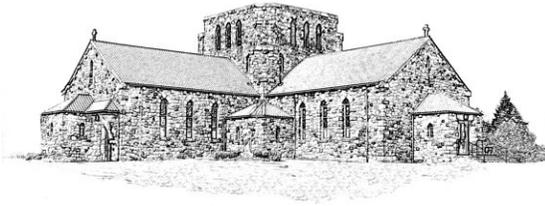


*You Are Living Stones ... (I Peter 2:5)*



**FAQ'S About St. Joseph Debt Elimination Drive –**  
*A Campaign for the Future in Honor of Fr. Mike Verschaeve's Service*

1) Where did the debt come from and to whom is it owed?

During the 1990's, St. Joseph Parish tripled in size becoming a large suburban parish of 3,000 households. Beginning in 1997 until 2003, renovation and expansion of the church and school created our beautiful campus that we use today at the expense of over \$10 million dollars. The mortgage is owed to the Archdiocesan Loan Deposit Program (LDP).

2) Why address the debt now?

With Fr. Mike's anticipated retirement in June of next year and with the recommendation of the Finance Council, it was determined that this was an opportune time to enter a campaign to retire the debt. With current monthly mortgage payments of \$39,000, or \$468,000 annually, the debt would be paid off in 2027. By entering into a successful campaign at this time, an estimated \$700,000 in interest would be saved. As a three-year pledge campaign of contributions above and beyond current Sunday Offertory giving, it is planned that the debt would be completely retired by or before 2022.

3) How has the debt impacted our parish operating budget each month?

Approximately, one out of every four dollars of parish income has gone to service the monthly mortgage payment to the Archdiocesan LDP. Because parish income is taxed at 7% by the Archdiocese, this has hampered the ability to reduce the principal payments as quickly as hoped. Very importantly, the debt has not allowed us to do all that we can do to build upon the foundations of faith that have been laid for us since the founding of the parish over 90 years ago.

4) How are we doing thus far in the campaign?

With the permission of the Archdiocese of Detroit, we began a "silent phase" of the debt reduction campaign in September of 2017. The campaign is being run completely through

the generosity of consultants Jim Walker and Michael Stafford, our chairman, Ryan Stacey along with parish business manager, Jill Barrett, and parish staff, Debbie Bloomgren, Suzie Fazzini and other staff members and volunteers. To date, **\$1 million** has been pledged by nearly 50 parish households. These include three-year pledges as well as one-time gifts. Additionally, more than **\$150,000** has been given by parishioners at large using the pink Debt Reduction envelopes over the past two years.

5) Will contributions be taxed by the Archdiocese of Detroit or used for any other purpose?

Upon granting permission to enter this campaign, the Archdiocese suggested that we use the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) to funnel our payments to the Loan Deposit Program (LDP). As a result, the Archdiocese does not assess the 7% tax on these funds. And since we have not hired a fundraising company and are administrating the campaign ourselves, every penny pledged or contributed is applied directly to the debt. The only expenses are for printing and mailing. Further, no contributions will be used for any other purpose by the Archdiocese than to service St. Joseph Parish debt.

6) Once the debt is paid off, what is the vision for the parish moving forward?

Here is a summary of some dreams that our parish staff has for the future of our programs:

- Enhance our Faith Formation and Youth Ministry departments to assist the faith development of our 800 students in the after-school Pre-K to 12 programs. This would include hiring a part-time Spanish-speaking person to work in Faith Formation.
- Increase the enrollment in St. Joseph School by increasing scholarships along with ongoing enhancement of technology all geared to the development of faith-filled and well-formed students.
- Provide greater support for families, for married couples, through counselling and enrichment opportunities, financial mentoring and support for the divorced and the single.
- Enhance adult faith formation by providing greater assistance to those yearning to grow in their faith. It is a dream to empower parents and grandparents to find ways to bring their children and grandchildren back to the faith.
- Outreach and service to the poor has always had a strong place among the members of our parish. With the debt retired, we could increase our Christian Service budget and do more to assist the needy at home and abroad and promote mission trips for our young adults.

- Enhance the beauty of our worship, music, celebration of the sacraments and the entire Sunday experience constantly requires resources as an ongoing priority.
- Our large and beautiful parish and school campus needs ongoing maintenance. We will be able to better meet the challenges to fully utilize our hilltop facilities as a beacon to the community for witnessing to Christ and our Catholic faith.

7) The face and reason for this campaign at St. Joseph Parish.

Retiring debt is a challenge to any parish or institution. From the beginning of his pastorate here in 2003, Fr. Mike has relied on the guidance of the Finance Council and their strong commitment to pay down the debt. He has been actively involved in the current project and sees its success as part of his legacy to hand the next pastor a debt-free parish. The upcoming retirement of Fr. Mike, however, presents a unique opportunity to honor his service and significantly move the parish forward in its mission to *Unleash the Gospel* in our area of North Oakland County.