

Lutheran Church of Australia: Commission on Worship

STATEMENT 17

THE USE OF MULTIPURPOSE WORSHIP CENTRES

Adopted by the Commission on Worship, January 1988. This statement was prepared by the Department of Visual Arts to provide guidelines for congregations with limited resources wanting to construct a worship centre

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- 1 Ideally a congregation will set aside a building exclusively for worship, to express its reverence for God and to acknowledge the priority of worship.
- 2 However, for a congregation with limited resources, a multipurpose worship centre can be a means of providing the best range of facilities both for the congregation and for the community it serves.
- 3 With careful design, such centres can fulfil all the basic requirements for worship as set out in the statement 'Public worship and its environment'.
- 4 Where a separate worship space is provided, it can stand as a constant reminder of the importance of worship in the life of the congregation, to members and visitors alike, throughout the week.

This cannot occur if the visible pointers to the means of grace, such as the altar, font, and lectern/pulpit, are removed from sight between formal worship services.
- 5 A congregation can demonstrate the priority of worship in a number of different ways.
 - The sanctuary area can be set apart so that it is not used for any function other than worship, but stands visible to users of the building at other times.
 - A small chapel can be created, possibly near the entrance to the building, which can be used as space for private meditation and other acts of worship.
- 6 When multipurpose spaces are used for worship, special pointers in the space can indicate the unique nature of the activity. For example, different kinds of natural and/or artificial lighting over the sanctuary area, works of art, colours, or textures can signify that this area has been set aside for worship.
- 7 If no space is available for a permanent sanctuary, it may be preferable to locate the baptismal font near the entry to the building as a constant reminder of its significance as the means of entering God's family.
- 8 Many practical problems need to be overcome for a multipurpose worship centre to function effectively. These include consideration of lighting and acoustics; seating arrangements; and, if moveable platforms are being considered, their size and relocation. It is especially important not to skimp on the size of the sanctuary in flexible layouts simply because platform sizes become too cumbersome.
- 9 The congregation needs to remember that the primary reason for building such a centre is worship. All other purposes are secondary.