

## **Update on New Building Process**

Like every company or institution that is looking at a major construction project these days, the Holy Spirit Community is dealing with the “sticker shock” that comes with trying to build a new church and school. That has caused some re-evaluation of the phasing of the project, but the project continues to take small steps forward.

## **Realigning Gathe Road**

This spring, the parish entered into a contract with Rocky Mountain Engineering Services to perform preliminary site mapping, design for realigning Gathe Road and off-site sewer design. The city of Pocatello, meanwhile, is engaged in discussions with the private property owner in the Gathe Road area who might be impacted by the realignment of Gathe Road.

“Working with the city in the realignment of Gathe Road is the next logical step toward initiating construction at the site,” said Holy Spirit Pastor Enrique Terriquez. “Once Gathe Road is straightened, we’ll start work on running utilities – water and sewer – to the road. Gathe Road will be sort of a staging area – we won’t run the utilities all the way to our church and school site until we’re further along in the construction process.”

Representatives of Holy Spirit’s Building Committee, Finance Council and the Parish Council met earlier this year to discuss the status of the building projects and to make a recommendation to Father Terriquez on logical next steps. They concluded that working with the city to realign Gathe Road and running utilities to the road was an affordable next step that would increase the value of the parish’s 181 acres. Estimated cost of the road realignment and bringing the utilities to the road is \$1,177,676.50.

## **Updated Cost Estimates**

During the spring planning meeting, parish leaders were updated on the expected cost of the building projects. Site preparation, which includes bringing utilities all the way to the construction site and grading of the pad, are estimated at about \$2.75 million. Construction of a “bare-bones” church, which does not include accoutrements like furnishings or a sound system, was estimated at about \$4.2 million. Cost for a “completed” church building, which would include furnishings, sound system, etc., was estimated at \$5.5 million. That would put the total cost for a “completed church,” including site preparation, at about \$8.35 million.

Currently, the parish has cash and pledges of \$2.4 million from its capital campaign. St. Paul’s chapel has been placed on the market with an asking price of about \$1.7 million. The parish only intends to use about 40 acres of its 181 acres of property. It is uncertain how much the excess property is worth, but Holy Spirit paid just less than \$1 million for the 181 acres when it bought the land a couple of years ago. A raw estimate, then, is that the parish has about \$4.5 million to \$5 million in cash and assets, although there is no guarantee how much the sale of St. Paul’s or the excess property will actually generate. That leaves a gap of roughly \$3.3 million to \$3.8 million between parish assets and cost of a fully functional new church.

## **Closing the “Gap”**

A number of options for closing that “gap” have been discussed, including instituting a second capital campaign and hiring a full-time fundraiser, but no decisions have been made.

“We are committed to making a new church and school happen, but we recognize this is a long-term process,” said Father Enrique. “We ask for the continued prayers and support of our parishioners, as well as for their patience. A lot of people have put a lot of time, effort and money into supporting the vision of a new church and school. I truly appreciate their efforts.”

## **Why Are We Committed to This Approach?**

We recognize there are a number of newcomers to Holy Spirit Parish who don’t know the background on why the decision was made to build a new church, rather than to continue to utilize the three existing chapels. The issue was studied over a several-year period, and parishioners were surveyed for their opinions on the best way to proceed. The most prominent factors in influencing the study committee, the Parish Council, the Pastor and the Diocese that this is the correct approach were these:

1. The Vitality Project foresaw the possibility of having only one priest for the Parish and even with the ordination of six new priests this June and more to come there is still the likelihood of this in the near future. According to our Bishop, the Vitality Project is still viable and becomes the road map to be implemented. It is important to note that the Diocese still has only 53 diocesan priests (includes the six who were recently ordained and four working outside the diocese), as compared to 83 just 20 years ago, and that, on average, the diocese loses four priests a year to retirement or other causes. In the mean time, the number of Catholics in Idaho continues to grow. Even if Holy Spirit can maintain two priests, it is difficult when one of the priests is on vacation or out of town for the other priest to maintain the current Mass schedule at three different chapels.
2. The current chapels are all aging facilities that require a high level of maintenance, and are not as handicapped accessible as we’d like. Building a new, high-quality, energy efficient facility will reduce maintenance and operating costs, and meet handicapped accessibility codes.
3. Holy Spirit is a united parish that brings together all of the Pocatello/Chubbuck Catholic Community. Having one church building that can accommodate a larger segment of the parish community will further that sense of unity.
4. We need to begin a long-term plan to accommodate future generations and potential growth within the parish.