

St. Cyprian of Carthage
Orthodox Church in America

Building Committee Meeting
October 12, 2005

We are about to enter into an exciting chapter of our parish history. Many tasks await our common and personal work as we attempt to build a gathering place for the benefit of all that may come to receive the Light of the World, who is Jesus Christ our Lord. Tonight, we begin the preliminary programming of the schematic phase. Over the next two weeks we will involve the parish in our effort by making personal contact with the remainder of our parish. An open meeting will take place Wednesday, October 26, after Vespers. This meeting will include the participation of any parish members that are able to attend, Fr. Alexis Vinogradov (liturgical consultant), and our local architectural team from Rawlings, Wilson and Associates (Bill Rice, President; Paul Schope, Managing Associate). The open meeting will help our team develop design criteria for the project. If additional meetings are necessary to complete the programming task, they will be planned accordingly.

We must approach this work with humility, joined in constant prayer, because the project that is ahead of us will offer numerous temptations to act out of concern for the preservation and protection of our own pride, prestige, power and possessions. The best and worst of our humanity will emerge as we lead, follow, or offer support to the task at hand. Therefore, keep these thoughts in your own mind, and encourage them in the work of our committee and in the life of our parish:

- Orthodoxy is the Church of Christ on earth.
- The Church of Christ is not an institution.
- **The Church is new life with Christ and in Christ.**
- It is not limited to a building.
(The above points from *The Orthodox Church*, Fr. Sergius Bulgakov)
- A building will not define who we are or make us any more or any less a part of The Church.
- Anything we build must support our new life in Christ, and not hinder it; neither should a new building become the sole reason for our interest and activity in this new life. The **new life** itself should always be primary.
- While each of us have important perspectives and expertise to offer to this project, we must avoid personal agendas, else we risk building a monument to ourselves, rather than a gathering place and temple for the sacred rites of the new life we are called to live.
- We must work to openly communicate with each other and with the parish members so that we do not build up dividing walls between each

other. The evil one seeks to divide, to kill, and to destroy. Christ comes that we might have life, even life to the fullest (catholic).

The immediate task before us is to analyze who we are and who we hope to be in terms of how this identity will effect what we plan to build; both short term and long term, both initial construction phase and master plan development.

There are five distinct project phases listed in the contract with our architect:

1. Schematic Design Phase
2. Design Development Phase
3. Construction Documents Phase
4. Biding or Negotiation Phase
5. Construction Phase

While we will work closely with the architectural firm throughout the entire project, this preliminary portion of the Schematic Design Phase will require the most from us as a committee and parish. We need to communicate our vision of what we “see” (by faith), so that our design team can envision it schematically. We need to “see” a total facility to support the catholic (whole, full, and complete) life we hope to live: **being** the Church. This long range vision will help the design team develop a Master Plan to prevent us from constructing something today that will end up being in the way, or limiting what we may need to build tomorrow.

Sizing things up

(From the Church Facilities Checklist, OCA Department of Missions)

- 1 acre of land per 100 people (building/parking)
- 1 priest can effectively pastor 150 people
 - 0-50 people = “Family Church”
 - 50-150 people = “Pastoral Church”
 - 150-350 people = “Program Church”
 - 350 people and up = “Corporate Church”
- Our worship requires 9 to 10 square feet per person in nave
- Minimum of 10 square feet per person in fellowship hall; preferably 15 square feet per person
- 2.25 : 1 person to car ratio (suggested by architect) means 66 parking spaces for 150 people
- The 80% rule
 - If on a Sunday a visitor attends church and sees it only 50% full, he/she wonders what is wrong with the church
 - If a visitor finds the worship space 80% full, he/she may think there is no room for him/her

- With this rule in mind, 1000 square feet may only be sufficient space for 80 people.

Of course, these are only estimates, and we cannot anticipate every perception, or build something to meet every expectation.

During the contract negotiations for purchase of our property on Hugeunot Springs Road, we used the figure of 250 parishioners as the criterion for the soil test. This figure was thought to be greater than what we would actually seek to accommodate, but nevertheless, a number of potential parishioners that would offer us a way out of the contract if the soil findings were completely unacceptable.

A matter for discussion this evening and over the next two weeks is; when we look at ourselves ten or twenty years from now, what size parish (number of parishioners, both adult and children) do we “see”? Think about the categories of parish sizes above. If the author of these findings is correct, one priest can effectively minister to the needs of around 150 parishioners (knowing the sheep by name, and the sheep knowing the voice of the shepherd). We know that there are many local parishes that have over 150 parishioners and only one priest. Some of these parishes might even be described as successful.

The point is that when the parish becomes this large, the priest is more often forced to sacrifice ministering to the needs of people in order to attend to the needs of programs. When a parish grows beyond 150 people, it does have more resources with which to provide program ministries (“meeting the needs of the parishioners”). Programs need people, both leaders and participants, and programs also add more planning and coordination time to the priest’s responsibilities. This is why “Program Churches” usually require additional staff members, whether clergy or trained laity, to assist program management.

In light of some of this data, what size do we want to be? What number of parishioners do we want our master plan to accommodate? We know that we are currently approaching 60 adults and children. If we gain an average of 4 active attendees per year (considering potential losses) over the next ten years, regardless of whether they are contributing or “voting” members, we will be approaching 100 active parishioners by 2015. It is entirely possible that we may be at this number in five years. If so, it will only be because of what God is doing in our midst, not because of how beautiful a building we construct or how successful we may be judged to be.

A possible vision, as it has been voiced during the property search, is to develop a master plan for structures that would support a parish ministry for 150-200 parishioners. When we find ourselves approaching this number and are regularly cramped for space, then we will pray for God to call a portion of our membership to remove themselves from those who gather under the name

of St. Cyprian of Carthage, and to begin a new mission in Varina or another area east of I-95. We might even begin to look for favorable property now, to purchase it sooner, rather than later, in order to accommodate this plan. The important thing is that we risk **seeing** ourselves grow to be a parish of 150-200 people. We will need to anticipate what a parish that size will need in order to support our life in Christ, as well as to foresee what physical structures will best support the effort to be a "light to the nations," if only the greater Richmond/Central Virginia region. If we "see" a parish larger than 150-200, then we will need to consider appropriate space for worship, fellowship, education, multiple staff members, and facilities to support the ministry programs we might see ourselves offering to the community.

PRIORITIZING SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Primarily, our life in Christ as a parish is centered on worship. By offering the Divine Services and administering the Holy Mysteries, we offer ourselves, each other, and all our life unto Christ our God. In addition to worship, our life in Christ includes, but is not limited to prayer/meditation, instruction, counseling and ministry to the crucial needs that surround us; as well as good works and acts of kindness not necessarily limited to the gathering place. Here are some activities the Orthodox Church in America suggests that the local parish might attempt to offer its community (either with people power or making facilities available):

- Scouting programs
- Vacation Bible School
- Summer Camp
- Nursery School, Preschool, Kindergarten, etc.
- Home-schooling coordination
- After school, other youth related programs; tutoring
- English as a second language (ESL) courses
- Sports and recreational activities
- 12 step programs
- Food pantry/soup kitchen
- Clothing bank
- Senior Citizen's group
- Community Alliance/coalition (parish as center of community events)
- Immigration assistance
- Abortion counseling/assistance for unwed mothers
- Battered women's assistance
- Marriage/family counseling
- Drug, alcohol, other counseling
- Fairs or festivals, bazaars, open house, etc.

Take a moment to pick and prioritize (label 1-10) 10 activities that you could see our church offering as ministries to our community.

My thought is that the list of activities that emerges as the top five choices (ranked) should significantly influence the master plan for our future facility. The top ten should direct our long-term plan for program ministry.

MASTER PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE

The following list of questions is to guide our discussion this evening, and to guide each of you as you personally contact parishioners to glean the “mind of the parish” over the next two weeks. Please contact your list of persons, either individually, or around the table one evening, and allow them to respond to the questions. Keep track of their responses, and organize them in a way that you can report the findings to the body during our discussion on October 26. (See suggestion at the end of the questionnaire)

Consolidating the responses will help our meeting move along that evening, but persons present at the meeting will still be encouraged to offer their thoughts. This process will help us to understand the “mind of the parish” and to communicate that “mind” to the design team. There will be time to offer aesthetic suggestions, but aesthetic matters will mostly be left up to the design team. Additional questions can be asked, but these will be our starting point.

1. How far into the future should be anticipated in the development of the master plan? Five years? Ten years? Fifteen years? Twenty years?
2. As we consider the prioritized activities (programs) that we hope to offer our community, in addition to worship, we need to consider what structural space can be multipurpose and what space needs to be dedicated for a specific use. What spaces could benefit from movable partitions to accommodate multipurpose use? For instance, Commons/Fellowship area; Church Hall/Church School partitions; Library/Conference room/Office suite;
3. Our greatest facility needs at the present time (rank by numbering 1-5):
 - Site Considerations
 - Fellowship
 - Worship
 - Education
 - Recreation
 - Suggest additional facility needs (present)
4. Will a dining or kitchen area be required in the master plan? Will it be used immediately before or after worship functions? Will there need to be storage off of the fellowship hall for tables and chairs? Would we like to use folding walls and/or accordion partitions to divide areas of the Fellowship Hall into separate classroom areas? If so, what would be the ideal size for these areas? Is there a preference as to whether we plan for a commercial kitchen or warming (residential) kitchen? How much storage or pantry area is required?

5. Will the master plan consider regularly scheduled programs for preschool age children **during the week**? For children under age 2-1/2 (means special construction and higher cost)?
6. Regarding Christian Education (Church School), what is the preferred classroom size for adults and children (number of people)? Will classes sit in chairs, desks, or around tables? Do classrooms require: storage closets? bulletin boards? blackboards? clocks? special electrical outlets? coat hanging facilities? Is a church school office or work room required for teacher's planning meetings and materials?
7. In planning for a new worship space, how many people should be accommodated?
8. Are there any specific design standards that are applicable to this project? For instance; natural lighting versus (or in support of) artificial/electric lighting? Walls or ceilings to support larger iconography? Intentional space for the choir and their supporting material? Inclusion of a "prothesis" or separate room traditionally on the north side of the altar for the Liturgy of Preparation that is accessible to both the sanctuary (altar area) and the nave (Sacristy and storage then on the south side of the altar)? Permanent seating at the rear of the nave; no seating; or movable seating around the perimeter of the nave?
9. Regarding site development, would we want to see a portion of the paved parking area double as an outdoor basketball court? Will we want a children's play yard? Are there any special exterior lighting requirements (county may have some)? The county will require a certified landscape architect to plan our landscaping. What landscape/vegetation concerns or desires would you express at this time?
10. Regarding the administrative area, is office space required in this phase or future phases? What are the size and space requirements of the church staff? How much record storage/file area is required? We have discussed the Fr. George DeTrana Memorial Library as being attached to the office area and to double as conference room.
11. Regarding entrances, should the master plan encourage an entrance that is universal and close to the office area? Should there be a separate exterior entrance to the narthex, or an interior commons that receives people and disperses them to their desired destination? A commons area could be designed as a walk through or "breezeway" so that processions can still proceed around the temple and end in the commons before entering the narthex, i.e. for Holy Week and Pascha? Should there be an exterior courtyard that encourages the nave as the primary entrance into the temple? Or, any other entrance plan or combination of the above?

Suggestion: After completing the questionnaire with your contacts, compile the data in a manner that will be legible and easy for the design team to consult. If there are clear trends in the responses to particular questions, be prepared to communicate those trends at the meeting. Less defined trends will be noticed by the design team and taken into consideration. We may decide to meet again as a committee to determine overall trends in responses from the parish.