

PMT GUIDE # 13

Book of Order Section G-10.0102o: "The session is responsible for the mission and government of the particular church. It therefore has the responsibility and power . . .to provide for the management of the property of the church, including determination of the appropriate use of church buildings and facilities, and to obtain property and liability insurance coverage to protect the facilities, programs, and offices, including members of the session, staff, board of trustees, and deacons."

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

To provide a comprehensive perspective on the importance and opportunities that landscape and site development has for a church and its ministry and on how to develop and care for it.

There are different aspects and levels of landscape and site development they may be considered by a church, including the following:

Landscape Maintenance

Keeping your church property well kept is an important part of being a good neighbor and creating a first impression for new visitors. Depending on your church size, staffing and budget this work such as mowing, weeding can be handled in-house by staff or by volunteers, but for larger properties and larger budgets a professional maintenance company should be considered. Typically a landscape maintenance company is able to provide full landscape services as well as snow removal. It is a good idea to keep both of these contracts together if possible, as those plowing the snow might be somewhat more protective of the landscape that they are maintaining during the rest of the year. In all cases get at least two to three bids and check references before signing a contract and make sure that the Contractor is fully insured. Refer to the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association website for potential Contractors, www.ilca.net. (See attached Landscape Maintenance Scope of Work for bidding purposes. It is best to have the Contractors provide pricing on a similar scope of work.)

Snow Removal

As noted previously, it is a good idea to keep your landscape maintenance and snow removal with one Contractor. If that is not the case, again make sure to get a number of bids for the work and to make sure that you check all references and get proof of insurance. Make sure that your contract includes something about damage to church property which can easily happen during snow removal. (See attached Snow Removal Scope of Work for bidding purposes.) In this case, it can easily be split up so that the parking lot and roadway plowing can be handled by an outside Contractor and in-house staff can shovel walkways.

New Landscape Development and Site Work

There are a couple of approaches if you are considering installing significant new landscape development around your church property. One approach is to hire a Landscape Architect to provide design services, much as an Architect does for the building. They can then assist with the bidding of the work and the selection of the Contractor to do the work. To find a Landscape Architect in your area you can contact the Illinois Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, www.il-asla.org.

The other option is hiring a Landscape Contractor who also provides design services, which is referred to as design-build. In this case they will provide design services and the installation of the new work. Refer to the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association website for potential Design-Build Contractors, www.ilca.net. Either approach is acceptable, but particularly if you are considering a large project, hiring a Landscape Architect can be desirable as they will serve as your advocate and insure that the work is properly installed.

Resources

There are a number of books that can serve as resources landscape design ideas. A couple of these include 'The Book of Garden Design' by John Brookes and 'The Big Book of Garden Design' which is part of the Time-Life Book Series. You can find these books and others at your local library, book store or at educational locations such as The Chicago Botanic Garden and the Morton Arboretum.

Most Landscape Architects and Contractors can also provide design services for hardscape (pavers, concrete and asphalt work) and either install the materials or provide recommendations for Sub-contractors.

REFERENCES

Landscape Maintenance Scope of Work (for Bid)

The Landscape Contractor shall bid on one-year of maintenance (April 1st to November 30th) including the following minimum services:

Lawn Care

Mow lawn weekly to maintain at a 3"-3½" height.
Provide three fertilization applications and two weed control applications for lawn areas.
Provide an application of pre-emergent for crabgrass.
Remove debris from lawn areas weekly.
Remove lawn clippings from paved areas and excess clippings from lawn areas.
String trim lawn grass along posts, etc. weekly.
Edge tree circles, planting beds and sidewalks (min. two times a year).
Provide leaf removal as needed.

Shrub, Groundcover and Perennial Care

All beds shall be cultivated and/or weeded as necessary to present a neat weed-free appearance at all times.
A light dressing of shredded bark mulch for shrubs and mushroom compost for groundcover and perennials will be added as necessary in the beginning of the season.
All shrubs shall be pruned once a season to remove dead or damaged branches and to develop natural form, do not prune into tight forms.
All groundcover beds shall be trimmed during the season to insure healthy growth and full appearance.
Plants shall be monitored for watering needs. Water shall be applied as needed.
Leaves shall be removed from the beds.

Perennials shall be dead headed as needed.
Debris, paper, etc. shall be removed from the beds weekly.
Monitor disease and insect activity and respond in the appropriate manner.

Tree Care

Trees shall be pruned to remove dead or damaged branches and to develop the natural plant form. This does not include provision for tree work as the result of a significant storm or stress defects.

Monitor disease and insect activity and respond in the appropriate manner.

Granular fertilizer shall be applied, as needed, for each tree.

Check moisture levels and notify Owner of concerns.

Irrigation

The irrigation system shall be started up in the spring and shut down in the winter.

A full irrigation system inspection should take place monthly but a general inspection should take place whenever the Contractor is on site. Problems shall be reported to the Owner immediately.

Repairs shall be made as needed, and as approved by the Owner. Compensation for damage by others will be the Owner's responsibility.

The irrigation system is best run in the evening, typically overnight, and local ordinances must also be followed as to acceptable watering times.

Miscellaneous

There shall be an overall spring and fall clean-up to start and end the maintenance season.

Landscape debris shall be removed from the site at no extra charge.

Certificates of insurance shall be provided.

The Landscape Contractor shall oversee all landscape maintenance activities and will notify the Owner of any problems or concerns immediately and will provide the Owner with a brief report of each month's activities.

Snow Removal Scope of Work (for Bid)

The Snow Removal Contractor shall provide a flat rate for each snow removal and de-icing (de-icing shall not be based on the weight of the materials used).

The Work shall include the plowing and removal of snow from parking lots, internal roadways, sidewalks, ramps and steps as agreed to with the Church Representative. Removal shall occur once 2" of snow has accumulated. The Contractor shall return during snows over 2" before 8:00am in the morning (particularly on Sundays and for Special Events) to insure that all areas are clear and possibly again during the day depending on the amount of snow. This schedule must be reviewed and agreed to with the Church Representative.

Plowed snow shall be placed in areas agreed to by the Church Representative and snow shall not be plowed so as to damage the building, paving, wheel stops or landscape. The Contractor shall be responsible for all damages caused by his work and shall pay for all repairs.

De-icing agents shall be applied to all pedestrian access/egress areas, sidewalks, ramps and steps. De-icing agents must be environmentally friendly so as not to damage concrete, asphalt or landscape areas. Care shall be taken not to overspread de-icing agents into the landscape areas.

A Certificate of Insurance shall be provided prior to any work.

Green Initiatives

(see also links to more resources: [Click Property Ministries Resources](#) > [Green Building Resources](#))

There are a number of ways that we can be more environmentally sensitive relative to our landscapes and our site maintenance. In all cases, consultation with a landscape professional or even a Civil Engineer would be desirable, to ensure that the work is done properly and safely. Some of these options include:

Turf Removal – Limiting the amount of bluegrass lawn on an existing site or as part of any new work is a good idea. It can be replaced by mixes of fescues, native grasses or other plantings that require less water and maintenance.

Water Collection – If you have external downspouts, then you have the opportunity to collect water from your roof that can be used for watering plant material. Placement of a water barrel, tied to one of those downspouts, near a garden area can provide a handy source of water for those plants. Very sophisticated cistern collection systems with pumps can also be set up and connected to an existing irrigation system, but you definitely need to consult professionals to design this type of system.

Permeable Pavers – The use of permeable pavers for new hard surface areas can also be considered. These pavers allow for the infiltration of storm water and reduce the run-off from your property. Again professional guidance is needed to determine the permeability of the soil, the required gravel base and the type of paver that is appropriate for the use of the area.

Rain Gardens – Another way of reducing the run off from your property is to create depressed landscaped areas that will hold storm water and allow it to percolate into the sub-grade. Colorful plantings can make these areas visual assets to the property, but again professionals must be consulted to determine permeability, soil mixes and how to handle overflow in a heavy rain.

Irrigation – If you have an existing irrigation system or are planning to install a system there are options available from all irrigation manufacturers for the conservation of water. Drip irrigation which is good for plant beds allows for a limited loss of moisture into the atmosphere; low flow

spray heads are also available as are controllers that tie your system directly into the weather forecast and so that your water usage is more closely tied to the existing conditions.

Green Roof – The green roof to be considered here is considered an ‘extensive’ green roof. Typically it has 4” of special planting medium and drought tolerant plants (normally a blend of sedums). There are a number of tray systems available or you can install an edging and a drainage layer that is then backfilled with planting mix and planted. A green roof can be an attractive addition to your property and will help cool your building, reduce the storm water runoff from the roof and improve the air quality. Again professional advice is needed to determine that the roof structurally can carry the load of the plantings and planting medium and to help make the proper selections on planting mix and plants.

Maintenance – There are a variety of organic options available to you from your local garden center and from your Maintenance Contractor for fertilization, weed and pest control. Have a talk with your Maintenance Contractor about being more ‘green’ when it comes to taking care of your property.