

Church Architecture: Building Deliberately Lutheran

The mission statement that guided construction of a new church in Verona, WI was influenced by similar thinking at Our Savior Lutheran, Houston, TX. The WTL newsletter encouraged interested readers to study a comprehensive description at the Houston website: www.osl.cc/ff/index.html.

Readers will discover that the Houston design was inspired by the famous Lutheran Frauenkirche in Dresden, Germany, a church that was destroyed in World War II. A glorious reconstruction project was completed in 2006 and attracted interest and support from around the world. The official Frauenkirche website – which features an English version – is at: <http://www.frauenkirche-dresden.org/>

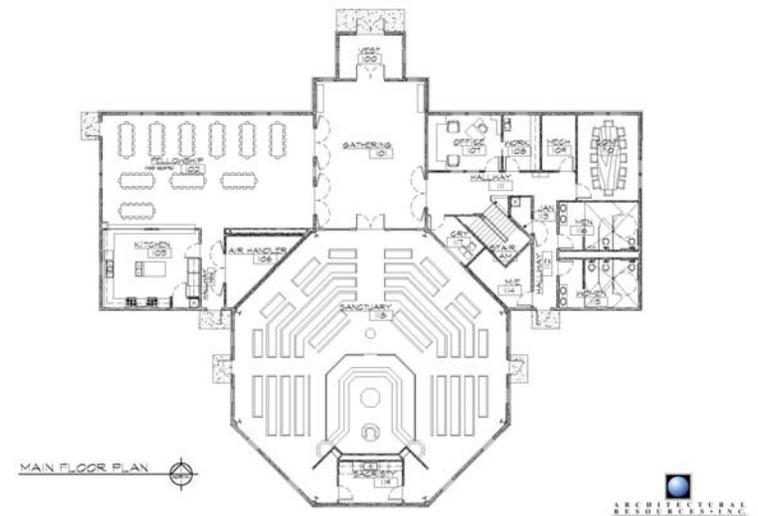
Despite its name, the Frauenkirche is a Lutheran church built between 1726-1743. Its real name is the Evangelical [i.e., Lutheran] Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul. The Houston website tells the story of Lutheran determination to build the most Lutheran church they could.

The impetus for the construction of this massive church was the 1697 conversion of Saxony's Elector Augustus the Strong from Lutheranism to Catholicism.... He proceeded to build a beautiful Catholic cathedral, the "*Hofkirche*," across from his palace so that the members of his court could worship according to the teachings of his new faith. The Lutheran burghers of Dresden were dismayed. They resolved to raise a church that would rival St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. . . .

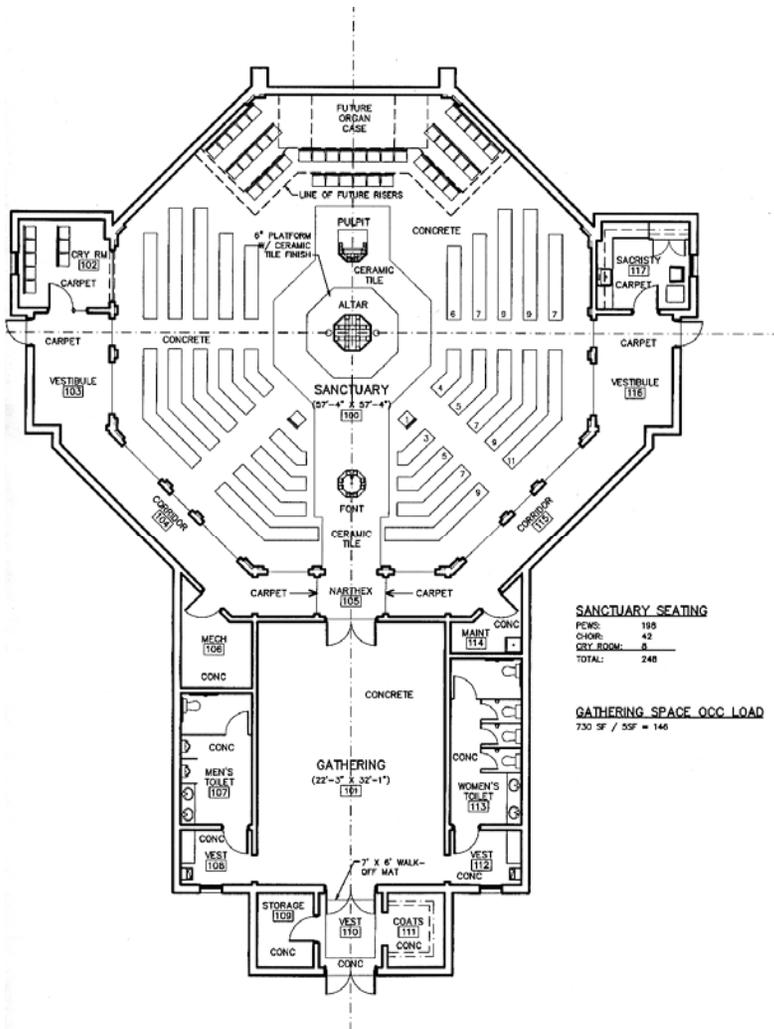
The concept of a large central space surrounded by multiple balconies and focused on pulpit, altar and baptismal font as the architectural representations of the means of grace became the central theme of Lutheran church architecture in the years that followed. Lutheran churches were built in a variety of configurations – square, rectangular, and octagonal – but a consistent emphasis upon the means of grace, the Gospel in Word and Sacrament, was maintained.

Two recent WELS church designs have been heavily influenced by Dresden/Houston design concepts. Tomhave wrote about the new church in Verona: "The baptismal font is octagonal to symbolize the eighth day – the day of the resurrection – and its connection to Baptism." Both of the churches below are also octagonal.

- Construction of Shepherd of the Hills, Duluth, MN, began in October, 2006. The pastor is Matthew DeNoyer. The architect is Rob Semborski of Architectural Resources, Inc., based in Duluth.



- Construction of Prince of Peace, Traverse City, MI, has not yet begun. The pastor is Brent Brutlag. The architect is Rick Skendzel of Architectural Technology, PC, based in Traverse City. He is also licensed to practice in Wisconsin.



SANCTUARY SEATING

PKGS:	198
CHOR:	42
CRY ROOM:	8
TOTAL:	248

GATHERING SPACE OCC LOAD

730 SF / 55F = 146

