

PLANNING DOCUMENT
SEPTEMBER, 2010

1THE HISTORY

Since its founding in 1930, Saint Agnes Parish has served the Worship and Sacramental needs of Catholics in the areas of Fort Wright, Park Hills and beyond. The original church was a wooden frame structure that was used until 1939. The current church began service in 1939. The annex section was added in the 1960's. The stained-glass windows were added at this time.

The same year the parish was founded, a parish elementary school was started. Staffed by the Sisters of Notre Dame, the original "school building" was a house on the property. Soon, a four room wooden structure was built, but the parish out-grew that building quickly. School classes had to be held in the church basement, the church sacristy, and down the street in Covington Catholic High School. The older (northern) section of the current school building was built in the 1950's, and a large addition including the gymnasium was completed in the late 1980's. In 2009, our school was awarded "Blue Ribbon Status" by the United States Department of Education. Providing a solid academic education in the midst of a Catholic religious environment has been an enduring legacy and is an ongoing commitment of our parish. The parish understands its school as one of its ministries and in fact it is its largest ministry.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Worship Life – Sunday celebration of the Eucharist is the centerpiece of our parish's Liturgical life. At present, over 1200 persons assemble at Saint Agnes for Sunday Mass each weekend. Daily Mass is also a vibrant aspect of Faith at Saint Agnes, with over 150 people participating each day. Through our worship we experience Catholicism's rich traditions in the Seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. Over 400 people are committed to an hour of Eucharistic Adoration each week in our Adoration Chapel.

Education – Currently, over 410 students representing nearly 250 families attend Saint Agnes School. The operation of the school has always involved the largest portion of the parish budget. We have over 70 children enrolled in our evening religion program for elementary and middle school aged children who attend public schools. Saint Agnes also provides support to families who home school. In addition, the parish also supports diocesan Catholic High Schools through its payments to the Diocesan Secondary School Fund. Because education in faith and our religion is also important for adults, we have a full-time director of adult faith formation and offer opportunities to learn and develop as Catholics at the adult level.

Outreach – Our parish has a very dedicated Saint Vincent de Paul chapter which ministers to dozens of people with material needs each month who are from outside our parish. Our parish Christian Service Committee ministers to those in need from within the parish by helping them financially, providing meals, hosting funeral receptions, and collecting food for area agencies. Several weeks a year our parish is host to the Interfaith Hospitality Network. During these weeks homeless families stay in our convent building as they work to put their lives back together. Parishioners help IHN with meals and babysitting.

Social Life – Our parish has a very active social life, including the parish dinner for the Feast of Saint

Agnes, the Big Blue Bash (fundraiser and social), Saint Patrick's Day Party, Holy Thursday Potluck Supper, Homecoming, as well as fellowship time with coffee and doughnuts after Mass every month, and more.

THE NEED OR THE PROBLEM

Saint Agnes parish has a long history of providing spiritual sustenance to the communities of Ft. Wright and Park Hills. Our parish heritage has cultivated a spiritual community reaching far beyond our boundaries through our school and church programs. However, just as our souls need frequent care and feeding to remain vibrant, so does the infrastructure of our parish. After more than 80 years, we've reached a critical milestone. Specifically, our school building and our church building require our help to keep them sustainable for current and future generations. To address the core infrastructure needs of the parish, Father Keene enlisted a committee to embark on a systematic and comprehensive review of current facilities identifying needs to bring them up to required standards. The committee has worked for more than 2 years enlisting professional engineering sources, available energy experts, facility administrators, and contractors. In short, the longevity of the parish requires that we make improvements to the infrastructure now in three categories: 1) Life Safety, 2) Environmental Health, and 3) Building Integrity Improvements and Renovations. The following is a description of some of the key needs:

Stained Glass Windows – Arguably, among the most striking traits of Saint Agnes are our stained glass windows. They help make Saint Agnes the beautiful church it is. After more than 50 years, they are in need of maintenance and repair to keep them from deteriorating further. Detailed bids are currently being developed, but at a minimum, caulking, soldering, cleaning and replacement of protective outer coverings will need to be undertaken to restore and preserve the quality of the windows.

Murphy Hall Renovations – Murphy Hall is central to parish activities as it is used for small wedding receptions, parish gatherings, and meetings. Among the frequent limitations of Murphy Hall are the lack of easy access as well as the lack of facilities and equipment necessary for hosting larger events. Murphy Hall was last renovated in the late 1980's and its décor is starting to show its age. With some renovation, Murphy Hall will be more attractive and capable of hosting larger weddings, parish meetings, community meetings, faith-based meetings, funeral receptions and many other types of gatherings. Specifically, the facility currently lacks appropriate equipment and space to prepare or keep any food warm. Rather than investing in full kitchen, we plan to equip the kitchen and bar area for "catered" events. Improvements to the restrooms and audio visual systems are planned to better equip the hall to host events. Finally, lighting and other cosmetic enhancements will improve the visual appeal of the facility.

Saint Agnes Elementary School – While the core principles of Catholic education are the same as when Saint Agnes was founded in 1930, many other things have changed. In the past decade alone it would be hard to overstate the influence of technology in education, both as a tool for learning and as a subject to be learned in its own right. As stated above, most of our classrooms were built in the 1950's. In 2007, a study committee was created "to make recommendations that would ensure a healthy environment at Saint Agnes School and that would promote positive attitudes and strong academic performance." In 2008, to assess the condition of the school infrastructure, a professional engineering firm and an architect were hired. They evaluated what renovations would be required to prepare the school building for another 20 years. The results of this work were shared with the parents of our parish school children during mandatory meetings in November 2009. The key areas identified to be addressed were:

1) The item found to be most in need of upgrading is the electrical system. Each classroom has only three duplex electrical outlets, less than most people have in their family rooms. As students learn with newer technologies, the need for more electricity in the classrooms has grown. Also, the electrical system for the entire school building is now running at full capacity. Increasing the overall electrical capacity of the school as well as increasing the electrical energy available in each classroom is a great need. Additional outlets are required to meet the learning needs of the students and to insure a good level of "life safety" by avoiding the hazards of overloaded circuits.

2) The study revealed the need for more and better fresh air circulation in the building. In interviews, the faculty, staff, and students refer to the building as being very "stuffy", resulting in drowsiness. At present, to alleviate this stuffiness, windows are opened to introduce the needed fresh air into the classrooms. During warm/hot days, minimal relief is achieved by opening windows since the outside air is warm and humid. On cooler and cold days, opening windows results in air that was heated by our boilers being exhausted to the outside requiring additional heat to maintain temperature. We need to add a Dedicated Outdoor Air System to provide the fresh, dehumidified and filtered air necessary for the school, thereby minimizing the use of windows, especially during winter. Also, replacing our windows would improve the efficiency of our building.

3) The current arrangement of our kitchen and cafeteria consists of a lot of outdated equipment and poor ventilation. Cold-storage consists in numerous refrigerator-freezers that line the walls of the cafeteria. They are noisy and raise significantly the temperature (and discomfort) in the cafeteria. A walk-in refrigerator-freezer, an improved kitchen ventilation system and newer food preparation equipment are needed to help our staff provide more healthy meals, which students can enjoy in a more hospitable environment.

4) While the school building is in very good shape structurally, the ground is unstable and the northeast corner of the building is sliding toward the ball fields. To address this, the engineers recommend the installation of a retaining wall.

THE PROPOSED SOLUTION

COST – \$5,282,325

Financially, our parish essentially covers its operating expenses from the offertory collection, tuition and some school related fund-raisers. The capital needs of the parish have been met by special gifts to the parish (particularly bequests from wills), past capital campaigns (the last was in 1999), and from rebates from the Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal (DPAA) each year. The rebates from the annual DPAA have enabled us to "keep up" with some of our smaller capital needs. The needs identified above require much larger amounts of capital, and so we have decided to explore the possibility of a capital campaign.

Stained Glass Windows – Our stained glass windows are very beautiful and add much to the aesthetics of our church. The work required to maintain them is not very noticeable until it has been neglected. At that point restoration work is very expensive. Doing restorative work and replacing the current protective coverings (which are old and in some places broken) with more state-of-the-art coverings will do much to preserve these artistic treasures of our church.

Murphy Hall – We believe Murphy Hall is a much under-used asset of our parish. We would like to renovate it and then use it more both for parish functions and as a source of revenue to the parish through rentals.

School Electrical Upgrade – The needed upgrades and improvements to our electrical service, both to the entire building and to individual classrooms are essential. Technology is a necessary part of education today, and all technology runs on electricity. Other recommendations in this document, particularly those related to air quality and the kitchen also require updated electrical service.

School Ventilation/Air Conditioning – Current classroom conditions need to be improved. Poor ventilation (Carbon dioxide, heat, cold, and humidity) results in lethargy and drowsiness and is an impediment to learning. A new ventilation system (and possibly conditioning) will significantly enhance the learning environment of our school.

School Cafeteria and Kitchen – Currently, our cafeteria has a large number of refrigerators and freezers lining the walls. We seek to replace them all with a more efficient walk-in refrigerator- freezer. Improved ventilation in the kitchen itself as well as other upgrades in equipment to store, prepare and serve food are also necessary.

General Improvements – There are a number of general improvements that integrate with the completion of the larger capital projects or they are required for better serving the welfare of our parish. These improvements include replacement windows for the school, security systems, interior and exterior lighting, fire alarm system, handicapped access parish-wide, exterior doors, loose furnishings, plumbing and fixtures, technology and general finishes and equipment.

OBJECTIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As a result of the successful funding and completion of these projects, the following objectives will have been achieved:

We will have restored the stained glass windows, preserving the artistic treasures and an important element of the church's spiritual architecture.

Saint Agnes School will provide a more inviting and comfortable learning environment for its students and make it more attractive to the parents of potential students.

Improvements made in the learning environment will help lead to improvements in learning.

Upgrades in the electrical infrastructure will help to better safeguard our parishioners and students through improved life safety elements such as the fire alarm system, sprinklers, emergency lighting and exterior lighting.

A renovated Murphy Hall will help to facilitate additional use of this space, thereby enhancing parish life as well as positioning the facility as an asset that can generate additional income from increased rentals.

The parish of Saint Agnes will experience a new and uplifting sense of spiritual and community growth.

As our founders before us, we will meet the future needs of the parish for generations to come.