

New Addition Release

The groundbreaking for the new addition at First Congregational Church of Manchester occurred on Sunday, November 19th. The addition will provide wheelchair accessibility to both wings of the church as well as an aesthetically pleasing entrance that connects to all three levels of the sanctuary and education wing.

Rev. Steven Berry of FCC shared, "It has been a blessing working with our architects, Bill Badger and Claudio Veliz. It has been a further blessing to have such open minded folks on the Architectural Committee chaired by Sue Robinson."

In addition to ensuring wheel chair access, the new addition will be a communal and thought-provoking entrance to the church. Robinson commented, "We're moving the beautiful stained glass windows from their obscure location in the sanctuary and placing them on each side of the door."

She added, "The three-story addition will follow the themes of water, earth, and sky from bottom to top. A waterfall will flow on the ground floor. Plants will be prevalent on the second floor, and finally translucent panels by Kalwall on the ceiling will allow in natural light." Among these markers of the natural world in the lobby will be additional social space.

"There is a postmodern reformation going on architecturally as well as sociologically," said Rev. Berry. "We are part of that movement. Study the designs of our building for community and you will see that the architecture mirrors our dreams as we step into the future."

Planning this contemplative creation-centered design was assigned to Claudio Veliz A.I.A. (of C.V. A.) who skillfully assembled a design that embodied all of the needs of FCC. From there the implementation of the design was passed to William Badger A.I.A.

Badger, the principal of Badger and Associates, Inc., set to work with the architecture committee of FCC on Veliz's plan. "They were a very hands-on committee, and there was a lot of good input back and forth," Badger commented.

Regarding the addition, Badger said, "The church was two separate buildings: the 1871 church and the 1969 annex for education. There was limited wheel chair access and 95% of the people enter church through a narrow set of steps in between the two buildings. The new addition has a logic that joins the two pieces together."

Funding such a project is no small task. Jim Lee chaired the capital campaign that raised \$1.2 million from June 1 -August 30th, 2006. "Under the leadership of Dr. Berry and Rev. Laney our church is growing and we need to continue expanding to meet the needs of the community," said Lee.

The next step after the completion of the new addition will be an updating of and an addition to the education annex. Robinson commented, "FCC is a meeting place for the whole town. We have so many groups meeting in our annex and we would like to provide a better space for them."

The First Congregational Church in Manchester is a member of the United Church of Christ. All comments and inquiries may be directed to Beverly at 362-2709. Find out the latest FCC news anytime at www.manchestermeeinghouse.com.