DESIGN FOR BEREAVEMENT
How can architecture be utilized to aid in the process of grieving?

Envisioning a new kind of funeral home on Lake Conne, at the Southeast edge of Alexandria MN.
Funeral services are commonly performed in a very traditional way which offers much comfort to the bereaved. The casket or urn is generally displayed at the front and the family and friends sit in rows facing the front. This arrangement is flawed because it stifles any engagement between people who are grieving together.

The chapel of this funeral home is rounded, allowing those who grieve to see others who are sharing the same feelings. Healing comes from sharing these emotions with others and the design of this chapel creates a sense of community and togetherness.

Our society approaches death in such a way that people have very little contact with a person once he or she has died. In many cultures the family does everything to prepare the body, offering the opportunity to acknowledge the death and begin the process of healing. Because our preparations are done by a funeral parlor, we have no contact with the deceased and it is even more difficult for the bereaved to acknowledge the death and begin the process of healing.

After services are completed, the family and friends walk up the second corridor to the reception space. A large, open space is necessary for those who are grieving to interact with each other in a less formal atmosphere.
THE BUILDING UTILIZES CONCRETE MASONRY CONSTRUCTION, FACED WITH STONE AS WELL AS STEEL FRAMING FACED WITH WOOD. THE ROOF IS SUPPORTED BY GLUE-LAMINATED ARCHES AND BOW TRUSSES. THE MECHANICAL SYSTEM IS SPLIT INTO TWO ZONES, ONE FOR PUBLIC AREAS INCLUDING THE CHAPEL, LOBBY, AND RECEPTION SPACE, AND ONE FOR PRIVATE AREAS SUCH AS OFFICES, EMBALMING ROOMS, AND THE GARAGE.

MATERIALS
- WALL MATERIAL: LOCAL STONE, IMPHAL WOOD SIDING, GYPSUM BOARD
- CEILING MATERIAL: WOOD DECKING
- ROOF MATERIAL: ZINC PANELS
- FLOORING: STONE TILE

OFFICE CORRIDOR

OFFICE RECEPTION AREA