

# Gathered in Your Name



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why is this project being considered?

Architecture reflects values. One of our highest values is to *enhance our parish community*, which requires the proper architectural space to make community gatherings easier. This need for a gathering space is reflected in most public buildings and many Christian and Catholic Churches. Three of the five Cedar Valley parishes have added in recent years some type of gathering space. Our community lacks such space.

### 2. Why now? Where did this initiative originate?

The addition of a gathering space has been under consideration for many years. When the *Rebuild My Church* project happened in the mid 1990's, an addition of a gathering space was considered, but the completion of both projects was deemed cost-prohibitive at the time. With the clarification of our parish's mission to be "evangelizing community," the issue of the welcoming place for others to come and share in the Gospel of Jesus was raised by our Pastoral Council in 2015. More concrete conversations have happened since then, both with parish leadership and with an increasingly larger part of the parish community.

### 3. What would the new gathering space be used for?

The space, as discussed in the rationale for the project, will be used for the gathering of the parish family, both before and after Masses, gatherings of families for sacramental occasions (funeral Masses, weddings, baptisms, etc.), for families with small children to "take a break" during Masses, as well as for meetings with parish staff and other parish groups. The new gathering space will be accessible to all persons regardless of physical abilities.

### 4. Isn't our church already accessible, since we have an elevator?

The elevator offers a degree of accessibility, but more improvement to the accessibility of our church building is needed. Those concerned with building accessibility note that full accessibility to a building would allow everyone to gather in the same primary gathering space. Another level of accessibility comes by having any steps inside the building where they are not subject to the dangerous effects of winter weather, as is envisioned by the relocation of the Mitchell Avenue steps in this project.

**5. What will the former Rectory, now the Parish Center, be used for?**

Guidelines from the Archdiocese recommend that the residence of our pastor ought not be in the same building as parish offices, to preserve the clear boundary between work and living spaces. With the move of offices to a new location, this building could be restored to the purpose for which it was built—a residence. We could also continue to offer guest spaces for seminarians and visiting priests, as well as offer some more permanent residence for recently retired priests who want to live in the Waterloo area.

**6. Why would we also want additional meeting spaces and relocated offices?**

During this last year, we converted the former unused nursery space into a meeting room. However, this remains the singular sizeable meeting room in our church building. All other meeting rooms are in the current Parish Center, and all require negotiating stairs for use. Many of our parishioners need fully accessible meeting rooms. Our current options are limited. Easier office staff accessibility and visibility allows us to better fulfill our mission to share the mission of Jesus.

**7. If the project were not done, how much would the necessary repairs to the Church steps, Parish Center steps, and accessibility to the Parish Center cost?**

We have not, at this time, received estimates to **only** replace the Church and Parish Center steps. However, parishioners with expertise in the construction industry provided us with estimates make the Parish Center accessible.

Making the Parish Center accessible would require significant changes to its front: landscape modifications, concrete, revision of existing columns, and ramping from the driveway to the front door. Estimated cost for this exterior work: \$60,000.

Options and estimated costs to renovate the interior including the above exterior work to provide accessibility is as follows:

- Option 1  
Main floor accessible for guests, front and garage entrances, widening doors, one accessible restroom, and minor modifications to the kitchen. No additional work will be done to the second floor. Estimated cost: \$95,000 - \$125,000
- Option 2  
Main floor accessible for continued use as office space and second floor for continued use as a sleeping quarter: \$145,000 (to install a chair lift and make a sleeping room and restroom accessible) - \$332,000 (to install a limited use elevator in lieu of a chair lift)

We do realize that keeping things as they are is not an option. Our nearly 75-year-old buildings are aging quickly and will require some major renovation. The front steps on both buildings are crumbling and will need costly attention. If our parish center remains as parish offices, out of justice, we will need to make some significant renovations to make them more accessible to all the members of our parish. Older spaces will need increasingly more maintenance, while new spaces will add more upkeep. In the end, however, *all must be welcome!*

**8. How much will the *Gathered in Your Name* project cost?**

We are in the development phase of the project. No final architectural plan has been established and no final construction cost has been determined. Our experienced architect, knowing the size of this project, has estimated that the project will cost somewhere between \$2.5-2.75 million, not including any modifications to the Parish Center. If offices are removed from the project, the estimated cost would be reduced by approximately \$315,000. However, steps would still need to be repaired and the Parish Center would need to be renovated to improve accessibility, at a total cost (as noted in Option 2 of #7) of \$145,000—\$332,000, plus the cost of step repairs.

**9. How will this project be financed?**

The project will be financed through a special capital campaign, with anticipated three- to five-year pledges. The Archdiocese will not permit us to begin the actual project until all required funds are at least pledged. We will not incur debt to complete this project. Just as with all our past campaigns, this campaign will require sacrifice by everyone to be successful. We are grateful to our ancestors who made the sacrifice for us. It is our turn to make similar sacrifices for generations to come.

**10. How could we think of an expansion when other parishes and Catholic institutions are either closing or downsizing?**

Whenever one part of the Body of Christ—the Church—suffers, all are affected. While we grieve the struggles of our sisters and brothers, it is the fact that, throughout the 20 centuries of our Church history, parts of our church have grown, even while other parts are in decline. Times and circumstances change - folks move from one place to another, needs of people change, and facilities naturally require updating over time. We must be ready, as has each generation before us, to respond to these changes, ready to provide for generations to come.

**11. Isn't this renovation irresponsible when our parish membership is declining?**

Just as many of our grandparents (or even parents) could not have imagined what would be the situation of our church in our day, we would not presume to know what the situation of the church for our grandchildren's generation will be. Only God knows the future. What we do know, however, is the promise of Jesus, who assured us that "the gates of Hell" will never prevail over the body of the church (cf. Matthew 16:18), a promise verified over the course of church history. This project is certainly a leap of faith, but we leap into the sure hands of God's providence and His abiding care and presence, wherever "two or three gather in his name" (Matthew 18:20).

**12. How can we be sure that such an addition would attract future members?**

A large body of research, particularly from our evangelical brothers and sisters, shows the positive effect of welcoming, accessible gathering spaces on church community. Of course, as noted before, only God knows the future. Gathering spaces do not guarantee a gathering. That said, without such space, gatherings will not happen.

**13. Will this project take needed funds away from other pastoral priorities of our parish, including our Catholic Schools?**

Church fundraisers indicate that donations designated for a special capital improvement like the proposed one are not necessarily in direct competition with donations made for operational expenses of the parish. With the proper project and a clear and compelling rationale, donors tend to donate towards such projects in addition to more general support for the operation of the parish.

**14. Why would this project be considered when both Cedar Valley Catholic Schools and St. Edward Parish are in debt?**

It is not correct to say that both Cedar Valley Catholic Schools and St. Edward Parish are in debt. However, it is important to recall that, while related in mission, the two are separate entities and have the separate financial obligations. In the case of Cedar Valley Catholic Schools, there does remain a debt from the construction of Blessed Maria Assunta Pallotta Middle School and the School Board is formulating a plan to address this. Regarding St. Edward Parish, we are not currently "in debt." In fact, we have significant savings invested in the Catholic Foundation of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. At the same time, our normal budgeting process has highlighted a recent noticeable reduction in the sacrificial giving of our parish family. Our Pastoral and Finance councils are currently strategizing how to address and reverse this trend.

**15. Won't the addition either destroy or damage the architectural integrity of our parish buildings?**

It need not be an “either—or” situation: we can make modifications even while honoring the architectural style of our buildings. Every effort will be made to preserve the beauty of the parish buildings balanced with the need to effectively serve our community.

**16. Will the addition adversely affect the beauty of the stained-glass windows?**

The proposed addition of meeting rooms and office space will affect the natural light for the stained-glass windows on the north side of the church. A combination of skylights and technologically controlled lighting will preserve the appearance of natural lighting on these windows and better protect them from the elements.

**17. Has the effect of this renovation on traffic flow been considered?**

Yes, our professional architect has considered the required width of driveways and the size of entrances that will be necessary to maintain the current flow of traffic. The “at-grade” driveway in the front of the church will eliminate the need for external stairs to enter the gathering space.

**18. Will there be an increase of handicapped-accessible parking?**

Yes, there is a plan to add approximately 12 spaces reserved for handicapped-accessible parking. The spaces will be added between the current Parish Center and the New Life Center, near the elevator.

**19. Will the parish “vote” on whether this project goes forward?**

Jesus' last words to his disciples were a prayer for unity: “Father, I pray . . . that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you” (John 17:21). We will not cast a vote on this proposal but will seek to reach a consensus on the project that will best serve our parish's future and the greater good of our members.