

Letter to Council

When did the sanctuary stop being the “sanctuary” ?

I am writing to Council because I am not sure where else to send this. I.e. I don't know how these things get decided. Hopefully the whole Council was involved.

Lately the sanctuary is being referred to as the “gathering place”. This seems appropriate when it is used by outside groups. But for worship service the word “sanctuary” is more appropriate.

The word comes from the Latin “sanctus” meaning holy. So the sanctuary is the holy place. What more appropriate place to have worship. Just as the “green cathedral” is a sanctuary when we worship there in the summer.

When the design of the addition and renovation was being done, one of the main tenets was that our building would be open for use by the community. To this end we incorporated design elements that would make it accessible to all. But during this process the sanctuary was always called the “sanctuary”. I know because I was chair of the Design team. During the latter stages of building it came to be referred to as the “concert hall” for non-worship events.

Now as our philosophy has developed and Grand Bend Place has been born, It does seem appropriate to use “gathering place” for this space of our building when used for non-worship events. But surely when it comes to worship we can use a better name, i.e. the holy place — sanctuary. I know I am not alone in this. So we will use the term “sanctuary” because it was and is and always will be.

We are fortunate in Canada that this does not happen often, but if one did need to seek sanctuary, I'm betting that they would rather be in a “sanctuary” than a “gathering place”.

If I am wrong in this—and the sanctuary is still the “sanctuary”, please forgive me and carry on.

Ron Holmes