

**2006  
SPECIAL MENTION**



*Photo by J. K. Lawrence Photography of Bozeman, Montana*

## **St. Paul's United Methodist Church**

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*The Montana Chapter of the American Institute of Architects is pleased to announce Place Architecture is the recipient of the 2006 Excellence in Design Special Mention. Place Architecture will now be able to compete at the Regional level in 2007.*

In response to growth issues and wear and tear on the existing Depression-era building — the St. Paul's Congregation chose to build a new structure in the Downtown Helena area. The building committee chose to not only meet the technical and hard edged design criteria but also wanted to harness the ideas and talent of St. Paul's energetic congregation through a collaborative design approach. The church members were led through a process of establishing a value system for the project, which highlighted goals for community service, artistic expressions of faith and a functional building to accommodate growing programs.

The key location in a significant historic district at the base of a major architectural icon — the Helena Cathedral — required sensitivity to the context of the project. The resulting design concept and budget became the basis for the capital campaign. Thematic design diagrams led the congregation's value system and artistic goals throughout the project. The talent of the congregation was exhibited in their completion of the shell with all of the interior and much of the exterior finish work.

The design call upon details and forms in the adjacent Cathedral, creates civic space important to facilitate community service programs, and provides a strong horizontal visual lead to the Cathedral from a downtown viewpoint — the new Methodist Church compliments the vertical emphasis of the Cathedral. The striking stained glass windows of the old church are all being reused in the church as a direct connection to the spiritual and historic values of the congregation.

Phase I is represented in the current building — Sanctuary, Choir Loft, and Lower Level Educational Space — with future plans to extend the form to the east with eventual removal of the old church building. It is designed to allow the roof forms to be extended into the future project — Fellowship Hall, Chapel, and Offices. The current project of 18,000 SF would be extended to 32,000 SF.

Perched just below the Cathedral of St. Helena on a slope overlooking downtown Helena, the site offers outstanding opportunities for views, community connections and drama. Daylighting, natural building conditioning, recycling of cherished elements from the existing church and durable construction will help make this building which sustains the vital ministry of St. Paul's for years to come.

*The Montana Chapter of the American Institute of Architects is located in Billings, Montana. For more information, visit [www.aiu-mt.org](http://www.aiu-mt.org) or call 406-259-7300.*