



Churches Recognized for Architectural Excellence Receive the 1999 Presidents' Award

New Construction Honor Award and Honorable Mention for Treatment of Baptistry

Project: Creekwood Christian Church, Flower Mound, Texas

Architect: Bryce Weigand, FAIA—Good Fulton & Farrell Architects, Dallas, Texas

Cost: \$1.2 million (\$116 per square foot)

Jury Comments: "it's clean, straightforward, nice and open"
"wonderful expression of the baptistry"

Creekwood Christian Church is a rapidly growing congregation just north of the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport. As with many first units, the congregation could have used twice the space that they were able to build so a creative design of a multiple-use space was imperative. The main space in the building has the integrity of a space designed for worship while functioning effectively for fellowship as well. The 10,000-square-foot building is the first phase of a planned four-phase master plan.



The sanctuary/multipurpose space of Creekwood Christian Church features site-built trusses and spiral ductwork. Jurists praised Creekwood for the integration of handicapped accessibility into the heart of the design.

The congregation desired simplicity as an expression of good stewardship and the use of natural, exposed materials to be in harmony with the worship of a revealed God. The creation of a glass tower behind the chancel allows daylight to enter the space and creates a welcoming glow to the surrounding neighborhood during evening hours. Extensive use of glass in the narthex allows the surrounding community to observe the activity of the church and conversely, allows the church to observe the world it is called to serve.



The setting sun is reflected on the front entry of Creekwood Christian Church in Flower Mound, Texas.

New Construction: Citation Award

Project: Saint Andrew Christian Church, Olathe, Kansas

Architects: Cullen Burda and Gary Black—R. Gary Black Consulting, El Cerrito, California

Cost: \$960,000 (\$140 per square foot)

Jury Comments: "we can't ignore this one" "emphasis is clearly on spoken word and communion" "use of straw is a plus—great insulation—fabulous use of a throw-away material"

When this new congregation start of the Greater Kansas City Region began to interview architects some four and one-half years ago, Joel Barnes, Building Committee Chairperson, asked each of the potential architects to respond to the question, "What makes a sacred building sacred?" The response of Gary Black, project architect, was, "You don't just slap a cross on a building and call it sacred... the whole process, from start to finish, is sacred." The architects saw this project as a way to understand the dreams of the congregation and then marry those dreams to a particular piece of land.



Children perform in the new sanctuary of St. Andrew Christian Church in Olathe, Kansas. Bright colors and natural light from above create a joyful worship space.

The church is built of simple, humble materials: straw, concrete, wood, and terra cotta, which are easily available and environmentally friendly. The church sits on 10 wooded acres surrounded on two sides by housing developments in this south Kansas City suburb. The building is L-shaped, facing a nature preserve, offering a retreat-like setting in the middle of suburbia. The congregation has a sister community in El Salvador, this relationship helped shape much of the building.

This first unit is essentially composed of two rooms. The Hearth Room has thick adobe-like walls built of straw bales encased in three inches of pneumatically placed concrete. The two-foot-thick walls with a R-50 rating, have deep window seats set with Spanish tiles. There is a fireplace with hand-painted accent tiles made by the congregation. The sanctuary has four concrete trusses which were built on site and lifted in place by a 150-ton crane. The room seats 260 people in moveable chairs making a variety of worship experiences not only possible but a way of life.

A note from the editor

Since the very beginning of Board of Church Extension in 1883, quality design in church buildings has been promoted as an asset to the ministry of the congregation which it houses. In that year, American Christian Missionary Society Convention Secretary, Robert Moffett, observed that "the want of a suitable place of worship is the chief hindrance to success" of a church. Now, 116 years later, the 1999 Presidents' Award for Architectural Excellence recognizes congregations and organizations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and their design professionals who have demonstrated a vision for quality, creative, and functional design in recent building programs.

The Presidents' Award honors the seven presidents of Board of Church Extension: Francis Rains, George Muckley, John Booth, William Percy, Rolland Sheafor, Harold Watkins, and James Powell, who have embodied the commitment to excellence and quality in the congregation's ministry.

Awards were considered in four categories: New Construction, Renovations and Restorations, Accessibility, and Visual Arts. The jury, who received entries from 17 states, considered not only design aesthetics but also how the project facilitates ministry, the good stewardship of resources, and the environmental friendliness and accessibility of the project. The top award, the Honor Award, in each category received \$500 to the outreach ministry of the recipient's choice. Awards were presented on October 8, 1999, at the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). I am pleased to devote this issue of *Cutting Edge* to the Award recipients in hopes that all can benefit from how sister congregations treated their building issues.

—Ryan D. Hazen

New Construction: Award of Merit and Honorable Mention for Treatment of Gathering Area

Project: Hazelwood Christian Church, Muncie, Indiana

Architect: John D. Hicks with Jerry G. Hoffman (US Architects) as Architect of Record

Cost: \$863,325 (\$61.60 per square foot)

Jury Comments: "the addition has created a wonderful, new gathering space" "made a thoughtful connection to existing limestone building"

This congregation completed a 14,000-square-foot addition giving careful consideration to the existing 1955 limestone sanctuary and mansion on the property. The two-story addition was angled between the two buildings for pedestrian flow and visual effect from the street. Like many congregations, the traffic flow at Hazelwood Christian Church has changed through the years. In the days of yesteryear many would walk to church using one entrance, but today most drive and use the door closest to the parking lot, which may or may not be the main entrance. In this case a new entrance was created to serve the parking areas, making this entrance one of welcome.

The new facility will allow for expansion of the congregation's programs including volleyball, contemporary worship, community use of



A glass-enclosed rotunda creates a connection between the 1955 sanctuary and the new addition at Hazelwood Christian Church in Muncie, Indiana.

the facility, and a 60-student pre-school program. Careful attention was given to accessibility as new restrooms and an elevator were a part of the design as well.

Renovation/Restoration: Honor Award

Project: Cleveland Heights Christian Church, Cheektowaga, New York

Architect: Arthur Frederic Beaman, Arthur Frederic Beaman, AIA

Cost: \$497,578

Jury Comments: "they took good advantage of their courtyard" "I like the way it's linked through from street to sanctuary" "good scale and character"



The new addition, including a new fellowship hall and accessible covered entry, has increased the opportunities for ministry at Cleveland Heights Christian Church in Cheektowaga, New York.

Cleveland Heights Christian Church in Cheektowaga, New York, got by for many years with fellowship space in the original 1947 building or by using the inadequate narthex behind the 1960 sanctuary. All of that has changed. An addition to the fellowship hall now provides new opportunities for ministry and a central atrium has become a favorite gathering space for all kinds of activities. A new elevator in the atrium makes accessibility central to the new design. A new covered entry with a new entrance now clearly says "welcome."

New and old building continuity was achieved by site-building roof trusses to match the 1947 clerestory ceiling construction. An octagon window from the 1947 sanctuary was also replicated in the new elevator tower to achieve a uniform appearance. There is a new, fresh, updated appearance at Cleveland Heights without throwing out the old.



The new atrium at Cleveland Heights Christian Church is now the favorite gathering place for members and visitors. The elevator shaft enclosure features an octagonal window to match one in the sanctuary.

**Renovation/Restoration:
Award of Merit and
Honorable Mention
for Treatment of
Gathering Area**

Project: Timberlake Christian Church, Lynchburg, Virginia

Architect: Robert Winthrop, Robert Winthrop and Associates

Cost: \$510,000

Jury Comments: "the gathering area is delightful in how it opens to both worship and fellowship" "good job of matching to the other building"

This project has presented a new face to the community by adding a large new narthex and fellowship hall with classrooms below. The project also completely refaced the building for an updated look.

The steeple is installed on the renovated Timberlake Christian Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. The existing building was refaced with new brick to give it a new and updated appearance.



Activities now take place in spaces that face the street and the public. Greeting and gathering before and after worship now take place in a welcoming, light-filled room.

A small steeple that was built by a member of the congregation for the original 1980 building was

removed and remounted on the new entrance lantern. For those thinking about taking a group to this area of the country, the renovation also included showers in the new restrooms stemming from the congregation's desire to host overnight groups from out of town.

**Accessibility: Honor Award;
Renovation/Restoration:
Citation Award**

Project: First Christian Church, Corvallis, Oregon

Architect: Howard Smith, Architects Four

Cost: \$482,439

Jury Comments: "creativity—quality—function, it meets all three criteria" "a very sensitive addition" "rear window, as viewed from inside, is very open—it looks more pleasant in proportions"

The remodeling project on this grand building was dedicated to

the glory of God on June 1, 1997. A complete rework of the main entrance, including moving the existing doors to the center axis of the building, meant a simplified and enlarged narthex and an elevator to all levels.

Architects Four principal, Howard Smith, of Salem, Oregon, said that the primary intent "was to develop a solution in which it would be difficult to separate 'new' from 'original' during all phases of its development." The addition extended the base character of the original with materials, colors, and details respected throughout. Where existing stained glass windows were concealed by construction, they were relocated to the new stairway/elevator addition. Where past remodeling projects had compromised functions and/or aesthetics, they were removed.

Prior to this renovation effort, congestion was the norm as the path to the sanctuary began with a short flight of stairs, a direct right turn through a narrow doorway and two more steps. This landed you in a very congested area directly in front



Stained glass windows that would have been concealed by new construction were relocated to the new stairway/elevator addition.

of the eastern-most sanctuary doors where others were trying to get into or leave the sanctuary. The renovation effort also added two new accessible restrooms. The jury delighted in the solution to what they saw as a very complex problem.



The new ground-level entrance co-exists in harmony with the existing building at First Christian Church in Corvallis, Oregon.

Accessibility: Citation Award

Project: Carlock Christian Church, Carlock, Illinois

Architect: Donna Milner

Cost: \$74,135

Jury Comments: "exterior is extremely handsome and compatible" "they have achieved a lot with a limited budget"

Donna Milner's goals for the congregation was to provide an entry to the church which improves the accessibility of the building and which blends with the original architecture of the building. She achieved both at a cost



A new ground-level entry addition complete with a limited-use elevator (door next to stairway) was completed at Carlock Christian Church in Carlock, Illinois, for just over \$74,000.

of just over \$74,000! The addition provided a new interior stairway and a limited-use elevator, which link the new grade-level entrance with the main worship level and the lower-level Sunday school rooms and community room. In addition, the new entry is easily accessible from both the front sidewalk and the rear parking area.

The brick for the new addition was carefully selected for color and texture to match existing brick as closely as possible. The connection to the existing wall was offset just a few inches so the new and old brick would not be in the same plane, making any slight variations in color and texture even less noticeable. The style and details of the painted wood arch supported by wood brackets of the new street entrance copies those of the original main entrance. The original exterior brick wall and floral patterned stained glass window were incorporated into the interior design of the new vestibule.

Accessibility: Award of Merit

Project: First Christian Church, Stow, Ohio

Architect: James Murfin, Murfin Associates, Inc., Architects and Planners

Cost: \$730,000

Jury Comments: "they achieved accessibility to the chancel with a delicately done ramp" "drive-up entrance is nicely done"

Architect James Murfin of Murfin Associates, Inc., of Hudson, Ohio, faced the problem created by a 1921 original structure and a 1954 education addition with multiple floor elevations. A series of internal ramps was established to permit easy accessibility to all major areas.

The jury commented on the complexity of this situation and the hundreds of others like it across the country. All jurors believe this solution dealt very effectively with the problems presented in the two buildings.

In addition, this was truly a congregationally supported project with more than 1,700 hours of sweat equity from members. The ownership in the project demonstrated by such an effort is to be commended.



Numerous existing floor elevations posed a challenge at First Christian Church in Stow, Ohio. A new addition with a series of internal ramps now permit easy accessibility to all major areas of the building.

Visual Arts: Honor Award and Honorable Mention for Treatment of Baptistry

Project: Geist Christian Church, Indianapolis, Indiana (windows)

Artist: Kenneth von Roenn, Jr., Architectural Art Glass, Louisville, Kentucky

Architect: Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf, Architects, Indianapolis, Indiana

Cost: \$54,000 (windows)

Jury Comments: "I like the use of glass to integrate indoor and outdoor worship areas" "creative, it doesn't distract from the worship experience, contemporary and meaningful"

Kenneth von Roenn, Jr., of Architectural Glass Art in Louisville, Kentucky, explains that the two sets of windows, one over the altar and one on the side, function quite differently in this new sanctuary for Geist Christian Church. The altar windows are intended to be more meditative for prayer, while the side windows are more informative—stimulating the mind. The fundamental theme in all the windows is growth expressed through symbols associated with natural growth and from parables told by Christ. The symbols common

to both sets of windows are the seed and the trellis. The prominent symbol of the altar windows is the flame, traditionally symbolic of the Holy Spirit with white glass jewels or seeds scattered throughout. This is a process known as "art glass" rather than stained glass as no leading is part of the assembly. Bevel and color components are adhered to panels and are then sent to a glazing shop to have another glass panel applied.

The sanctuary itself designed by Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf of Indianapolis, is a contemporary expression of traditional worship space. The long center aisle and expansive interior lend itself to formal services and weddings, while the fan-shaped seating create the opportunity for informality and intimacy. The jury gives Honorable Mention to Geist Christian Church for their treatment of the baptistry in their gathering area (the former sanctuary). Its prominence in the gathering area, known as the Great Hall, is a constant reminder of the importance and significance of one's baptism.



The altar window with a subtle flame design and the outdoor cross is the focal point of the new sanctuary for Geist Christian Church in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Visual Arts: Honor Award

Project: St. Andrew Christian Church, Olathe, Kansas (cross and hangings)

Artist: Judy Bryan-Frazier (cross) and Gary Duncan (hangings)

Cost: Cross donated, hangings \$693

Jury Comments: "bright and playful" "energizing together, these pieces create a gestalt that works astonishing results—you can't ignore it"

Since 1992, St. Andrew Christian Church has partnered with El Higueral, a mountaintop community of about 140 persons in

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northern El Salvador. This community dispersed during the Civil War and has been in the process of rebuilding since 1989. Several delegations from St. Andrew have visited El Higueral in the past seven years. When the time came to design a cross in the new sanctuary, this tie became important. Judy Bryan-Frazier, a member of the Building Committee, agreed to sketch some scenes for the cross after last year's delegation to El Higueral found no piece suitable for purchase. Minister Holly McKissick assured Judy that a professional artist could be hired to paint the scenes Judy envisioned. No such artist could be found so Judy also did the painting. Cut and constructed of ash plywood by the father of a church member, the cross was then painted in three sections in Judy's basement. Judy confesses that she had to constantly refrain from detailing elements such as shading, fingers, toes, sandals, and clothing creases to remain true to the spirit and style of Salvadoran art. The banners and other hangings designed by Gary Duncan contribute to the joyful presence in this space. They are designed to be easily changed for special programs and for different seasons. His work also graced the General Assembly worship area.



A reminder of their sister congregation in El Salvador, the sanctuary cross of St. Andrew Christian Church in Olathe, Kansas, shows many scenes of everyday life in El Salvador. The banner hangings throughout the sanctuary create a joyful worship space.

Four Jury Members Determine Winners of Presidents' Awards

A jury composed of four design professionals and other consultative staff to Board of Church Extension determined the winners of the Presidents' Awards.



The jury considered many factors in judging the entries, including how the project facilitates the congregation's or organization's ministry, stewardship, design

aesthetics, environmental friendliness, and accessibility.

Jury members included (from left to right): Joe Gardner, special BCE architectural consultant, Atlanta, Georgia; Jack Pecsok, special BCE architectural consultant, Indianapolis, Indiana; E. J. Potente, BCE sacred space consultant, Kenosha, Wisconsin; and N.

Vernon Blankenship, retired BCE vice president, Lexington, Kentucky.



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Board of Church Extension Services Offered

Board of Church Extension offers a staff of professional consultants to help congregations with the planning and financing of capital projects. These services are available by calling toll-free 1-800-274-1883 or by e-mail, bce@disciples.org.

General Counseling: On-site visits are made without charge to help congregations explore objectives, evaluate financial resources, and develop time schedules for capital projects. There is no charge for the general consultation.

Strategic and Building Planning: Newly established congregations plus a number of growing, declining, and relocating churches receive field consultations, which provide staff leadership, research materials, and evaluations to define missions, set goals, and identify requirements for housing present and future programs. No charges are made for these services.

Fundraising: Materials and staff direction help raise funds for capital projects, debt reduction and, in some cases, funds for operational and special needs. A nominal fee is charged.

Loans: Church Extension loan services are available to congregations and organizations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for the purchase of sites, parsonages and equipment, construction and remodeling of church buildings, construction of facilities for regional and general units of the Church, campus facilities and student centers for church-related colleges and seminaries, development of camp and conference centers, and all other capital projects.

Site Selection Counseling: Field visits and written reports are made without charge to evaluate proposed sites for new and relocating congregations.

Listening Conferences: Teams of consultants meet with congregations to gather input from

membership on issues surrounding building needs. The team will prepare recommendations to resolve struggles with hopes, expectations, problems and opportunities for ministry, and prepare recommendations to help the congregation move forward. This extended service is provided for a nominal fee.

Special Counseling: On-call architectural, fundraising, and data processing specialists provide consultations to help resolve issues in these special fields.

Planned Giving and Wills Seminar: Individuals and organizations receive counsel and advice on a variety of giving opportunities; the service specifically addresses the needs of people in establishing a will. No charges are made for this service.

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