

# Return and Renewal Project

## Update for March 18

In our weekly communications, we have been offering a few insights into aspects of the Return and Renewal Committee's audio-visual project. Yes, the "Return" part pertains directly to our eventual physical return to the sanctuary, and the "Renewal" part relates to the expansion of our electronic presence, but this project also refers to the architecture and history of our space.

Historically, the chancel had four choir pews and a modesty screen on either side, the organ console, and only the high altar. At some point in the '50s or '60s, and for some reason lost to us, the organ console was split from its pipes and placed in the gallery. We seek to "Return" the choir pews and console to their original position, albeit with one fewer pew per side. The freestanding altar will slide back several feet to allow for ample space on all sides.



*The photo to the left shows the chancel and sanctuary as it was originally; note the choir stalls on either side of the chancel, the high altar, and the organ and console in close proximity to one another. The photo to the right shows the modifications to the chancel and sanctuary made between the 1950s and 1960s; note the removal of the organ console and the changes to the fittings in the sanctuary.*

Won't we need to purchase new furniture for this to work, you might ask? We, in fact, have the original pews collecting dust in the north transept. It will be a simple relocation once we determine the best timing with respect to Covid restrictions and the return of singers. If you happened to attend Lessons &

Carols in December, 2019, you probably noticed the choir fitting in appropriately in their original position as liturgical participants. Charlie and Chris relocated the pews just for that service.



*The photo above showing the Service of Lessons & Carols from 2019; note the choir stalls temporarily moved back to the chancel.*

As we mentioned last week, having pews up front allows us to use the chancel for more intimate services and gatherings, not only reserving seating for choir members. Similarly, by vacating the seldom-used pews from the north transept, we have an opportunity for exploring the “Renewal” of that space as well. It even houses the church’s original altar. The formally-called All Saints Chapel could provide space for small liturgies, small group gatherings, a children’s space, and many other possibilities.

These changes allow us to experience the church closer to the architect’s vision from 130 years ago. After all, architecture is nothing but masses in a void if not for we as humans getting to experience space with every one of our senses. Incense. Bread and wine. Sunlight through stained glass. Music. Prayer. Wood, stone, fabric. Movement. Presence.

By installing excellent audio-visual equipment, we can experience our holy space on a more human level, even from afar.