

# Return and Renewal Project

## Update for March 4

### Liturgical Benefits of the Return and Renewal Project:

You've been hearing about the Return and Renewal Project at Atonement. Our committee has already given you an overview. We've told you how we will be making liturgy accessible to people who can't come to church, and we've mentioned how we'll be rearranging the chancel. We also want to offer some reflections on why and how our renewal will enhance the liturgy.



One of the great inspirations behind liturgical reform is that worship is something everyone in the church does together. The clergy, all those in the altar party, and the people in the pews are all members of one worshipping community. The celebrant presides and performs the priestly acts of consecration and blessing, but everyone else is actively involved in many ways. Members of the congregation come forward with the gifts, some of us step forward to read the scriptures, and at communion we move forward in our grand procession to the communion rail. We sing the hymns and say the responses. Even when we are silent we can see and feel others beside us. We support each other with the gift of our presence.

Where does the choir fit into all of this? The singers too are members of this worshipping community. All of them play a vital role in our shared worship, whether they are professionals or dedicated volunteers. They lead us in singing, and they model the reverent attention that we all value. If we are all in our various ways ministers of the liturgy, so too are the choir members. When

we can see them alongside the others who lead us in worship, that helps them to play their role.

If the choir is there in the chancel, alongside the clergy, that can focus our attention on the space where the liturgy is centered. It contributes to making the chancel a lively and alluring space, rich in symbolism and alive with color, with the fragrance of incense and the sound of sacred music. The altar remains the center of our attention, but it is framed by the choir's pews. The choir joins with the altar party in its ministry, leading us in music and calling our attention to all that happens in the chancel.