

INTRODUCTION

This is a proposal to rework the main entrance landscaping of OSLC. It is being led by Pam Mann, who has organized a group of anonymous donors to pay for the entire cost of the job. The renovation plan was developed by landscape architect Stephen (Steve) Wlodarczyk, whose services the Manns had used over 20 years ago. The theme of the church renovation is a simpler, cleaner, greener landscape with less maintenance.

The impetus for getting a new landscape plan for the garden arose from the last church workday (Sat., Sept.19). Pam contacted Steve and he, Tim and Pam met at the church on Oct13 to check out the garden and discuss new plan ideas. After getting a blueprint of the garden area from Bruce Thompson, church maintenance point of contact (POC), and tree location and identification information from Tim, Steve developed a preliminary plan. As advised by Bruce, the plan was presented to the Board of Governors on Nov.19; Mark Middlebusher, who wrote up questions about the plan from that meeting, and Byron Thompson were selected to work with Pam in pursuing the project. Mark, Byron, and Pam held a Zoom meeting with Steve on Dec.1 to begin discussions and answer questions. Since that time, Pam has had many interactions with Steve, who has been very generous with his time and expertise.

The objective of the proposed plan is to provide year-round color and easier maintenance using grass, flowering plants, and evergreens. The plants and shrubs were selected for slow growth, low expected height, resistance to disease, and attractiveness.

The Faith Walk will not be impacted by the proposed landscape plan, but a plan for its restoration is included and will be implemented in conjunction with church volunteers.

I. MAIN FEATURES OF THE CURRENT GARDEN

The scope of this project is the garden areas outside the front doors between the church and the preschool. The doors are on the east side of the garden (and face west); the church borders the south side and the preschool borders the north. The center walkway separates the two sides of the garden.

Trees:

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2 River Birch, 4 Redbud, 2 American Sweetgum, Bald Cypress, 4 Dogwood (1 is the Danny Butler Memorial Tree)

Plants and Shrubs:

Mophead Hydrangeas, Beautyberry, Japanese Hollies, Abelia, Azaleas, Sarcocca (Sweetbox), Henry Garnet (Sweetspire), Rose Bush, Daylilies, Coneflowers.

Faith Walk

Open area:

Mulch beds with weeds/leaves, black rubber edging, two drains, in-ground lights (four on north side, three on south).

Solar lights on posts on both sides of center walkway to the front doors.

II. MAIN PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT GARDEN

PROBLEM 1: The garden is unattractive and a less than inviting experience for church attendees.

Trees

The two American Sweetgums are planted too close to the structures and produce unwanted prickly seed pods; the roots are negatively impacting nearby planting beds and drainage.

The Bald Cypress is too large for a garden area and is expected to grow to 25' wide and 50-70' tall. It blocks the sun and competes with the beauty of the sanctuary. It has negatively impacted nearby plant and tree growth - in particular, the Danny Butler Memorial tree.

Other existing trees need careful elevation (lower branches removed) and professional pruning.

Plants and Shrubs

Hydrangeas all along the windows on the east side of the garden grow too large, blocking a view of the outside from inside of the building.

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Other plants and shrubs exist throughout the garden. Many of them have stunted growth and are 'clumping' due to lack of sunlight.

Faith Walk

The Faith Walk is unsightly – half complete, sunken and silt covered. The two wooden posts along the Walk are corroded and the posts' attached signs are unreadable. The bench along the Walk is deteriorating.

Open Areas

Mulch beds are unsightly and uneven, and they cause water drainage problems.

Weeds and leaves are everywhere.

Black rubber edging, originally used to define plant beds, add to a cluttered look.

Drains get covered with debris.

Mud and dirt from the gutters splashes up on the walls of the church and preschool and erosion occurs along their edges.

In-ground lights: scalloped concrete bricks that frame the in-ground lights have fallen over, making them unsightly, as well as ineffective in protecting lights from cover by mulch and leaves.

PROBLEM 2: The garden requires too much maintenance for a volunteer team.

Church volunteers mostly just weed and mulch – weed and mulch – weed and mulch - on church workdays. Soon after, the weeds return; it is a thankless job. Occasionally, some weeding and raking is done on other days. Many parts of the yard are largely overlooked.

Trees

Some trees need to be removed. Other trees need professional pruning and careful elevation (removing lower branches).

Plants and Shrubs

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Need professional care or replacement or relocation in the garden.

Faith Walk

In need of cleanup, professional repair, and completion.

Open areas

The open space requires too much weeding and too much mulch.

III. HOW THE NEW PLAN WILL REMEDY THESE PROBLEMS

Overall goal: Make the front entrance to the church clean, simple, and inviting; build curb appeal and reduce maintenance efforts by lowering the tree canopy, introducing grassy areas, and having smaller plant beds with more evergreens.

See ATTACHMENT 1. NEW LANDSCAPE PLAN

PROBLEM 1: The garden is unattractive and a less than inviting experience for church attendees.

Existing Trees

Existing trees (E) noted on plot by large circles with dark center dot. Trees to be removed have dashed circle edges; those to remain have solid circle edges.

The two American Sweetgums and the Bald Cypress will be removed, and their stumps will be removed. The Sweetgums are labeled E05 and E06 in the plan; the Cypress is E07. The area will be graded out with new topsoil.

The two Birch trees will be elevated (have lower branches removed). The Birch are E01 and E12 in the plan.

The other trees, Redbuds and Dogwoods, will be carefully pruned and elevated. In the plan the Redbuds are E02, E03, E11, and E13; the Dogwood are E08, E09, E10. Note: E8 is the Memorial tree.

Existing Plants and Shrubs

The existing planting beds will be cleaned-up, pruned, and generally overhauled, to restore a more welcoming, professional appearance to the front of the church. The

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plant beds will be prepared for planting using a blend of Leafgro, sand, and topsoil mechanically tilled into the existing soil to condition it for proper plant growth.

The current plants and shrubs will either stay in place, be transplanted elsewhere in the garden, or be removed. Some of these plants and shrubs are noted on the plan; Hydrangeas are represented by small circles with little squiggles in the center. (Plants that are not thriving will be removed.) On the plan there are lines from the items to be transplanted to where they will be moved (Ninebark, Misc. Shrubs, Beautyberry, and some other existing plants are noted on the plan).

New Plants and Shrubs (9 new types)

The '#G' on the plan is the number of Gallons of an item, i.e., the size of the container holding the roots of the plant or shrub.

See ATTACHMENT 2: PLANT and SHRUB PHOTOS

NOTE: 'Name in photo' marked with '**' is equivalent to the name of the item given on the plan.

#	Name on plan	Name in photo	Icon on plan
10	Buxus 'Korean'	Korean Boxwood	dark green wavy-edged circles
2	Buxus x 'Green Velvet'	Buxus; 'Green Velvet' Boxwood	dark green wavy-edged circles
19	Nepeta x 'Walker's Low'	Nepeta 'Dropmore Purple' **	small blue circles
32	Ilex glabra 'Nigra'	Ilex glabra 'Inkberry'	grey wavy-edged circles
12	Leucanthemum x 'Becky',	Shasta Daisy	small yellow circles
28	Nandina domestica 'Gulf Stream'	Nandina 'Moonbeam' or 'Gulfstream' Dwarf Nandina	light green boxes
23 flats (15 - 4" plants /flat)	Liriope muscari 'Royal Purple'	Liriope	dark black dots
10	Azalea encore carnation	Azalea	wavy-edged small circles with pink spots
16	Hosta x 'Williams'	Hosta 'Frances Williams'	green and grey star shaped flower

Faith Walk

The proposed landscape enhancements will not impact the Faith Walk.

Restoration of the Faith Walk will be performed on a time and materials basis by the contractor and will involve church volunteers. The Faith Walk foundation will be stabilized, the current bricks cleaned and re-laid, and the Walk will be completed with plain bricks. The 2 posts and bench will be removed. **SEE APPENDIX A.**

Open Areas

The two mulch beds will be removed and replaced with sod (these areas are shown on the plan). These grassy areas will provide year-round green and better water absorption. Areas needing mulch will be treated with a pre-emergent herbicide to control weeds prior to mulching.

Existing weeds and leaves will be removed.

Rubber edging will be removed by church volunteers.

Drainage stone will be added along the edges of the buildings to reduce mud/dirt from the gutters splashing up onto the walls.

In-ground lights: The scalloped concrete bricks that currently frame the lights will be removed and possibly replaced by a “riser fashioned from PVC or ADS pipe”, if needed to keep mulch and leaves off the lights.

PROBLEM 2: It requires too much maintenance for a volunteer team.

Maintenance Schedule

	Spring	Summer	Fall
Trees		Pruning	
Plants & Shrubs		Pruning - Early summer	
		Perennial dead-head /cutback	Perennial cutback
Open Areas	Remove leaves & debris		Remove leaves
	Mulch&		Clear drains

	<p>Weed control (would this be early spring?)</p> <p>Weed control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mid spring - Late spring <p>---Cut Grass---</p>	<p>Weed control</p> <p>---Cut Grass---</p>	<p>---Cut Grass---</p>
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The largest effort will be in the spring with spreading about 20 cubic yards (cyds) of mulch; this is reduced from the current needs of up to 40cyds. This reduction cuts both material costs and labor hours in half.

A plant care procedure guide will be provided when the job is done.

IV. CONCLUSION: BOTTOM LINE

1. BENEFITS of New Garden

Lighter, lower, greener, and vigorous, thus more attractive

Year-round color - grass, flowering plants & shrubs, evergreens

Fewer empty areas within the planting beds, requiring less mulch and weeding

Solar lights brighter with grass surroundings

In-ground lights more visible

Characteristics of new plantings

- 1) Shrubs slow-growing
- 2) Disease-resistant
- 3) Animal resistant
- 4) Perennials

(However, there will be one additional garden task: grass-cutting.)

2. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION/ TIMELINE

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The work would take about 1-1/2 weeks, excluding the Faith Walk renovation. If the work is started in early March, most of the garden possibly could be ready by March 24 (Palm Sunday). However, due to availability, some plantings may be delayed.

There will be no obstructions to the front of the buildings during the work. Neither the entrance nor the walkway would be blocked.

The work area would be safely secured using construction fence.

The workers will maintain clean site conditions throughout the course of the project.

One week before plan implementation there would be a walkthrough with relevant parties to tag plants and trees to remain in place, what is to be removed, and what is to be transplanted. NOTE: after the walkthrough is done church members will be given the opportunity to extract any plants that are not to be included in the new plan; they also will be able to take mulch that is to be removed. Details TBD.

3. COSTS

As stated at the start, the landscape work will be completely paid for by anonymous donors.

A contract for the plan has been signed and a down-payment has been made to ensure that 2020 costs would remain in effect for 2021. The down-payment is completely refundable if the plan is not approved.

4. CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

- a. Clear rubber edging in the garden.
- b. Faith Walk – power wash existing bricks (Bruce says this works great); remove cleaned bricks to a palette; remove posts and bench.
- c. Possibly remove unwanted mulch and plants from the garden.
- d. Volunteer for church workdays!

5. CONTACT INFORMATION

Pam Mann – pmann@comcast.net, 410-908-8243

Steve Wlodarczyk - McHale Landscape Design, Inc., McLean, VA. 22101

APPENDIX A – DETAILED PLAN FOR THE FAITH WALK RENOVATION

1. Church: Removes the 2 posts/signs and bench along walk.
2. Landscape Co.: Provides pallet and places it near the end of the Faith Walk on the cement walk in front of the 2 benches there.
3. Church: Power-washes the bricks currently on the path and removes them to the pallet to dry; the church protects them from theft with shrink wrap purchased at a local hardware store.
4. Landscape Co.: Levels and properly enhances the foundation with a compacted stone and dust base to prevent sinking.
5. Church: Purchases 200 bricks from local hardware store to match (size, color) the 90 bricks the church currently has in storage (verified by Bruce). These 290 bricks should suffice to complete the remaining ~24 ft of the path (12 bricks per ft.)
6. Landscape Co.: Installs the cleaned, dried bricks from the pallet in the original laying pattern: ~alternating 4 bricks and ½ brick, 3 bricks, ½ brick.
7. Landscape Co.: Installs the plain ~ 290 bricks in the same laying pattern to complete the path. They fill the space between the bricks with polymeric sand, a substance that will keep the bricks in place, prevent weed growth, and allow for future brick removal, as needed.
8. Church: As newly engraved bricks are acquired, some of the newly laid ~ 290 plain bricks will be extracted and replaced with the engraved ones.

Contacts: Dean Purkoski, initial Walk implementation; Cheryl Lee, currently in charge of acquiring engraved bricks and with whom the above plan was discussed and developed.

APPENDIX B. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

A. Are the plants native to Maryland?

Some are and some are cultivars (cultivars are a cultivated variety, i.e., bred by humans for a particular trait). Using only MD native plants was a requirement of the original garden plan (developed in ____?). Bruce was unable to find a copy of the original plan at the church. (Pam was not involved in that initial effort.)

Note: All of the original landscape members still at the church were contacted about this new plan being proposed; they were largely supportive of this effort.

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- B. What times during the year will each tree be at peak bloom? Are we looking at various colors throughout the year?

The proposed renovation is working with the existing trees-

Redbud- purple flowers early spring

Dogwood- flowers mid-spring

There are some existing flowering shrubs including Ninebark (late spring)-

Hydrangeas (summer) which will remain as is or be transplanted.

There are also some miscellaneous perennials to be transplanted elsewhere in the garden.

Encore Azaleas (new plant) - these will bloom in spring and fall.

- C. Question: What additional problems might we have with this new design that are not currently faced with that we might have to deal with?

Steve: "There does not appear to be any additional problem."

- D. Will lights on the walls of the preschool or the lights on the church building be blocked?

No lights will be blocked.

North garden: there are two rounded wall lights about 10-ft up mounted on the pre-school wall. Inkberry planted along this wall is slow growing only to a max of 6 ft., so these plants will not block the lights.

South garden: there are corner flood lights mounted on 3 corners of the church building. Since no new trees will be planted, and the only tree near 2 of these lights is the Bald Cypress, which will be removed, these lights will not be obstructed.

- E. What about a concern of possible shortcuts through the grass to the front doors?

The solar light posts will possibly provide a natural deterrent to a shortcut to the front doors through the grassy areas. If not and shortcutting becomes a

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problem, some type of secure roping could be installed along the posts. (We could possibly also try adding “Please Keep Off Grass” signs.)

F. How high do you go when you elevate trees?

There is no fixed rule. Generally, you go high enough in cutting off branches that it improves visibility, maintenance, and safety.

G. Because of the preschool is it safe to use herbicides in the garden?

According to Becci Stewart, head of the preschool, according to the laws governing preschools in Maryland (Maryland Code of Regulations) - COMAR13A.16-01-.19 – this is not a problem: the children do not play in the front garden, so the rules do not apply to that area. The rules only apply to the designated outdoor activity area where the children are permitted to play, i.e., the fenced in area behind the church (See COMAR13A.16.05.12).