

The St. Joseph Gathering Space Project

Construction has officially begun! The Gathering Space Project has been in the works for many years and **I want to thank all of you** for the years of planning and fundraising that you have already done to bring us to this point. It is not an accident that we will complete the project in this Holy Year of St. Joseph. It is so good to have our Patron praying for us!

The project marks the conclusion of two major building campaigns: Building on Tradition, begun back in the early 2000's, and Witness to Hope in 2017. Witness to Hope, our most recent campaign, had three goals: a Maintenance Fund of \$100,000, a new Rectory, and the Gathering Space. Our parish has completed two of those goals already by allocating money to the Maintenance Fund and completing the new Rectory. The Rectory turned out beautifully and came in under budget.

That brings us to the Gathering Space Project.

The Project will revamp the front of the Church by giving us **a car canopy for drop-off, adequate bathroom facilities** and lots more **space for events such as weddings and funerals**. It will help us to be even more welcoming to those we seek to reach and serve in Christ. The Gathering Space was initially estimated at \$1.2 million. Our actual cost came in at \$1.8 million, which includes a 6% builders contingency that we are hoping to partially recoup by the project's end.

Why the cost difference?

The main factors are yearly cost inflation from the initial estimate back in 2017, "Covid costs" from the current supply and material situation, and an unforeseen electrical service upgrade. DTE has to modernize our current electrical service whether we build or not. The infrastructure upgrade will certainly help us going forward, but was unforeseen when planning began.

How is the Gathering Space being paid for?

I am happy to say that we have over \$1.1 million on hand from Building on Tradition and Witness to Hope. Praise God! At this stage of the campaign, 100% of money given through Witness to Hope comes to St. Joseph Parish. We are expecting to bring in a little over \$400,000 on current Witness to Hope pledges, which leaves us with a loan from the Diocese for roughly \$264,000 to cover the difference. We are hoping to pay that loan off as quickly as possible, or ideally have no debt at all.

Here is how we can do this together:

1. If you have already made a Witness to Hope Pledge, we ask you to finish paying that commitment. Thank you so much for your generosity!
2. Maybe you are new to the parish or did not initially pledge during Witness to Hope, but would consider doing so now. If that is the case, we would love your support and you can do so through the parish office.
3. Perhaps you have completed your Witness to Hope pledge, but would consider making a further commitment. I fall into this group myself. I fulfilled my initial Witness to Hope commitment last year and after seeing our beautiful new Gathering Space Project, will be making a further pledge. Maybe you would consider what you have already done and continue it for another year or two? This can also be done through the parish office.

I am proud to be your pastor and excited to see our parish's dreams come to fulfillment! This past year I have seen firsthand the generosity of our parishioners. It has been amazing to be a part of this parish. May the Lord continue the good work He has begun and bring it to completion!

Fr. Gary