



The staggered wall of the south façade diminishes the building's scale.

After more than three decades in existence, Galilee United Methodist Church in Sterling was still operating with an undersized sanctuary. A new master plan by LeMay Erickson Architects of Reston called for the construction of new worship, fellowship, religious education, and administrative spaces as well as future demolition of the existing 35-year-old buildings. But the first order of business was to build the new sanctuary and expand the church parking lot to accommodate a larger congregation.

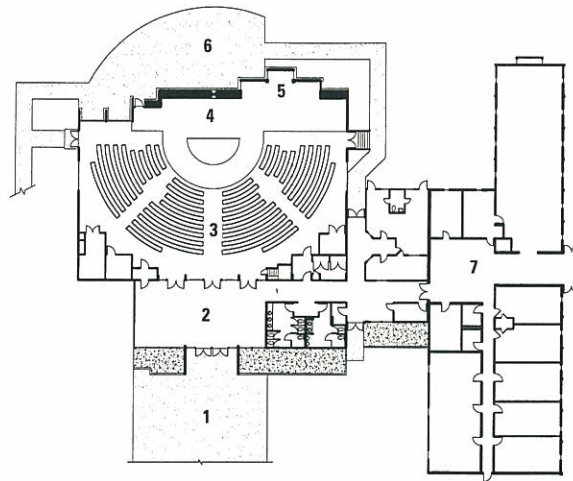
The church sits on a five-acre site that is partially wooded and partially developed. It is also beside a pond and the junction of two major highways. LeMay Erickson located the building to be open to the wooded areas and pond while acknowledging its high visibility in the community both day and night.

A transparent glass entrance allows unobstructed views through the church to the large cross above the altar. A careful balance of form focuses the chancel, allows for a flexible choir area, and fosters the gathering around of the congregation. The circular geometry of the sanctuary continues beyond the exterior wall to give shape and identity to the south terrace, which provides a gathering space.

Natural light is controlled to enhance the various liturgical elements and functions of the church. Direct light and views from the sanctuary take advantage of the attractive natural site and dramatize an openness of the congregation. Indirect natural light shields potential glare, bathes banners, and backlights the choir and musicians.

Light of the Lord

Galilee United Methodist • LeMay Erickson Architects



- 1 Entry Plaza
- 2 Gathering Space
- 3 Sanctuary
- 4 Chancel
- 5 Choir
- 6 Terrace
- 7 Existing Building

First Floor Plan



Generous windows fill the sanctuary with natural light and frame views of the wooded site.