

Pre-Cast Concrete Helps Create Vibrant, Affordable Worship Spaces

When undertaking a church construction or expansion project, church designers and congregations are often challenged by having modest construction funds to create an attractive, inviting worship space. To overcome this hurdle, many congregations and designers are turning to pre-cast concrete panels as a low-cost alternative to traditional construction materials, such as brick and stone.

“Cost is always a factor for the church groups we work with, and pre-cast concrete panels provide a durable yet very attractive-looking construction material,” said Jack Holmes, president of Minneapolis-based Vanman Companies, which specializes in the design and construction of religious buildings. “We’re being driven to save costs by being more creative. Pre-cast concrete is one of the tools we use to provide a worship space that’s dollar-efficient but still very inviting for fellowship.”

Pre-cast concrete panels offer church designers a wide range of benefits:

- **Ease of construction** – Compared to traditional construction methods such as brick and masonry, pre-cast panels offer dramatically shorter construction times.
- **Reduced costs** – By speeding construction time, pre-cast panels can reduce construction costs. They can also help control long-term maintenance fees and provide a structure that is extremely energy efficient, reducing energy costs.
- **Durability** – Because concrete actually gains in strength for as long as 50 years, structures made from pre-cast concrete panels can last for generations.
- **Attractive exterior and interior space** – Today’s worship spaces are designed with the goal of welcoming existing churchgoers while also attracting new visitors. Pre-cast concrete panels offer an attractive interior with a wide range of exterior finish options.

Solid Acoustic Benefits

Pre-cast concrete panels can help provide a worship space in which the spoken word and music can be heard with equal clarity.

“Many of the worship spaces we design are used for both recreation and fellowship activities, so it’s always a concern to choose a building material that works acoustically in a wide range of situations,” said Burton Youngs, principal and project architect at Moorhead, Minn.-based YHR Partners. “Pre-cast concrete panels have a hard, smooth surface that reflects sound well. It’s also easy to direct where sound needs to go by adding softer interior elements, such as draperies and acoustic panels.”

Because concrete is structurally strong, large acoustic elements such as baffles, acoustic panels and draperies can be hung anywhere on a pre-cast concrete panel, without the added costs of reinforced wall blockings or strengtheners.

“We’re in an age where constructing large structures with brick or concrete blocks is simply becoming too expensive,” said Jeff Nadeau, sales engineer for Fabcon, Inc., a Minneapolis-based pre-cast concrete panel manufacturer. “Pre-cast concrete panels offer a winning blend of affordability, practicality and attractive design.”

For more information about the advantages and benefits of pre-cast concrete panels, call Fabcon at 1-800-727-4444.