changing face of churches
and their landscapes

a study of Southport Presbyterian Church
Indianapolis, Indiana

by Amy Cunningham
changing face of churches and their landscapes:
a study of Southport Presbyterian Church

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Acknowledgements:

To the One above, I owe everything.

I would like to dedicate this book to the two true heroes in my life, my parents. Thanks for your support and love (and seeing to see me through this).

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Abstract

Southport Presbyterian Church is a church in transition. The increase in church membership dictated the expansion to a new facility. The broadening of church ministries corresponds with the increase in church membership; for instance, the private elementary school associated with the church has grown as a result of more space in the new facility. The first area of the church property developed was the recreational elements to share with the community. Currently, the building, parking lots, ball fields, and playground are the only elements on the site. There are many opportunities for the landscape. This project addresses the needs and dreams of Southport Presbyterian Church members in regard to ministry opportunities translated onto the landscape.
Introduction

In the mid 1800s, churches were not only the place for spiritual enlightenment, they were often the dominate social institution in most Hoosier communities. The main pastimes of the community were synonymous with church activities; for example, picnics and get-togethers were often held at the church. Likewise, schools in the community were church-sponsored, church-financed, and often shared facilities with the local church. Churches not only offered social opportunities, they often influenced the values of the community. Although civil courts held jurisdiction over criminal and civil acts, churches passed judgement on moral conduct. If a church member committed a moral or ethical indiscretion, such as absence from Sabbath worship, drunkenness, or profanity, he would have to confess his sins to elders, repent his sin, and pledge atonement for future, or be suspended from Communion until his did confess. Fear of social and ecclesiastical ostracism was a powerful deterrent of misbehavior. With increased population in communities, government agencies and commercial adventures addressed other functions the church once facilitated, including moral expectations while churches focused more on the spiritual fulfillment of its patrons. Recently, there has been a shift back to the church; people becoming uncomfortable with changing societal values are calling for churches to offer more services. Church members are also recognizing voids in society that can be addressed though ministry opportunities. As a result, churches today have a unique challenge of creating an environment for their varied ministries and even taking into consideration future ministry opportunities that may still be unrecognized. One church going through this challenge is Southport Presbyterian Church of Indianapolis, Indiana.
Landscapes of churches

Religious buildings are a universal aspect of American settlement. Many of the people who helped settle the United States were immigrants fleeing from Europe for religious freedom, thus churches became an important icon in communities. The look of early churches around the country was influenced by local vernacular architecture. Building materials, climate, topography, and available technology influenced the first churches built. The building styles were dictated by the ethnic diversity of the settlers. The immigrants often modeled their new churches off of buildings in their old country. The places of worship were governed by all the means by which a community listens to its Lord.

The landscape around the church often was dictated by the area; however, the uses of the church influenced the landscape. School was held in the church building in small communities. The yard of the church hosted social events and a cemetery, located close to the church, became a resting place for deceased members. Today and in cities, the landscape of churches is predominately hardscape parking.
Significance of gardens to churches

Eden, Jesus in the wilderness, the garden of Gethsemane—all are important examples of nature in the Bible. Places of nature, like gardens are a place for humans to go and be peaceful. They provide a place for God to talk to his creation. Gardens are a place to observe nature change and watch the cycles of life that help people to understand their unique place in God’s world. A garden contains many levels. There are individual plants, yet all the plants join together to form the whole garden. That reflects how an individual person fits into the world. The multiple senses stimulated by the garden environment appeal to the whole person. A garden is an extension of the past, present, and future. The garden may acquire a past of its own and allows people to connect when they see how it has grown and changed. A garden reveals the temporal structure of human living. Gardens and plants found within them often carry symbolism; for example, an evergreen (like Christmas tree) is used to show the constant state of God.

Japanese gardens drew upon the natural world for tranquil beauty. Designers believed that the garden is an extension of the self with two components—hard (such as rocks) and soft (like water). Balance of the components lead to a sense of harmony: dark compared to light, fine versus coarse textures, and hard offset by soft. Japanese gardens were typically informal but English gardens were usually more formal in style. Meditative gardens were important in England. The Bible instructs believers to pray alone; gardens lend themselves to be places of solitude. Buildings were often so small that the outdoors was the place to be alone. References to plants and gardens are numerous in English meditative writings for example, John Wesley wrote about gardens. He wrote after walking through the landscape, “still the eye was not satisfied with seeing. An immoral spirit can be satisfied with nothing but seeing God.” The English were so caught up with meditative gardens that they grounds of many estates and homes contained a wilderness. These areas are not untouched areas of land but rather carefully planted and maintained parts of the landscape. The wilderness often encompassed a garden labyrinth or maze for wander around in nature.
Presbyterian Church of USA

The Presbyterian denomination has a long history, which began in the first century by Jews who heard Jesus and his teachings. The early Christian church spread from the Middle East; however, a rift formed between the Greek and Latin speaking branches of Christianity resulting in the establishment of the Eastern Orthodox church (eastern Europe and parts of Asia) and the Roman Catholic Church (western Europe). During the spread of Christianity, the church became not only a spiritual power but also a political force.

In Western Europe, the Roman Catholic Church remained a largely undisputed authority well into the Renaissance (15th century). Many worldwide changes such as widespread plagues, end of the feudal system, and invention of the printing press helped bring about the Reformation. In 1517, Martin Luther challenged the theory and practice of indulgences in the Catholic Church. He insisted that salvation depended on individual faith based on guidance of the Bible rather than a sacramental system and absolution granted by Priests. The Protestant Reform movement resulted in a religion that was more an expression of the beliefs of people rather than the province of highly privileged members of clergy. John Calvin refined what became known as Reformed theology—a new way of thinking about the nature of God, the supremacy of scriptures, and God’s relationship with humanity. Calvin also discussed the importance of the democracy of church structure in the Reform movement. John Knox met with Calvin while on exile from his home country Scotland. Knox returned and led a revolt against the Catholic Regent of Scotland that was under the rule of Mary Tudor, the Catholic Queen of England. In 1560, Knox persuaded the Scottish Parliament to adopt the Confessions of Faith and Book of Discipline, resulting in the Scottish Presbyterian Church. The economic and religious struggles in England, Scotland, and Ireland lead many early Presbyterians to migrate to the New World; most immigrants to the New World—French (Huguenots), Dutch, English, and Scottish—were Calvinists in faith and believers in a democratic church. The Presbyterian Church traces its ancestry primarily to Scotland and England.

The Presbyterian Church grew along with the settlement of the New World. Rev. Francis Makemie, known as the “Father of Presbyterianism in America,” came from Ireland as a missionary and was instrumental in bringing an association of Presbyterian ministers to the colonies. He also helped organize the first Presbytery, a judicatory, consisting of six ministers. By 1716, the Presbytery grew to forty churches up and down the coast, thus the presbytery was divided into four with a Synod established to cover the presbyteries. After a study by the Synod
committee in 1785, the Synod itself was divided into four because the large geographic area in which the churches covered, and the General Assembly, a superior judicatory body, was established. About the same time, the constitution of the church of Scotland and other Protestant churches adopted the Confession of Faith, Form of Government, Book of Discipline, and Directory of Worship.

Presbyterians have featured predominately in United States history. One of the signers of the Declarations of Independence was John Witherspoon, a Presbyterian minister. During the Revolutionary War, some Presbyterian elders became leaders of the resistance from England. There are close ties between the Constitution of the United States and the Presbyterian Form of Government; both are believed to have formed almost simultaneously. The democratic systems both contain changes that are administered by representatives rather than people themselves and contain a system of checks and balances. The Supreme Court is similar to the General Assembly while the states are like synods; counties and presbyteries are comparable, and cities/towns are like local churches.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States has divided and reunited several times; for example, the Old School (conservative) and New School (more evangelistic and opposed to slavery) split the denomination in the 1830s. The largest group today is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), established in 1983 after the joining of the southern (Old School) and northern (New School) branches.

The Presbyterian Church is unique in two major ways: the Reformed theology and a form of government that contains representational leadership of both ministers and church members. The Reformed theology emphasizes God's supremacy over everything and humanity's chief purpose as being to glorify and enjoy God. John Calvin developed a pattern of church government which elected laypersons known as elders. They are the primary authority of a particular congregation and known as a session. The session is the smallest, local governing body; their primary charge is to seek and discover the will of Christ as they govern. Other governing bodies are presbyteries (several churches), synods (several presbyteries), and the General Assembly (representing the entire denomination). A typical Presbyterian Worship usually includes prayer, music, Bible reading, and a sermon based on scripture. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has two sacraments—signs of the real presence and power of Christ in the Church. The two symbols of God's action recognized by the Presbyterian Church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Southport Presbyterian Church is part of the Synod of Lincoln Trails and Whitewater Valley Presbytery. Like the history of the Presbyterian denomination, Southport Presbyterian Church has had its own unique past.
Background of Southport Presbyterian Church

The history of Southport Presbyterian Church can be traced back to January 1826 when nine members, all related, first met in central Indiana for church. That summer, a log sanctuary was built; it also housed the area's first school. With more families moving into the area, the New Providence Church was officially organized in 1833 and met in the Mud Schoolhouse (a short distance from today's Banta and McFarland Road intersection). The slow growth in church membership during the 1830s corresponded with the national separation of Old School-New School theology. The new Providence Church split with the 17 remaining New School members becoming the origin of First Presbyterian Church of Southport.

A new structure was built by the remaining members in 1842 (corner of current Southport Road and Madison Avenue). It housed the Church until fire burned down the building. Southport Methodist Church allowed the Presbyterians to share their facilities while construction of a new facility took place. A year after the fire, 1860, a new brick facility was dedicated, and the church was renamed Southport Presbyterian Church. The late 1800s saw an evangelistic emphasis in Protestant Churches characterized by revival meetings to bring wayward and unchurched into the church family. Southport Presbyterian Church experienced a doubling of church membership. When a tornado damaged the church in 1883, the church decided to rebuild a larger facility. The church population did go through some rough times during the twenties and thirties; the depression aggravated the loss felt by the church. However, Southport Presbyterian Church did regrow with a rebirth brought on by the centennial celebration, growth in Indianapolis suburban population, and the outcome of World War Two. The addition of social clubs in the church stimulated the growth of church membership and dictated the need of a larger church facility. In 1949, 6.7 acres were purchased at the corner of Southview Drive and Orinoco Avenue. Southport Presbyterian Church organized itself into a not for profit corporation under the name First Presbyterian Church of Southport in 1955, and the fifth church building was dedicated in 1957. (The name Southport Presbyterian Church is still used.) The fifth church property included a shelter house and playground; the construction costs were donated by a recreationally minded member of the congregation. The church population again was stimulated by the construction of a new facility.
Southport Presbyterian Church has experienced a long and prosperous history. The latest chapter includes the addition of another church building located on 27 acres between Emerson Avenue and McFarland Boulevard. As the church expands its ministry and membership, its history will continue to grow. As Pastor Date notes, "I see a strong, alive congregation with great potential to become yet stronger and more alive in the months and years ahead... Never has our Church been in a more strategic position to make its greatness count for Christ. Our prayer for the future is that we may be sensitive to what God is requiring of us, and then have the faith and courage to do it."

The continued success of Southport Presbyterian Church depends on the stewardship—time, talent, and treasure—of its members. The church has five broad focuses: ministerial, evangelism, Christian education, general church, and missions. Southport Presbyterian Church supports many ministries. There is an elementary school and day care along with an adult day care for elderly individuals suffering from difficulties such as dementia. Parent’s Day Out is a service provided by the church to allow baby sitting while parents run errands and attend appointments (like doctor visits). Operation Outreach is a local mission project located in downtown Indianapolis. There are numerous smaller worship and study groups throughout the church along with larger ministry categories such as sports and finance ministry. The ministry opportunities continue to grow and change at Southport Presbyterian Church as the membership grows. It is the people, not the structure, which truly defines a church.
Site and Setting

Southport Presbyterian Church is located in southern Marion County, a rapidly growing section of Indianapolis that has boomed in the last few years. The new structure was built to accommodate the church's growing membership as well as the expansion of an elementary school. The site is located on 27 acres between Emerson Avenue and McFarland Boulevard. The old church building is located approximately ten miles to the east; however, the change in location did not negatively impact existing members because both facilities, as well as most church members, reside in Perry Township. As the church grows, it has also started attracting people from farther away and as members move away, they still return to the church. The interstate facilitates the regional membership better than the last building location. Access to interstate 65 (exits at Southport Road and County Line Road) allow church members easier passage to the church while attracting new members.

The last structure for Southport Presbyterian Church was landlocked in a residential neighborhood. The new location is beneficial for drawing new members by inhabiting a more visible location; the church itself is located along Emerson Avenue, a road that connects into Indianapolis. Southport Road, to the north, and Stop Eleven Road and County Line Road, to the south, are also important connecting roads near Southport Presbyterian Church.
Context

The site of the new Southport Presbyterian Church facility was once the home of a dairy—McFarland Farms. The site was contaminated with asbestos and oil tanks and had to be cleaned extensively before construction of the church. The cleansing process left the site barren; however, the surrounding areas are growing. To the north and west of Southport Presbyterian Church is residential. Single-family homes are located to the west while apartment complexes are located to the north. Six thousand new homes have been built in the adjoining tracts within the last seven years. Matching the boom in residential is the increase in commercial developments. South and east of the Southport Presbyterian Church property are some of the newer commercial adventures and medical buildings. St. Francis Hospital is located on the southeast corner of Emerson Avenue and Stop 11 Road. The residential neighbors and hospital display manicured landscapes, and Southport Presbyterian Church hopes to fit better into the neighborhood through the site master plan.
Project Goal

To develop a campus master plan for the recently developed Southport Presbyterian Church property.

Objectives

Design a prayer and meditation garden for church members located close to the church building.

Integrate outdoor education areas, such as wetland, prairie, succession plot, orchard/arboretum, and class gardens, into the property design.

Provide a trail system that surrounds the site and links up the various elements of the master plan.
Client

The clients of this project are the members of Southport Presbyterian Church. Specific contacts for this project are: Pastor Capps, Mrs. Patti Probst, and other prayer garden committee members.

Users

The people using the site include the members of Southport Presbyterian Church. However, they are only one part of the user base. Elementary school students and teachers also use the site on a daily basis. The outward focus of the church dictates the addition of community members to the user list.
Program Elements

The program elements for the master plan of the Southport Presbyterian Church property take into account the varied users of the site from church attendees, elementary school children, and community members. The church members have goals for the church itself and ministry services they provide. The desired elements important to the church members are divided into five broad categories: image to the public, circulation, recreation, education, garden spaces.

The residential neighbors to the west and St. Francis Hospital have attractive properties. Southport Presbyterian Church hopes to enhance their own landscape to blend in with the neighborhood. The program category of image to the public should include clearly delineated entrances and landscaping around the two existing signs. It should also include upkeep adjacent to the roads—the most visual area of the site beyond the building. Likewise, the building face along Emerson Avenue has few windows and appears to be turning its back onto Emerson. The east façade does not convey the welcoming attitude held by the church. Special treatment should be given to this portion of the property.

Circulation is another important element of the property, especially for visitors. Both pedestrian and vehicular needs should be addressed. Entrances from roads and into the building should be clearly marked. Parking lot flow and image will create a more pleasant church experience. The phasing of parking lots from existing to proposed should be considered while addressing the site circulation.

Southport Presbyterian Church has placed recreation as a priority by the construction of fields and playground to the north. There is a desire for a trail to connect all the major elements (i.e., building, parking lots, and recreational elements) together. The trail has an opportunity to contain niche areas for resting and enjoying nature; these areas should accommodate all ages of users. The church property upkeep should also allow church members recreational opportunities for gardening. Sport ministry is facilitated by the various fields and indoor gym. A trail system around the church property would provide a walking space for members and visitors. With the elementary school, space is needed outdoors for children to run and play. A space for open play should be provided.

Southport Presbyterian Church commits itself to education; for instance, the church started a private elementary school in the building. Outdoors is one of the most influential learning environments for children because they can play and experiment with more freedom than typical classrooms. The church would like educational opportunities to extend beyond children; they would also like to create an explorative learning environment for all ages, such as a wetland, prairie, wildlife brushpile, and succession plot. Southport Presbyterian Church could also support an outdoor amphitheater for education purposes as well as outside services. The different education areas should be located farther out from the church building. They would not be used on a daily basis and would add interesting variety to the recreational trail. A small orchard/arboretum could also create places for learning. They would create a pleasant view from the church while framing Southport Presbyterian Church from the surrounding roads. The trees from the arboretum could be transplanted around the site as needed.

Gardens are places to watch nature change through growth and death. They also create an environment to become peaceful, listening for the voice of God. Southport Presbyterian Church would like to incorporate gardens into their campus for educational, recreational, and spiritual uses. Passive gardens should be more beneficial close to the main structure because they can be seen from the building. Gardens in close proximity to the church can also be utilized year round by views from indoors. Passive
gardens can likewise create an environment for wildlife. More active gardens, such as planting space devoted the elementary school students, should be located farther away. Church members have specifically requested a prayer/meditation garden outside the proposed chapel on the east side of the church.

The five broad categories of program elements overlap to create a fluid master plan. Areas for recreation will also educate. Many educational areas can flow together; for example, the prairie and succession plot can blend together, while addressing recreational needs. The gardens close to the church would have an increased amount of wildlife if the area surrounding the garden would encourage wildlife infiltration (i.e., wetland, prairie, or succession plot) and create a recreational and educational environment. The desired elements identified by the church will allow Southport Presbyterian Church many ministry opportunities and facilitate the needs of the changing church.

Below is a list of the individual program elements identified by Southport Presbyterian Church members:

Image to the public
- entrances with signs
- landscape around building
- landscape along roads

Circulation
- pedestrian
- vehicle (including entrances)
- parking (taking into account existing and proposed)

Recreation
- trail system
- natural play area
- gardening

Education
- wetland; prairie; succession plot; wildlife food plot; brushpile
- orchard; arboretum
- class gardens (with compost pile)
- bird feeders; bird nesting shelf
- amphitheater

Gardens
- memorial spaces
- prayer/meditative gardens
- sensory garden (butterfly or other influence)
- education-focused garden
Site Inventory

Topography
The twenty-seven acre Southport Presbyterian Church site is relatively flat with a drainage ditch along the west and south terminating with a detention pond in the southeast corner of the property. There is an approximately three feet elevation drop from Emerson Avenue to the structure. There are also two smaller ditches to the north of the building. A branch of old Emerson Avenue splits at a gate and runs north to the shelter house.

Vegetation
To kick off the development of the site, some members of Southport Presbyterian Church planted trees along the right-of-way of the property. Besides the young trees along the boundary of the site, there exists a small group of plants just to the north of the building’s eastern hallway. When the plants grow taller, they will be transplanted throughout the property. Volunteer members of the congregation donated and planted annuals around the welcome signs last year; however, no permanent vegetation is located around the signs. The rest of the site is blanketed with grass. The lack of vegetation variation on the site is a result of the site clean-up efforts from McFarland Dairy.

Roads
Roads on three sides border Southport Presbyterian Church—Emerson Avenue to the west and the curving McFarland Boulevard to the south and east. The north border is open flowing into the apartment complex.
Signs
Two signs, one along Emerson Avenue and the other off of west McFarland Boulevard, welcome members and visitors while conveying information such as service times and activities.

Parking
There are two parking areas on the property. The northern section services the recreational areas as well as the church building itself. Access for the lot is off of eastern McFarland Boulevard. To the south of the building is the second parking area; it is accessed from southern McFarland Boulevard. All parking lots contain some curbless islands. Tall light poles flood the parking lots with light.

Tower
Like a beacon on a hill, Southport Presbyterian Church displays a bell tower as a symbol of the church. The white metal structure is located along the east face of the building and is tall enough to be visible from far distances away (i.e., interstate 65). The top of the tower contains a glass sculpture and will contain bells. Lights illuminate the tower at night.

Recreation Elements
The first elements constructed on the site were the recreation pieces. A basketball court is surrounded by parking lots. To the north is a joint soccer field and baseball diamond (the two overlap areas). A shelter house is east of the soccer/baseball area, and is filled with benches. The shelter has restrooms and electric power. It is used by church and community members for family gatherings and outdoor worship. A gate blocks off the old Emerson Avenue spur; however, it runs behind the shelter house allowing vehicle access in addition to parking lots. Next to the shelter on the north are two volleyball courts and a playground surrounded by sand. The playground features a swing set and other jungle gym equipment. A path connects the playground to the church building. Between the building and the recreation elements is a big grassy field for open play.
Structure
The façade of Southport Presbyterian Church will change over time with the addition of rooms; likewise, a brick shelf has been built into the building so that a brick face can be added later. Many different activities and size groups meet in the church facility. The elementary school and day care hold classes in the Christian education wing. Outside the CE wing, to the north, is another playground for younger children. The gym is utilized by children during school and for sports ministry during evenings and weekends. An atrium space welcomes attendees to the building. It is a tall simple yet elegant space. Until the worship center is finished, services are being held in the multipurpose room; its location close to the kitchen will allow for banquets among other functions. Center Hall between the multipurpose room and gym is used for meetings and will link up to the proposed chapel. The elementary school eats lunch in the hallway leading to the kitchen.
Twenty-year Plan

- current building
- first additions (chapel, administration wing, and worship center)
- long-term additions (building and parking)
Twenty-year Plan

To adequately allocate space for present and future ministries, the church developed a long-term plan for the site. The plan takes into consideration future building space along with expected parking requirements. Although these elements are only projected needs, they will be important to consider when developing the master plan of the church property. The long-term plan for the site is divided into three phases—current, first additions, and longer-term additions (believed to be complete in the next twenty years).

The current structure is located along the eastern edge of the property (close to Emerson Avenue). Parking is located off of McFarland Boulevard. The recreational area to the north—consisting of basketball court, soccer field/baseball diamond, volleyball courts, shelter house, and playground—were the first elements of the site to be completed. When Southport Presbyterian Church purchased their new property, they first installed recreational facilities for the existing neighbors prior to building the church structure to emphasize the commitment they feel to community.

The first additions planned for the church structure are the administration wing (southwest part of building), proposed chapel (east extension next to tower), and worship center (west addition). Right now, the administrative offices are still using the old church facility until the new wing is built. The administration wing will mirror the Christian education wing and be used for the staff. Weddings and other smaller services will occur in the new chapel. Although no specific design shape has been completed on the new chapel, it is expected to seat 250 to 300 people. The new worship center will seat more than 800 people to allow more members to worship at the same time.

The long-term plan in building structure will be dictated by the ministry needs of churchgoers. The parking expansions will also depend on the current needs of the congregation. These elements, planned within the next twenty years, many change or modify with the changing ministry goals of the church.
Site Analysis
Site Analysis

Roads
Emerson Avenue is a busy road, yet it allows easy access to the church. It also links up to interstate 65 just a block and a half north and south of the Southport Presbyterian Church property. The grade change between Emerson Avenue and the site does provide a separation; likewise, the old spur of Emerson Avenue protects the northwest portion of the site from the busy street. McFarland Boulevard is a calmer road dominated primarily by residential traffic. It offers a good transition in and out of the church.

Natural Systems
The property was once McFarland Farms, a dairy. The property contained asbestos-contaminated buildings and submerged fuel oil tanks; the site was cleansed leaving the site barren. Some members planted trees along the road right-of-ways to add vegetation to the site; in addition, the church wishes to restore vegetation to the site for wildlife. The increased development surrounding the site also emphasizes the need for some areas devoted to wildlife. The drainage ditch along the west and south part of the site is a wetter section and would be the best location for a wetland. Use of wetlands could naturally cleanse runoff from parking lots. The flat lay of the site provides few limitations for use.

Structure
A way to describe Southport Presbyterian Church is a building with no backside. Because all the sides are visible to the varying surrounding areas, the building has four front faces. However, the building faces along Emerson Avenue has few windows and appears to be impenetrable. The east facade does not convey the inviting attitude held by the church. The entire building facade itself will also change with the addition of bricks in a few years.

Long-Term Plan
To plan for the future of Southport Presbyterian Church, a long-term plan was developed for the site. The planning allows the church to grow more smoothly. The set elements create a constraint of having to work around elements, yet the plan does allow the master plan to be completed in stages depending on the actual growth of the church. With the construction of the new worship center, it will be important to plan for a passage between the two parking lots to remain. Without this connection, it will be difficult to drop off members and get from one parking area to the other.
Concept One: addition of parking necessary
Concept One

The first concept assumes that Southport Presbyterian Church membership growth will dictate a need for additional parking within the next twenty years. The master plan will utilize the future parking lots; however, the elements located in the areas of expansion will be able to be removed.

The first element surrounding the site is called the "welcome zone." It addresses the view of the church to the public by framing views of the church and creating a welcoming environment. It also addresses the entrances and accentuates the entrance signs through plantings.

Expanding on the existing recreation elements is a natural play zone. It would contain logs and elevation changes for children to play. The space will have open areas for elementary school games and activities. It could also accommodate educational learning projects. The restrooms in the shelter will be an asset to the space and function.

The educational areas of the site are divided into a north and south region. In the north, the orchard/arboretum is located east of the path to the playground. The location would allow vehicular access from the old Emerson Avenue spur to aid in maintenance of the trees. The trees would also create positive views of the site from Emerson Avenue especially during spring and fall. The individual class gardens are located near the Christian education wing (across from the service drive). Access to the gardens for tilling would be from the service drive or parking lot. The southern educational area is passive. A wetland is created along the existing drainage ditch. North of the wetland is a prairie and succession plot. The educational areas would not be used on a daily basis, thus their location farther away would be appropriate.

Close to the building are garden spaces. The eastern area next to the tower and proposed chapel is the space for the prayer/meditation garden. The northern garden will serve as an educational space during the week and a place for church members to congregate on Sunday mornings. The smaller zone to the south could be a meeting area for staff during the week; on Sunday mornings, it would provide a place for church members to rest or talk with friends. All three areas would contain plants for year-round interest and places for sitting.

Concept One offers many opportunities. The wetland is separated from the church for safety reasons while utilizing the natural lay of the land. The concept provides many opportunities for natural playing and learning areas. The natural areas near Emerson Avenue can provide an interesting backdrop for the church as people drive along the road. The various nodes close to the church provide opportunities for many different groups. Groups of varying size and age could utilize the spaces. The concept does have one potentially dangerous area—the orchard located along the path to the playground is not ideal because pesticides used on the plants in close proximity to the playground.
Concept Two: additional parking unnecessary
Concept Two

The second concept assumes that the additional parking will not be necessary. The unessential parking expansion could be curtailed by expanding the number of services or the use of public transportation. Thus, the placement of elements is less constricting in this concept because they do not have to be planned for removal.

The “welcome zone” is also utilized in the second concept. It surrounds the border of the site. The welcome zone will improve the image of the church; likewise, the garden spaces around the church remain to soften the exterior of the building while providing places to gather before and after church.

Concept two allows for many educational opportunities. The class gardens are located adjacent the playground; access for tilling could be from the service drive. The prairie and succession plot are located north of the building. Depending on the type of garden to the north, wildlife could flow between those spaces. The orchard/arboretum is located south of the church by McFarland Boulevard. The trees would create positive views of the church (especially during the seasonal changes) while creating less of a potential chemical contamination. The retention pond is the location of the wetland. It would be safer from children away from the church. This concept utilizes the existing topographic conditions. An amphitheater is added to this concept. The proposed amphitheater could be used by the children and to hold church services. Power and restrooms from the shelter would be near the amphitheater.

Advantages of this concept are the orchard being separated (both because of chemicals and the spring/fall colors setting off the church). Concept one divides the site with active areas to the north and passive areas to the south, yet concept two has more variety of activities sprinkled throughout the site. The presence of the amphitheater offers many opportunities. There are some disadvantages of concept two. First, the amphitheater seems too close to the active recreational elements. The wetland also seems out of place down by the retention pond.
Concept Three: option of lot phasing for parking expansion
Concept Three

Concept one and two were combined into a final concept. The parking lot expansion plan is proposed for the next twenty years; however, a balance between can be reached. The final concept allows for parking expansion to the north of the building.

Like the previous two concepts, this concept involves a “welcome zone” around the outside of the site. It also has garden spaces around the church building for use by members.

This concept brings back the natural recreation area located to the north by other recreational elements. The close proximity to the shelter’s restrooms is an advantage. The prairie and succession plot are located between the natural play and church structure. It would add a transition between the active recreation and building. A path system running out to the recreation areas would have the possibility of running through the prairie for a new experience. To the south of the church is the orchard/arboretum and wetland. The arbor would create a shady environment for picnics. It would also create a beautiful backdrop for the church. The wetland uses the existing site conditions and provides a place to stop along the proposed trail system. Although the church was excited about an amphitheater, the location to the north did not seem appropriate. Instead, a gathering space closer to the church building could be incorporated into a meeting area.

Concept Three was refined to develop the master plan for Southport Presbyterian Church.
Master Plan

Image to the Public

The zones adjacent to Emerson Avenue, McFarland Boulevard, and the north boundary of the site are encompassed in the “welcome zone”. Existing trees are located along the right-of-way boundary line. It is recommended that the church should incorporate low berms in these areas to better frame the church and emphasize the separation between roads and church property. The berming system would hide the parking lots from cars traveling along the street. This would create a more inviting feel for the church. In addition to the planting along the church site boundary, there is also landscaping around the building to soften the structure’s exterior. Gardens are located in close proximity of the church building to aid in this objective.

In addition to the landscape treatment, signage will convey an inviting feel. The two existing signs will receive plantings around them while new signs will be added to the other two entrances. The new signs will pick up the architecture of the building to create attractive signage that complements the church building. Recommendations of lighting and materials for the entrances will assist the church as it transitions to different entrances, after the completion of the worship center.

Circulation

Circulation on the site includes parking and pedestrian traffic. The master plan of Southport Presbyterian Church assumes that all the allotted future parking space will not be necessary (due to the adjustment of church service schedules or public transportation). There is room for parking lot expansion north of the building along with two rows of parking to the southeast lot. The landscape elements present in these locations will be able to be removed during the parking expansion. To aid in the welcoming atmosphere of the church, landscaping within the parking areas will be added. Vegetation will provide shady parking spaces and breakup the monotonous hardscape. Signage into the site will give visitors a better sense of belonging. After the construction of the worship center, it is important to keep a car pull-through between the two current parking lots. Without this lane, it will be difficult to drop off church members, pick up elementary school children, and get from one parking area to the other.

A loop trail system has been incorporated throughout the entire property and will link up the different elements of the site while creating a recreational opportunity. The surface of the trail is hard to allow for all types of users.
Recreation

An 0.8 mile looping trail runs along the perimeter of the property. The surface is chip and seal to provide accessibility for all users. It will be less costly with fewer maintenance requirements than other hardscape surfaces. Niches, areas of benches and plants, are located along the trail, allowing people to sit and rest while viewing the rest of the site. (These areas could become memorial areas that are donated by members of the congregation.) In addition to the trail, the upkeep of the gardens is a recreational opportunity.

The northern part of site contains existing recreational components. Between the prairie/succession plot and the shelter is another area of recreation. It will be an open area with natural play elements, such as logs and earth mounding. During the week, the elementary school children could use the space for outdoor science experiments and physical education. The natural play is located adjacent to the path for easy access by the children.

Education

Many educational opportunities are present within the Southport Presbyterian Church property. A wetland area is located to the southeast corner of the site along the existing drainage ditch. The design itself is informal to complement the arbor space to the north. A gazebo is located near the pond for small group meetings and a trail niche is also placed close to the wetland to take advantage of the aesthetic quality. The arbor is an informal woods (instead of a formal orchard needing to be maintained) that will be planted with a variety of tree species. The group of trees would allow teachers to explain about the differences between trees while providing leaves for art projects. When the space is not used by students, it would provide a shady location for picnics, games, and group meetings. Other natural wildlife areas are located to the north of the building. A prairie and succession plot would flow together while providing an interesting walking environment and a place for wildlife. A niche is found between the zones to utilize the natural feel of the area. Bird feeders are located in the prairie area to encourage birds to use the site. To the east, there is a more active zone for class gardens. Each grade in the elementary school would be allotted space for planting. Extra spaces could be worked by interested church members. A small shed near the site would house all the necessary equipment for the children. The fertilizer from a composting pile, located next to the kitchen, would be donated to the children. The tending of the gardens and visiting of other educational areas will provide different unique learning opportunities for children and adults alike.
Gardens

Three garden spaces are located close to building. Their location would be ideal for church members to gather and socialize between church services; the three areas serve different purposes. The southern smaller node will be used for small gatherings. The space is a formal garden with abstract baptismal font located in the center of a cross-shaped raised planter that will accommodate seating. The location of the formal cross garden is located outside the kitchen and administration wing. Staff members could gather in the space during the week and church members on weekends.

The garden to the east is will be divided into two sections after the completion of the chapel. The southern area is the prayer garden. It contains a berm off of the trail system to enclose the space. A looping path travels through the space and across a small pond. The pond is made from three smaller ponds that waterfall into the bigger pond. They serve to eliminate some noise from Emerson Avenue while adding a relaxing quality to the space. Throughout the prayer garden are several stones with carvings of meditative Bible verses. At night, soft light will flood across these stones to create a peaceful mood. Sculpture elements used in the garden will create a mood of introspection, allowing the participants to listen for the voice of God. Plantings, with fragrance and color, will also help to create a mood of peace and prayer. A path system will lead from the prayer garden into the small group gathering space located to the northeast (with the completion of the chapel, this path will disappear). The tower creates a backdrop; a gentle slope climbs permitting small groups to meet in the space for meetings and Bible studies. There is also a circle of benches close to the building for other group meetings. The gardens to the east of the building link up the site trail system.

The last garden space is located to the north of the building next to the existing playground. The space is an interpretive garden that serves as a seating and gathering space for weekends, as well as learning play space for children during school time. The garden tells the life of Jesus through snippets of Biblical stories. The space is enclosed by plants and a gateway along the western entrance to delineate the space. The sculpture pieces create an opportunity for teachers and parents to tell children parts of the New Testament while giving children a unique play environment. All three gardens are located close the building; therefore, special consideration was made in the design process so the spaces create a pleasant view out from Southport Presbyterian Church during all seasons of the year. Quality materials will be used in all gardens to uphold the aesthetic character of the church.
Image to the Public

In the aftermath of the site cleansing, the church property was left with little diversity in vegetation. Southport Presbyterian Church is surrounded by neighbors with well-kept landscapes. The church would like to improve its image projected through the use of landscaping. The program element of “image to the public” is divided into three categories: landscaping around existing signs, addition of signs posted at unmarked entrances, and a low berming system along McFarland Boulevard.

Currently, two signs are located on the site. They blend into the landscape because there is little color to the signs. The addition of plants will bring emphasis to the signs. The four plants chosen will provide year-round interest and were also chosen to tolerate the conditions of the signs—full sun and dry conditions. In front of the signs and between other perennials are Daffodils (Narcissus spp.), that will bloom in spring. As the Daffodils die back, Pinks (Dianthus gratianopolitanus), six to eight inches tall and blooming pink from April to May, will appear in front of the sign. Between the Pinks and the sign are dwarf Daylilies (Hemerocallis Happy Returns). The prolific yellow flowers appear May through September and grow eighteen inches tall. The Pinks and Daylilies are small enough to avoid obstructing information displayed on the signs. To the sides of each sign are Purple Maiden Grasses (Miscanthus sinensis Purpurascens). Plumes appear in September to October on the four- to five-foot-tall native grass. The grass persists into winter, providing year-round interest and emphasis for the signs. [Right is a photo of an existing sign, plan of proposed plantings, and sketch of plants in front of the sign.]

Signs added to unmarked entrances will welcome guests and members to the church. Similar to the existing signs, the new signs will use elements from the building’s architectural style to link the new signs to the rest of the site. The signs will also fit into the site by mounding behind the signs. Framing the church, concealing of parking lots, creation of inviting atmosphere—all are important functions of the berming system along McFarland Boulevard. The berms would range from three to four feet in height; the berm side slopes will be gentle enough to allow for mowing. The existing trees would take priority over the proposed berms by allowing the berms to undulate around the trees or only using berms between the existing trees.
Circulation

- parking expansion
- vegetation added to parking lots
- pull-through between buildings
Circulation

With over one thousand church members and a society dependent on the automobile, circulation and parking are vital for the continued success of Southport Presbyterian Church. Although factors can influence the amount of parking needed by the church, such as the amount of church services held, the master plan includes areas for parking lot expansion. The addition of two lanes to the southeast parking lot would be the first available. There is the possibility of using grass pavers in this area; the grass pavers would permit parking while preserving grass in this area. The second area for parking is located to the north of the church building. The addition would require the removal of the prairie/succession plot; however, the area would be the easiest area to convert.

Currently, islands are located in the existing parking lots, yet no trees are located within the lots. Trees would break up the vertical monotony of the parking lots while providing shade for cars. The trees would also create seasonal interest through the use of Pears (Pyrus calleryana), Maples (Acer saccharum 'Columnare'), and Ashes (Fraxinus americana 'Autumn Applause'). Some of the islands are curbless; they provide a location for plowed snow storage in winter. The addition of trees should be located in islands with curbs; if trees are added to curbless islands, the trees should be planted as far away from the island edge as possible so the trees will not be damaged during snow plowing.

The addition of the future worship center will create a larger place for members to meet; however, the construction, without proper planning, could produce a separation between the northern and southern sections of the site. The building could also terminate a safe drop-off zone and disrupt the elementary school pick-up system as a result of construction. It is recommended that a pull-through for cars remain (at least on the ground floor). This would allow for members with difficulty walking a place to be let out closer to the church along with a drop-off zone during inclement weather. The addition of the structure could include a second story connection for members walking between the two buildings.
Recreation

There are a variety of elements that makeup wellness—spiritual, emotional, social, and physical are four. The church itself addresses spiritual, emotional, and social needs of members through spiritual guidance and the connection felt by meeting with other members. One area of wellness currently underdeveloped at Southport Presbyterian Church is physical. The presence of the gym and ball fields provides opportunities, yet a trail system around the property would create another opportunity for a variety group of users. The surface of the trail is hard and the slope kept to a minimum to accommodate all users [see sketch]. The path would also link up the variety of elements of the site; for example, the wetland, the prayer garden, the shelter could all be approached through the path system. The total length of the boundary trail is approximately 0.8 miles with a few cutbacks to the church building and through the prairie and recreation areas.

Niche areas are located at four locations around the site to provide a place for sitting, viewing, and spending time alone or in small groups. Each niche area contains one or two benches along the trail. Some niches also contain plants around the benches to convey a feeling of protection while differentiating the space.

The natural play area—consisting of natural play elements—provides another recreational opportunity for children. The majority of space is open for outdoor physical games, yet the area incorporates logs, trees, earth mounding, and stumps in a grassy field. Children can hide, run, and jump around on the various elements. Some of the elements can be used for education; for instance, kids could count the rings on stumps for a math exercise. The space has freedom while offering many opportunities.
Education

With the elementary school, Southport Presbyterian Church would benefit from outdoor educational opportunities. Research shows that playing outdoors stimulates children and get them excited to learn. The class gardens are a place for children to nature their own plants. With fewer family farms, children are becoming disconnected and no longer understand where the food they eat comes from. Growing their own plants will teach children to respect the natural world.

The prairie/succession plot will teach children what happens in areas left wild. Examples of plants found in the prairie include the following: Queen Anne’s Lace (Daucus carota), Black Nightshade (Solanum nigrum), Evening Primrose (Oenothera biennis), Indian Grass (Sorghastrum nutans), New England Aster (Aster novae-angliae), Perennial Sunflower (Helianthus x multiflorus), and Purple Coneflower (Echinacea purpurea). The succession plot is an area where the natural succession of plants (from barren, to prairie, to Maple forest, to Oak forest) is allowed to happen. The process takes many years; however, by supervising the natural process and maintaining the prairie, the children and adults will learn how nature, with the hand of God, changes and heals.

The woods area is planted with many different varieties of trees. The school children can explore the shape, size, and color of different trees and leaves [see sketch]. The space could be used for science and art classes. Shade from the trees creates a cool place for all different users.

A gazebo is located by the wetland [see sketch]. Small groups and classes can congregate in the shelter. The wetland is surrounded by water-loving plants and would provide a home for wildlife.
Gardens

As noted before, gardens are important places for God to communicate with his believers. They also serve to provide opportunities for church members to gather between Sunday services. For the Southport Presbyterian Church plan, the gardens seek to soften the exterior of the building.

There are three garden areas around the building. To the east is the small group node and prayer garden. These two areas will be separated after the completion of the chapel. The second area is a small gathering space to the south. The last space is an interpretive garden that plays off the Christian education wing. All the garden spaces are unique and address different needs of the church body.
Small Group Node

Along the northeast side of the church is an area set aside for small groups to meet. Currently, the area is connected to the prayer garden to the south. With the completion of the chapel, the space will be separated. There are two primary places for sitting in the space. Rising out from the tower is a hill that would allow a speaker to stand at the base of the tower to speak to those sitting on the hill. It could be used for outdoor services. Banners hung from the tower would create a backdrop. The second seating area is a circular area to the north. The space is entered through a trellis that contains hydrangea vine. Benches are offered in the area. Shrub, hydrangea and rhododendrons, line the back of that seating area and block views of the garbage. Ferns are also used to line the path in the space. Serviceberry shrubs and a Dogwood tree add screening and seasonal interest to the space.

Plant List (name) | (size) | (bloom) | (fall)
--- | --- | --- | ---
tree  | AG  | Serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis* ) | 25" | white (April) | orange
     | CF  | White Dogwood (*Cornus florida*) | 30" | white (May) red |  
shrub  | HQ  | Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) | 5" | white (June) red |  
     | RH  | Rhododendron | 7" |  |  
perennial  | CL  | Northern Sea Oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*) | 30" |  |  
   | HP  | Climbing Hydrangea (*Hydrangea petiolaris*) |  | vine (June) |  
     | Fern | Fern mix (suggested varieties below) | 18" |  |  
         | Lady Fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) |  |  |  
         | Japanese Painted Fern (*Athyrium nipponicum 'Pictum'*) | 24" |  |  
         | Cinnamon Fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*) | 3" |  |  
PA  | Ribbon Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea 'Picta'*) | 24" |  |  
VM  | Blue Myrtle (*Vinca minor*) | 6" | blue (April) |  

Prayer Garden Plan
Prayer Garden

### Plant List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant Type</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Bloom</th>
<th>Fall</th>
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Prayer Garden

Often in the hectic pace of life, it is difficult to slow down enough to listen for the voice of God. The members of Southport Presbyterian Church expressed a desire for a place outdoors where they can go and pray. The best location for the garden is close to the church for easy access. The space should be viewed from inside the church to let people know it is available, yet it should not have too many windows viewing into the space or users may feel watched. The east side of the church contains few windows which makes it an ideal location. With the construction of the chapel, doors will open directly into the site. In the meantime, the garden is linked up to the trail system to draw users. The garden is simple in form with a berm along the east to give the feeling of enclosure.

The location of the garden on the east side of the building provides protection. The site should stay cooler through the summer and is protected from harsh winter winds. Rhododendron and Dogwoods are two plants that often do not survive in Indiana, but they will grow in this protected site. Plants chosen for the area have year-round interest; for example, the Japanese Kerria has green stems in winter, the Dwarf Inkberry will retain some of its leaves all year, and the rough bark of the Oakleaf Hydrangea adds texture to the winter landscape. In fall, the shrubs and trees turn brilliant shades of yellow and red. The perennials and shrubs add flowers and fragrance to the garden from early spring into fall. All the plants are also tolerant of partial shade.

The lack of windows and blank east building façade serves to help users focus their attention and become less distracted. Trees located along the right-of-way will also enforce the impression that the space is safe. Emerson Avenue runs close to the site; however, design elements, such as the berm and water feature, will help eliminated the distraction. The water feature consists of three small pools of water and a larger pond. Utilizing the slope created by the berm, water cascades down from each pool into the pond to generate white noise. Car noises will be lessened through the creation of white noise.
Stones and plants line the pond to create a natural boundary to the water feature. Along the path are large blocks of rough cut limestone to be used as benches. They will change with weathering the show the work of God through nature. A few stone benches look directly over the pond [see sketch]. Water has a calming effect that will allow users to slow down, stop and listen. Because the prayer garden is located to the east, the site is more protected for having water.

The path of the garden connects up the main site trail system in two locations; it also loops around within the garden itself. The walkways allow users to walk through the site or to continue walking around the area. To complete a loop in the prayer garden, a path runs over the pond with a small bridge. Along the path are carved stones. Each of the stones would contain a scripture verse to aid users in concentration and meditation [see sketch]. Examples of verses found on the stones are listed to the right. Soft light will focus on the quotes while bollards add additional lighting needs [see sketch]. The lights in the garden will be subdued to complement the meditative quality of the space. The path material in the garden is pavers that match the main church entrance and serve to unify the building ambience. The change in path texture from the site trail system will also help define the space.
Formal Garden

Located between the kitchen, administration building, and parking lot is a small formal garden for meeting and sitting. A boxwood hedge surrounds a cross-shaped planter bed that is incorporated into a seatwall. The plants are chosen for seasonal interest. Daffodils appear in spring and are replaced by dwarf daylilies that bloom from May through September. In fall, the plants can be replaced by chrysanthemums. There is also the possibility of adding annuals instead of the perennials to the planter bed. In the middle of the cross is an abstract baptismal font to represent one of the sacraments recognized by the Presbyterian Church. Korean boxwoods trimmed into a neat hedge delineates the space. The paving in the space is carried from the main entrance—pavers in the same color and style. The space will be used by churchgoers before and after services as well as staff during the week.

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Plant List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Bloom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tree</td>
<td>Redbud (Cercis canadensis)</td>
<td>25&quot;</td>
<td>purple (April)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shrub</td>
<td>Korean Boxwood (Buxus microphylla koruna)</td>
<td>2-3&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perennial</td>
<td>Dwarf Daylilies (Hemerocallis 'Happy Returns')</td>
<td>12-18&quot;</td>
<td>yellow (April-Sept.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chrysanthemum</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>mix (September)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interpretive Garden

To the north of the church building is a garden space that will be utilized by both elementary school children during the week and church members during the weekend. The area is in close proximity to the building and particularly the Christian education wing. Seating has been provided in the garden for meeting and relaxing before and after church services. The open outdoor space could also accommodate additional seating and tables for functions like an ice cream social. Plants will soften the space while delineating it from the surrounding area. A gateway trellis into the garden will further separate the space. The space is an interpretive garden that tells the story of Jesus' life through sculptural elements. There are simple wood benches, "Jordan River" that flows into a pond, sheep sculptures, path of palm leaves, communion table, Garden of Gethsemane, crosses on a hill, and an empty tomb [see sketches on next pages].

Through the interpretive elements, the garden becomes a teaching and play space for children. Teachers can bring classes out to the garden to teach parts of the New Testament; for example, after hearing the story of how Jesus walked on water, the students could act out the story. The "pond" is an area for children to sit and sing songs or have a lesson. The other sculptural elements allow for different types of play: kids can climb on the benches, sheep, and stone; they can jump between the twelve blocks of the last supper; and children can follow along the Jordan River. Young children enjoy playing in enclosed spaces; the tomb would also serve as a clubhouse. The plants bordering the site and trellis gateway will help children decipher that space as their own. It will become a place that children could take their parents to show what they have been learning. Jesus often took time out from his ministry to spend time with children. He also told his disciples that they must become like children to enter heaven. One of the ways children learn is through play. The space celebrates children and their importance to the kingdom of God.

The landscaping could imitate the varying landscape characteristics of Israel; however, the use of the space as a play and learning area dictated the use of grass as the major ground material. A Russian Olive tree located in the northeast corner resembles an Olive tree from Israel. The tree is located away from the path because the thorns on the tree. The border of the site is Purpleleaf Wintercreeper. It is an easily maintained plant and can be mowed if it gets out of hand. Climbing the trellis is a Clematis vine. The tree chosen for the garden area is a Yellowwood. It will provide shade and is a brilliant yellow color in fall. Annuals or perennials could be added to the garden space as needed by teachers. Teachers could use the plant material for teaching and science experiments. The space will become a unique learning space while addressing needs of a gathering space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant List</th>
<th>(name)</th>
<th>(size)</th>
<th>(bloom)</th>
<th>(fall)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tree</td>
<td>American Yellowwood (Cladrastis lutea)</td>
<td>25'</td>
<td>white (May)</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russian Olive (Elaeagnus angustifolia)</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>white (May)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vine</td>
<td>Sweet Autumn Clematis (Clematis maximowicziana)</td>
<td></td>
<td>white (Sept-Oct)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>groundcover</td>
<td>Purpleleaf Wintercreeper (Euonymus fortunei 'Coronata')</td>
<td>6'</td>
<td>lt. green (June)</td>
<td>purple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Upon entering the garden, there are a few rough wood benches that show the humble beginnings of Jesus as a carpenter. Off to the right path, a bluestone river cuts across the path and flows into a larger pond up ahead. Walking over the "stream" symbolizes the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River [see sketch]. The pond of bluestone represents many different Biblical passages while being functional. Jesus walking on water, Jesus calming the storm, and Jesus teaching from a boat as listeners gather on the shore—all are examples of Jesus' actions near bodies of water in the Bible. The flat surface provides a place for small groups of children to sit while learning or playing outside. Continuing around the path, sheep sculptures are located, to show an example of one of the many parables told by Jesus. The sheep also symbolize believers and Jesus as the Shepherd. The sculptures are simple abstract forms of sheep made of bronze [see sketch]. One of the sheep sculptures is positioned away from the rest to tell the story of the lost sheep. The surface of the path changes next; imprints of palm leaves signify the beginning of Holy week in the Bible when children laid down palm leaves on the ground for Jesus to walk on.
The next element is a stone bench with twelve stone squares surrounding the bench; the stones are flush with the ground. They represent the last supper that Jesus shared with his disciples when they shared the first communion; the abstract table provides seating and the squares could be used by children for games [see sketch]. Along the path is a tree and a stone for sitting in the shade to represent the garden of Gethsemane. Depending on lessons being taught, the garden area could be planted with annuals or other plants; this would better emphasize a garden. This area is not planted heavily because the play of children and to avoid competition with the eastern prayer garden. Away from the path is a low mound with three crosses to show the crucifixion of Christ. The mound is surrounded by plants to discourage children from playing on the crosses [see sketch]. The last sculptural element in the garden is an empty "tomb" that children can crawl in and discover it is empty. It symbolizes that Jesus rose from the grave. The gateway into the garden also creates a place for visitors to pass through on their way out. It is not only important for Christians to understand the life of Jesus, but they are encouraged to spread the news; likewise, the gateway creates a sense of returning to the world.
Conclusion

Pastor Date was right when he said that Southport Presbyterian Church is a strong and alive church. Many great things are coming together, and the church is growing. Lives are being reached through the members and ministries of Southport Presbyterian Church. Yet the landscape of the church is underutilized. Members of Southport Presbyterian Church have the opportunity of setting a precedent of what a church really is—more than just a building. A church is a place for all ages and types of people. It is not only a place for Sunday mornings—it is an active lifestyle for the glory of God. The property of Southport Presbyterian Church currently addresses many needs in the community, such as a place for recreation. The opportunities for the future are endless from wildlife enhancement, learning, gathering, and meditating. The church stands at a crossroads with the landscape. It can either become like so many other churches by expending all the effort into the building, or the church can continue pushing ahead to include new and innovative uses for the landscape. If the second option is explored, new members may call Southport Presbyterian Church home, and the current members will reap the benefits. Similar to the man with talents, those who invest will be greatly rewarded. The time is now to invest in the landscape of Southport Presbyterian Church.
Bibliography

Books:


Magazines:


Architectural Drawings:

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