

Building the future

We have inherited a sound and attractive building from our Victorian predecessors, but we need to ask the question, “As our society changes, and our church life adapts to 21st century Selkirk, are our buildings still suitable for our congregational life and outreach?”

We are not the first to ask this question, and over the years, many improvements have been made, such as the light wooden ceiling above the sanctuary, the creation of the “meeting house” and glass partition, the removal of the side-facing pews to form the side chapel, and the hall renovation, including the improved kitchen and new toilets.

The sale of the former manse in The Glebe gives us an opportunity (a substantial amount of money) to consider any further improvements.

The Kirk Session and Congregational Board have been thinking a little about this over the last year or so, and a list of “issues” has been compiled, which could be addressed.

General issues

- need for more storage space (for food storage, chairs, equipment)
- lack of mid-sized meeting/activity room(s)
- need for larger kitchen for Open Door and other events requiring catering
- more creative use of the front garden (eg seating, peace garden)
- need for office space for staff team
- making the entrance area / doors more welcoming and accessible

Issues specific to the “sanctuary”

- storage space for communion ware, hymnbooks
- inflexible and uncomfortable seating / sticky varnish
- need for better disabled access, and seating space for wheelchair users
- need for better lighting, screen and sound systems
- the high cost and environmental impact of heating a large volume of space for only a few hours every Sunday
- long-term maintenance of the windows, particularly stained glass
- making best use of the balcony area

To think about

Do you agree that it would be good to address these issues?

Are there other things that you think need attention, or could be improved?

If we have to prioritise, which do you think are most important?

Please let us know your thoughts and comments!

Next steps

Once we have heard everyone’s ideas, we will need to involve some professionals – the general trustees, an architect, energy advisers – to suggest some options of how we might address these needs, within the budget we have available. That will take some time. For the moment, we just want to explore our needs and priorities. You can send you thoughts by letter or email, or by speaking directly, to David Bethune, who is leading a small group investigating this. Thanks to all those who have already done so!