

## THE NEW CAMPUS

First Baptist Church is one of the largest property owners in downtown Dallas. But the aging facilities consist of a hodge-podge of closed, inaccessible buildings constructed over more than a century.

First Baptist's proposed new 21<sup>st</sup> Century campus will be a re-creation, not a renovation, of the facilities that is united in function and design; open and accessible; and easily identifiable as a church.

The new worship center will hold 3,000 – almost twice as many as the existing sanctuary – with close to a mile of pews. Special features will include a walk-through baptistry with family viewing space on the platform and a huge viewing screen behind the choir space consisting of seven large high-definition television panels blended together.

A sweeping glass concourse, including a sky bridge over St. Paul Street, will connect the new worship center, education building and parking facilities. The current sanctuary will have a new steeple, replicating the one taken down in the 1960s for safety reasons. A cross tower and fountain, suitable for baptisms, will be surrounded by green space, creating a spiritual oasis in the middle of downtown.

“Every recent advancement in church design and today's most advanced technology have been incorporated to create a space that combines the comfort, spaciousness, and convenient access of a world-class building today with the intimate atmosphere generations of First Dallas members have cherished,” said Dr. Robert Jeffress, First Baptist's Pastor.

The six-story Education Building will feature a double gymnasium, a roof-top prayer garden, junior high and high school theatres and an indoor playground. The first floor will be dominated by glass to make it more open and inviting to people passing by.

New parking garages will feature direct access to children's facilities and senior adult classes. Education space for senior adults will be beneath the new worship center, with parking below. More than 800 parking spaces will be added to the campus, for a net gain of nearly 300 spaces when other spaces being eliminated are figured in.

The sanctuary, which dates to 1890, will remain in order to be used for weddings, funerals and other special events. Other than the sanctuary and the Criswell Center, which was built in 2006, everything in the city block bounded by San Jacinto, St. Paul, Federal and Ervay streets will be torn down.

All told, there will be more than 1.5 million square feet of buildings on the new campus. The entire campus will be certified by the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System. Groundbreaking could be as early as July 2010, with completion about two years later.