

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ENHANCEMENT CASE STATEMENT

22 October 2018

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK:

Saint Joseph Parish in Amherst was founded in 1864. Our first church was located on Tenney Avenue in downtown Amherst and was in use from 1868 until 1956. It was later razed and today the property serves as parking for Amherst Public Library.

Our second church was in use from 1956 until 1970. It was then converted into our gymnasium in our Saint Joseph School building.

Our third and present church was dedicated in 1970. It will be 50 years old in 2020. It is the subject of this capital campaign.

WHAT WILL BE DONE TO OUR CHURCH?

Our current church was built right after the Second Vatican Council [1962-1965]. Those who designed this building tried to incorporate many of the new ideas from the Council. A number of these were executed well. However, built so soon after the Council, some liturgical ideas had not yet matured. Now, this many years later, there are some refinements that are appropriate so that our beloved church may continue to serve the Lord and the people of Saint Joseph Parish well for the next 50 years.

Rather than describing our plans as “remodeling,” we are actually “enhancing” the lines and layout of our church to better accommodate those who gather here to worship God and to emphasize that it truly is a sacred space.

WHY DO THIS NOW?

Anniversaries are very important to the people of Saint Joseph Parish. And our church will be 50 years old in 2020. With nearly a half-century of regular use, our church is showing the effects of its age. As our own residences need attention as they grow older, so too does “the house of the Church,” [or in Latin, “domus ecclesiae,” an ancient name for a church building].

Our church's 50th birthday is a significant reason for us to celebrate and to "enhance" our beloved church's functionality and beauty.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

We would be improving the appearance and the function of the church interior so that it might be devotionally even more inspiring and liturgically even more fitting. We would also be enlarging our gathering area so that it might become our main entrance, with adequate space for us to gather before and after Masses. And throughout this project, we are striving to be as compliant as we can be with ADA guidelines [Americans with Disabilities Act].

WHAT ARE THE CHURCH ENHANCEMENT COMPONENTS?

The Church:

- three accessible restroom facilities have been completed;
- re-lighting the church interior is already underway with LED fixtures;
- the wood ceiling to be treated and cracks in the white surrounding materials to be treated and painted;
- replacing the 20-25 year-old sound system;
- adding an "induction loop hearing system" for the entire church to assist those with hearing devices;
- installing permanent risers for the choir to have a dedicated music area;
- replacing the 20 year-old electronic organ and speakers;
- replacing the worn-out carpeting with marble or a marble-like material in the sanctuary, and with ceramic or ceramic-like material in the body of the church;
- extending the limited sanctuary space, and raising it all one level for better visibility;
 - the altar, ambo and presidential chair to be on the same level for ease of accessibility;
 - the tabernacle would remain at the same height and in the same location;
- concealing with a wooden screen the two sacristy doors in the sanctuary;
- two retractable projection screens permanently installed in the sanctuary;
- adding padding to the pews to make them more comfortable;
- re-arranging some pews so that people with wheel chairs and walkers could sit in the body of the church with their families;
- a wider aisle at the altar for a better flow for the Communion processions;
- remodeling a portion of one of our two "cry/quieting rooms" into a Reconciliation chapel for more accessibility and for privacy for those who need to speak more loudly when going to Confession;
- re-purposing the two small former confessionals into shrine areas with vigil lights;

- a baptismal area inside the main doors of the church to replace the small font currently in the gathering area;
- full on-grade accessibility at the front and rear entrances with automatic door openers.

The Gathering Area:

- push out the back wall to near the edge of the parking area to enlarge this currently small space, and make it the main entrance way;
- include a fully-covered outdoor canopy to shelter those who are being dropped off at the door, and provide space for them to be seated indoors while their drivers park their cars;

External Areas:

- the bell tower and the church steeple are damaged by the weather and will be tended to.

WHAT WOULD THIS CHURCH ENHANCEMENT PROJECT COST?

Here is the financial scope of this project:

- project estimate: \$1,098,280 [via Ziska Architecture]
plus 10-12% engineering and architectural fees
and plus 15% contingency funds to be available for unforeseen expenses:
TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$1,394,815
- money on hand from two estates, marked for this project:
\$476,455 [34% of the project cost is on hand]
- balance needed to be raised:
\$918,360 [66% of project cost still to be raised]

We have one-third of the money already in hand, with two-thirds still to be raised.

If additional funds are raised beyond this project, they would be used to attend to some deferred maintenance items on the Saint Joseph Parish campus.

HOW LONG WOULD THIS PROJECT TAKE TO COMPLETE?

We would block out six months for construction time, which could start when we have the full amount pledged and 50% of the funds in hand. We would begin with the church and when it is completed we would then move on to the gathering area expansion.

We are fortunate to have available Saint Joseph Social Hall and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in South Amherst for weekend Masses, and Nativity Church for funerals and weddings.

WHAT IS THE REDEMPTION PERIOD FOR OUR PLEDGES AND GIFTS?

This capital campaign would be done in-house, saving outside consultation fees. We would like to collect as much of the funds as possible during the first year. But parishioners are welcome to extend their pledge payments over 24 months.

We will not go into any long-term debt for this project. And collecting as much of the pledge funds as possible during the first year will save us interest on any short-term loans.

At the end of 24 months, our plan is to have the entire project costs paid for and no debt to remain.