

All About The Commons



BACKGROUND / ORIGINATION

The Transforming Hearts Strategic Plan was the driving force behind the design of The Commons. Through extensive surveys and conversations, parishioners consistently expressed a desire for connection and welcoming social spaces, inspiring the creation of The Commons gathering areas. We hope “*Meet me at The Commons*” becomes part of our shared parish vocabulary. An expanded and dramatically enhanced youth space was also identified as a fundamental need to support our growing program.

The Commons provides a much-needed space for belonging beyond worship as a “third space” (home, work, and community gathering space). Some may think of it as an extension of their home, or even office. The goal for this space was quality first — timeless, durable, and welcoming rather than ornate. The intention was to create space that will function well for decades to come.

TIMELINE

The Transforming Hearts Strategic Plan began in Spring 2022 and was made up of clergy, staff, Vestry, and laity on various committees, including Outreach and Engagement working groups, as well as the Sacred Spaces and Interiors Committees.

The first planning meeting for the new space was held in January 2023. We received permit approval in October 2024 and immediately began construction, for a total of 17 months of active construction.

DESIGN

The Commons isn’t just for Sundays. It was intentionally designed for weekday Bible studies, staff collaboration, youth programming, remote work, and spontaneous connection. During daytime operating hours, the spaces may not be reserved so that they are always available.

Imagine some of the following uses:

- Moms/dads enjoying a cup of coffee and/or breakfast with a friend after CCK drop-off or grabbing a bite to eat before or after pick-up
- Small Bible studies and groups that once met offsite meeting at The Commons, with delicious coffee and food

- Parishioners, neighbors, and community members working remotely
- Small group meetups for conversation throughout the week
- Friends meeting for a game of cards or Mahjong
- Special parish events and celebrations

The Living Room offers a space for more intimate meetings, gatherings before and after family services, or brides getting ready and waiting to walk down the aisle.

The main goal of these spaces was to create a sense of warmth and invite people in. All the fabrics, although luxurious, are also indoor-outdoor, giving a bit of “Teflon” to a room that we hope gets “used and abused.”

Design Highlights:

- The large, 23-foot arched windows were a driving architectural feature for this space, allowing in as much natural light as possible. In addition, much discussion went into making the Courtyard usable and special to blend indoor and outdoor hospitality.
- Materials were selected not just for beauty but for sound absorption, helping conversations feel intimate, even in a full room.
- Layered lighting (natural light + lamps + fixtures) was intentional to create warmth rather than a “commercial” feel.
- Flooring and performance upholstery were selected for heavy use over decades, reinforcing quality first.
- Acoustic paneling throughout provides enhanced sound quality and a more comfortable gathering experience.
- There is a beam signed by hundreds of parishioners, young and old, at a Topping Out Ceremony on Spring Parish Day in May 2025.

By the Numbers

- The Commons square footage = 14,000 SF (Main Room = 5,000 SF)
- Youth Center square footage = 2,000 SF
- Courtyard square footage = 1,300 SF

ARTISTS

Front Vestibule and Gathering Space Paintings: Carl Linstrum

Carl Linstrum’s professional experience spans a broad range, including his work as an internationally exhibiting painter, through nearly twenty years as a gallery owner and art consultant, and into his current position as a professor in the School of Foundation Studies at SCAD Atlanta. He received his BA in Printmaking from The University of South Florida in 1992 and his MFA in Drawing and Painting from Georgia State University in 2002.

The large painting in the gathering space was the first piece acquired for The Commons. The four additional Linstrum works in the foyer and vestibule were subsequently commissioned specifically for those areas, creating a cohesive and beautifully unified visual experience throughout the space.

Living Room Paintings: Fred Cox

Mr. Cox is trained in European techniques, specializing in the use of resins, gilding, oils, and acrylics. He creates works that embody a soft, serene, and calming palette, perfect for enhancing any space with beauty and tranquility.

FURNITURE & FIXTURES

All upholstered furniture was made and sourced locally. All wooden pieces were also handmade locally.

By the Numbers

- There is seating in The Commons for 136 people.
 - Lamps = 27
 - Pillows = 34
 - Light Fixtures = 32
 - Outlets/USB = 130
 - Doors = 41
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CAFÉ & COFFEE SHOP: COMING SOON

We look forward to opening a full-service café in the next few months. This coffee shop will offer all the traditional beverage options, along with breakfast and lunch offerings.

The hours are not yet cemented, but we anticipate it will be open on Monday – Friday in the morning until early afternoon, as well as Sunday mornings.

Lots of exciting details to come.

YOUTH CENTER

The proximity of youth space to adult gathering space was intentional, reinforcing that young people are not separate from parish life but central to it.

Every week, at least 100 youth (grades 6–12) meet for EYC, Life Group, after school office hours, High School Bible Study, Middle School Sunday School, Confirmation, and

Youth Council. This new space will allow our youth to shift from meeting in various detached classrooms and offsite into a sacred space of their own.

The Youth Center has been in the works for years. We listened to youth voices in extended conversations and took into account our current numbers and future dreams as we planned the layout for this space.

The full kitchen will allow the youth to cook and serve meals in their own space and purchase and store food in a more intentional and sustainable way. The furniture can move around to accommodate different sized groups and activities. The tables can seat a big group and can also be used for ping pong! The glassed-in room allows for quiet meetings and contemplative prayer during Life Group and at other times. We want our youth to find this space irresistible.

By the Numbers

- Youth members of Christ Church = around 600
- Dining table seating = 26
- Square footage compared to previous basement space = so much more ... and with great light!

COURTYARD & LANDSCAPING

The trees planted near the front of the building greatly exceed the minimum requirement for tree size required by code. The hope is that the larger trees, especially when blooming, will give the building a feel like it has been here for a long time.

Everything in the planning was centered around the new building fitting into our campus in a way that wouldn't overshadow or detract from our existing buildings.

FUN FACTS

- Approximately 450 plants, bushes, and trees were installed.
- The tallest tree is the black gum (25 feet tall).
- We also replaced our beloved ginkgo tree in the front of the building on the right.
- The new landscape is designed for year-round color, including:

Late Winter Color: Lenten Rose

Early Spring Show: Serviceberry, Fothergilla, Azaleas

Late Spring Fragrance: Gardenia, Sweetbay Magnolia

Summer Texture: Mexican Feather Grass, Oakleaf Hydrangea

Fall Color: Japanese Maple, Fothergilla, Oakleaf Hydrangea

Winter Berries: Hollies

PARKING

- While we had to lose some very convenient parking with the building site, the good news is we were able to net a small increase in spaces, which will hopefully meet the Church's needs most days and Sundays.
 - The spaces closest to the building are designated for handicap parking, with additional Sunday Senior parking in the next two closest lots.
 - CCK carpool will eventually return to the back driveway/main CCK entrance.
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FINANCIAL

- Total dollars raised for the Transforming Hearts Capital & Ministries Campaign = \$33 million
In addition to the new building, the total includes monies dedicated to Outreach, to creating the Center for Wellbeing and Care, as well as reserve funds for programming and maintenance, ensuring that this space is used well for years to come.
 - Number of contributing households = 617
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IN SUMMARY

The Commons represents far more than a building. It is the physical expression of the Transforming Hearts vision — a space intentionally designed for connection, belonging, hospitality, and growth. From worship to weekday gatherings, from youth formation to spontaneous conversation over coffee, The Commons strengthens the heart of our parish community.

Built with quality, warmth, and longevity in mind, this space was created to serve generations to come. We invite you to use it, enjoy it, gather here often, and make it your own — meeting, connecting, celebrating, and building community together.