

Countryside Covenant provides pleasing worship environment

It was a previous construction job at Countryside Covenant Church in the late 1990s that convinced the building committee to hire Fuqua Construction for a design/build project that would include construction of a new worship center for the growing congregation.

“We had decided early on that we were going to do it with Fuqua Construction as a design/build,” Jerry Linn, building committee chair, said. “We had done a previous project four to five years earlier and used Fuqua Construction, but did it as a bid project. We weren’t really satisfied with the way that went. We thought Max Fuqua was great, but we had to go with whoever the low bidder was on the subcontracting and we didn’t always get the quality that Max or we wanted. That’s why we decided to go design/build with the new project and to use Fuqua Construction as the contractor. We thought Max had done a good job before. He was honorable. He had the same basic principles we had. It was a good fit.”

By choosing to use the design/build process for the new project – a 20,400 square foot addition that included a new worship center, nursery complex, choir room, offices and restrooms – Linn said the McPherson, Kansas, church saved money, time, a lot of frustration and got a facility that they are very pleased with and still meets the congregation’s needs after seven years of use.

The project was almost two years in the planning stages, Linn said. The congregation was rapidly outgrowing its sanctuary with two overflowing services when the process started. By the time the plans for the new addition were completed, the church had added a third service on Sunday mornings and two Sunday school hours. Some consideration had been given to expanding the original worship center, but it was concluded that made little sense. The church began having



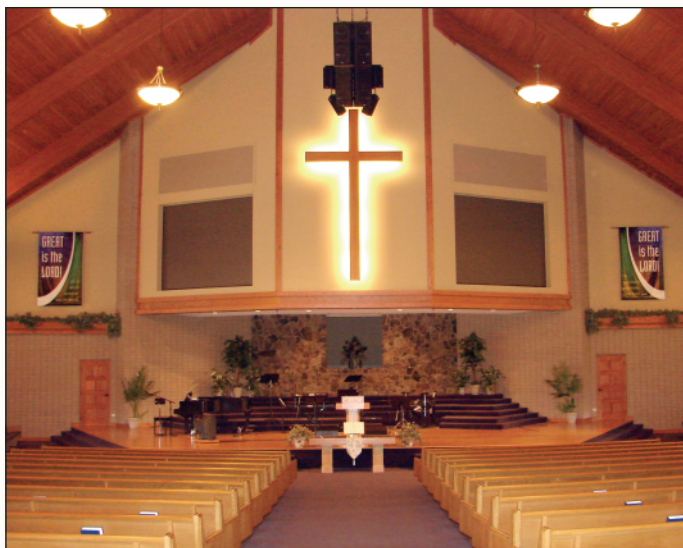
PROJECT FILE

Countryside Covenant Church

Location: McPherson, Kansas
Project Scope: Sanctuary Addition
Square footage: 20,400 sq. ft.
Design Build Team: Fuqua Construction
Kelly McMurphy,
Landmark Architects

small group discussions about what should be done. The church also began determining what kind of financial support there would be for the project.

Fuqua Construction was hired as the contractor and Fuqua recommended an architect, Kelly McMurphy with Landmark



The front of the worship center uses angles and textures to ensure quality audio/visual quality as well as providing a simple, uncluttered feel.

Architects of Hutchinson. They began meeting as a team with the building committee and other church groups as needed from the beginning of the planning process, which, Linn said, made the planning process less frustrating.

“Max is very sensitive to the (planning) process. He un-

continued on back

derstood how church committees have to work through things. He knew when he needed to listen and when it was time to speak up to save us time. He kept us on track and he kept our leadership focused.”

That sensitivity continued during the construction, according to church administrator Linda Totman, who worked in the building while crews were on site. The congregation is very active with a number of activities in addition to Sunday services. The Fuqua Construction crew was very sensitive to the traffic in and out of the building and parking lot, Totman said.

“The crew was very accommodating and we found Max to be such an easy person to work with. It was fun to be around him and his staff – they were dandies. We never found it to be a hardship,” she said. “If we were having a funeral or other event where we needed to park a number of cars, they would move large equipment out of the way. They were also very good at the housekeeping part of construction. They always warned us ahead if something they were doing was going to be noisy or would interfere with activities.”

The goal architecturally for the project, according to McMurphy, was providing a worship center that was large enough for the congregation’s needs and worked well with the most up-to-date audio-visual equipment. McMurphy and Fuqua took the building committee to other facilities they had built with similar features for ideas. It was a trip to Eden Mennonite Church in rural Moundridge that solved some of the design issues relating to the sound system, Linn said.

“A sound consultant had done an analysis of the percent of hard and absorbent surface we needed for quality sound, but they weren’t interior decorators,” Linn said. “When Max saw we were stuck on what we wanted to do, he took us to Eden Mennonite and showed us how he had used angles and a mix of stone and wood to enhance the sound. His experience saved us from having to use a sound engineer as an architect.”

Fuqua was also quick to bring in an expert on heating and cooling to visit with the committee when it was having trouble deciding on a conventional heating and cooling system or a boiler/chiller system. Linn said the size of the space was at the break point for which one should be selected. After hearing the presentation, the congregation went with the boiler/chiller.

“Max took the bull by the horns and got us the information that helped us choose the best system,” Linn said.

That attention to detail and sensitivity to the committee’s need for information continued throughout the building process. Linn said that Fuqua did a good job of keeping the committee in the loop on progress and clearly delineated where they were at, where they were headed and the time factors involved. And, that attention to detail continued as the

construction neared completion.

The front area of the worship center had a hard surface floor which met the carpet and needed a custom-built edging. The job done by the flooring subcontractor just wasn’t what they had wanted, Linn said. He called Fuqua, who saw immediately that there was a problem and had his own crew redo the edging saying that: “I know what you want and it can’t be a tripping hazard.” The problem was fixed.

“Max was sensitive to what was acceptable. Sometimes



Design features at the back of the worship center add interest and allow natural light into the facility.

that kind of thing can become a fight, but it never was with Max. He takes pride in his work and wants it to be what his client wants,” Linn said.

The final result has been very pleasing, Totman said. The worship center fits the church family very well and is a very comfortable and accommodating facility. She said every time she enters it she feels she is being ushered into God’s presence and that the simplicity of the facility really glorifies God.

Linn said he would definitely go with a design/build approach to a new construction project. It saved the congregation money and time – even though it was a long process – by having the contractor and the architect both on board at the start of the project and one person to deal with when there were questions or problems.

“We only had to do it one time. It was definitely the way to go,” Linn said. “You need to have a vision of what you’re wanting. Max doesn’t have a crystal ball, but if you have some idea and a proposed budget, he can take that, run with it and bring you a completed project that you will be very happy with. I would recommend Fuqua Construction without hesitation.”

written by Cindy Baldwin, Baldwin Creative Services