

I am the **R**esurrection and the Life.  
Jesus in John 11:25



Here stands the font before our eyes,  
Telling how God did receive us.  
Th' altar recalls Christ's sacrifice  
And what the sacrament gives us.  
Here sound the Scriptures that proclaim  
Christ yesterday, today, the same,  
And evermore, our Redeemer.

CW 529:4



# How **Lovely** IS your dwelling place, O LORD ALMIGHTY!

An explanation of the sanctuary and furnishings of Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church

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<sup>1</sup> *How lovely is your dwelling place,  
O LORD Almighty!*

<sup>2</sup> *My soul yearns, even faints,  
for the courts of the LORD;  
my heart and my flesh cry out  
for the living God.*

*Psalm 84:1,2*

“How lovely!” the writers of Psalm 84 thought as they reflected on the Old Testament places of worship for God’s people—the tabernacle and then later the temple. Those were beautiful places indeed as God’s people gave him their best in exquisite tapestries, carvings, massive stone work, and billions of dollars of glittering gold.

Yet as the inspired poets wrote Psalm 84, they recognized that the greatest beauty of God’s house is not in any of those outward things. The house of God is a lovely place because there they were in the presence of the LORD. Their souls longed to be with the living God.

We, too, at Resurrection have brought God our best in wood, in glass, and in stone, yet those are not what make this place lovely. The real beauty of our sanctuary comes not from what is here, but from who is here. This is the place where we worship the living God.

An axiom of church architecture states that “Form follows function follows faith.” In other words, what you see around you in our sanctuary is a conscious reflection of what we believe about our God. The design and placement of the furnishings and artwork is meant to be an unmistakable statement about our faith even before a word is spoken. That unspoken message? Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is the focus of our faith and is the center of our worship as we gather around Word and Sacraments.

## THE FOCUS OF OUR FAITH

As soon as you step inside our sanctuary, you’ll see that the focus of our faith is Jesus Christ. That’s why we’re called Christians. Jesus is the only way to heaven and is the only answer to the sin and guilt that burdens every human heart.

If you don’t know Jesus, our greatest desire is to introduce you to him. Because he died for us and rose from the dead, we have forgiveness and the hope of eternal life in heaven.

## CRUCIFIX

While the cross is a grim reminder of our sin and its consequences, it is also a beautiful reminder of the depth of God’s love for us. Jesus took on your sin, your death, your hell in order to give you his righteousness, his life, his heaven.

Consequently, we do not shy away from thinking about and talking about Jesus’ crucifixion. Instead, like the Apostle Paul, we preach Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Corinthians 1,2).

The crucifix is suspended above our altar, the place of sacrifice, because Jesus Christ is once and for all the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). It is only in Christ Jesus that we have forgiveness and peace with God.

The cross is bowed to show that the enormous weight of the punishment that brought us peace was upon him (Isaiah 53:5). The sign above Jesus’ head, called a *titulus*, displays the charge Pontius Pilate posted on the cross: THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. The writing follows the wording of the gospels in the three languages Pilate ordered to be written. The top line is in Hebrew (following John 19:19), the middle line is in Latin (following Mark 15:26), and the bottom line is in Greek (following Matthew 27:37).

The corpus was hand-carved from linden wood by the Ferdinand Stuflesser Studio in Ortisei, Italy. The cross is oak.

## RESURRECTION STAINED GLASS WINDOW

Mary Magdalene had personally witnessed Jesus’ agony on the cross (John 19:25). She was there when they wrapped his lifeless body and placed it in a tomb (Mark 15:47). Three days later she returned with other women to give Jesus a proper burial (Mark 16:1). But Jesus’ body wasn’t there. Perhaps someone had stolen the body. She lingered by the tomb, lost in grief and sadness, thinking that Jesus’ death meant that all was lost.

A man stopped to talk to her. She thought he was the gardener. Then the man called her by name. “Mary.” Our stained glass window captures that moment—when Mary Magdalene recognized her risen Lord. Her grief changed to

joy, her despair to eternal hope. Jesus lives! You can read the whole account in John chapter 20.

The Apostle Paul describes the dreadful outcome if Christ's crucifixion had been the end (1 Corinthians 15). If Christ had not been raised from the dead, we would still be in our sins. Everyone who dies would be lost eternally. There would be no hope. But, because of Easter, the opposite is true. Jesus' resurrection guarantees our justification before God (Romans 5:25). We are given a new birth and a new hope in Jesus' resurrection and have the promise of an eternal inheritance in heaven (1 Peter 1:4).

In our resurrection window, an angel points to the tomb. It's empty! He is risen! Under the stone lies Satan, depicted as a snake, crushed by Jesus' feet (Genesis 3:15). By dying and rising, our Savior has destroyed death and crushed the power of Satan. The banner of victory in his hand is a common symbol in resurrection art. Because Jesus won the victory for us, we no longer need to fear death or hell. Our Savior Jesus proclaims himself as the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25,26). He promises that because he lives, we also will live (John 14:19).

While the main figure in the window is Jesus Christ, God the Son, the other two persons of the Trinity are also represented. The hand of God the Father extends down from heaven while the Holy Spirit appears as a dove as at Jesus' baptism.

Easter lilies blossom near Mary. The dogwood flowers in the bottom of the left panel are also commonly associated with Jesus' death and resurrection. The trumpets mixed with the dogwoods represent our joyous songs of praise that mark the celebration of Easter Sunday and of the "little Easters" we celebrate every Sunday. The sky is filled with the brilliant colors of a sunrise, both of that first Easter morning, and as the dawning of our hope of eternal life in Christ Jesus and his resurrection.

Our stained glass window was made by Hardeman Fine Art Glass, Inc. of Duluth, Georgia.

## WORSHIP CENTERS AROUND THE MEANS OF GRACE

Christ Jesus, crucified and risen, is the focus of our faith. That fact has a profound impact on the way we worship. When we gather in this sanctuary, it is not for entertainment, nor are we here to view a performance presented by the pastor and others. Rather, we are here to receive from God what our souls so desperately need—the message of God's love and forgiveness in our Savior who died and rose.

How will that happen? God promises that there are ways through which he comes to us with his grace and mercy. 1) God claims us as his own in the waters of Baptism. 2) God gives us the precious body and blood of his Son for the forgiveness of our sins in the Lord's Supper. 3) God speaks to us in his Word. We call these three ways the Means of Grace. We expect God to work in our hearts through these Means of Grace because he has promised to do so. Our

sanctuary emphasizes the importance of God coming to us by lining up the architectural representations of the Means of Grace along the strong central axis of our worship space.

## BAPTISMAL FONT

Our font at Resurrection is placed immediately inside the entrance doors as a constant reminder of the importance of baptism for each of us.

Who are we to come into the presence of the holy God? How can we expect anything good from him or think that he will hear and answer our prayers? Only because he has washed away our sins, made us his dear children in baptism, and has clothed us with the righteousness of his Son, Jesus (Galatians 3:26,27).

Like many other fonts, ours is in the shape of an octagon. Christians have long associated the number eight with resurrection and new life, because after seven days in a week, the eighth day is Sunday, the beginning of a new week and the day of our Lord's resurrection.

God tells us that baptism is for us a resurrection from the dead. In the waters of baptism, we die to sin and are raised to new spiritual life in Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 6:4,5.

We were therefore buried with [Christ] through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

Baptism is therefore the gift of new life in Christ and a daily reminder to drown our sinful nature in repentance as we live for God. A summary of Romans 6:4,5 is etched around the rim of the bowl on our font: BURIED INTO CHRIST'S DEATH + RAISED IN HIS RESURRECTION. Take a look at the still surface of the water as you enter the sanctuary to catch a glimpse of Christ's death and resurrection reflected in the water of the font.

The font base was constructed out of oak by the wood shop of Massmann Studios. The stone top of the font is a solid piece of sandalwood sandstone, quarried in Colorado. The material of the font bowl is appropriate for a congregation on the edge of "Glass City." Local glass artist Janine Ody-Miller fused together the many different layers of glass, formed the sheet of glass into a bowl by allowing it to "slump" into a mold, and then etched the letters of the passage.

## ALTAR

The design of our altar seeks to combine the massive weight of a stone altar, reminding us of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross, with the shape and openness of the table from which our Lord's body and blood are served in the Lord's Supper.

The centrality and weight of our altar emphasize the importance of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and of the gifts he gives to us in the Lord's Supper. According to his promise, we receive from him not only bread and wine, but also his very body and blood, given and poured out for us for the forgiveness of our sins (Matthew 26:26-28). The Sacrament is also a way that we express our common faith. The circle we form as we commune together around the altar expresses the unity and the fellowship that we share.

Our altar serves another purpose as well. God is everywhere and can be worshipped anywhere (John 4:24), yet it is helpful for us as creatures bound by space and time to orient our worship in a single direction. From the altar, God, through the pastor, announces forgiveness in the absolution and in the Lord's Supper. From the altar God's name is placed on his people in blessing. We face the altar as we bring God our praise and prayers and offerings (Hebrews 13:15,16).

Altars traditionally include five crosses representing the five wounds of Christ on the cross. Our altar has four crosses, one on each of the solid sides, plus one more right at the center. Do you see it?

The altar base was constructed out of oak by the wood shop of Massmann Studios. The stone top of the altar is a solid piece of sandalwood sandstone, quarried in Colorado, and weighing a little under half a ton.

## **PULPIT**

God comes to us in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. God also comes to us in the Bible. The Bible is not a compilation of myths and human interpretation ( 2 Peter 1:16,20), but is the Word given by God himself (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Because God is the Truth, you can trust that anything he tells you in his Word is true. When God condemns sin and calls us to repentance, he's not joking. When he assures you of his love for you in Christ, your soul can count on it. When God makes you a promise, you can be certain that he will follow through. God's Word is not only true; it is the power of God (Romans 1:16) through which the Holy Spirit creates faith in human hearts and strengthens us on the road to heaven.

Therefore, it's not surprising that much of our time together in worship is spent listening to God—reading his Word and applying it to our lives. The importance of God's Word in our worship is emphasized by the placement of the pulpit. It stands on the same central line as the font and the altar in a place that can easily be seen and heard by all. From this pulpit, God's Word is proclaimed. Whoever steps into this pulpit has the responsibility to preach the Word of God without adding to it, subtracting from it, or twisting it.

The pulpit was constructed out of oak by the wood shop of Massmann Studios.

## **WE GATHER FOR WORSHIP**

Although the word "church" is often applied to a brick and mortar building, an empty church would really be no church at all. The church is people—people who, through the Spirit's work in the Means of Grace, profess their faith in Jesus as their Savior.

Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church is not a street address or a configuration of concrete, wood, and stone, but is composed of people. We study God's Word together in Bible studies. We enjoy Christian fellowship at meals and other events. We go out into our community to share the gospel. Yet nowhere are the marks of the church more evident than in our worship. As we gather together around the Means of Grace, sing hymns, and confess our faith, we encourage one another in our faith (Hebrews 10:25) and wear the name of Christ.

The new seating arrangement reflects who we are as a church. Week after week we gather together around the Means of Grace as God assures us again and again of his love and forgiveness in Christ. Yet worship is not simply between us individually and God. Worship is public expression of our unity as the body of Christ. Worship brings us together with fellow believers and gives us the privilege and responsibility of encouraging each other in our faith.

There are other ways in which the room itself is designed to aid God's people in their worship. Early in our renovation, we enlisted the help of acoustical consultants to assist us in ensuring that our sanctuary reinforces rather than dampens the songs of praise and the confession of faith of God's people in this place.

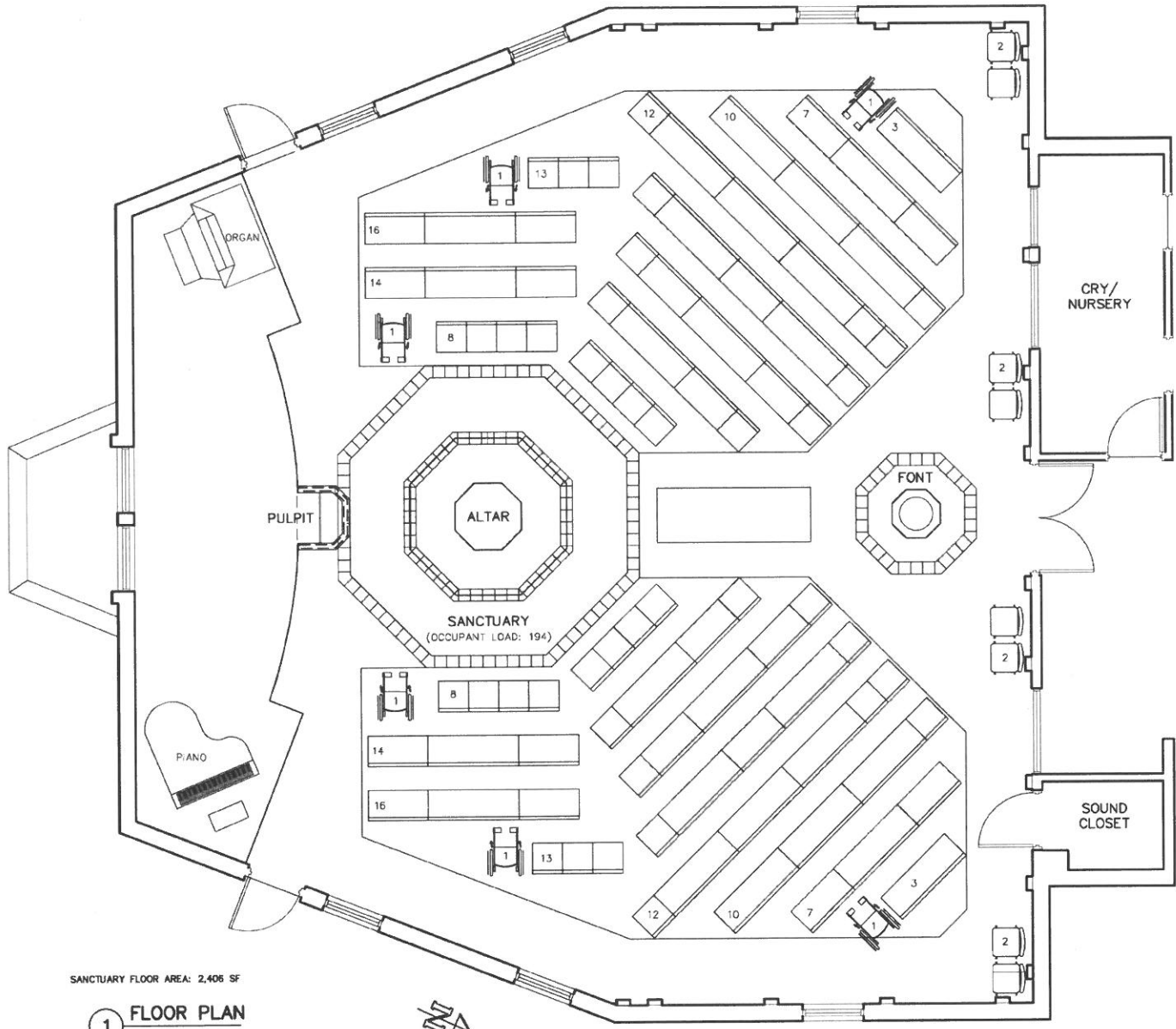
A Yamaha C2 grand piano was purchased in 2011 to assist our congregation in singing God's praises. It is placed in a new music area which provides flexible space for our choir and instrumentalists. Our existing 1950s era electronic organ has been reinstalled. The organ chamber on the rear wall of the sanctuary currently houses the organ speakers and is designed to accommodate a new electronic organ or pipe organ in the future.

## **HOW LOVELY IS THIS PLACE**

Jesus promises, "Where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them" (Matthew 18:20). As we gather together to worship here at Resurrection we know that the LORD God Almighty is in this place, working in our hearts through his Word, through baptism, and through the Lord's Supper. He points us to himself as our only Savior, who died and rose for us. As we gather together as a congregation around those Means of Grace, we lift our voices to him in prayer and praise. May God fill his house with people who recognize how lovely it is to be in his presence!

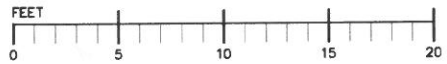
For generations to come, may this sanctuary be for the glory of God and the salvation of souls!

*soli deo gloria!*  
To God alone be the glory!



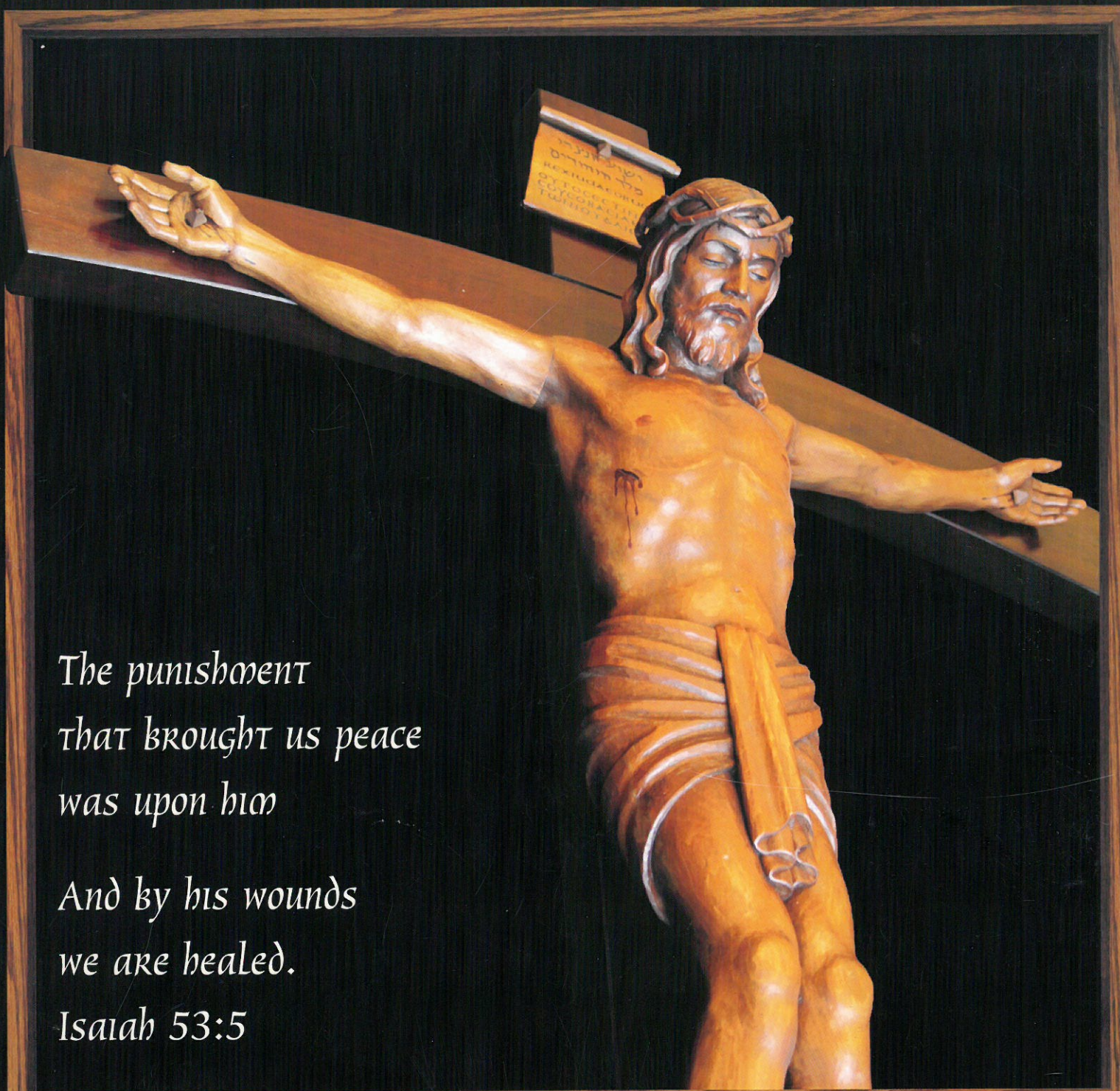
SANCTUARY FLOOR AREA: 2,406 SF

1 FLOOR PLAN



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The punishment  
that brought us peace  
was upon him

And by his wounds  
we are healed.

Isaiah 53:5



ישוע הנצרי  
מלך היהודים  
REX IUDÆORUM  
ΟΥΤΟ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΙΗΣΟΥΣ  
ΟΥΚ ΟΒΑΔΙΑΕΥΣ  
ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ