



**Summary of Imaginings Sessions
with Goody Clancy for**

The Unitarian Church in Westport

Two Sessions: 8/24/2019 and 9/10/2019

Entryway

- Circular driveway
- Covered entrance
- Eliminate hill and have ground level entrance
- Need "welcoming" area
- Push out entryway
- Can't get downstairs without going outside
- Possible 2-story addition by oak tree
- Dig out area between 2 wings
- Give front courtyard a fireplace with couches for gathering
- Has accessibility issues, difficult to enter building
- Not all can walk up to the front door, and access to lift can be challenging

Sanctuary

- Replace glass walls—bullet proof? Photo-chromatic? Vacuum glass? Other?
- Make glass E-glass or add see-through shades; would not get heat load in summer
- Leave current glass walls in place but put another glass wall where railings are, thus creating an internal corridor
- Include down-blowing fans and get rid of electric heat along windows
- Possible stained glass in the skylight
- More height in front of sanctuary so it is easier to see from the back what is happening up front
- Electronic system for raising and lowering risers
- Projection screen visible to congregation
- Replace flooring with hard material to ensure good acoustics for music program
- Outdoor lighting to lessen "blackness" outside glass walls during evening events

Space

- Aesthetics—more flexibility in the space; must marry architecture and functionality
- Increase size of foyer by moving entrance
- Turn courtyard into interior space
- Need space and flexibility to support multi-functions, e.g. social activities and wedding preparations
- Increase storage areas
- Increase space in Ed's office to accommodate amazing music program
- Would like choir rehearsal room separate from sanctuary

- Would like meditation space
- Serve coffee in same space where people congregate after services
- Expand common space, but with ability to divide with folding walls
- Use sliding white boards for meetings
- Take offices out of the wings
- Put administrative area in another building
- Possible second story addition
- Need dedicated 'family viewing room' for services
- Potential of outdoor space being more usable

Kitchen

- How to design for future possibilities, profit-making events, e.g. hosting big weddings with formal receptions
- Possible catering kitchen? Soup kitchen?
- Concrete counters
- Can't host elegant events and serve food
- Needs a dishwasher

Sound System

- Sound system lacking, Voices Café has to bring in own sound system. Would be nice to get rid of ugly wires all around; Ideally there would be a lighting plan
- A person I know cannot hear in this space, and our electronics don't work for all
- Sound system needs improvement; singers not always heard in back of sanctuary
- Microphones are not well coordinated

Technology

- Televise services
- Connect with programs such as Partner Church in Transylvania and Kenya
- Insure flexibility with future technologies
- Make space available for interactivity initiatives
- Need 21st century audio-visual capabilities
- Need better Wi-Fi
- Would like large screen in sanctuary
- New direction of RE
- Support the staff better
- Communicate with congregation

Driveway/Parking Lot

- Flooding a huge problem
- Sidewalks cracked, uneven, and treacherous
- Steps falling apart
- Pot holes are a mess
- Outside lighting very limited at night
- Consider solar energy use over parking lot

Landscaping/Grounds

- Must complement the modern style building
- Needs updating
- Grounds very overgrown
- Create an outdoor labyrinth or amphitheater on the grounds
- Tough location because area isn't flat

Energy Use

- Sustainability and energy use—very important. To be an attractive place where people are proud to come we need it to be sustainable and have low energy use. Non carbon eventually, but lower carbon use for now. Sustainability is savings of money and less energy use.
- Building should not just be visually attractive, but LEED certified
- Insulating windows and roof so less energy use
- How to incorporate and use solar power—possible loss of some trees
- Explore glass that captures solar energy
- Explore geo-thermal energy as solar panels are unsightly
- Energy efficiency a priority—solar? Geothermal?

Other

- Many accessibility issues
- Consider Meeting House needs
- Seek Landmark status for possible financial aid in future
- Do not remove colored glass in kids' chapel
- Air conditioning would help support summer events, e.g. weddings
- Lower level seems very separate from upper floor
- Rental of downstairs—Space available for use, but we need the money from rentals
- Need approval process for donations to church, e.g. artwork
- Memorial garden losing topsoil; problems maintaining the space; moss taking over
- How to keep interior in sync with beauty and sanctity of the space
- How to afford necessary repairs and regular maintenance

- We should live our principles
- Important to maintain the 'awe' I feel every time I enter the building
- TUCW could become a vibrant community center
- Standing seam or copper roof or other material that sheds water
- Stonework on everything except sanctuary would increase insulation and provide safety for pre-school
- Many difficulties for older members—stairs, parking lot, too hot or cold and hard to hear in sanctuary
- Concerned about our impact on the environment—take out invasive species, permeable parking lot, rain garden to help with flooding
- Critical to maintain Victor Lundy's vision
- Possible elevator on side entrance
- Bigger door on side entrance
- New organ
- Use variety of new materials

APPENDICES A-D

A. Notes from 8/24 First Imagining session, Group A

No clear indication of where the front entry to the church is located

Consider a circular driveway, easier for dropping people off, and a covered walkway from the driveway into the building

A problem with stairs; difficult for some to maneuver

How will we incorporate the elevator on which we have already spent a great deal of money?

Would like the front entrance to be on ground level, which would require eliminating the hill.

Would like to see the front doors moved

If we had an intruder and we needed to evacuate the building, what would we do? Where would we go?

How can we make the building more secure? How can we be able to see who is approaching?

Would be nice to have the flexibility of movable walls

We don't have a 'welcoming' spot near the entrance; a place to store name tags

Shelter Rock Church on LI has a huge 'welcoming' spot for coats, literature, etc.

Would like a dedicated family viewing room (or a "crying" room) We could use the library for viewing the service on a monitor. Now we use the foyer, and, while that space is fine for viewing what occurs in the service, it is not always easy to hear what is going on.

For weddings, the bride usually waits in the library as the guests come in. We do not have a specific dressing room for wedding preparations.

TUCW receives significant revenue (12% of our income) from the "Nature" pre-school which uses the downstairs level of the building. Could the downstairs be used differently?

Would like to have an electronic system for raising and lowering risers in the chancel.

Would like TUCW to become the 'mother ship' as homebound and others in places such as Meadow Ridge, could 'attend' services on Sundays without leaving their homes

New technologies could make it possible to televise services allowing both observation and participation from a distance.

Would like a projection screen in sanctuary so music would be visible for all (no need for hymnals) This would also allow for other documents to be visually available.

Concerned about growing the congregation over time. We should have some areas available for rentals.

Our kitchen is used more for 'assembling' of foods brought from home rather than cooking, and we definitely need more counter space.

Ed's impact on the music program has been astounding. He has brought in many people because of its excellence. What can we do to improve the space in his room?

We need to consider additional space for the future of the music program.

We must keep up with technology to connect with such programs as Kenya and Partner Church in Transylvania.

We need potential space for **interactivity**. How do we keep track of current technology? How do we implement it when available?

How do we make sure people do not feel "othered" if they need to use assisted devices for hearing, wheelchairs, or walkers?

Many new issues now with gender equality and bathrooms. Do we identify them as male/female or not? Singular stalls?

Our concepts of room and space may need to change in the future. Some space may be needed for people who want/need to work alone. Other spaces may be identified for those who want to work with others.

Acoustics are important. It is easier to hear in some parts of the building than others. Flexibility is necessary, but it may affect acoustics and other functions.

Must be able to support multi-functions, e.g. the annual tag sale uses the entire building on a Sat., yet, as soon as it's over, the building must become a 'sacred space' for services the next day

Possibility of solar power? On top of the parking lot?

We can increase the size of the lower level, but it would change the view of the building. How much can we change without jeopardizing our Landmark grant?

What possibilities are available for replacing our glass walls? Bullet proof glass is very heavy and very thick, and not bullet proof after the first shot

We need easy ways to keep everything clean.

Best way to take care of asbestos flooring is to cover it.

David's office is very cramped. Needs more space and support.

Someone from outside our church community said that TUCW in "the church that does things." John often uses the phrase "a spiritual center with a civic circumference."

There is no space in the foyer to show what the community is doing

We love the colored glass in the kids' chapel. Do not change that!

Screens for viewing are needed.

B. Notes from 8/24 First Imagining session, Group B

Entry has accessibility issues, difficult to enter building

Sound system is lacking, voices café has to bring in own sound system, it would be nice to get rid of the ugliness of wires around, ideally there would be a lighting plan as well.

More height in front of sanctuary, so it is easier to see what is happening up front from the back.

Sustainability and energy use are very important, to be an attractive place we need it to be sustainable, a place where people are proud to come to, because it is sustainable and low energy use. Noncarbon eventually but lower carbon use for now. Sustainability is savings of money, and less energy use

The building should not just be visually attractive, but LEED certified.

We should live our principles

Long term our world needs to figure out how to be less carbon intensive, in the meantime our church should be example of that. Draw people in because we had vision and are sustainable.

Solar overhang parking

Insulating so less energy use, windows and roof

Include down blowing fans, and get rid of electric heat along windows

The capacity restricts us to certain types of events, small wedding

If you want to serve food, you can't do an elegant event, if we had the ability to do that somehow that would be a big boom to host an entire event

AC would help support events in summer, such as weddings

We need better space for after services. I imagine for more space to congregate, take out office to increase size of west wing

I know a person who doesn't come here because they cannot hear in this space, our electronics don't work for all, also that person can't handle the walk up the path to the front door and the process of getting lift access can be challenging.

We have accessibility issues if you are handicapped, you can't go downstairs without going outside. If a parent or a child is immobile, it is a problem. Accessibility inside and outside

Another church we attended, the coffee was in same space as where people congregated, to do this would be good

Expand common space, but be able to divide it up still

Dividing up rooms can be done with folding walls

If want bigger space to congregate for coffee, maybe close off courtyard and don't heat it. we need it to be energy efficient, because of expense and it is the right thing to do. Local UU congregations may contract in the future so perhaps we should talk to those other congregations. We want glass in sanctuary, but not sure if we do in offices. The building should be structurally sound, so the roof doesn't

leak, the sound is good. If have to add or subtract in the future, additional work won't require a jack hammer to expand.

Make glass E-Glass, or add shades still see through but don't get heat load in the summer

For the 20/30 somethings, they come for the music, singing, SJ work, christening, marriage, events at church, outreach, community. You don't come because hard to go up and down stairs, parking, too hot or too cold, place not as welcoming, not adequate space for kids, they can't be in sanctuary. Hard to hear in sanctuary.

Bottom of church very separated from top part, can't host big wedding with formal reception

A lot of people come here for music and the sound system needs improvement.

Singers or other instruments are not always heard in back of sanctuary, piano ok

Mics are not well coordinated

Need to make sure people know how to use new equipment, wonderful space, closeness is ok, aware of all of the troubles, common community space - if that works all flows from that

I have been here 40 years and I still have the awe when I come in, and I would like for people who will follow me to have the same awe, not saying we aren't working towards that, but I would like us to see us working towards that over everything else

Initial perceptions are this place is beautiful but once you are here for a while you begin to see the flaws

How can we draw in outside groups, how get them to participate here

It is welcoming, more so if more social space, how people and staff get people to come here once it looks beautiful

Parking lot being flooded doesn't help us, pass the sign out front, cute matching mailbox, but then you see the pot hole mess and then the lake. At night lighting outside only shines on the stairs, lighting is limited in the parking lot, grounds are overgrown, entrance is spooky during acorn season

Thinning out trees, overgrown

I imagine this place as a vibrant community center, there are limitations to what we have now

take offices out of wings so more space

we have such beautiful grounds, I would love something to make it useful, like an outdoor labyrinth or amphitheater,

standing seam or copper roof, ice on the roof that could kill someone, roofing material that shed water, also everything except sanctuary would have stonework, increase insulation rate. Safety for preschool with stone walls

this is a modern building and it should function as a modern building

C. Notes from 9/10 Second Imagining session, Group A

Location is tough because we aren't on a flat area

Nature, with the change of seasons is the spiritual aspect of this building

Concerned about our impact on the environment. Permeable parking lot, take out invasive species, rain garden (to help with flooding)

Not enough space to mingle

Critical to maintain Victor Lundy's vision

More accessible stairs, and an awning over the entrance

Make front entrance more beautiful and side entrance more functional, perhaps with an elevator

Accessibility is important. Maintain dignity of all

Have a bigger door downstairs, more welcoming, easier to travel through

Outside space s/b connected to the Sunday service – games, etc.

Patio structure for activities/events outside

Turn courtyard into interior space

Give front courtyard a fireplace and have couches for gathering

Current outside terraces are wasted space. Get benches (at least)

Solar energy – what % of trees are you willing to lose? There will be structural issues if on the roof.

What about over parking lot like at F'fld HS? The cost of installation vs impact on our budget needs to be well understood. 9 participants agreed. It shows our commitment to the future and supports our principles

Glass that captures solar energy? Has been tried in Australia – is very expensive

Explore geo=thermal because solar panels are unsightly

Geo-thermal doesn't work well all year long, would need backup

Another building for the administration area

Instead of replacing the glass walls, leave them in place and put another glass wall where the railings are, creating an internal corridor

Event space is important

Keep the glass

Maintain the glass

Want to keep all floor to ceiling glass – change would ruin the aesthetics

Staff likes to see outside

Use the lower space

Building bones are good, but shabby now. Weave aesthetics with today's function and technology

Better lighting and Wi-Fi

Need video instruction for online learning – esp. for faith development

No large screen in the sanctuary

Better sound system in the foyer

Need our space to be flexible. Large spaces and meeting rooms important

Create new space for the choir

New music storage space in a low profile building

Storage for hymnals

New organ

More storage. Keeping all the glass limits this

Sliding white boards for meetings

Kitchen is crowded, noisy and needs a dishwasher. Is not suitable for catering revenue

Stained glass in the skylight

Work should be done in phases

D. Notes from 9/10 Second Imagining session, Group B

TUCW--the glass, location, sanctuary is a safe place, offers a continuous view of nature. Suggested new possibilities available for the glass walls—glazing, photochromic glass. Mentioned the effects of the sun at certain times of the morning when one is standing in the choir...blinding/bright/hot

Tiles should be removed because of the asbestos. How do the tiles affect music/sound/acoustics?

Would like to see a choir rehearsal or practice room separate from the sanctuary.

Perhaps a second story?

Concerned with the landscaping. It should complement the building. Architecture is important and distinctive. Our landscaping is a jumble of bushes which doesn't work with the distinctive architecture of the building.

Important things we don't see—electricity, wiring, mandatory items need to be 21st century audiovisual. Perhaps screens on mobile carts? They would need to be elevated

The staff seems 'smushed' in their offices. Ed's office is especially crowded. We have an extraordinary building but need more office space

One's first impression of building is its extraordinary beauty. He is trying to obtain an early picture of the building—from 1960 or 65—as it was pristine. Nothing interfered with it, no banners hanging from the railings, no overgrown landscaping. He would like to keep it that way as much as possible.

Wants to preserve as much as possible. It is an iconic building, both a curse and a blessing. We need the preschool's financial payments.

Loss of pre-school would change the functioning of the building. There would be many opportunities if this was a possibility..

Sometimes we lose opportunities for other paying tenants because of the nursery school and also the parking lot. The macadam parking lot is very big and poorly designed. It is inefficient, lots of wasted areas. The WISE men group of Weston could not be accommodated

There is a big parking problem because of drainage

The library is frequently used as a small meeting room and is now a small office for Margalie. In the past the library has been the office of our assistant ministers.

The Meeting House is used for meetings, some rehearsals for play group, HS youth group meets downstairs. It has a kitchen and many bathrooms, some very good things

Many organizations approach the church for various functions, e.g. the local land trust, Voices Café

The room must be versatile

The screen at the back of the chancel blocks the storage of all sorts of items behind the organ. It is extremely unattractive when coming down from the Memorial Garden.

Can't hear if you're in the ante room during services, although some people like sitting there.

We don't use the balconies very much. The elevator (lift) is a good thing, and there is one table and chair set on the corner of the western side of the building. Lovely to sit out there on a nice day.

The playground can be seen from the balcony. There are stairs from the balcony to the lower level... towards the back of the building on the east side.

Choir needs elevation; there was some talk about possibly locating the choir in the back of the church. Feels eventually some choir members may need a wheel chair, and access to the choir area would be difficult.

The sidewalks are treacherous.

The parking area is uneven, difficult to maneuver. Should be more direct.

Information related to entering the building needs to be intuitive.

Some folks see only the side entrance.

New rules require door heights to be 80". Ours are not that height now...this is a problem.

Wondered about donations of various items. Is there an approval process? Example—the two urns by the front door are Victorian and do not go with the architecture of the church. Is there, should there be, some mechanism for approval of such things?

The Memorial Garden is losing topsoil and has been for years. Called it "pebble city." Mowing is impossible around the memorial stones. Have we considered retaining walls?

It is a resting place with a beautiful bench. A place for quiet contemplation

A difficult place to maintain, basically a constant losing battle. We do not have the volunteers to maintain. Moss has taken over (a good thing) and we should encourage more of it.

Mentioned "star" moss—very expensive, but would be wonderful for the area

Asked about the interior of the building, how to keep up with the beauty and sanctity of the space

Our mission statement is so inspirational, synergistic with UU spirituality. Can we use modern materials that work with the conceptual aspect of the building? Noted it would be hard to find a carpet that holds up to use by 400 people weekly

Suggested other materials to absorb sound, e.g. bamboo or cork

Imperative to have hard floor in sanctuary for acoustics

We know there is a certain amount of work we must do, and expenses must be considered. We're not sure what we're able to finance yet.

The kitchen is not adequate. Should we knock down the walls? We are limited; it only minimally supports us now.

A better kitchen would allow us to possibly rent space for weddings. How can we use our space and keep moving forward? Possible use of concrete counters? (Popular now in NY) It is exciting to think about new materials now available.

We do not have a catering kitchen, e.g. the Clambake is an example of outside catering. We have done some major cooking for large events, but mostly cooking is done at home and brought in. We have a hard time even making enough soup for Soup Sundays. What about the possibility of having a "Supper Club" where we would produce food for 100 people each month? Or a Soup Kitchen? If we build one, will they come?

This is just one more reason to make use of the downstairs

Some discussion about rentals—We receive \$77,000 per year from the nursery school. We could get \$15,000 per catered wedding.

The kitchen is awful. Jenna and Julyen do amazing things, but we really need to decide what we would do with a real kitchen.

Many times toys are left outside of the nursery school, so the view when approaching the building is not good.

Energy efficiency is a priority.

What about canopies? Can Goody Clancy envision this in our landscape?

Suggested pushing out the entryway. Putting the entrance at the front would give more area and opportunities for solar panels.

Some people don't want our footprint to increase. We will need to make some compromises.

The wings were built first, then the sanctuary. We have some of Victor Lundy's original sketches. His concept of the location of the walls—he had many ideas for how it would reflect the vision/mission of the church

Mentioned digging out the area between the 2 wings

Leveling the entryway would mean entering through the bottom level with stairs leading upward to the main level. This would give us more room, perhaps a bride's changing room.

Possibility of a 2-story addition by the oak tree. There is a sketch book of Victor Lundy's drawings; he thinks it may be available.

Would like the sanctuary to be used just as a sanctuary. Would like to have other activities, e.g. dances, gatherings, etc., in a different space.

The sanctuary at night feels ominous as the 'walls' look black.

Would like to be able to 'light' the sanctuary by simply touching the glass...check the Corning web site to learn about this!

People are attracted to our openness, connection with nature, access. Our building is designed for UUs and reflects our values.

The openness of the building reflects the openness within

We have our faults but we need to make clear people's needs to feel welcomed

Mentioned a NYTimes article highlighting Westport as a place for creativity, artists. This space is dogma free; people gravitate toward this spiritual direction—people who want to 'find their own way'

Sits on the left side of the sanctuary year-round. Enjoys the views of all seasons although it is a little cold in winter and hot in summer