

Pastor's Corner: It is amazing how quickly time passes by! Believe it or not, in July I crossed the milestone of being your pastor for five years, having arrived in 2016. It prompted me to pause and reflect upon the various accomplishments we have reached: replaced the roof on the church, replaced the rectory garage, replaced the roof on the rectory, replaced numerous HVAC units, replaced hot water heaters, painted the social hall, installed the crucifix in our sanctuary, survived a derecho and pandemic and most importantly, as a parish we have been good stewards of the resources entrusted to us and we have maintained a positive fiscal budget each year!

I have been blessed, because for the past five years, I have not had to ask for money one time. When you have seen a need, you have made the donations necessary to cover the costs. Many of you have signed up for electronic funds transfer (EFT), which allows you to contribute to the parish monthly or bi-monthly. Others use the donation button on our website, while some continue to use their parish envelopes or donate anonymously using cash. Many of you donate your time and talent. Regardless of how you tithe to St. Ludmila Parish, I thank you for your sacrificial giving AND for the faith and trust you place in me, our staff and our Finance Council, to be good stewards of your time, talent and treasures. **As a parish community, we continue to be a vibrant parish because of these gifts!**

Over the course of the past eighteen months, I have occasionally shared information about our aging facilities. The school was built in 1958, the convent (Parish Center) in 1961 and the gymnasium in 1984. During these months, there has been a committee made up of parishioners, who have looked at our facilities, our ministry and our future, while asking the questions, “Do they meet our needs today?” “Will they meet our needs of tomorrow?” “Are they efficient?” After careful consideration of the structure, the usage, the upkeep and the cost of updating and bringing these buildings up to code by becoming handicapped accessible for all parishioners, this committee also considered building a new facility.

What surfaced from these meetings and conversations include the following:

- The boiler in the school is original – 1958; when it fails, it will be expensive to replace
- The windows in the school are single pane and not energy efficient
- The school building, access and restrooms, etc. are not ADA compliant
- The building was built for a school, which no longer serves the needs of the parish or the future ministry we dream about
- The convent currently has 6 window air conditioners on the main level – not efficient
- It is not feasible to convert the convent to central air
- None of the restrooms are ADA compliant
- We currently have limited meeting room space for medium-sized groups
- We lack efficient space for a vibrant youth and young adult ministry program
- We need multi-purpose space that could be used for wedding receptions, funerals and athletic events

After careful consideration of estimated costs, it is projected that it would *cost approximately* \$9,000,000 to renovate and bring our current facilities up to code. In the end, we still have aging buildings that will require a lot of upkeep! This committee then started looking at other options. It was determined that to build a 35,000 square foot building that would be connected to the church and meet the current and future needs of the parish, it would *cost approximately* \$7,000,000. With this information, the committee has been inspired to continue to look at options and look to the future of the parish, with wise stewardship of our time, talent and treasure as the driving forces, while being energy conscious.

Why are we looking at a new facility? Future cost and upkeep of our current facilities was the first factor. It is our desire to have parish space that is handicapped accessible to all parishioners. The new facility would be energy efficient and would compliment the architecture of the church (Novak Design is assisting us). The building would be built to provide office space connected to the church; it would accommodate our Religious Education program and youth ministry. There would be an industrial kitchen to enhance our kolach bakes, space for bingo and additional accommodations, such as a multi-purpose space that could be used for wedding receptions, funeral luncheons and gym rental. We will have adequate space for meetings, ministry opportunities and graduation parties, baptismal receptions, family gatherings, storage, etc.

This weekend drawings are available in the gathering space. After meeting with the numerous committees, those responsible for the kolach bakes and bingo, and other ministries, these are the plans that have surfaced. We have been in constant communication with the Archdiocese of Dubuque and we are currently in communication with a fundraising organization that will be assisting us with securing the financial resources to achieve our goals.

Thank you to the numerous individuals who have provided input and guidance on this project. Visiting with various sources who know about St. Ludmila Parish, they have expressed their thoughts stating, "How exciting it is to be part of a parish that continues to look to the future, confident of the growth and vitality of the parish!" I look forward to hearing your thoughts and opinions, which will be shared with the planning committee! Please join me in praying for the success of this campaign for the future of St. Ludmila Parish! Sincerely, Fr. Kenneth J. Glaser