

## Remodeled church marries new to old

The renovation goal of the Emmanuel Mennonite Church of Meade was to make the 50-year-old building handicapped accessible. The quick list included an elevator, remodeled restrooms and enlarged hallways. What they got was so much more.

The congregation partnered with Fuqua Construction of Inman, Kan., on the project, which was completed in January 2016. The decision to tackle the project was several years in



**Project Scope:** Elevator, Carport and Foyer Addition/Renovation  
**Project Type:** New Construction - Renovation & Remodel  
**Square footage:** 1,750 sq. ft. new addition, 1,150 sq. ft remodel  
**Design Build Team:** Fuqua Construction Inc.

### PROJECT PROFILE

**Emmanuel Mennonite Church**

**Owner:** Emmanuel Mennonite

**Location:** Meade, Kansas



the making, with some congregation members hesitant to take on the expense of a major remodel. However, once the decision was made, the decision to hire Fuqua Construction as the general contractor was an easy one, according to building committee chairman John Ross.

“We had a budget, and (owner) Max (Fuqua) came out and gave a presentation to the committee or church members about what he would do. He was very thorough, had completely bid the project and answered our questions. He was very well prepared,” Ross said. “The way Fuqua Construction presented was reassuring. No one else had the game plan they had. Max’s presentation showed he had a good understanding of what we wanted and what we needed.”

That desire to keep the building committee and church members in the information loop continued throughout the project, which took 12 months after construction began.

“We really appreciated the very open communication with Max and his crew as the project progressed,” building committee member Charla Unruh said. “When Max met with the church body, he took questions and gave people a chance to get on board. He was very visible and reachable throughout the project.”

According to Unruh, there were monthly update meetings with the building committee outlining the schedule for the next three to four months. When decisions needed to be made, options were provided that fit into the church’s budget and Fuqua gave them time to talk it through and come to decisions.

“We never felt pushed. They never seemed offended or impatient with our questions. It was

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A new carport leads to the remodeled foyer entrance, stairway and elevator to the sanctuary level.





**Above: a coffee bar is situated near the foyer. Right: The nursery was expanded and sinks and a restroom were added.**

a very comfortable process,” Unruh said.

To meet the primary goals of handicapped accessibility, an elevator was installed. The installation of the elevator required new construction and a remodel of the foyer where it is housed. The entrance to the building was redesigned as part of the foyer remodel. Four new restrooms were constructed in the addition and existing restrooms were repurposed. Hallways were widened. The nursery was expanded and remodeled to include it’s own restroom, and a coffee area was added off the foyer. Modifications were made to some existing rooms as they took on new roles.

As with any remodel projects, there were surprises.

“We had to rerun the sewer line and there were several issues with the elevator, none of which were Fuqua Construction’s fault. Max did a wonderful job working with the elevator company and pushing them to do what needed to be done. When it broke down after installation, Max went to bat with the elevator company to resolve the issue and even absorbed part of the cost,” Ross said. “None of the surprises were because of something Fuqua Construction did, and they were great in helping us deal with them.”

There were also some changes to the initial plans. Unruh noted that the church had hoped to use the elevator mechanical room for a mop room, but learned that codes wouldn’t allow water there. A room that they had hoped to use for a bride’s room, counseling and other functions, was smaller than it had looked in the plans and was instead used for the mop room and storage. Even with those unexpected challenges, the project stayed on budget, Ross said, adding that Fuqua found savings without sacrificing quality.

One of the biggest anticipated challenges by the congregation was carrying on the daily activities of the church in the middle of a construction site. Any fears that the construction crews would be disruptive were soon put to rest.

“We were looking for places to move my office, because I didn’t figure I could work there during the construction. My office is located on an outer wall, which they were building on to. They were taking out walls and putting up temporary walls around me,” church secretary Marshan Padgett said.



“We were able to leave the office right there through the whole process. There were two days I didn’t come in, but the rest of the time it was business as usual.”

Padgett said the church had more funerals during the construction year than they had probably had for the previous five years. She would let the crew know when the church would be needed during the day and they planned around it. They might come in early, but they had cleared the area, cleaned up and made everything presentable for the service.

“At no time did we feel it was a disruption,” she said. “And the crew was wonderful to work around. The first day the supervisor introduced himself and told me if anyone, at anytime, did anything that was offensive or disrespectful to let him know, and he would address it. There was never a problem.”

Ross also commented that the church was always ready for Wednesday night youth meetings, and Fuqua’s crew was very mindful of the safety of the children in the construction zone, building temporary walls if necessary to keep construction areas secure. The crew did an excellent job of keeping the construction area tidy.

Unruh, Ross and Padgett said the congregation is very pleased with the completed project stressing that one of their hopes was the new construction and remodel would blend seamlessly with the original structure.

“I think it turned out wonderful,” Padgett said. “Everything matches -- even the brick on the outside. We did recarpet the entire building. You can’t tell the old from the new.”

Ross, who often is involved in remodeling projects for his employer, which has multiple stores in the region, appreciated how smoothly the project progressed. He attributed that to the professionalism of the crew, the cooperation with and support of local subcontractors used on the job, and the frequent communication between the crew onsite, Max Fuqua and the building committee.

“If I was ever involved in another remodel, I would hire Fuqua Construction without hesitation,” Ross said.

*written by Cindy Baldwin, Baldwin Creative Services*