To the worshipers at MCCDC:

This is an update on the repair project that involves repairing/replacing the lighting control panel in the sanctuary.

In case you aren’t aware, the only way we can currently control the sanctuary lights is by flipping the main power breaker switch in the upstairs hallway. The panel on the wall in the rear near the soundboard is essentially useless.

It will likely be a major expense to rewire and/or replace the controls. The Trustees thought that it would be wise to determine if the existing light fixtures were functional before bringing in an electrician to discuss options. Trustees also agreed that switching the traditional bulbs to energy-saving LED bulbs could save the church some money in the long run.

To that end, we rented a scissor lift to get up to the 24 fixtures above your heads and replaced all the bulbs that Irena Fulp could. Once she was able to inspect the fixtures up close, she realized that there were two different types of light fixtures. The bulbs in the fixtures that she was unable to change were designed more like the headlamp bulb on a car rather than ones that can simply be screwed and unscrewed. Since we were working on a Saturday afternoon, tracking down replacements for the ten unusual bulbs we needed was unsuccessful. Also, they weren’t available in LED.

Another unfortunate choice ended up being my selection of bulb. On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is “soft” and 5 is “hard/bright” I chose the #3 because I thought is would be a nice medium range. In hindsight I should have chosen the soft option. Turns out buying lightbulbs isn’t as easy as it was way back when.

So far, I haven’t been able to get an explanation as to why the fixtures aren’t all the same. Since the odd ones are all on the east beam, I suspect that they were added after the original fixtures. Note that most of the fixtures on the west beam were designed to illuminate the altar. Perhaps the congregants in the back needed more lighting to see the hymnal.

Our work in late March was just the first step in what will no doubt be a significant and complicated project. Did you know those flat white squares spaced out along the edges of the highest parts of the ceiling are lights? The view from the outside when they were illuminated was like a beautiful crown of lights and a beacon to the neighborhood! Wouldn’t it be nice to switch those over to a low cost LED bulb so they could just be left on all night?

The current bulbs will likely have to be replaced along with the odd fixtures – hopefully before the seasons change and darkness creeps back in.

The bigger issue is addressing the church’s electrical system so that we can properly control the lighting and use of electricity throughout the building.

Scott Frazier