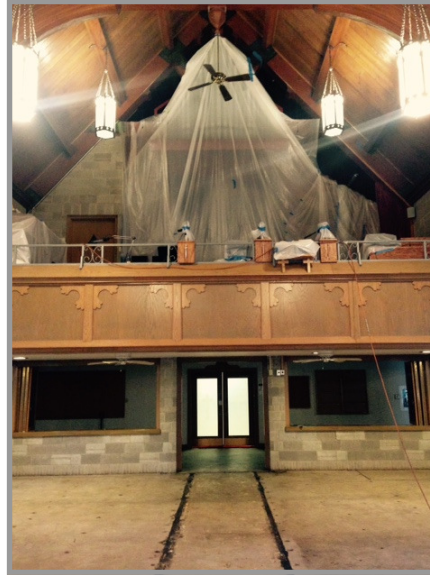
The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation - Psalm 118:14

A church choir works best when they work together. The flooring of our balcony was redesigned in a way that helps choirs to do just that, and existing pews were re-crafted to fit the space. As each singer proclaims the gospel in song, the shape of each flooring level enables that singer to hear the other singers in the choir. This, in turn, benefits all who are listening to the choir.

Construction Photos



Pews are out; chancel work begins.

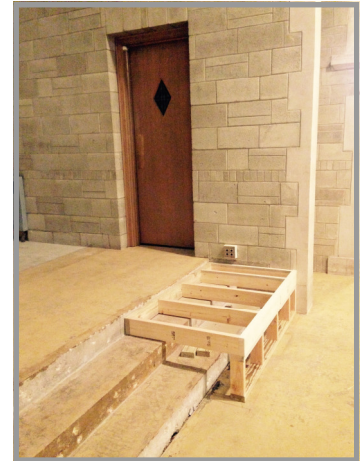


The balcony floor is restructured.



Air vents keep things safe during asbestos abatement.

Organ pipes are protected from dust.



Support for the new ambo is in place.



The cross design requires art and skill.



During construction the pews were stored in the fellowship hall, and we used that space for weekly services.



Dusting the ceiling requires courage and a good sense of balance.



The backdrop of the Lamb is painted a darker blue to match the color of the stained glass window.

Thanksgiving • Acknowledgements



Throughout St. Paul's history, our people have supported gospel ministry with generous gifts. Our congregation was officially incorporated on November 2, 1883. Just one month later, the forty members of this new congregation dedicated a white frame church building. Our first school building was built in 1884. On August 16, 1953, a new church and school were dedicated in our current location, and school additions were built in 1964 and 1995.

Those who have gone before us have shown us what the message of sin and grace was worth to them. Our prayer is that future generations will learn the same thing from us.

May God continue to preserve his Word and Sacraments here, so that many more may receive and believe the saving message of Jesus and proclaim in their hearts, "Surely, the Lord is in this place."

We offer a special word of thanks to Jim Gamble, who chairs our TTF Steering Committee, to the members of the church interior committee and their chair Mark Bergeon, and to Paul VanCalster, who spent countless hours serving as liaison between our congregation and the construction team throughout this project. We are thankful also for the fine work of Massmann Studios, our design and construction team. We thank our anonymous donor whose matching gift plan encouraged many more to give generously, and we're thankful for the prayers and support of all whose gifts made this project possible.

Soli Deo Gloria: To God alone be the glory!

This church interior project is the first in our TTF (Today, Tomorrow, the Future) program. The goal of TTF is to support and encourage the proclamation of the gospel through the design and function of our church and school building.