

"This innovative house of worship was a multiple award winner."

Client: First Alliance Church

Worship space is dramatic. Large volumes. Wide open areas. All too often the structures for these spaces are dark and forbidding. The overuse of massive glue-laminated timber arches tends to add a heavy feeling to space. In contrast, the First Alliance congregation wanted a light, open sanctuary; one that better reflected their relationship with God.

Steele Structural Engineering employed the combination of longspan joists and an architecturally exposed tube tower to replace the more traditional church structure and form the unique roof shape. Above the ceiling, an extensive catwalk system runs through the joists rather than underneath - allowing the ceiling to be raised, maximizing interior volume and providing precisely the space the congregation envisioned.

While the building is impressive, the application of common materials to an uncommon form allowed the design team to arrive at an economical structure that will serve the congregation well into the new century. The reward at the end of the day is happy client and a First Place showing in the 2000 National Steel Joint Institute Design Awards. The project also was awarded a Diamond Award for Engineering Excellence from The Consulting Engineers Council of Pennsylvania.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Open Sanctuary
- Longspan Joists
- Architecturally Exposed Tube Tower
- Maximized Interior Volume
- National Award-Winner

