

Why and Wherefore

Someone once said that the key to successful architecture and construction worthy of note is due primarily to how well a structure allows for the full purpose for which the building is intended. Homes, hospitals, banks and the like are planned around the daily use of that space. Churches too are designed to fit the needs of the community that gathers. As one walks into the church space the Parish of Saint Theresa call home, one need only to look around to realize that every effort has been made to witness to the presence of God in our midst. From simple, straightforward materials, to workmanship that is truly artistic, the space is imbued with a living and true sense of life and purpose.

When committees gathered and parishioners were asked what they hoped to see in a new church for the parish some years ago now, the common themes were evident. A place that is warm and comfortable, inviting and not overly large was just some descriptive ways people used to express themselves. The church needed to fit its surroundings and speak of the very people who would be filling her pews, family folk who work hard and appreciate the simple things in life while searching for deeper fulfillment in real ways, not the fleeting and costly. She needed to maintain a sense of purpose with ample space to worship and pray, but also allow for the gathering of all in times of great joy and profound sorrow, a place that would be used for prayer as well as the social events and fundraisers that bring life. Al

Oakes of Artis Designs, Providence, RI, acted as Architect, and Pariscault Builders, Warwick, RI, General Contractor.

The community now enters the church through a spacious narthex or gathering space. Outside landscaping and lighting, as well as a substantial entryway beckon all to enter in. Here families will

gather to be greeted as we sing farewell to a loved one, or congratulate the bride and groom just beginning on a new way of life. Clear glass allows all to see, even before they are able to touch, the fact that the waters of baptism await all who believe, offering refreshment and freedom. As the Paschal Candle illumines our way in life, the moving waters of the Baptismal Font and Pool will be used to bring new members into the life of Christ and the Church he established. Our using the waters of the font each time we enter into the refreshing space of the church will remind us of the beginnings of our own faith, and the continuous protection offered by a God that is only a touch away. A bronze grill yet to be completed, designed as a fishing net will allow water to flow from the bowl of the font, to the pool below without noise or distraction. The Ambry, the place lighted next to the font, is where the sacred oils are preserved and displayed. Oils for anointing the sick, infants and adults at baptism and confirmation, as well as in the ceremonies of the dedication of the altar and church walls, connect us to the wider church. Such oils are blessed each year by the Bishop during Holy Week, and represent the extension of Christ's healing through the Church.

Standing just beyond the font is our patroness, Saint Theresa. Central in focus and in placement, she now welcomes all to encounter the Lord who can be experienced in "little ways". In simplicity and humility she asks that we not leave our concerns at the door, but to bring them into the presence of God, so that he can transform them into life-giving experiences of hope. Our way into the sanctuary is marked out by granite medallions in the center aisle and at the foot of the altar. Sloped forward, the very shape of the Main Nave draws all physically and visually to the altar of sacrifice. The crucifix suspended above, begs all to come closer to encounter life born of death and resurrection. The wood of the sanctuary

floor is red oak and makes connection with the wood trim throughout the church. The mahogany columns and risers, as well as the main doors to the church and the trim in the rear of the sanctuary connects the eye to form a cohesive whole. Such connections tell us that something special is present, someone we can encounter nowhere else as easily as here.

The Altar, Pulpit, Altar of Reservation, Table for the Book of the Gospels and Baptismal Font and Pool are all constructed Louis Ledoux of Little Compton, RI, of mahogany, soapstone and copper, natural elements each with distinctive characteristics and yet which speak so well together. To connect with these important loci are the chairs in the sanctuary, handmade by Paul Cyr of Little Compton, RI, and designed to be in harmony with the vault of the ceiling and simplicity of lines found throughout the church. Seating is provided for the priest celebrant in the center, the Deacon to his right, and three Altar Servers chairs to offer balance and assistance in the celebrations.

The use of color and tone brings a richness and warmth to our place of dining and adoration, celebration and blessing. Surrounded as we are with the Stations of the Cross, recounting the path Jesus trod for our salvation, and Stained Glass Windows which come to us primarily from Saint Patrick's Church, now Good Shepherd, in Fall River, the rich symbols of our faith help us to recall and learn of all the good that God has done for us. As the window designs are completed and installation continues in coming weeks, our home will be enriched with new and more vibrant light.

The floor of colored and polished concrete is a bit unusual, and may trick the eye to believe that it is marble or some other stone. Poured in slabs and polished until it dried, the burnishing achieved adds

interest and distinctiveness. Sealed and waxed, the floor is designed to be non-slip, even as it reflects light from above it. The ceiling of wood adds further dimension to the space as its rich tones instill calm and warmth. Even the placement of the music ministry, organ and choir, to the front is to invite all to join in praise with song; not allowing the moment to pass when we can all offer our prayer twice by opening our mouths and "shouting" from our hearts.

One may take note of the Transition Room, or "Cry Room" in the north-west corner of our addition. While not much larger than the original, its placement is designed to allow for clear visual lines to the altar. This room is intended to help train young ones to be able to participate in the full celebration of mass. Not large enough to serve many at a time, it is hoped that families will use it when necessary, not as a normal course of events. The Sacristy is much more functional than before, with ample room for preparing for liturgy, be it mass or service of prayer. And the Reconciliation Room at the rear of the worship space, in the hallway leading to the Parish Hall, gives forth a sense of peace in its spaciousness and appointment.

So plan to visit our parish home, and take a look around. Marvel at what the Lord continues to do for us. It is to his greater glory that we are called and all we have done is for the purpose of praising his goodness to us. May he dwell in his house and with us for generations to come.

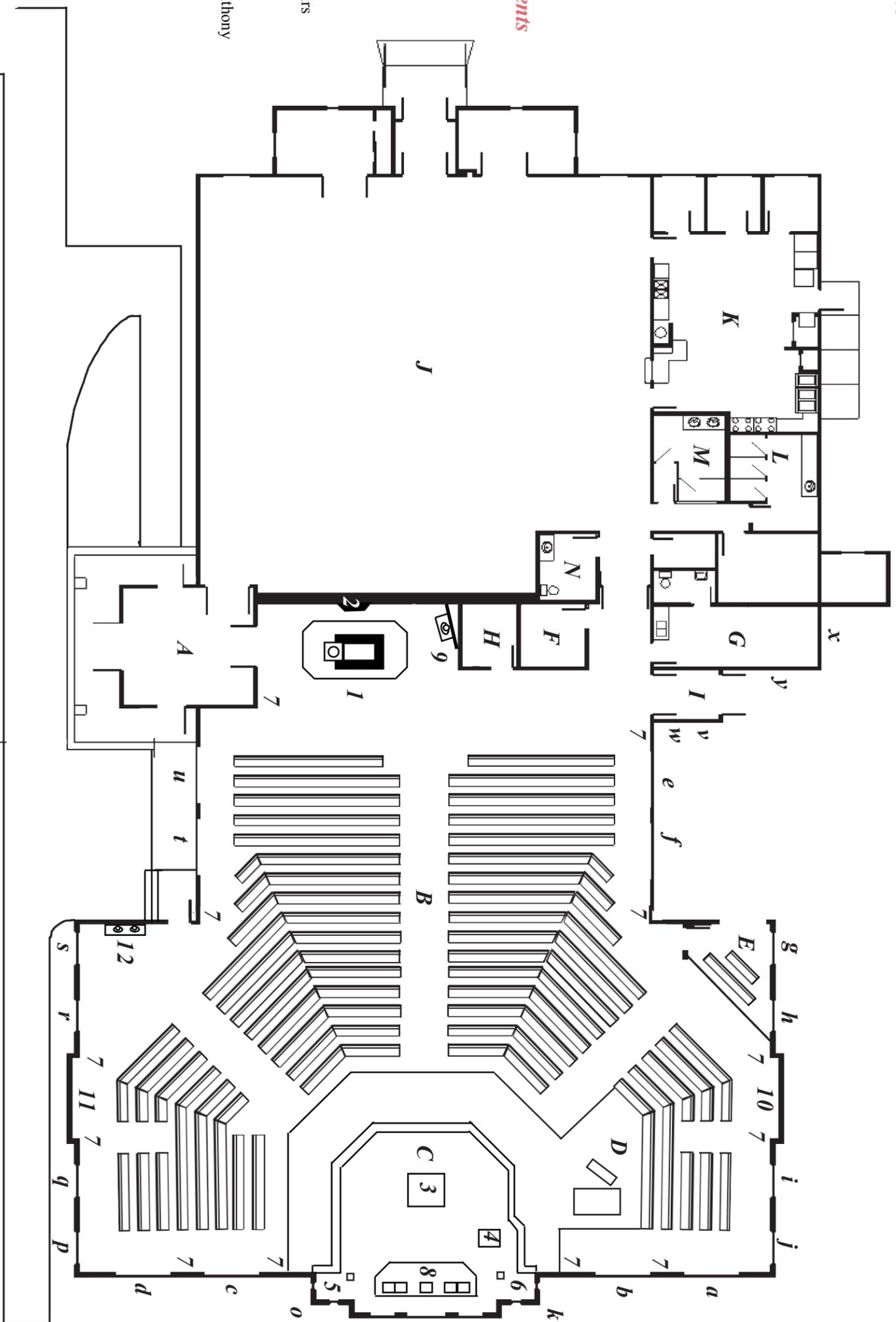
Our Church Plan

Making Ourselves at Home

- A. Narthex, or Gathering Space
- B. Main Nave
- C. Sanctuary
- D. Music Ministry
- E. Transition Room
- F. Reconciliation Room
- G. Sacristy
- H. Ushers/Storage Room
- I. Vestibule
- J. Parish Hall
- K. Hall Kitchen
- L. Men's Room
- M. Lady's Room
- N. Handicap/Family Bathroom

The Liturgical Appointments and Furnishings

- 1. Baptismal Font and Pool
- 2. Ambo
- 3. Altar
- 4. Pulpit or Ambo
- 5. Tabernacle
- 6. Book of the Gospels
- 7. Dedication Candles
- 8. Presidential and Deacon's Chairs
- 9. Saint Theresa
- 10. The Blessed Mother
- 11. Saint Joseph
- 12. Saints Francis of Assisi and Anthony



The Stained Glass Windows

- a. Saint Matthew
- b. Saint Mark
- c. Saint Luke
- d. Saint John
- e. The Law
- f. The Scriptures
- g. The Lamb of Victory
- h. The Lilies of Resurrection
- i. The Lyre
- j. Keys of the Kingdom
- k. I
- l. m.
- n. o.
- p. The Wheat for Eucharist
- q. The Monstrance
- r. The Chalice
- s. The Pelican
- t. The Holy Spirit
- u. The Baptismal Shell
- v. Cross and Crown
- w. IHS
- x. The Papal Insignia
- y. The Miter and Scepter