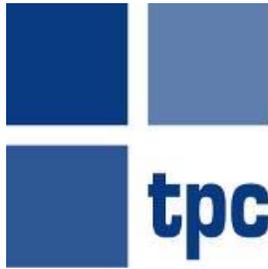


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Planning · Architecture · Design

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January/February 2013

## TPC Architects, Inc. Newsletter

### TPC Newsletter Goes Bimonthly.

No, you're not missing out. You may have noticed that lately we have been producing the newsletter on a bimonthly basis; but do not fear, we will continue to share our experience and knowledge with you. If you like something you have read, our PDF archive of past newsletters is available in the [News](#) section of our website.

Thanks For  
Reading!

### Planting in a Time of Famine

### One Building, Many Uses



*Notwithstanding the centuries-old history of traditional church design, multi-use worship and educational facilities are clearly here to stay. Our culture is changing, technology exploding, and finances demanding alternatives to traditional design. TPC first wrote about this in our July 2010 newsletter. We consider the topic important enough to repeat this message, with only minor changes.*

Not that long ago most church assembly spaces had fixed seats and sloped floors. The "Fellowship Hall," "Social Hall" or "Parish Center" was the venue for all non-worship and community activities. If a church constructed a gymnasium it was the automatic venue for "youth concerts." Today's public schools, especially elementary and middle schools, commonly have "multi-purpose" rooms designed for similar purposes. What about today's church?

Even with some signs of recovery our current economy underscores the need for churches to maximize the use of their facilities. In previous TPC newsletters we have emphasized the importance of keeping ministry planning, facility planning, and financial planning in sync. A church must not build what they do not need, nor spend more



Genesis 26: 1-5 tells the story of Isaac, who found himself in tough circumstances. As with his father Abraham (Gen. 12: 10) there was a famine in the land. Although God instructed Abraham the patriarch to head for Egypt for sustenance, He told Isaac to stay put. In Genesis 25: 12 it states that Isaac "planted crops *in that land and the same year* reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him."

Isn't that interesting? Isaac could have left, and was inclined to do so, but God said to stay and to invest in the future there. It must have seemed ridiculous to him and to his neighbors to plow the fields, watching the dust fly, right in the midst of the famine. But God had him preparing for a future blessing.

What about your church? Are you in the midst of a famine? Has God given you any options or direction to uproot or change your ministry? If not,

than is necessary or affordable. And so the design of space that can serve more than one ministry function should be seriously considered.

The community use of church facilities continues to be on the rise, which is a good thing! Integrating community activities like scouting programs, emergency response training, educational seminars, kid's festivals, and recreational leagues is appropriate for many churches. We are seeing partnerships between local government organizations and the church in developing joint use facilities. Organizations such as the *Community & Sports Development Council*(CSDC) [www.csdccouncil.org](http://www.csdccouncil.org), promote the community use of religious facilities.

Multi-use design is not limited to the assembly room of a church. Sure, we are encouraged to use these large gathering spaces for more than fixed seating venues, but multi-use thinking should begin with site entrance, parking lot layout, lighting, and overall image. Without compromising your church's sacred character you can present a persona to your community that invites them to join you, even catering to their needs.

### FIGHTING BLAND DESIGN



A common perception is that multi-use space design is inherently bland and cost-driven. Certainly economy is a part of the formula, but it need not subtract from good architecture. Consider **Rolling Hills Christian Church** in El Dorado Hills. Having outgrown rented space, their need was for a Phase 1 worship facility to seat 500 to 600 people in a flexible, community friendly, multi-use building. They began by planting a cross on their site as a symbol of their

perhaps He is encouraging you to stay where you are and invest in His future for you.

Here at TPC Architects we are watching some churches "plant in a time of famine" through wise planning and a determined faith. God is at work! Nothing will stop Him from building His church!

**Architect-Billing Index in U.S. Increases to Five-Year High**

The American Institute of Architects Billings Index climbed to 53.2 last month, the highest level since November 2007, from 52.8 in October, the Washington-based group said today. Readings above 50 signal an increase in activity. The gauge has advanced for six consecutive months, the longest winning streak in its 17-year history.

Billings tend to lead construction by 9-12 months, according to AIA chief economist Kermit Baker. The value of all U.S. construction projects climbed in October to an \$872.1 billion annual rate, the

purpose.



Rolling Hills' design integrates a very functional rectangular multi-use room into a soft, inviting, community center style package. While there is no mistaking its purpose as a place of worship, its posture is at the community level. Parents find a friendly teaching environment for their children, youth have a blast with indoor basketball and other activities, and the worship environment is acoustically correct and visually alive.



**ON A LARGER SCALE**

fastest since September 2009, Commerce Department data show.

"There appears to be some new life generated in the construction sector of the economy, which has been pretty much dormant since the recession," Bernard Baumohl, chief global economist at Economic Outlook Group LLC, a Princeton, New Jersey-based forecasting firm, said before the report.

AIA researchers produce the report by surveying about 700 U.S.-based firms, including Skidmore Owings & Merrill LLP and HOK Architects Corp., on whether billings rose, fell, or remained the same in the past month.

Firms reporting inquiries about designing new projects also rose for a sixth straight month, climbing to a nine-month high of 59.6 from 59.4 in October.

"It's indicative of confidence," Rodd Merchant, a senior vice president at JE Dunn Co., a Kansas, Missouri-based building contractor, said before the report. "A lot of that work on the private side is driven by corporations investing in their operations, whether office or industrial."

## Useful Links

Back in 1985 First Baptist Church of Elk Grove, CA had outgrown their original home on the east side of town. A property yielded a large parcel along Highway 99 in a growing region of the community. Phase 1 would require seating about 1,200 people in a flexible, multi-use room. The budget was small and the need was large. The building had to accomplish a thriving preschool as well as a dynamic children's ministry. And as always, phase 1 development costs dictated a frugal approach to the design of building space.



Sports were a big part of the picture. The assembly room needed to host basketball and volleyball but not allow these activities to dominate the worship environment. The room also had the need to expand for overflow seating.



## Summary

Often limited budgets and space call for combining uses into one building. Beginning with a well conceived "Ministry Master Plan" (see Oct. 2009 newsletter) consider the types of ministry functions that can be accomplished in a multi-use format. Then approach your design creatively,

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[Faith and Form Website](#)

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being careful to assess the costs along the way.

*Happy New Year! From all of us at TPC Architects*

I encourage you to contact me personally with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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