

IMANI BAPTIST CHURCH

BLACKSPACE

COMMUNITY VISIONING | DESIGN STRATEGY EAST ORANGE, NEW JERSEY

For 30 years, Imani has been a spiritual and community hub in East Orange. However, Imanians faced increasing difficulty growing the congregation maintaining social programs and using existing space effectively in addition to addressing the issues of needing to pass the torch to the next generation in a building that reflected its Black history.



PROJECT VISION

Imani Baptist Church collaborated with BlackSpace to support “Imani’s Road Map to Victory”, a community visioning and design strategy to help create a more inclusive church identity and expanded community hub.

Over the course of eight months, Imanians and the BlackSpace team worked as co-designers to:




LEARN, LISTEN, ACTIVATE

CHOOSE 3 BLACKSPACE MANIFESTO PRINCIPLES
LEARN FROM 4 BLACK CHURCH DESIGN EXPERTS
RESEARCH OVER 70 LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
COLLECT 22 STORIES

CO-DESIGN, CO-DEVELOP

CO PRODUCE 5 COMMUNITY EVENTS
GENERATE OVER 100 PROJECT DESIGN IDEAS THROUGH A SERIES OF DESIGN WORKSHOPS

These Manifesto Principles resonated with intergenerational audiences to help set intentions for the project:

-  **RECKON WITH THE PAST TO BUILD THE FUTURE**
-  **BE HUMBLE LISTENERS WHO PRACTICE DEEP LISTENING**
-  **MANIFEST THE FUTURE**

CO-CREATE, LINK

Finally, BlackSpace redesigned the social and spatial program by offering space use ideas and building upgrade priorities that could enhance their community outreach and support Imanian’s gathering and worship desires.

Newly created church activity rooms such as a computer lab, arts and culture room, a garden, and church dance studio pique interest groups both young and old!

The groups focused on building external community engagement by collaborating with East Orange’s cultural, educational, and spiritual groups/organizations to gain additional operational resources.

A sanctuary stage for performance-based ministries that would improve the flow and flexibility for gatherings.

Modular sanctuary pews that reflected colors and textures that represent Black culture.



THIS IS A BLACK SPACE.

PARTNERS

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Rohk Studio • University of Orange • YFW Productions • The Henry Luce Foundation • and many community members, friends, and volunteers!