

Congregational Inputs: Space Features Valued for Adult Programs

In a series of conversations with 15 adult church groups in late 2017, The Building Communications Task Force asked, “What are the features you particularly value in a meeting/gathering space?”

Some of the conversations were brief, some delved more deeply into thoughts about how their use of church space could help them meet their respective missions.

Three categories of need emerged, most with **implications for space usage in the fixed-up Jones Building**: space for organizational meetings, space for program events, and auxiliary space for storage.

Groups which meet regularly – Organizational Meeting Space

Board of Trustees

- Capacity/set-up: seating for 13 people around a hollow square of 4 six-foot tables, plus room for a row or two of auxiliary chairs, with enough room so as not to trip over the furniture. More space for bystanders would enable us to invite people to sessions of interest.
- Privacy - for occasional closed sessions.
- Good lighting and ability to hear everybody well.
- A/V set up: AV capability to show slides, internet connections and equipment for Skyping or teleconferencing – “would enable us to consult with so many resources!”
- Would value auxiliary space offering flexibility to be creative for annual Board retreats.

Church Council

- Capacity/set-up: seating for 12-15 people in a circle of chairs that can be readily moved, with low table in center for chalice.
- Nice ambiance (like the Commons)

Community Services Ministry

- Capacity/set-up: seating for 6-10 people in a circle of comfortable seats around a table.
- When we are expecting a small group, we prefer the Admin lobby, because of its table set-up and more comfortable chairs. For more (up to 10) people, the Kirby Room fits but it has some kind of mold issue (allergic reactions), and its seating is uncomfortable.
- Convenient storage space for trifolds and other display materials.

Community Clickers

- Capacity/set-up: seating for 12 people around pair of six-foot tables. It would be great if tables could stay set up, or at least be stored in the same room. Chairs with comfortable seats and good back support.
- Overhead lighting very important.
- Need enough adjacent storage (shelf space, preferably not on floor) for 4 large bins, so don't have to schlep. We weary of schlepping all this stuff back and forth each time we meet.

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Community QUilters

- Capacity/set-up: room for 10 people plus at least 4 six-foot tables plus two ironing boards. Would be great if tables could be reliably stored near working space.
- Overhead lighting very important, and ample electric outlets for sewing machines and irons.
- Convenience to parking (participants lug their own sewing machines from home, so appreciate the easy access from rear parking lot to back door of Commons).
- Comment: We like the Commons, but electric outlets and convenient storage are a problem.
- Need enough adjacent storage space for two large bins plus one very large bin, plus two ironing boards. Moreover, ideally, the two cabinets' worth of fabrics at Susan's house would be stored at the church as well.

Covenant Groups

- Capacity/set-up: 6-10 people in comfortable chairs, around a low table for a chalice.
- Intimate ambiance: dimmable/not-harsh lighting (very important), and low ceiling.
- Privacy.
- Reliable availability.
- Small cabinet to store chalice and matches for each space would be nice.
- There is very limited accessible space now, and interruptions are rampant in those few spaces. An accessible room that no one else would be tempted to access during our meetings would help us focus on deep sharing and building community.

Lectio

- Capacity/set-up: seating for 12 people in circle of comfortable chairs that are easily moved, adaptable for fewer or more people plus room to maneuver electric scooter or wheel chair, with low table for chalice in center of circle.
- Privacy, quiet
- Good, natural light, lots of windows with views of foliage.
- Single, small cubby suffices for readily-accessible Lectio materials and chalice.
- Really like the Commons, even though occasionally interrupted there.

Music Team

- Capacity/set-up for team meetings: comfortable seating for 6-10 people around a table.
- Rehearsal space:
 - Capacity/set-up: Seating for up to 45 people in rows with about a third of the room left for piano and Director's logistics. It would be extremely valuable to have a stable configuration of room furnishings, so not necessary to spend time at beginning of each rehearsal reconfiguring the room after other groups have left the furniture askew.
 - A resident piano
 - Privacy (no interruptions or distractions by other people)
 - Flexible availability for ad hoc and regularly scheduled rehearsals, for groups or soloists
 - Access during the day of scheduled rehearsals (e.g. ability to organize and lay out sheet music in advance for rehearsal participants) so precious rehearsal time is better used
 - Enough organized, alternative storage space so stuff doesn't clutter the rehearsal room.

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Spiritual Exploration for Adults (SEA)

- Capacity/set-up: flexible seating for 6-12 and more, with and sometimes without a table.
- White board on the wall, A/V set-up, readily accessible easel and supplies.
- Availability of break-out rooms.

Worship Ministry

- Capacity/set-up: comfortable seating for 12 people in circle of chairs, NOT a long/skinny room.
- Emotionally warm, good light, interesting walls, carpeting, plants “We like the cozy feeling of meeting in the Commons but it would be nice to be in a similar but private space, where the chairs were already grouped and there wasn’t a flow of through traffic.”
- Convenient storage for worship service accessories, such as flower vases, music holders, etc.

Groups which Hold Special Events

Annual Services Auction

- Capacity/set-up: table seating for at least 120 people in main room, plus auxiliary spaces to set up tables for silent auction and bar.
- Convenience to kitchen.
- Electric outlets everywhere, especially along the windowed wall in the Community Room.
- Auxiliary storage space: for 2-3 months before the event, it would be really helpful to have a small, designated, secure location where donated items could be collected and organized.

Concert Series

- Capacity/set-up for performances: Sanctuary is ideal because it accommodates large audience in space with stage and a good sound system.
- Capacity/set-up for hosting musicians: casual seating groups for 12 people (performers, friends & family), with enough space for buffet table and corners to stash gear out of the way.
- Privacy and security (ability to lock during performances)
- Convenience to kitchen.
- Reliable wi-fi access; Electric outlets (for charging electronics)

Peace and Justice

- Capacity/set-up for team meetings: seating for 6-10 people around a table.
- Community event space:
 - Some gatherings are small, but some bring in as many as 40 people (a recent example was a meeting which drew 32 community members, of which only 5 were C3HUU; and the quarterly MERI meetings bring in up to 40.) Need flexibility of seating configuration.
 - Convenience to kitchen.
 - Good acoustics and ability to darken for presentations.

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Sanctuary for Dialogue

- Capacity/set-up for organizational meetings: seating for 12, ideally a table with chairs as a set arrangement.
- Capacity/set-up for workshops: 8-80 additional people, need comfortable, movable furniture.
 - A space where we wouldn't be interrupted.
 - Built in white board and video screen.
 - Dimmable lights.
 - Convenient access to kitchen or kitchenette (because some workshops go on all day).
 - Convenient storage for unwieldy stuff like easels, flipcharts, tv (if not built in), in a closet where nice stuff could be kept separate from unwieldy stuff that could bump it.

WomenCircle

- Capacity/set-up for annual organizational meeting: seating for 12-16 around a square of tables in a room with space for refreshment table and extra chairs
- Capacity/set-up for events: Choice of room sizes, depending on nature of event and number of sign-ups, ranging from cozy (seating for 6-12 people) to capacious (tables and chairs for 12-32 plus open space for activity).
 - Convenient access to kitchen for food preparation and/or messy-project clean-up
 - Good acoustics and lighting

General Inputs about Storage Space

- Storage space should be highly organized, with established inventory and protocols for "borrowing," management, etc.
- Frequently used items should be stored near their usage site and should be directly accessible from a hallway or common room (not via a classroom). Particular examples are:
 - Folding tables and chairs should have designated storage space immediately adjacent to the Community Room.
 - Each classroom on the stage level should self-store its own allocation of chairs and a folding table (or two or more, for the Multi-Purpose Room and, perhaps, the Kirby Room)
 - Current and reusable tabling/display materials (trifolds and easels, posters, handouts) for active groups should have organized, common storage space near the Community Room.
 - Church groups which need bulky materials for their regular meetings, particularly the QUUilters and Clickers, should have allocated storage space near suitable meeting rooms.
 - Every room used for adult programming should have its own small cabinet or shelf space, stocked with essential shared supplies like paper and pencils, chalices and matches, tissues and paper towels (as in Commons).
- Infrequently used items should be stored in safe, dry space on church property. For example:
 - Old church records and archives need a secure, organized storage space.
 - The music and theatre programs need allocated storage for costumes, props and backdrops.
 - Supplies for the annual "Greening" need a separate storage space.