

***“To keep a lamp burning, we have to keep putting oil in it.”
Mother Teresa***

Growing Our Traditions

Mother Teresa, the beloved Roman Catholic nun, was no stranger to tackling difficult situations! Her work was a model of how God’s gifts and grace are critical to Building His Kingdom especially in challenging times.

Her wisdom about a lamp’s light (His Kingdom) being made possible through a continuous source of oil (His gifts being shared) is especially important for St. Michael’s in this time of study and prayerful discernment for the future of the parish.

Feasibility Study

The Needs Assessment, completed in fall 2008, identified critical and growing needs of the parish. Faith formation, ministries and ministry support were being negatively impacted due to space limitations. With projected continual strong parish growth, the needs will continue to increase and services deteriorate.

The next step was to perform a Feasibility Study to identify realistic ways to meet the critical needs and turn dreams into reality. The work, begun in January 2009, would be done by a Building Steering Committee composed of parishioners.

The Study asked questions and sought answers on:

1. Better use of present space
2. Use of off-site locations
3. Potential temporary use of on-site trailers
4. Potential use of original pastoral center (brick ranch house next to picnic pavilions)
5. Potential expansion of meeting/ministry spaces

Activities

To answer the questions, the Committee performed the following activities:

- Chose two architectural firms of John Bock and Canova Peterson (same firms employed for the Phase II building project).

Preliminary work done to-date includes updating of Master Plan and some initial design work. This work enabled preliminary cost estimates to be done.

- Perform a financial analysis to consider the impact of expansion. Did the parish have the financial ability to handle an increased mortgage and increased operational costs?
- Visit several churches which had undergone recent expansions of education and meeting spaces. How much space did they have? How were the various spaces being used? As shared previously, St. Michael’s has considerably less space for education, ministries and ministry support when compared with the other churches.
- Meet with diocesan personnel to share on-going efforts and ensure diocesan requirements for expansion are met.
- Update, through formal presentations, various groups: Parish Council, Finance Council, parish ministry leadership, parish ministry support staff and Knights of Columbus, St. Michael Council.

Findings

The first two items (better use of space and use of off-site locations) were already being done and would continue to be done. It was noted that the use of off-site locations was increasing. The result of this practice (when used in excess) negatively impacts the ability of creating the desired ‘home away from home’ parish environment that is so desirable.

The use of on-site trailers was not acceptable due to high costs, environmental considerations and potential for non-desirable visual impact.

Plans during Phase II called for the removal of the original pastoral center. This was not done. Since that time, the building has not been maintained and is currently in poor condition. It is rarely used and is an eyesore for the parish and property. Costs to renovate are prohibitive. It needs to be removed so the surrounding property can be more effectively used.

The work involving redesigning and expanding the current spaces has taken the majority of the Committee's efforts. The updated Master Plan, elevations and floor plans were reviewed by the Steering Committee, the Parish Council, and the Finance Council. Pros and cons of design and purpose of the plans were discussed and debated and eventually officially endorsed.

Cost estimates were obtained from the plans. Based on the financial analyses performed, it was felt that the parish could realistically undertake a building expansion and redesign for education, ministry and ministry support needs. Consistent monthly collections have allowed for current mortgage payments and other operational expenses to be paid in a timely manner.

It was obvious at that point that:

1. The needs were critical and growing.
2. The available space, when compared to other churches, was very low.
3. The much-needed expansion could be handled financially.
4. The property (unlike many sister parishes) had the space available to build.

In essence, the time had come to move forward with plans for a building effort!

“Now, let us do something beautiful for God.”

Mother Teresa

A Building Plan was created and endorsed. It will provide needed space to help with:

- programs that have not been offered, scaled back or cancelled
- chronic lack of available rooms
- overcrowded space for ministry support staff
- severe lack of storage space
- common work spaces for special projects
- conflicts in scheduling liturgical events such as daily or special masses, weddings and funerals, fellowship events, meetings, retreats, and other parish events

The Building Plan

The following Building Plan is presented to the members of the parish for prayerful consideration and support:

1. Build a 17,500 sq. ft. two story structure in the space between the two education wings.
2. Extend the existing educational wing that faces Springfield Drive by 2,250 sq. ft.
3. Redesign the interior space of existing education wings.
4. Create an outdoor ‘community life park’ around the current amphitheatre and picnic pavilions. The enhancements would include a children’s playground area, a sports area (basketball, volleyball, etc.) and food preparation area (grills, etc.). Landscaping would include removing the original pastoral center.
5. Build a Columbarium (a holy, respectful and public resting place for the urns and remains of deceased members of the parish) on the north side of the main worship space.

Also included in the recommendation is a two story Community Center in the rear of the north parking lot facing the lake. The purpose of the Center is to serve medium to large groups and events such as CRHP and youth retreats, CARITAS, conferences, Knights of Columbus events, and various ministry meetings. Of special interest is that this space offers opportunities to rent/share space with neighboring community organizations.

What’s Next ?

The parish has the opportunity to “...do something beautiful for God.” Continue dreaming the dream, growing traditions and using God’s gifts not just to satisfy space needs but to Build His Kingdom better than ever.

There will be one additional written communication within the next couple of weeks and then a special invitation to attend one of the parish town hall meetings in mid October. Plan on an **exciting** time when the Master Plan, floor plans and artist’s renderings will be unveiled during the meetings. There will be additional opportunities to ask your questions, give your comments and get involved!

Please forward your questions and suggestions to the Communications Committee at
traditions@saint-mikes.org