

The Pulpit at Grace Church

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Pastors often express interest in the pulpit at Grace Community Church. It is famous as one of the first pulpits ever mounted on a hydraulic lift, so that it can be adjusted for height, and it can even descend all the way beneath the platform, all at the touch of a button.

(This was made necessary by the placement of the baptistery, which is at the congregation's eye level, in the platform behind the pulpit. The pulpit was built to descend so that it could be permanently located at the very front of the platform, yet be easily moved—almost imperceptibly—so that the baptistery can be seen.)

I've often said this is my favorite pulpit to preach from, for several reasons. Of course, it's a historic pulpit with an unrivaled reputation as a place where biblical preaching always meets an eager congregation.

But I like the pulpit for pragmatic reasons, too. It offers more real estate for notes than any pulpit I have ever preached from anywhere. Its top is almost flat, not slanted like a music stand. (Slanted pulpits always allow my notes to slide beneath the reach of my bifocals. I'd prefer a totally flat pulpit-top.) Our pulpit is high enough that the line of sight between my notes and eye-contact with the congregation is very short.

As a piece of furniture, our pulpit is not particularly remarkable. There's nothing ornate or extraordinary about its craftsmanship. But what it lacks in aesthetics it more than makes up for in serviceability.

A couple of years ago, when Lakeside Community Chapel in Clearwater, Florida, was being remodeled, my longtime friend Steve Kreloff (senior pastor there at Lakeside) asked me for the dimensions of the pulpit at Grace. I took a digital camera and measuring tape to church one Sunday night and posted the results on a web page, then sent Steve the URL.

I had totally forgotten about that page, and I never gave the URL to anyone but Steve. I found it a while back while doing maintenance on my website, and I thought it would make an interesting item for readers of "Pulpit Live":

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The guy in the pictures is one of the sound-men at Grace Church, shown doing regular maintenance after the evening service. Of course, the green toolbox on the pulpit is his, and it's not usually there. Unfortunately, it obscures the clock, which is another interesting feature of the pulpit, built right into the pulpit-top, where it is visible only to the preacher. It's the only clock in the whole auditorium.

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