



FAITH & FORM

THE INTERFAITH JOURNAL ON
RELIGION, ART AND ARCHITECTURE
VOL. XLVIII • NO. 4, 2015 • ISSN 00147001

Annual Awards Issue

Richard S. Vosko, Hon. AIA

St. Vincent de Paul Church » Albany, New York



Constructed in the Greek Revival style in 1908, this Catholic church was expanded in 1957. After a fire in the sanctuary in 1985 the interior was renovated. However, the main worship space was not ADA compliant, the lighting was inadequate, there were no restrooms on the main floor and the church was not air-conditioned. The grisaille paint scheme with trompe l'oeil ceiling was fading and the seating plan limited the options for participation in the liturgy.

In the new centralized plan worshippers are equidistant from the altar table, they can see and hear each other, and they can intimately engage with all liturgical ministries. A series of educational and listening sessions was conducted with the congregation. Programming exercises determined the scope of work. The design process followed. Responsible stewardship and attention to people who live in poverty guided the budget. The total project cost was \$850,000.

Among the renovation's various features: a barrier-free, wood sanctuary platform

located in the center of the square nave; rearrangement of 450 movable chairs in a concentric plan around the altar platform with spacing for persons with different abilities; relocation of the music ministry in front of a new reflective surface to enhance the sound and reduce reliance on electronic amplification; a baptismal font allowing for ritual options including barrier-free access for persons with different abilities; newly painted surfaces, including the ceiling's cosmic theme; installation of eight new icons of saints chosen by the congregation; air-conditioning; a barrier-free family restroom in an existing parlor near the entrance.

Jury Comments

Even with a limited budget, this design transforms the worship space, making the most of the existing furniture. The new design supports the liturgical aspects of the church, demonstrating how older spaces can be converted into a contemporary setting. The design draws the worship community together.

Designer

Richard S. Vosko, Hon. AIA

4611 Foxwood Drive S.

Clifton Park, NY 12065

518-371-3009

rvosko.com

Liturgical Consultant

C. Elizabeth Rowe-Manning

Architects

Kerns Group Architects, PC

Lacey Thaler Reilly Wilson, LLP

Construction Manager

Wainschaf Associates, Inc.

MEP

MH Professional Engineering, PLLC

Lighting Design/Fabrication

Rambusch Studios

Acoustical Consultant

Pro Sound Associates

Iconographer

Christine Simoneau Hales

Photographer

Michael F. Joyce