

CENTRAL STAIRS, UPPER PLAZA, USHER CLOSET

What was here before the renovation?

- The top of the stairs was the Court of Flags that was framed by tall, hollow columns that defined the space. The Court of Flags featured doors that exited onto a small upper plaza. Below the Sanctuary there was a two-story stage.
- The patio was narrow and featured a cement wall at the outer edge. The membrane below the Plaza had disintegrated causing water penetration into all areas below, including the Columbarium, adjacent hallways, and mechanical rooms.
- The Usher Closet was a very small room adjacent to the old elevator in what is now the enlarged Welcome Center.

What's changed?

Central Stairs:

- The former stage in Stone Hall was removed and structural steel framing installed to pour a new concrete floor that connects the former north and south mezzanines. The stairs were constructed to easily access all levels and be close to our new Garden Rooms on the 2nd floor.
- The stair structure is steel with terrazzo treads to match the Sanctuary level floors. The glass guardrails of the staircase enable light to reflect and open up what was previously a dark mezzanine level.
- At the Sanctuary level, the columns were removed to open up the space and lights were inserted into the bottom of the columns.
- The chandelier, removed from our former church and installed here in 1969, was cleaned and re-wired for LED lighting. An electric winch was installed to easily re-position and maintain the chandelier in the future.
- Considerable insulation and piping were re-positioned in the mechanical room to accommodate the new staircase.
- *COMING SOON:* Area rugs (matching those in the Welcome Center) will be placed on the second level central stairs lobby to minimize sound and to prevent slipping on our new floors. The hand rails used on the Central Stairs will be extended to the bridge to the garden rooms for those needing extra support.

Upper Plaza:

- The old plaza was demolished and a new membrane placed to ensure the Plaza no longer leaked.
- The enlarged Plaza over the new Garden Rooms features pavers and a glass wall that overlooks the fountain garden.
- *COMING SOON:* The planters will have trees and plants installed. Patio benches will be added.

Usher Closet:

- The Usher Closet moved into the former First Aid room. Extensive cabinets were installed for storage of supplies.

Interesting tidbits:

- Considerable planning occurred to ensure a clear view of the fountain from the Sanctuary level.
- We had to cut through two existing 18-inch thick concrete walls to build the bridge that connects the Central Stairs to the new Garden Rooms.
- The chandelier can be lowered all the way down to the Sanctuary floor.