

# Annual Report

## 2021

### Board of Trustees:

Bruce Reed, President  
Bonnie Beardslee  
Ted Hicks  
Amy Hanlon  
Lyn Savidge  
Leah McCoy

Treasurer: Jeff Hill

Minister: Rev. Susan Ritchie

Commissioned Lay Minister: Teri Cornell

Commissioned Lay Minister Candidate: Morgan Patten

Affiliated Community Minister: Rev. Joan Van Becelaere

Affiliated Community Minister Emerita: Rev. Chris Jones-Leavy

Marlene Hartzler, Director of Music

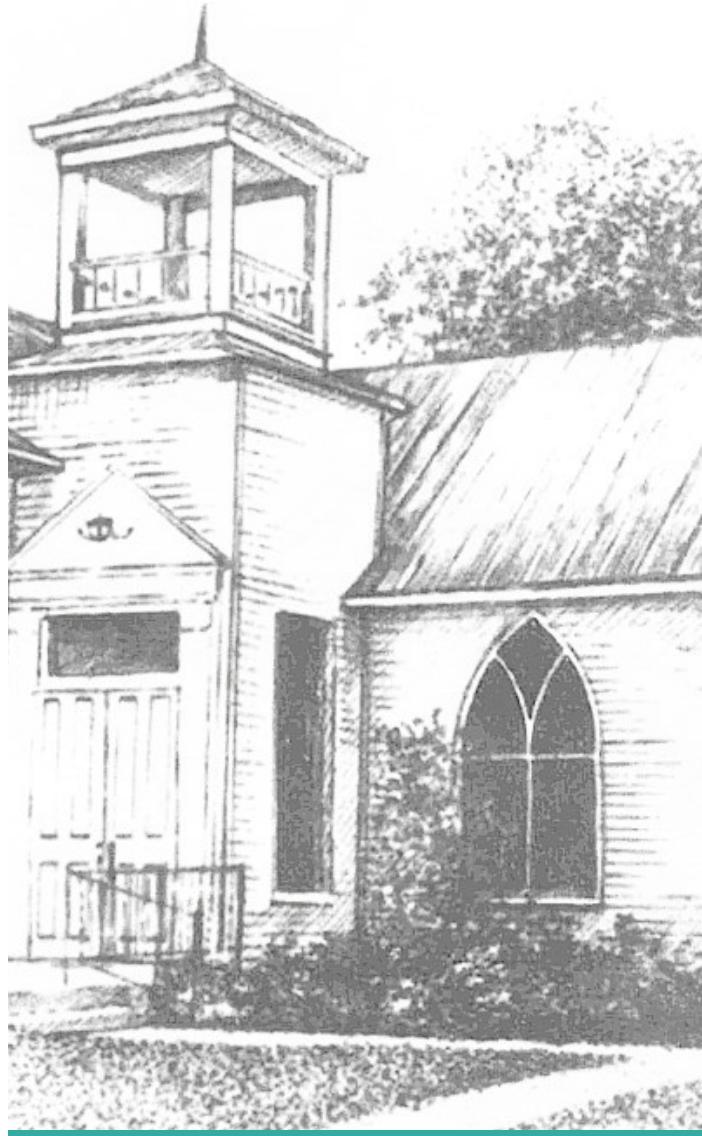
Jen Aultman, Director of Religious Education

Prescott Hartzler, Interim Pianist

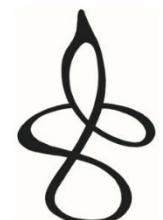
Ken Burkard, Sexton

**PRESENTED TO THE ANNUAL  
MEETING MARCH 20, 2022**

PO Box 541 1574 Franklin Street  
Lewis Center, OH 43035 [www.nuuc.org](http://www.nuuc.org)



NORTH  
**UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST  
CONGREGATION**



*We* WELCOME *We* INSPIRE *We* CONNECT *We* ACT

# From Your Minister



Last year for this report, I was compelled to describe 2020 as the *Annus Horribilis*. Many of us had been ill, some of us dangerously so. Most of us lost loved ones and all of us lost our usual ways of life. And at this time of year, were we mourning a year of loss of face-to-face gatherings (our church closed to face-to-face gatherings on March 13, 2020).

I am delighted to be writing this from a different position today. Just last week we got to hear our beloved choir perform for the first time in two years. Our sanctuaries (both the literal one on Franklin Street and the virtual one on Zoom) were full, and we are looking forward to the immanent return of social gatherings (look for an announcement about resuming coffee hour—with actual coffee and refreshments soon!), and, if the covid numbers continue to decline, an easing of our vaccine and mask requirements. And we are glad for our commitment to continue to offer worship and major programming online, no matter what, both for those who have continued health, safety, or mobility concerns, and for those who simply like it better that way.

At the conclusion of two years of living with the pandemic, it remains possible to say that: despite the challenges, and, maybe because of them, NUUC has grown in numerical, institutional, and spiritual ways. Some of this growth is real, but hard to quantify or categorize, when, for example, we are serving both traditional members who attend church in person, and persons who attend weekly online without having ever identified themselves to us, and everything in between. But I am grateful that our online presence, once an emergency measure, now more clearly represents a new, more diverse future.

This is truly a community of resilience, memory and hope. I remain honored to serve it and anticipate eagerly what is next to unfold. I am yours sincerely, and with great appreciation,

Rev. Susan Ritchie

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# Leadership

**Thank you!** We offer our gratitude to Bruce Reed, who completes his term on the Board as President of the Board of Trustees. We also offer our most sincere appreciation to Bonnie Beardslee and Amy Hanlon, both of whom complete their board terms. We appreciate their willingness to say “yes” to the call from the community and honor their leadership during difficult times.

## Elections to the Board of Trustees

Your Nominating Committee is submitting four names to fill the four vacancies on the Board of Trustees. They are recommending to you Donna Rhodeback and Glenn Waring to fill two regular, three-year terms of service. Ted Hicks and Leah McCoy are current serving on the board by appointment, as replacements for vacancies that occurred after last year’s annual meeting. The Nominating Committee recommends that they be elected to complete those terms, to expire with the annual meeting in March of 2024 ( and they thank Ted and Leah for being willing to continue on the board). The candidates’ biographies are below:

Hello, I'm **Donna Rhodeback**, married to Wayne and we have two grown children and two grandchildren. I work at Otterbein University as an Administrative Assistant in the sciences. I also volunteer at Promise House, Otterbein's free food resource for students. I've been at NUUC since February 2016. Ever since my first service here, I've felt like this is really the place I belong. I enjoy singing in the choir and have made new friends here. I have served on almost every committee during my 20 years at the Presbyterian church including serving on the board. I would very much like to serve on the board at NUUC.

**Glenn Waring** was born in 1948 & raised Presbyterian/Congregational in Southern California until 1970, when he headed to Cornell for graduate work. After working for Ford Motor and later Nationwide, he met Scott Peck and became interested in community work. He set up a counseling practice for CEOs and did that for 25 years. Glenn now does a small amount of counseling, dabbles at screenwriting and relaxes with his wife of 42 years Vivian (Fluff) Fiscus, daughters Katherine (DC attorney, 4 kids 4-10) and Elizabeth (OB/GYN, Virginia East Shore). A Unitarian since 1975, he served FUUC as chair 1979-80, ministerial committee for Carl Whittier, and listener to one Susan Ritchie. A practicing Unitarian with Stoic and Buddhist sympathies, his values are Authenticity, Truth, Love, and Laughter.

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**Ted Hicks** is a UU/recovering catholic from the bayous of South Louisiana. He is a 1978 graduate of the Louisiana State University School of Journalism, as well as that of hard knocks, having been an automotive technician in Baton Rouge until 1994. In that year, he embarked on a career as a technical trainer, and has dragged Margo and their three children around the country to New England, Houston, TX, Melbourne FL and now, Delaware, Ohio, where he is responsible for the five Subaru Service Training Centers in the midsection of the US. Their children and grandchildren now live in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Texas. He was introduced to Unitarian Universalism in Baton Rouge and became active after they joined a congregation in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. After moving to Florida in 2012, their youngest son, Lonnie, now 29, found and dragged them (willingly) to the UU Church of Brevard, where Margo and Ted participated in church activities of many types, it being a very small congregation. Ted began by helping out the B&G committee and joined the choir. He joined the board as first a trustee; was selected (yes, UUCB used the democratic process, but when nobody else will take the job...) Vice-President, then President. Ted and Margo participated in the 2017 UUA General Assembly in New Orleans, where he still has a large and extended family.

Originally from the Cleveland area, **Leah McCoy** has lived in central Ohio since 2012. She began attending Unitarian Universalist services over twelve years ago, became a member at NUUC in 2020, and has served as an interim member of the Board since August 2021. Leah holds an associate's degree in American Sign Language Studies from Lakeland Community College and a Bachelor of General Studies with concentrations in Sociology, English, and Communication from Kent State University. She works as a cataloger for the Marysville Public Library and will begin working toward a master's degree in Library and Information Science this summer. In her free time, she enjoys reading, performing arts, knitting, hiking, and cooking. She would be honored to continue serving on the board of NUUC!

**Elections to the Nominating Committee** Your Nominating Committee is submitting two names to fill the two vacancies on the Nominating Committee. Our thanks to Dee Burlison and Daniel Patridge, whose terms of two years expire with this annual meeting. Sarah Weaver has one more year to serve. The Nominating Committee recommends to you Morgan Patten and Debbie Shaw.

**Morgan Patten** has been a member of North for three years and has been a UU for over ten years. She is a Commissioned Lay Minister candidate and hopes to be commissioned this spring. At North, Morgan has enjoyed participating in choir, leading worship, and facilitating programs for children and adults. She has also served on the internship committees for two of our intern ministers.

**Debbie Shaw:** Since joining NUUC in 2018, I have been in choir, on the Auction committee, told stories during services, and gave input on sound requirements for the new building project. I took two adult ed classes and am in a Soul Matters group and UU Supper Club. I have loved the last years of zoom services because it has introduced me to so many other people via the breakout rooms, making me comfortable in running for the Nominating Committee! I am a retired reference librarian. Husband Carl Yaffey introduced me to UU & I joined the First UU Church of Columbus in 1991. I was in choir, ran

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sound, served on finance & other committees, chair of Worship and on the board for 2 years, and a brief stint as treasurer.

### **Commissioned Lay Ministers**

Our congregation is blessed with two Commissioned Lay Ministers, Teri Cornell, who has been serving in this ministry for years, and Morgan Patten, who has recently completed her credentialing process and who will be officially commissioned next month. Also, your Board of Trustees had authorized Katie Kuntz Wineland, former NUUC student minister and in independent ministry in Toledo, Ohio, to perform weddings under our authority. Their updates follow here.

#### **From Teri Cornell:**

Hello to all,

I was asked to write a few lines for the Annual Report regarding my role as a Commissioned Lay Minister at NUUC. The pandemic really slowed down much of what I might have been doing in the past. Below you will find a list of things I have been up to.

- \*I facilitate one of the Soul Matters Groups that meet monthly. (zoom)
- \*I facilitated a Creative Fellowship group that worked on creative projects while talking about a variety of subjects once a month. (zoom)
- \*I have been working with a couple to write and perform their wedding ceremony which is to be in June.
- \*Did the sermon and readings part of the worship at NUUC in Dec.
- \*Was a part of the internship committee for our intern minister starting in Oct. (Meredith, recently ended her internship early. I was also a part of our intern minister Leora's committee until June 2021.
- \*I am working on a curriculum for adult RE for consideration in the future for a zoom monthly discussion group regarding ageing and spirituality based on a UUA book "Landscapes of Aging and Spirituality".

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for your ongoing support of my ministry.

Warmly,

Teri Cornell

**From Morgan Patten:** Over the past year, I have concluded the training portion of the Commissioned Lay Ministry Program, and I hope to be commissioned later this spring. During the year, I have been grateful to serve as the Zoom host for online services, offer worship, facilitate a Soul Matters small group, and co-chair our intern's internship committee. In the next year, I look forward to seeing how my ministry within North develops and, as always, I am excited to be a part of our vibrant community.

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**From Katie Kuntz Wineland:**

Thanks, NUUC!

It brings me tremendous joy to be able to serve as a wedding officiant for couples who don't fit into the traditional boxes of religion and church. I am also thrilled to be available as a spiritually grounded wedding officiant for queer couples in greater Northwest Ohio as that need arises. As my independent ministry continues to grow, I expect even more opportunities to serve in this capacity in 2022 and beyond.

This past year, I performed two weddings. Lauren and Jake were seeking a ceremony that honored the ways their faith grows beyond the walls of a church. They were married in Bluffton, Ohio at the Bluffton Public Library. Their ceremony was rooted in the Christian tradition, interpreted broadly, with influences from pop culture and their lived experiences as a couple. Bob and Penny were married in an intimate ceremony surrounded by their immediate family at the Toledo Botanical Garden in Toledo, Ohio. Reflecting each partner's spiritual journey, their ceremony integrated interfaith sacred texts (Buddhist + Christian), original poetry, song lyrics, and nature-centric themes.

If it weren't for your support, this facet of my ministry would not be possible. I am immensely grateful for NUUC's continued support of me and my professional ministry! Thank you from the bottom of my heart, and I hope to see you soon.

Love,  
Katie

## Staff

This year, our adored pianist, Wade Jones, moved on after years in our congregation, to pursue his desire career in jazz ensemble performance in a more focused way. We miss him enormously, but we are also enjoying enormously the music of Prescott Hartzler, our Interim Pianist. There's a special sweetness to experiencing Prescott's talent realizing that when his mother, Marlene Hartzler, became our beloved music director 19 years ago, she did not even know that there would be a Prescott. Our gratitude to Marlene continues, who has served us with not only her musical expertise, but resilience and flexibility during the pandemic.

Jen Aultman, our Director of Religious Education, has also been heroic and resourceful in going above and beyond to offer our children quality religious enrichment programs as the changing circumstances of the pandemic required constant adjustments. Jen's schedule has become unsustainable with her challenging weekday career, family responsibilities, school board seat, and dog rescuing. For this reason, Jen has announced that she will be transitioning out of her role as Director of Religious Education (DRE) for NUUC, although, she has generously volunteered to serve as a mentor and

volunteer for the new DRE (Jen and her family plan to remain active members of the congregation). We will be making an announcement shortly about filling the DRE role, but in the meantime, please join us in thanking Jen for her dedicated, intelligent, and thoughtful ministry to our congregation.

## Enrichment Programming



**Adult Enrichment** opportunities this year included The Brown Bag Books Group (thanks to Ruth Rusk, convener), the NUUC Women's group (thanks to Marty Keith), an ongoing anti-racist discussion group, three Soul Matters small groups (thanks to the facilitators Teri Cornell, Karen McGuire, and Morgan Patten), and the Wednesday noon Check-in group. As of the writing of this report, some groups have transitioned to meeting in person, while others remain online for both safety and convenience.

## Financial Health

We are so fortunate not to be one of the many organizations not struggling to survive financially in these challenging times. Thanks to all of you who have contributed faithfully! Your generosity matters. As our current fiscal year runs July 1, 2021-June 31, 2022, the March annual meeting no longer includes a report on the year end financials. This year, our pledge campaign will run May through mid-June, and a congregational meeting will be called in early July to hear the final year end numbers and approve a budget. The fiscal year concluding June 31, 2021, closed in the black, with a small surplus. Pledge income and other income were on track to budget, except for the anticipated service auction income of \$10,200. Although we were not able to hold the service auction because of the pandemic, we received a second Paycheck Protection Program loan that made up the difference. Both the 2020 and 2021 PPP loans are fully forgiven. As of March 2022, NUUC is in much the same situation, with both income and expenses currently tracking well to budget. Your Board of Trustees will decide shortly about whether we can hold a service auction before the close of this fiscal year.

# Building Expansion

The Building Expansion Committee consists of Roger Johnson, Bob Keith, Donna Laidlaw, Lyn Savidge, Susan Ritchie.

## Background, and Where We Are Today



In 2015 the NUUC Board engaged in intense strategy, long-range vision and mission work to critically examine faith commitments and mission drive for the use of the NUUC facilities. During an eight-month period, the NUUC Board of Trustees ascertained a five-year strategic plan, which would necessitate completing a visionary building expansion/renovation project. The project was

to allow NUUC to become a community center, aligned with the NUUC mission “We Welcome; We Inspire; We Connect; We Act.”

The Board determined the building should clearly signal our religious values to the community through our physical presence and appearance as well as support programming that involves, welcomes, and supports the community. The goal was to create a building that is hospitable and welcoming to visitors, has well maintained spaces with good curb and public use appeal, and has spaces in keeping with contemporary standards for public accommodation. The building was to be developed to accommodate helpful partnerships in space sharing within the congregation and the community. Another serious priority was to return the children’s programs to the main building, rather than continue in their current location in Nielsen House across the street.

Seven years, one financial feasibility expert, three architects, two construction firms, and a worldwide Covid pandemic later, the Building Committee and Board are close to being able to submit a proposal to the congregation that is both financially within NUUC’s budget and meets the needs of the strategic long-range vision of the congregation.

Previous we have circulated the floorplan and design done by architect Kay Onwukwe and approved by the congregation on March 9, 2019. Although this floor plan was designed with the input from a construction consultant, the construction costs could not be brought into line with the NUUC capital budget. While trying to make compromises to bring the costs in line with NUUC’s capital budget, Kay Onwukwe lost his partner and other staff and Covid wreaked havoc on the construction industry. because of loss of construction labor, unavailability of construction material, and constantly escalating construction costs, for a time making it impossible to even get construction bids.

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In January 2021 the NUUC Board voted to terminate the architectural contract with Kay Onwukwe and a new contract was entered into with Davis Wince, a larger firm with more church construction experience and support staff. Under the construction constraints previously mentioned, the Building Committee worked with Davis Wince over a period of months trying to modify the congregation approved floor plan to bring it into budget, without success. Finally, the Building Committee asked Davis Wince to develop a new floorplan that was within our budget.

Although the new design has required many concessions regarding square footage and costs, it allows NUUC to meet the strategic planning guidelines for the NUUC facility developed in 2015 while remaining financially feasible with a minimal Close the Gap Campaign. The floorplan, elevations, and conceptual renderings of this new design are included below.

The Building Committee had hoped to receive a final guaranteed maximum price for this design from our contractor before this meeting. However, we have experienced yet another delay. The most recent estimation of costs was once again over budget, mainly this time due to extremely high site preparation costs (partially attributable to the current high cost of fuel for heavy machinery). Our architect and contractor are currently working with adjustments especially to the site plan, with the hopes of bringing the project back within budget. We should know a great deal within the next week or two, at which point we will schedule another congregational meeting for the purposes of the formal approval of the plan as well as to kick off the final phase of our capital campaign.

### **Building Design Features Summary**

This design features a new sanctuary off the south end of the existing church, with a flexible layout and seating for 180 (our current sanctuary holds 120 tightly packed). Two rooms towards the back of the sanctuary include a new nursery and audio visual/storage rooms. The current sanctuary is converted into three large classroom/gathering spaces separated (with room for storage units for religious education materials). The bathrooms remain in their current location towards the North of the church, but we replace our two single toilet bathrooms for one large bathroom with 4 regular and 2 handicap accessible stalls. The kitchen remains in its current location, but if we have enough money beyond that needed for new construction, we will remodel it. The Fellowship Hall remains in its current location, but multiple glass doors between the fellowship space and the sanctuary will hopefully encourage the use of both spaces for mixing and socializing. The current nursery and “middle office” off Fellowship Hall will be expanded into a single space for music administration and storage. The new main entry to the church will be located on the West side of the building, at the site of the current back porch. Site plans include expanded parking, and we have not forgotten our desire for a memorial garden, and a natural, safe play space/scape for children.

A specific issue we anticipate causing some individual discomfort towards the proposed floor plan, regards the bathroom. Initially the floor plan included three bathrooms: Men, Women, and Gender

Neutral. However, as the Building Committee started to make the many modifications needed to bring the new design within budget, it looked at the high dollar items first. The three bathrooms not only took up a great deal of floor space, but they were also very costly. A three-bathroom solution was simply too space-consuming and expensive. The most logical solution was to do what many new builds are doing (including The Ohio State University) and build one large central “washroom” lined with individual toilet stalls with floor to ceiling walls, full doors, independent lighting and independent ventilation. This allows for a cost-effective solution that still provides the much-needed privacy for persons of all gender identifications, and multi-gender families, who may need to assist one another.

While some might feel apprehension with this solution, it allows the floor space and money saved to be used for more pressing needs. As Unitarian Universalists, we are frequently called upon to challenge our comfortable ways of thinking and acting to ensure that we are being both inclusive and utilizing our resources wisely. The one washroom solution best meets these goals.

#### Building Expansion Finances and Assumptions in a Snapshot

**\$889K** Amounts currently pledged and raised for the capital campaign

**\$174K** Our design would allow us to sell Nielsen House and move the children’s programming back into our main building. Estimated value Nielsen House \$229K, minus existing \$39K mortgage, minus \$16K closing and transition fees

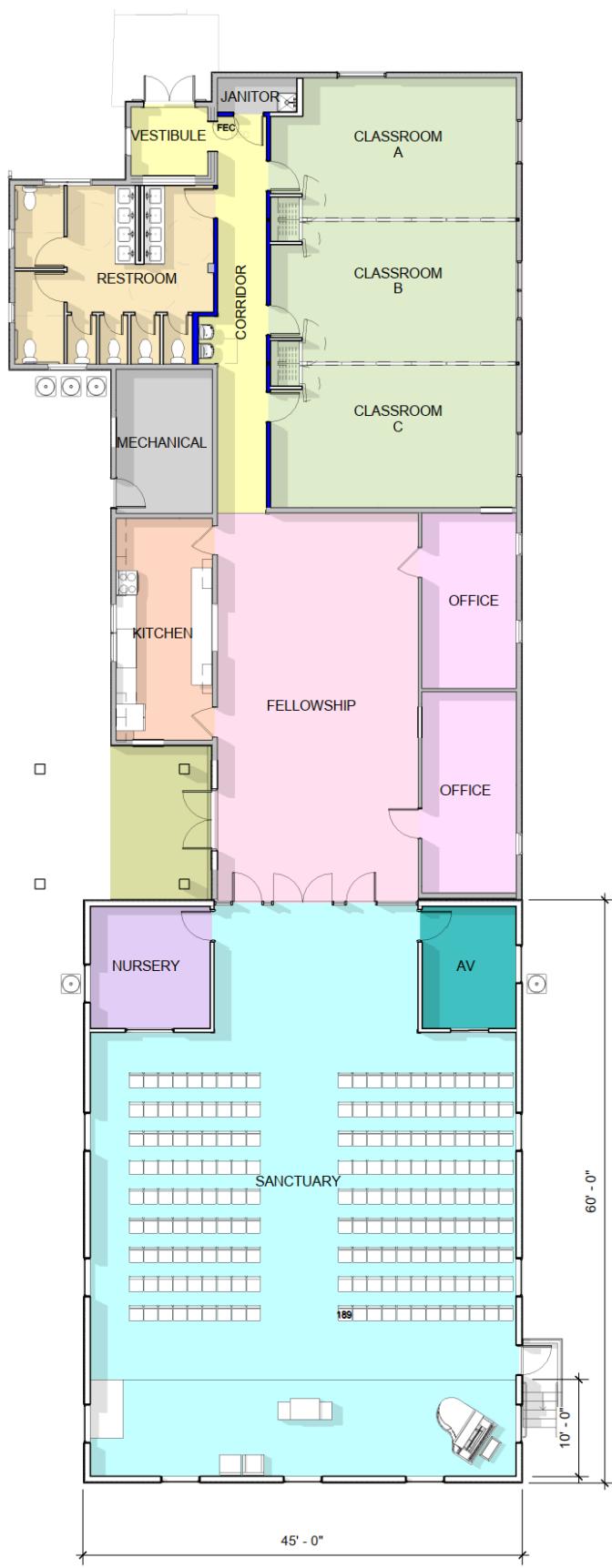
**\$200K** amount the board is willing to assume as mortgage

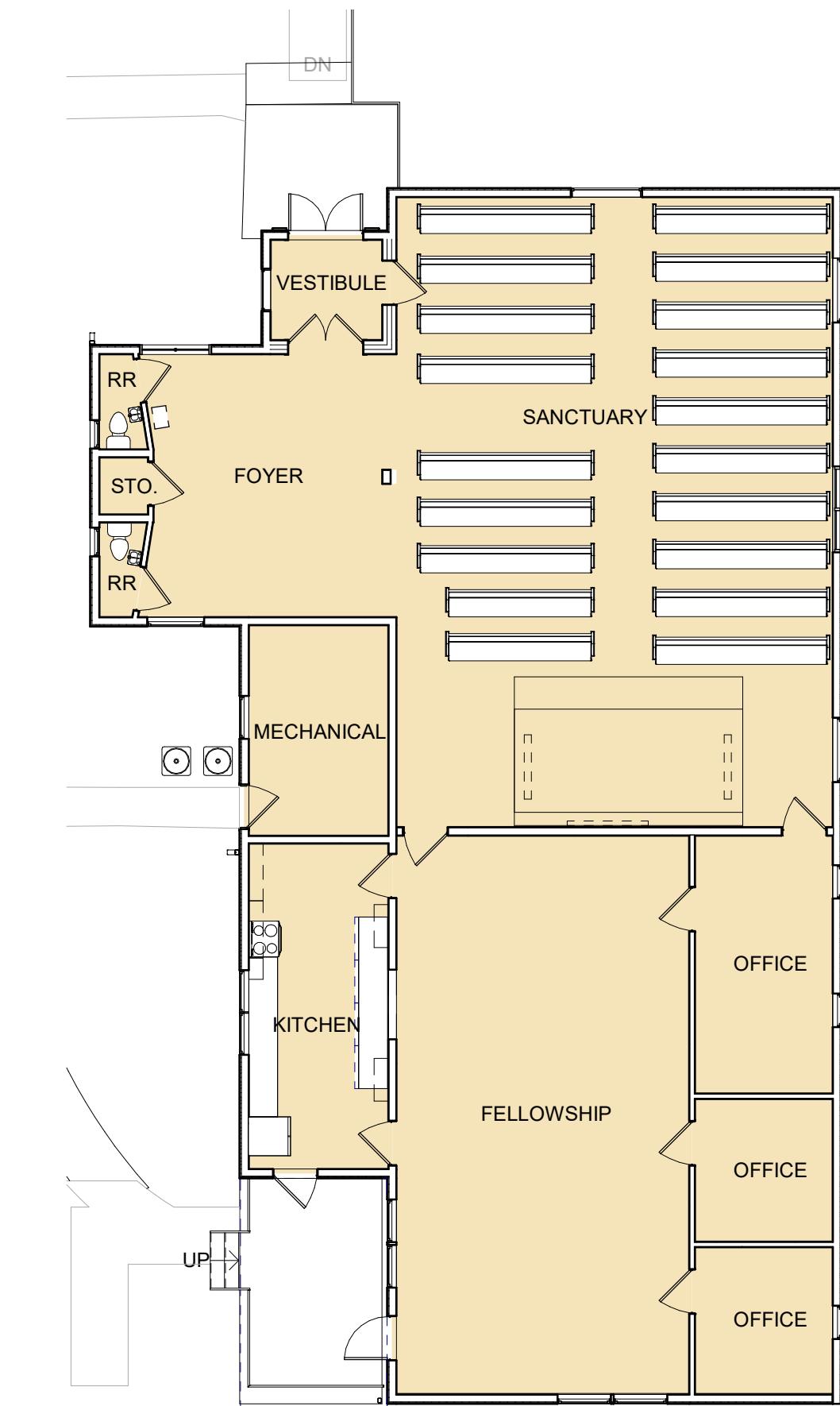
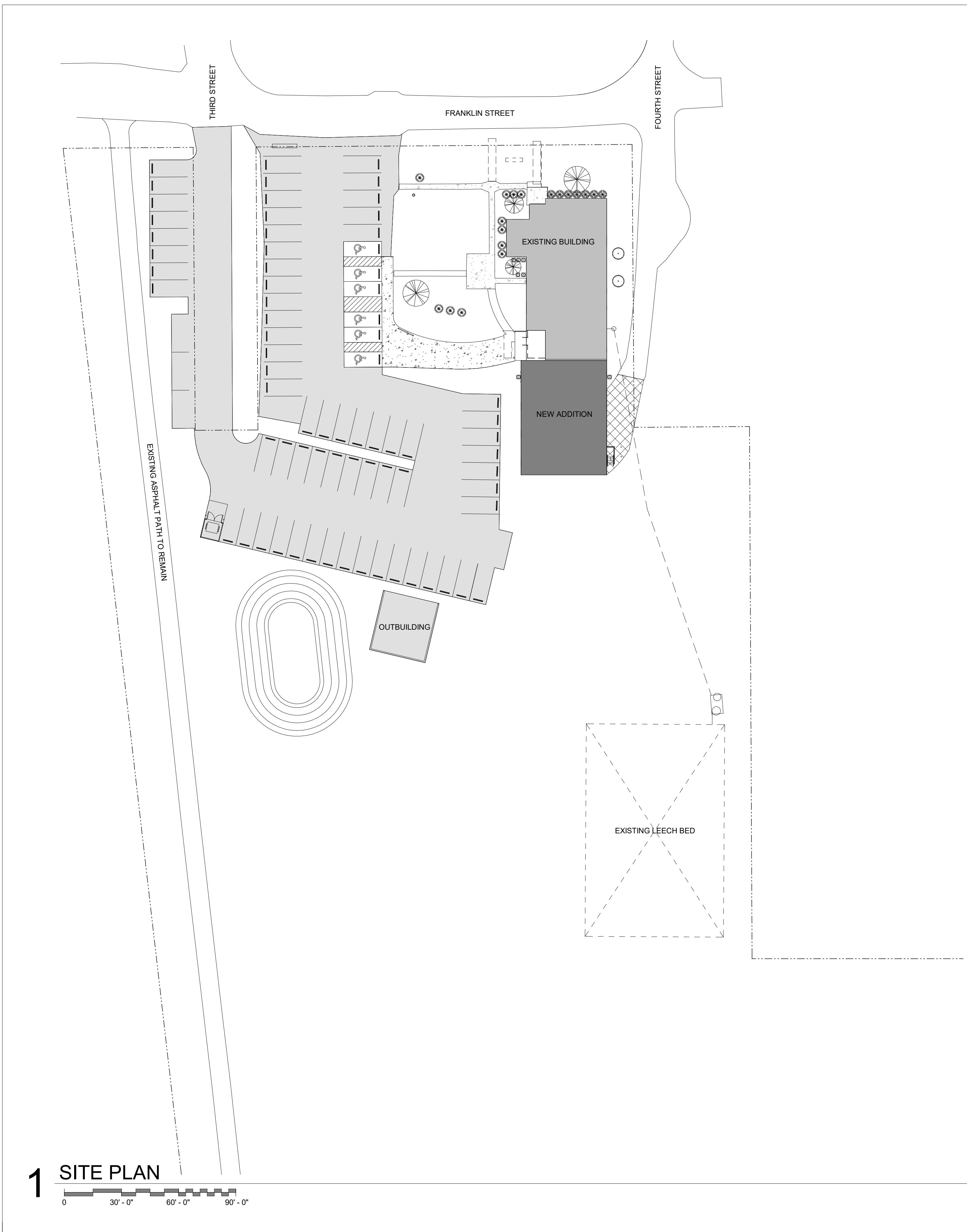
**\$1.1 M** budget the architect is working with for the actual construction costs of the building, although the current estimate for this design is pricing out at 1.4 M. The architect and contractor are currently working to bring this number more in line with our budget.

**\$532K** soft cost budget. Soft costs include all professional fees (architects, legal, engineering, surveying), fees related to permitting and zoning, the purchase price of the land that allowed us to extend our total acre to five acres (necessary for zoning), furniture, and those items to be handled outside of our relationship with our contractor (memorial garden, landscaping, natural playscape for children, outbuilding, audiovisual, etc...)

**\$369K** amount needed for the final phase capital campaign if the building budget is 1.1. We do have one generous six figure matching gift already pledged.

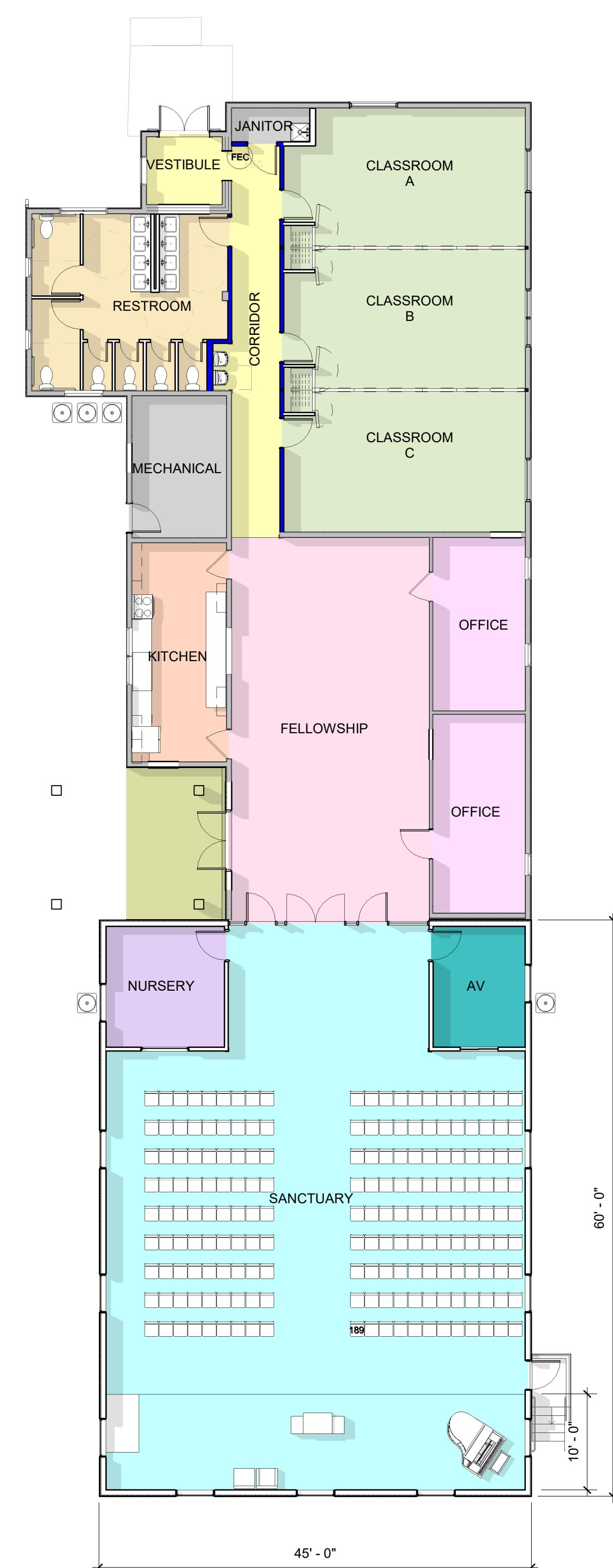
New Design Floor Plan





**2 EXISTING PLAN**

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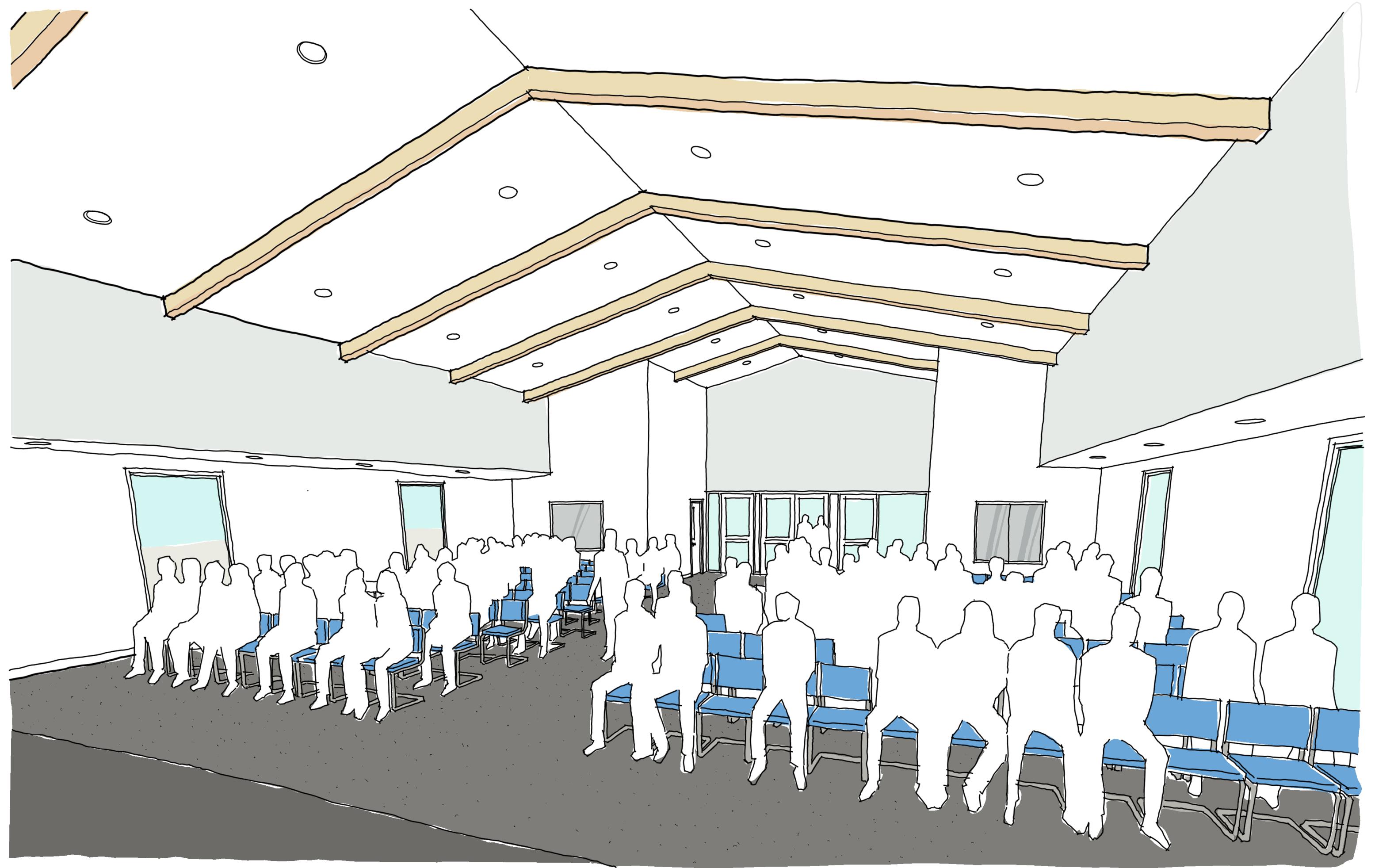


**3 PROPOSED PLAN**

0 8'-0" 16'-0" 24'-0"



EXTERIOR VIEW



INTERIOR VIEW AT SANCTUARY