

Martin Luther Church Altar Art Project

Expression of Interest Document

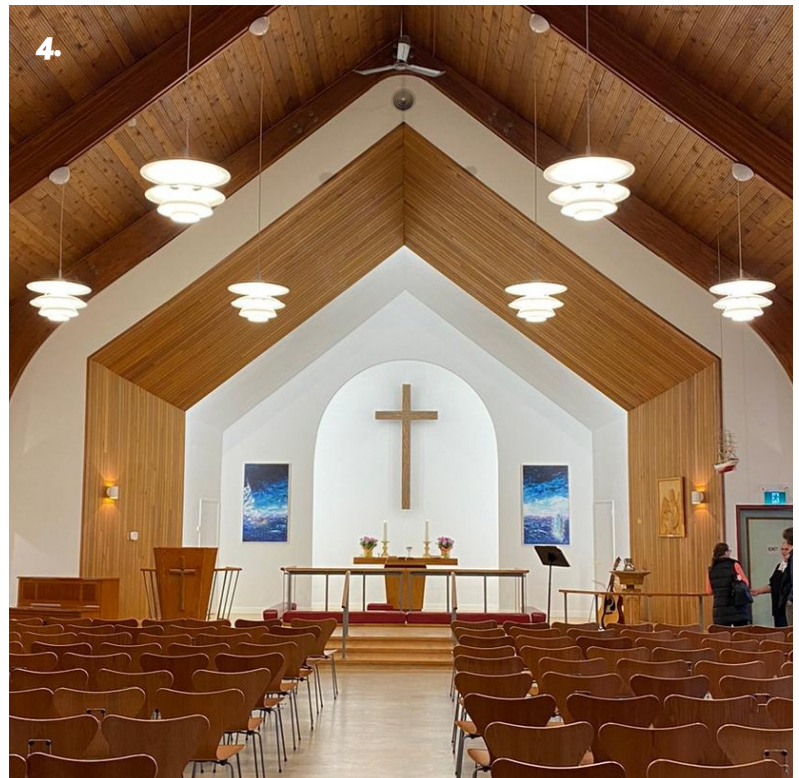


Martin Luther
**Evangelical
Lutheran
Church**

2379 Lakeshore Blvd West
Toronto, Ontario M8V1B7

April 17, 2023

www.martinluther.ca/altarart



1. The Altar art in a congregation member's German church that inspired the project; 2. Altar art in another German church provided as precedent; 3. Stained glass windows behind an Altar in another inspirational German congregation 4. The Altar art in the sanctuary of the Danish Lutheran congregation in Toronto

1. Intent

The purpose of this document is to inform artists of the opportunity to work together with the Martin Luther Church on their Altar Art Project, as well as to provide interested parties with the appropriate background knowledge and overview of the committee's selection criteria so that they may express their interest in the commission.



Exterior elevation shot of the Martin Luther Church

2. Who We Are

The Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church is a Lutheran congregation in Mimico, Etobicoke founded by German immigrants to Canada in the 1950s. Now the “Lutherans by the lake” this resilient multi-lingual congregation aims to serve the local population and wider German-speaking diaspora in Toronto both spiritually and in mission.

The church building is located at 2379 Lake Shore Blvd West between the major intersections of Lake Shore and Royal York Rd, and the rapidly gentrifying Humber Bay Shores area of Lake Shore Blvd West and Parklawn Rd. This location is historically significant as the first church building purchased by the founders of our congregation, geographically a short walk from Lake Ontario and the Martin Goodman Trail, and demographically situated at the intersection points of communities with diverse cultures, socioeconomic circumstances, gifts, and needs.

Although still a German Lutheran church with a strong core of German membership, the make-up and mission of the Martin Luther Church has changed over the last decade and continues to evolve through outreach and partnerships. Our full mission statement: “Lutherans by the lake, celebrating faith, serving and inspiring people” reflects the place we want to continue to hold and fill with our intentions, actions, and facilities.

The Martin Luther Church Toronto is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC): <https://elcic.ca/>, and partners with the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD): <https://www.ekd.de/en/>.

If you are interested in learning more about our history, please visit our website and explore this summary at <https://martinluther.ca/about/our-church-history/> and our 50 Year Anniversary book at <https://martinluther.ca/about/our-history-book-50-jahre-martin-luther-kirche/>.



1. Photo of the existing sanctuary 2. Rendering of the proposed sanctuary renovation

3. Project Background and Parameters

3.1 Background

In early 2018, a member of the congregation made a generous donation for the express purpose of the creation of an “altar picture”, a piece of art to be placed above, on, or behind the altar. This donation was the impetus for a larger renovation of the sanctuary and altar area, which would address the current needs of the congregation and compliment the altar art.

Over the last several years, this original sanctuary renovation project has expanded to include more parts of the building, with multiple committees hard at work consulting with stakeholders and working together with our partner Martin Luther Child Care, as well as architects, engineers, and consultants to bring the vision to fruition.

In the spring of 2022, a group of designers and artists from the congregation came together to form a committee dedicated solely to the altar art portion of the project. This group has collaboratively decided on the parameters of the project and the selection process and so produced this document.

It is important to note that during the above process a design was developed for a more accessible and multifunctional renovation of the sanctuary space (pictured left), but that due to budget constraints this work is no longer planned for the immediate future. Thus, any art intended for this space should consider both the present and future forms of the space.

3.2 Project Description

3.2.1 Who:

The Congregation, partners of, and visitors to the Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church

3.2.2 Where:

The niche behind the altar in the sanctuary of the church building sited in Mimico, Toronto, near the Humber Bay of Lake Ontario (see Site Description for further details).

3.2.3 What:

A piece of art to fill the space behind the altar which will be visible throughout the sanctuary and reflect the mission statement of the Martin Luther Church.

3.2.4 When:

Preferred proponent to be chosen in early 2024 to then work with the congregation until the work is completed, approximately 6 months after the selection is announced.

3.2.5 Why:

To support the purpose of inspiring the congregation and all who visit the sanctuary space for worship and reflection.

3.3 Theme and Inspiration

3.3.1 General parameters

Our faith, the material and images already present in the space, and the beauty of creation (especially given our proximity to the natural element of Lake Ontario's shores) should inform the piece. We are particularly partial to water, tree, or light related imagery in keeping with our geographic and spiritual context, and imagery from the Bible that honours our Lutheran beliefs and values.

3.3.1.1 Spiritual inspiration

The big beginning (Genesis 1, -2,4)

In the first book of the Bible God creates the earth and its inhabitants, plants, animals and humans. The state from not being into being starts: "The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said: 'Let there be light.' And there was light." Even at the dawn of creation there was water and there was light. God plays with these two elements to form of everything else. He separates the light from the dark and the water from the sky to form seas and continents. To this day we live and breathe to the rhythms created by light and water, night and day, seasons and weather.

Being Sheltered (Gen 6,9-13, 17)

If you enter the sanctuary of our church, the first thing you will notice is the presence of wood in the architecture. The arch of our ceiling may make you feel as if you are in a ship. Noah survived an ancient flood on his ark that was big enough to fit his family and two animals of every kind – a story full of wonder and images. Think of the birds sent over the sinking waters after the storm to find signs of life like an olive branch and the rainbow in the sky after the flood that symbolizes the promise of God to his people: Never will there be anything as catastrophic as this ever again. Many of the founders of this church came over the North Atlantic Ocean on big ships that brought them to new horizons. The water carried them, so that after World War II and all its horrors they could start fresh, and like Noah, find firm ground beneath their feet.

The light of the world (Matthew 4,16/John 8,12)

Christians believe that with the birth of Jesus God's light found a new way into this world that is so unmistakable and beautiful that it changes lives today. The evangelist Matthew says: "the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." 12 In the gospel of John Jesus even says himself, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." The imagery of light is very prominent and important to understand the effect that Jesus journey has to his followers to this day.

Worshiping by the Lake (Matthew 14,22-33)

Believers experience mysterious things in and around bodies of water, and the Bible has many stories to proof that notion. Once Jesus appears

*P: We pour in the water,
from which everything on
this planet originated, and
remember:*

L: God has given us life.

*P: We pour in the water that
quenches our thirst, and
remember:*

*L: God gives us everything
for life, what we need.*

*P: We pour in the water that
can bring misery and de-
struction and remember:*

*L: God is with us in the
storms of life.*

*P: We pour in the water that
cleanses and purifies
and remember:*

*L: Even when we fail, God
gives us a new beginning.*

*P: We pour in the water
which consists of many
drops,
and remember:*

*L: God has placed us into a
great community.*

*P: In this way, the water of
baptism becomes for us
a sign of God's love. With
this water we remember our
own baptism and baptize
this child of God to show
them God's love.*

to his disciples after their boat is shaken by strong winds far out on the lake. He walks over to them on the water. They do not recognize him at first because it is in the middle of the night and they think he is a ghost. Peter asks to come out to the water to test Jesus, and miraculously, he finds he can defy the element like his master and walk on water. Suddenly, he is spooked by the wind and starts to sink. He cries out to his master and is immediately pulled up by Jesus, who then asks him if he doubted him. Water can carry us but also leaves us feeling afraid and in awe. In the light of faith things may appear differently for us than they seem at first glance. Sometimes our doubts rob us of magnificent water walking moments. Nevertheless, Jesus brought his disciples down and so will he bring us the light of each new day.

Faith like a river (John 7,37-39)

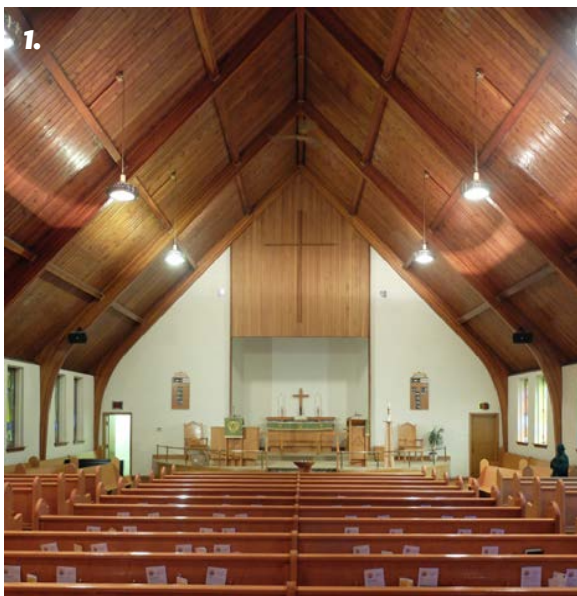
Faith is not a matter of checklists and feeling safe. Faith is about energy and movement, joy and savouring every sip from cup of life. Jesus, in one of his teachings told his contemporaries: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" Our trust in God is not supposed to hold us back but when we take him in return make us willingly share the live changing and affirming love that flows from him through us to others.

The healing powers of Baptism (Mark 1,9-11/Romans 8,38-39)

As Christians we encourage people to follow Jesus by baptizing them. Being immersed into a river or lake in biblical times is the physical sign that someone is repenting their wrongs in life and wants a fresh start. It is very interesting that Jesus himself went through that same ritual before he started his ministry. When he came out of the water, the sky opened, and the spirit descended on him like a dove. A voice from heaven said: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." When we bring someone in contact with the healing waters of baptism we tell them exactly that: God loves you no matter who you are and where you are from. And even if you mess up and fail yourself and others his love will help you deal with and work through it. As the Apostle Paul states it in his letter to the Romans: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

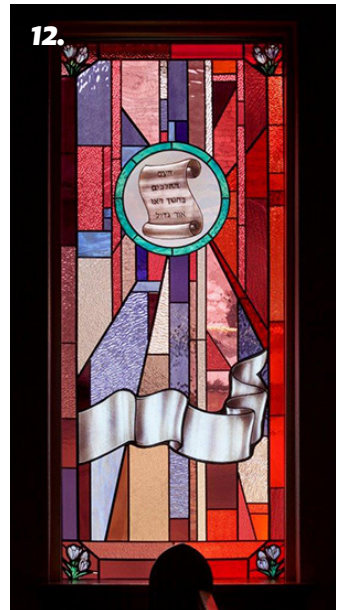
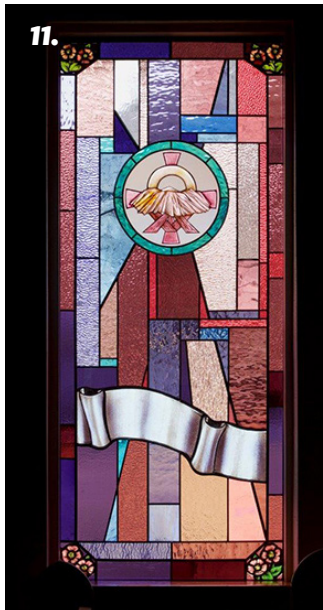
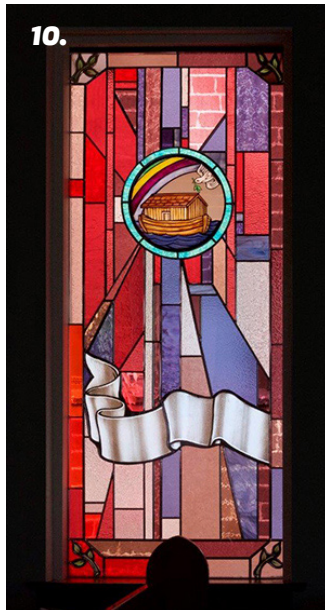
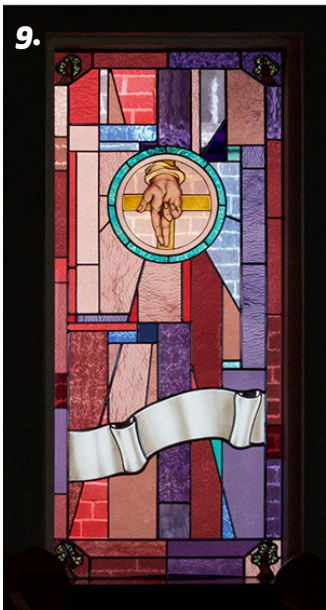
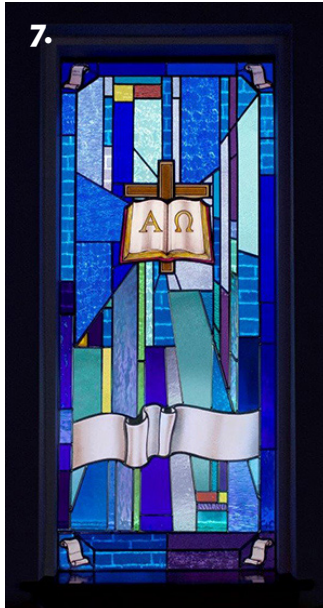
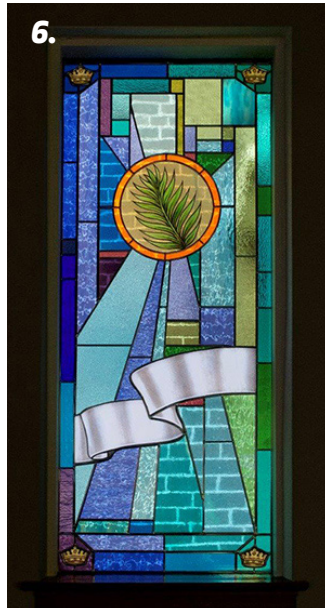
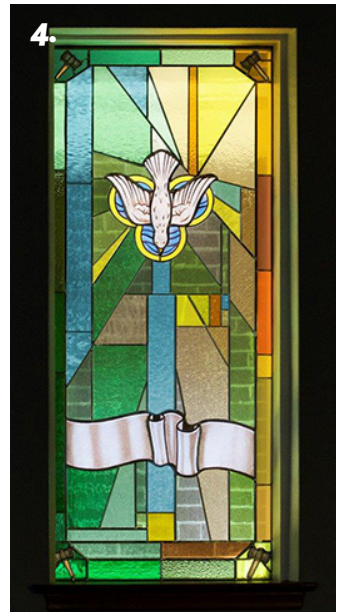
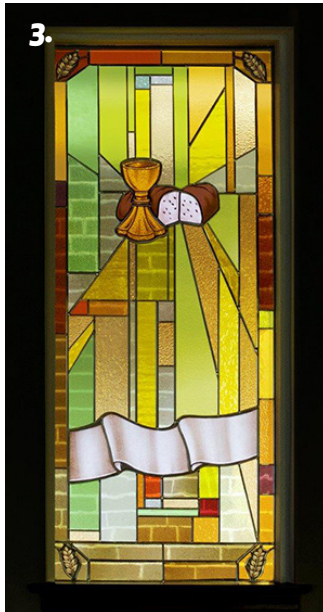
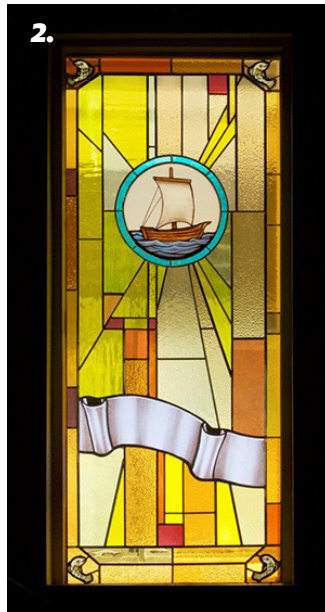
3.3.1.2 Existing materials and images

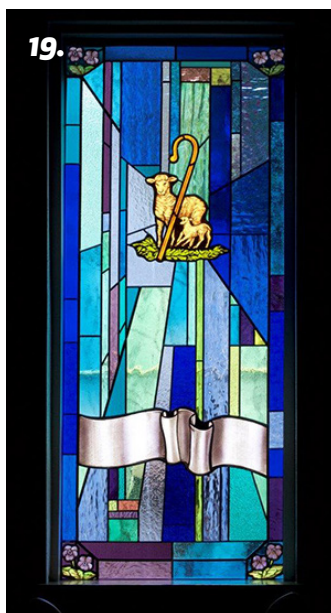
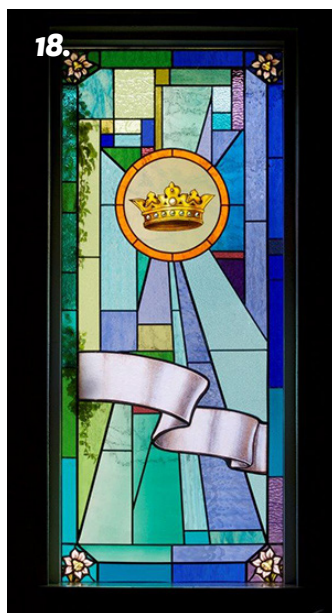
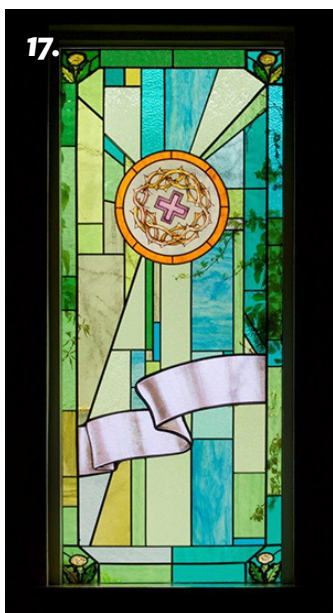
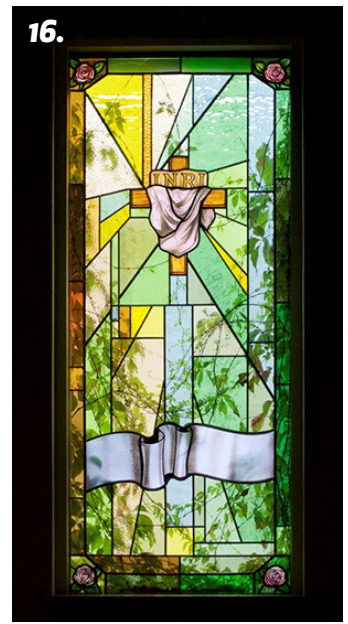
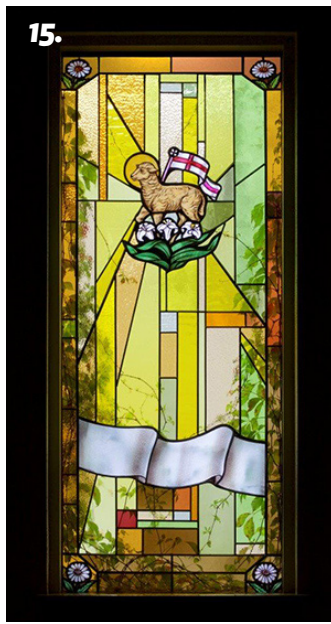
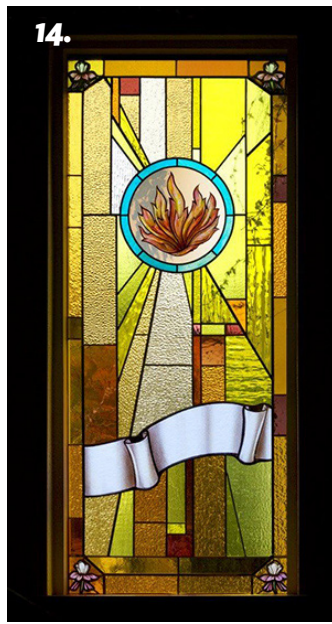
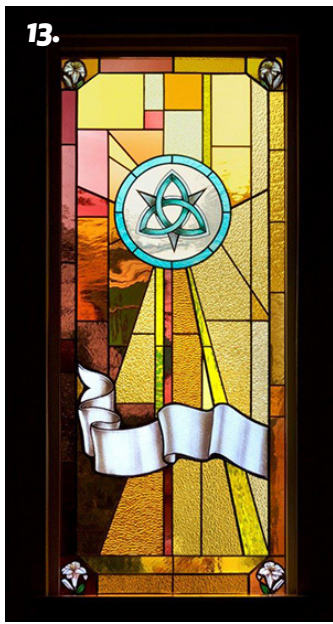
Sanctuary interior



1. The ship's hull interior; 2. Gothic arch in the doors; 3. Wooden liturgical furniture; 4. Wooden pews and the organ

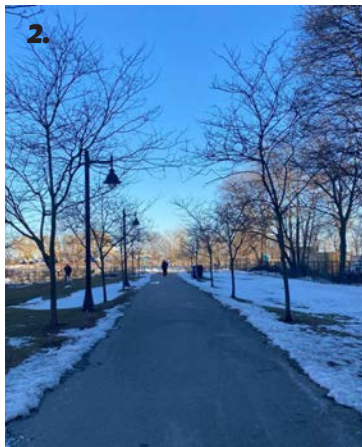
Stained glass windows





1. Prayer; 2. Ship; 3. Holy Communion; 4. Baptism; 5. Vine; 6. Palm; 7. Holy Bible; 8. Shell; 9. Creation; 10. Repentance; 11. Trinity; 12. Flame; 13. Lamb; 14. Cross; 15. Thorns; 16. King; 17. Shepherd; 18. Star; 19. Manger; 20. Scroll

3.3.1.3 Natural inspiration: Humber Bay



1. The section of the lake closest to the church

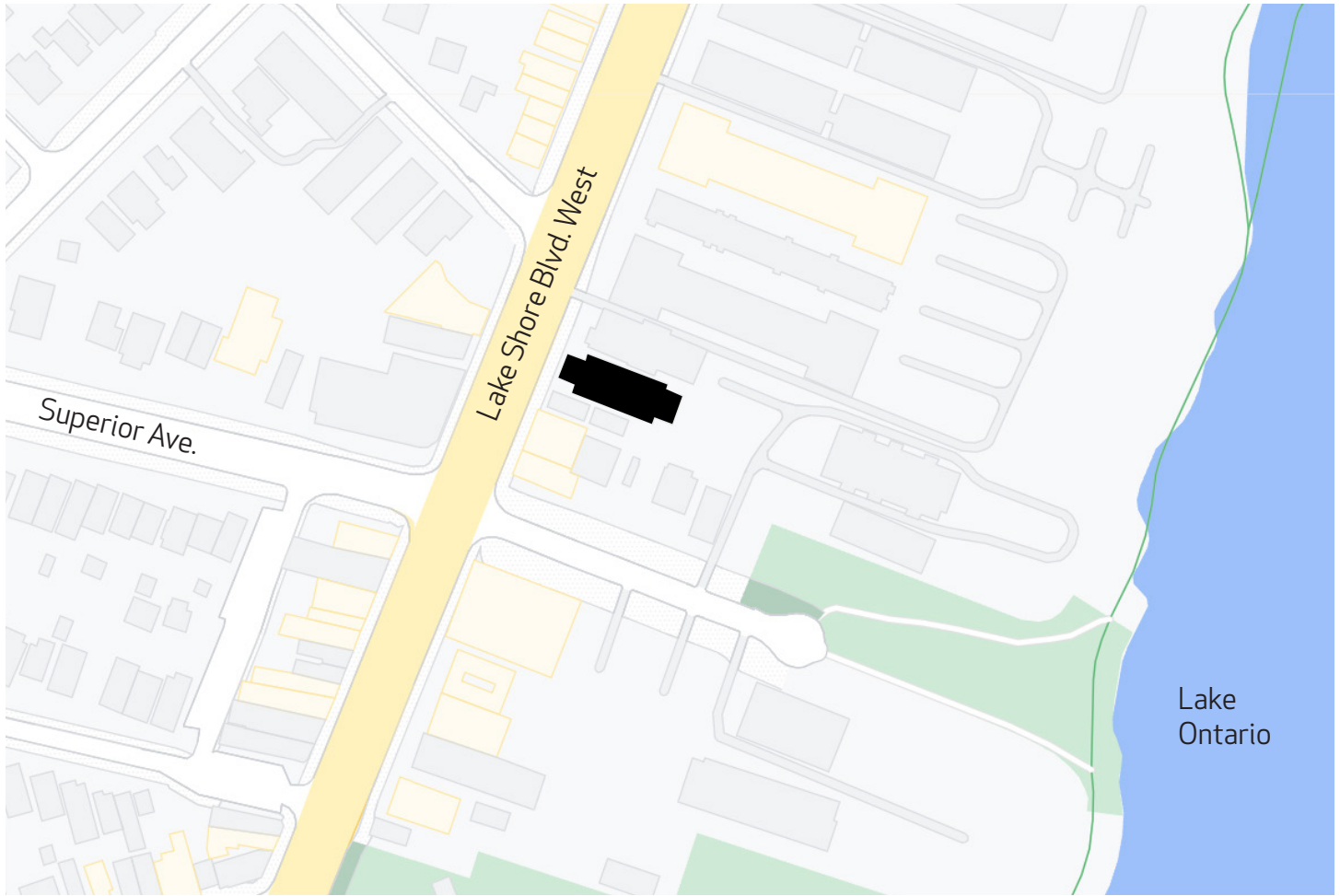
2. The path to the lake

3. The park by the lake

3.4 Site Description

3.4.1 Urban Context

Address: 2379 Lake Shore Blvd West, Toronto, Ontario, M8V 1B7,



A map of the surrounding area



Context at the front of the church

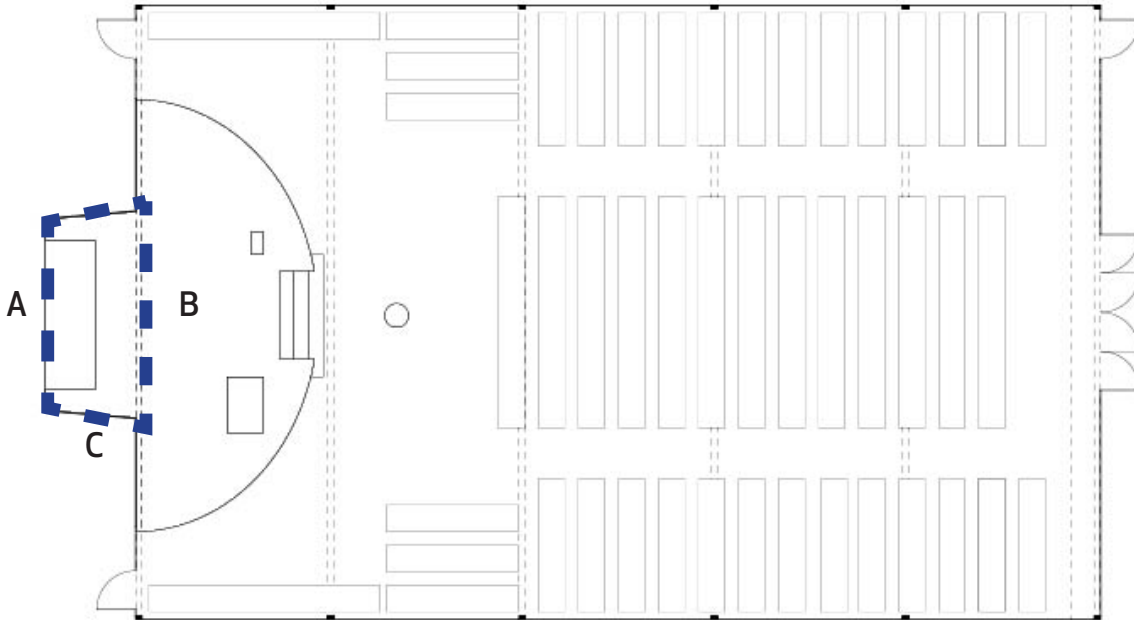


3.4.2 Space in Question

The current altar niche has the following dimensions:

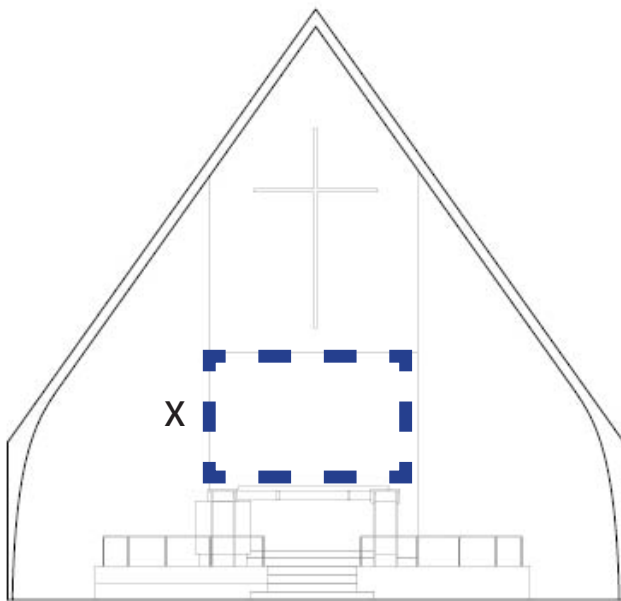
Side A: 155"
Side C: 72.5"

Side B: 189"
Width: 69"

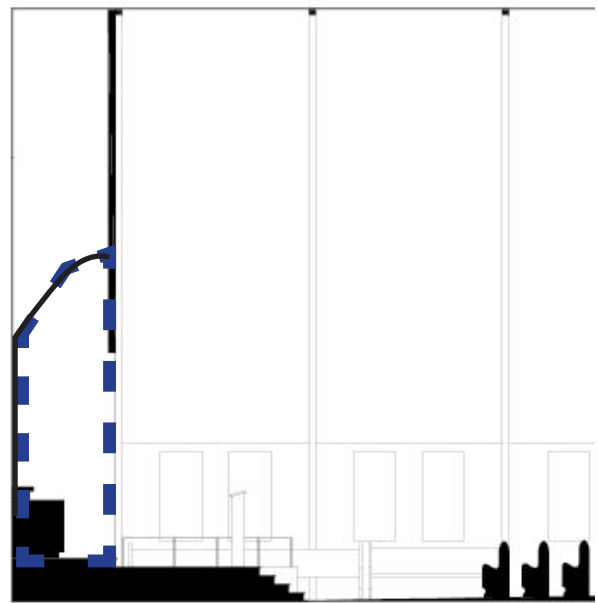


A plan of the sanctuary with the highlighted altar area in question

Height X: 92"



An elevation with the highlighted altar area in question



A section with the highlighted altar area in question

It is important to note that in the renovated sanctuary proposal (see Section 3.1 Background) sides A, B, C, and the width remain unchanged, but the height is increased to 110" as the platform is reduced by 18" to 6".

3.5 Project Considerations

3.5.1 Reverence

The piece must be reverent and representative of our Lutheran faith, values, and traditions, as well as respectful of our specific congregational history and present mission.

3.5.2 Artistic mediums

The committee will consider sustainable and permanent single and mixed media (ex. painting, sculpture, installation, metal, wood, lighting, ceramic) for the project. The materials and installation must be durable and long-lasting. No materials prone to degradation or decomposition will be considered.

3.5.1 Limitations and conditions

3.5.1.1 Dimensions

The piece must fit, both physically and proportionally, into both the existing and proposed dimensions as outlined in section 3.4.2.

3.5.1.2. Potential construction

The proposal must keep in mind that the space may be under construction if/when the sanctuary renovation takes place. This may require the piece to be moved and/or covered to protect it from construction activities. Proposals should include a strategy for moving, storing, and protecting the piece.

3.5.1.2 Storage

In the proposed renovated scheme, the altar niche space is to be occasionally used as storage for the altar furniture (altar, pulpit and chair), at which point sliding doors will close the front of the niche to obscure the contents. Therefore, it is important that the design begins above the height of these objects and leaves room for their storage, and that it allows for the doors to be closed (proposals can not "stick out" the front of the niche. The height of the lecturn above which the art can begin is 51".

3.5.1.3 Cleaning and maintenance

The proposal must consider how the art will be adequately cleaned and maintained

3.5.1.4 Fragility

The proposal must consider the fragility of the piece and ensure that all regular activities (speaking, singing, moving, furniture storage) can continue to occur in its proximity, and that it may be moved to allow for construction (see 3.5.1.2)

3.5.1.5 Lighting

The proposal must consider how the art will interact with the current lighting and power infrastructure or specify any new lighting design ideas.

3.5.1.5 Visibility and accessibility

It is important that the piece be large and clear enough to be seen and fully appreciated from any seat in the sanctuary to preserve the principles of accessibility.

3.6 Timeline

Expressions of interest will be due in October 2023. Candidates are to be selected and notified by end of November 2023, and then interviewed and asked to submit a proposal. A final choice of preferred proponent

will be made before the spring of 2024, at which point the design process can begin. The final design will be approved by the congregation and/or its representatives. The design, construction, and installation should take no longer than six months after the selection of the preferred proponent.

3.6 Budget and Fees

The Project Budget is up to \$8000 (incl. HST). This will include materials, installation, and artists fees.

Those selected from the expression of interest phase will be contacted to interview and submit a proposal and will be compensated with an honorarium for their work and time.



A photo from the annual Easter Sunrise Service

4. Selection Process and Criteria

4.1 Process

The selection process begins with the distribution of this document. Interested artists may submit their information (see section 4.2) to the committee, from which a shortlist will be drafted. The shortlisted artists will be contacted for an interview and asked to prepare specific proposal materials, for which compensation will be provided. The content of the interviews will be evaluated by the committee and an individual or group will be selected to collaborate with the congregation through congregational approval.

4.2 Requirements for expression of interest

The following is required of artists to submit their expression of interest to the committee:

- 10 images of your body of work representative of your style, media, and skills
- Brief biography
- Resume
- Paragraph or less detailing your interest in the project
- Any links to social media or website

Email the above information in the body of the email with jpg. or png. images attached, or as a compiled and attached PDF document with the subject line: Altar Art Expression of Interest to project@martinluther.ca by October 15th 2023. Please send files that exceed 10MB via a download link.

4.3 Criteria for proposals

Proposals will be evaluated on the adherence to section 3. Project Background and Parameters. Further information will be provided to the artists shortlisted from the expression of interest phase in late November. An honorarium will be provided to those asked to prepare proposals.

4.4 Contact for questions

Please contact project@martinluther.ca with any questions or concerns.



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