

ST. MARY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

CASE FOR SUPPORT

HISTORY

With its roots dating back to 1833, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception remains a foundational pillar of the city of Muskegon and the surrounding central city. Its prominent location in downtown Muskegon for nearly 200 years signals the Catholic Church's deep roots in the area as well as its ongoing commitment to growing the faith and serving local communities.

Throughout its nearly 200-year history, parish families and clergy have worked together to build and sustain the parish. From the first structure built in the 1850s to the current parish campus that serves over 800 families, St. Mary's, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, seeks to rededicate itself to living the Good News of Jesus Christ, primarily through worship, education, love, and service to all.

PLANNING – STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Muskegon's central city is alive with new developments, construction projects, and other investments that speak to the future vitality of the community. Parish leadership, under the direction of Fr. Kyle Kilpatrick, has also looked to the future to assess the most vital projects to enhance the worship, social, outreach, and investment in the parish role of being a beacon of hope – a "city of light" in the city.

In the spring of 2023, both St. Mary's and Our Lady of Grace communities as a parish undertook a comprehensive planning process that, with parishioner involvement and feedback, offered a focused approach to identifying and prioritizing areas of strategic importance to the future. Now identified as the parish strategic vision, it will become our "road map" that will guide our investments in the months ahead.

In summary, the plan of strategic initiatives is focused on three areas:

WORSHIP

Striving to become an even stronger, unified worshipping parish, and to make our worship worthy of the life of Heaven, for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls.

Specifically, the plan calls for the establishment of St. Mary's as the primary location of worship and parish life including:

- Moving the Saturday evening Mass to St. Mary's.

- Initiating additional opportunities for prayer, worship, and Eucharistic adoration.
- Complete the church's exterior renovation.
- Additional work to improve the church and sanctuary.

The plan also includes helping ensure the history of the Our Lady of Grace's campus remains and becomes a living legacy in the community. To celebrate its rich history and provide a genuine invitation for all to move forward as a united community, we have:

- Transitioned all worship and sacramental life to St. Mary's.
- Celebrated a final Mass in honor of Our Lady of Grace's rich history, community, and contributions.
- Held a welcoming dinner to the Our Lady of Grace community after the first Saturday Mass celebrated at St. Mary's showing the desire for unity.

EVANGELIZATION AND DISCIPLESHIP

As a Catholic people, we are called to form disciples of Christ in a vibrant Catholic culture and create places of intersection between the church and the world for bringing the Gospel to the people of Muskegon. The plan calls for the creation of additional opportunities for learning, discipleship, catechesis, and culture. Examples include:

- Parish/Community celebrations, feasts, and dinners.
- Young adult groups, date nights, and formation for married couples.
- Evangelistic/Catechetical programs, scripture studies, small groups, retreats, book studies, etc.
- Men's and women's groups, events with guest speakers.
- Additional staff to support new initiatives.

Utilizing the newly acquired Hennessy's Irish Pub, create a parish community center that includes administrative offices and spaces for fellowship, meetings, and outreach, including:

- Purchase and payment of the building – with diocesan support.
- Renovation and expansion of the space, including:
 - o Front and upstairs (along Jefferson St.) converted into parish offices.
 - o Additional flexible meeting space.
 - o Creating a welcoming space for a variety of parish and community cultural events.

Enhancing the use of our existing space

- Parking lot across Webster Ave. Space to be re-imagined for:
 - o Children to play

- o Youth, including sports, fellowship, and other activities.
- Updating Lourdes Hall to include classroom space for religious education.

CHARITY

We strive to be a parish committed to offering hospitality and witnessing the works of mercy in our community by:

- Ensuring the newly acquired Hennessy's building and renovated Lourdes Hall become places of welcome and hospitality.
- Formalizing the Hospitality ministry with regular events to welcome all people who come to Mass.
- Engaging with the broader Muskegon community and extend hospitality during city-wide festivals and events.
- Continuing to work towards even greater unity of our parish community.

Foster Works of Mercy by:

- Encouraging all parishioners to move towards practicing tithing (full 10%) as a visible sign of the embracement of God's gifts and gratefully sharing those gifts for the building of His Kingdom.
- Assessing all existing programs related to our service to or outreach to the needs of our neighbors, especially in terms of food and other basic human necessities.
- Developing ministries to meet unaddressed needs (e.g., food pantries, food trucks, soup kitchens, community gardens, etc.)
- Continuing our commitment to serve the Jackson Hill neighborhood surrounding Our Lady of Grace, including potentially maintaining a physical presence in the area.

STRATEGIC PROJECTS -- PROBABLE COSTS DESCRIBED

(Former Hennessy's) Irish Pub

Purchase	\$600,000
Renovation-Expansion <i>(Including Design Fees, Engineering, Permitting and Project Contingency)</i>	\$800,000

Improvements to Church

Interior <i>Stained Glass Flooring Lighting Sound System</i>	\$200,000
Exterior <i>Bell Tower and Crown Tuck Pointing Copper and Gutter Restoration</i>	\$545,000
Campaign Costs	\$75,000
Total	\$2,220,000

See what we are proposing and share your feedback!

1. To see architectural drawings (which will be available soon) to see conceptions of how Hennessy's will be transformed, see the [Strategic Plan page at the parish website](#), or scan this QR Code:



2. We want your feedback! An online survey has been developed that can be filled out anonymously (if you wish) to share your thoughts with us. You can find a link either at the [Strategic Plan page at the parish website](#) or scan this QR Code:

