

THE DESIGN RETREAT WORKSHOP



Different Congregations – Similar Problems

Through extensive work with hundreds of churches and temples, Heimsath Architects has discovered a pattern of fundamental issues raised by almost every congregation. Before beginning a building program, every congregation leader needs answers to the same questions:

Should we build new or renovate?

How much should we build?

How much will it cost?

Will our new building program meet our needs and goals?

Will it work with our existing facilities?



*Top left: First Baptist Church, Dripping Springs, TX
Top right: Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Fayetteville, NC
Bottom: Participants draw inspiration from walking the campus.*

A place of worship is one of the most significant monuments in a community. It can be a daunting task to design a beautiful, functional, and meaningful building tailored specifically to your congregation. The completed construction must address the diverse needs and desires of your congregation while anticipating future growth and changing needs. Every option must be weighed against physical, environmental, and financial realities.

Each committee member, church leader, and clergy member comes to the design process with his or her own hopes and expectations. By incorporating the Design Retreat Workshop into the comprehensive Master Plan process, your community can synthesize its diverse interests and goals into a unified vision.

The Design Retreat Workshop is the result of four decades of work with literally hundreds of worshipping communities.

The DRW helps building committee members identify and address the wide variety of needs that affect their building program. This full-day session will help you and your building committee ask the right questions intelligently and objectively, and then work together to find the solutions that will enrich your community for generations.

Congregation members envision possibilities for their Church.



“We were impressed by Ben’s familiarity with the church budget process. He completely won our attention by saying ‘I have never yet had a church tell me the sky’s the limit... we know how to stretch a buck.’”

—Ann Young, First United Methodist Church, Austin, TX



Master Plan Watercolor, St. Joseph’s Catholic, Inez, TX

The Retreat setting brings people together into a spiritual environment conducive to group sharing and listening. As we focus on the community’s needs, the group can begin to identify the fundamental issues of the project. As the congregation begins to invest itself into the process we are able to find moments of creativity and outside-the-box thinking that will translate into inspired design.

In this unique process, the architects’ job is to facilitate group sharing and exchange of ideas. Each person brings their knowledge and dreams, and contributes to a shared expression of faith and community. Time and again, the group comes to life with creativity and inspired design solutions. The trust and sense of purpose developed throughout the day results in consensus or near consensus on tangible solutions that are better than any one person could design on their own.

From collaborative creativity springs timeless, classic design. The final product blends old and new, traditional and contemporary, while being specifically tailored to each community. The design efforts of everyone involved create a worship space that is truly a spiritual expression of the congregation. The solutions that will enrich your community for generations.

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“Heimsath Architects’ consensus approach severely minimized the number of members who withdrew because of hurt feelings, being ‘left out’, etc.

We plan to use Heimsath Architects for our Phase II construction anticipated in the future.”

*—L. Keith Kruger, Co-Chair, Building Committee,
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Atlanta, GA*



Building committees that have participated in the Design Retreat Workshop report that Heimsath Architects’ Master Plan jump-started fund-raising and made congregations eager to begin building.

People often remark that no two Heimsath projects are exactly alike. This is because we know each community is unique, and the worship space reflects and enhances each congregation.

The Master Planning Process

The Design Retreat process works best as a key component of a comprehensive Master Plan. By fully understanding a congregation’s needs and goals, the Master Plan creates a unified ‘road map’ that avoids piecemeal building programs that create new problems. A good Master Plan contains not only design solutions but also budget projections, phasing recommendations and zoning requirements. Once the overall plan has been established, construction can be divided into phases based on current and future needs. Having this singular vision can be used to tackle projects with seemingly ‘impossible’ problems. Through collaboration and Master Planning, we have completed even the most complex buildings on time and within budget.

Once you have completed the Master Plan process, congratulate yourself. You have laid the foundation of your future building, and you can be sure it is a solid one. Building committees that have participated in the Design Retreat Workshop report that Heimsath Architects’ Master Plan jump-started fund-raising and made congregations eager to begin building. By choosing the Master Plan process, you have made a sound investment from which your church will reap the benefits for generations to come.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

To Plan a Design Retreat Workshop for Your Congregation

Call Ben Heimsath at: 512. 478. 1621

or

Send mail to: cbh@heimsath.com



“The Retreat which inaugurated the conceptual design phase of our project was extremely well-planned and executed by the Heimsaths. The outcome of that retreat was a brilliantly conceived general design for the eventual construction. Consensus, based on mutual involvement and shared dreams, was their focus, and this hoped-for agreement was achieved through Heimsath Architects’ efforts.”

—John E. Miller, Rector, St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, Richmond, VA

