

# Assumption B.V.M. Church

Lawrence Hoy, Renovata Studios › Feasterville, Pennsylvania

By the time Renovata Studios became involved in this interior renovation, the contract had been arranged to restore the pews and a “faux stone” vinyl tile had been chosen to replace the red carpet. However, there was no overall vision for the finished worship space. Renovata requested a moratorium on further design decisions until a cohesive program and master plan could be completed, along with a strategy to squeeze as much as possible into the limited available budget.

The goal of the master plan was to respect the existing architecture and to create a vibrant space for liturgy. The new program suggested a redesign of the sanctuary platform to include wheelchair access and better placement of altar, ambo, chair, and tabernacle. Some elements in the sanctuary needed to remain, such as the beautiful altar and communion rail of

Indian Rosewood created for the parish in 1958 by famed woodworker George Nakashima.

The new designs were approved in time to schedule the site work along with removal of the pews. The choice for new flooring material was changed to ceramic tile, which was under \$3 per square foot and installed by a local company, owned by parishioners, which helped keep costs down. To improve the appearance of the walls and ceiling new accent colors were added to the recently whitewashed interior. By painting the ceiling beams with a three-color treatment and the columns with the same brick color as the walls, the columns virtually disappeared. A crew of artisans from Renovata traveled to Pennsylvania to do the work, and spent the week lodged in the church rectory, with meals provided by parish volunteers, which saved more money.



*Renovated worship space enlivened with color, giving the altar more focus.*

This created a wonderful bond between the parish and the crew, and by the end of the project crew members were considered honorary parishioners.

The new design for the sanctuary platform was built by Renovata. Special care was taken to carefully remove the original Nakashima communion rail and incorporate it into the new platform as the railings for the access ramp. The other Nakashima furnishings were removed and the original oil finish restored by hand. A former side altar that had been previously modified was used as a base for the ambo with a new reading desk fabricated of similar wood. The new granite font was designed so that the bowl would be installed for the completion of Phase I, allowing the parish to perform baptisms; a temporary immersion pool can be used until the permanent one is installed.



*Worship space in its original condition.*



*Original Nakashima altar and furnishings, behind which the original communion rail serves as an access ramp rail.*