



Visioning for Future Facility Needs
St. Edwards Parish
Sisters, Oregon
2023 -2048

The following document was created to share with our parishioners much of the discussion and work completed regarding the vision for the future of St. Edwards parish with the primary focus on our facility needs for the next 25 years. Many options and ideas were considered and those were narrowed down through dialog and evaluation of the facts at many levels. A more narrowly defined set of options was presented to the parish council, finance committee, the pastor and finally the Bishop of the Diocese of Baker. These were finally approved in December of 2023 by Bishop Cary and were presented to the parish on December 16th & 17th.

Introduction:

Pope Francis set the tone for our work, when he stated through his apostolic exhortation in *Evangelii Gaudium*:

“Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: ‘We have always done it this way’. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities. “

The primary goal of gathering our committee was to sharpen a vision for how the mission of the church can be realized in the next twenty-five years and how our small church will effectively evangelize our current community and the next generation with the facilities we currently have and will need in the future.

Background

As we looked to our future particularly considering our facility needs, some of the big questions addressed were the following:

- What will the next generation of Catholics inherit from us?
- Since the Gospel will always be relevant to humanity, what evangelization do we need in this time and how do we prepare to evangelize with greater effectiveness in the future?
- How do we live and work together according to the faith to which we were called and given?

Throughout the history of the Church, parish structures have been adapted to serve the times and situations. While the “one parish, one pastor” model is still the most used, other models have developed through merging and clustering of parishes. The Diocese of Baker currently has 36 parish’s and 21 missions. All the missions share a priest with a parish. Priests are shared in Condon/Arlington, Heppner/Ione, LaGrande/Elgin/ Union and Dufur/Wasco. Four priests cover these 9 parishes. There have been many examples of mergers of parishes in the diocese over the years.

Projections from the Diocese of Baker indicate that it is likely more parishes will either experience a reduction in the number of priests assigned to their parishes or will share a pastor with another parish. As a result, we must rethink how the priest/pastor will fulfill his responsibilities while yet releasing the potential for the Church to grow in number and depth of discipleship.

Growth happens through becoming deeper in faith and wider in participation. When individuals know Christ personally and seek a deeper relationship with God, the body of Christ matures, and a natural result is multiplication. And when new populations come to Sisters and more people join a Catholic faith community, the body of Christ has wider participation with more needs, more resources, and more possibilities to minister to others. It is these challenges and possibilities we are trying to respond to now and as we look to the future.

There must be greater collaboration within the parish and geographic region to minister to the people of the City of Sisters and the surrounding area more effectively for the decades ahead. There were many different possible future options presented for consideration and for further refinement, even leading to other

additional possibilities. All these options were combined to create various scenarios. After 18 months of work the Future Facilities Committee recommended one option to address our future needs and this was approved by the parish council and finance committee. These recommendations were approved by the pastor and then finally approved by the Diocesan Facility committee which included the Bishop of the Diocese of Baker.

Priest projections and the future role of priests to shepherd the church.

We must rethink how the priest/pastor will fulfill his responsibilities while yet releasing the potential for the Church to grow in number and depth of discipleship. With increased responsibilities, priests cannot be expected to function in the same way as in the past. Their greatest role is their pastoral one so each parish will need to take steps to lessen the administrative duties of the pastor. We are in an era when fewer priests/pastors drive the necessity of embracing an appropriate role for the laity and incorporating their gifts. The dramatic rise in the numbers and percentages of permanent deacons and lay ecclesial ministers who serve on parish staffs illustrates this trend. Business managers have been hired to handle administrative duties and other ministers are hired to provide pastoral care, direct Catholic education programs, promote stewardship, and manage parish communications. Parish staffs are growing larger and more specialized, and as a result increasing the capacity to better harness the gifts of all parishioners to serve the mission of the Church.

HISTORY & DEMOGRAPHICS

St. Edwards held its first Mass on Christmas Eve in 1963. St. Edward was a mission church of St. Thomas until 1978. In 1983 the church was physically moved to its current location. In November of 2001 the garden addition was added.

Currently St. Edwards serves 178 families (2022) and has a seating capacity of less than 300. Average Sunday attendance is as follows:

- Average Attendance- St. Edwards
 - 2021 Winter 180 Summer- 213.

Demographics of Sisters

In understanding the Sisters Catholic Community, it is important to review:

- Anticipated population trends
- The annual impact of visiting Catholics to the parish

The town of Sisters had a 2021 population of 3,285. The last census reported a population of 2,038 in 2010. The population area of Bend and Redmond is now over 200,000 people. The population in the Sisters geographic area is approximately 7727 based on the 97759-zip code. The parish includes parishioners from the 97759-zip code but also parts of zip codes 97756 and 97703.

Sisters is a city that has vision, planning, and growth which presents an exciting future. The Sisters population is projected to increase to just over 6,000 or 100% by 2042. Currently approximately 14 % of Sisters residents are Catholic, which equates to an additional 420 Catholics by 2042. If 50% attend Sunday Mass that would increase the number of parishioners by a very large proportion.

Addition information regarding the Sisters comprehensive plan can be found at: <https://www.ci.sisters.or.us/community-development/page/comprehensive-plan>

Assumptions for the Facility Plan for St. Edwards

Overview of needs:

Immediate needs:

- Upgrading existing bathrooms to meet the standards of the Americans with Disability Act.
- Adding classrooms and meeting space which is very limited or non-existent.
- Replacing two of the three HVAC systems. (1 unit is 14+ years old and another 20+ years old)
- Installing sprinkler system to protect our current facilities and structures.
- Sound system upgrade and technology additions to church and activity center; add video streaming capability.
- Parking & traffic safety during peak Mass events at Christmas & Easter.
- Roofing repairs at Church driveway entry.

Long-term issues:

- Roofing systems may need further upgrade/replacement in 10-15+ years.
- Increase seating in the main portion of the church.
- Expand the size of our parish hall.
- Increase the square footage for the sacristy.
- Add a 24-hour adoration chapel.

How do needs change if our parish grows?

What additional needs are there for facilities for church as we grow over the next 25 years? Will our current facilities meet the demands of our parish over the next 25 years?

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The balance sheets for the parish are very strong with no long-term debt. Current assets for the parish far exceed current liabilities by almost \$600,000 of which \$90,000 is a building fund that was started over 15 years ago. Giving has remained strong with positive cash flows even through COVID-19.

LAND SITUATION

The parish owns 8.19 acres at the current location. The property runs south to north from Hwy 242 to the adjacent LDS church on the north. Lot 1 of our two has a 200' building set back from Hwy 242.

History of Committee Work

Father Sibi felt that St. Edwards needed to start looking at the short and long-term facility needs for the parish in 2022. After consulting with the parish council, Father Sibi asked Dr. Dennis Dempsey to chair a Future Facility Needs committee. Dr. Dempsey has been a St. Edwards parishioner for over 30 years and was an educator and school administrator for 47 years. He was also on the board of the St. Charles Healthcare system for 20 years and ended his education career teaching at the University of Oregon in 2022. Father asked Dr. Dempsey and his committee "to study the needs of the Catholic Church in Sisters for the best growth and development for the well-being of the Church." Father also asked that the Baker Deanery be consulted during this process.

The initial committee included the following parishioners:

Chris Ambrose, Craig May, Matt Cohen, Floyd Leithauser, Mike Berry, Hal Darcey, Gene Wellman and Dennis Dempsey.

The committee formed to address several objectives:

- 1) Gather information and data regarding population and growth in Sisters
- 2) Discuss how that growth affects the larger Catholic Community of Sisters
- 3) Determine if the original recommendations and draft drawings from 2006 were still viable today
- 4) Determine whether the parish should do nothing, remodel and expand the current facilities or build a new church and add additional rooms to the existing structure.

During the initial work of the committee, it was found that a building fund was started in 2006 and actual draft designs for a new church and meeting rooms were created by architects during that time.

Unfortunately, due to the turnover in pastors, parish council leadership, etc. these plans have stayed on the back burner for over 16 years.

When work was started in the summer of 2022 on the future facility needs for the parish, the committee identified facilities as a major issue. The committee wants to create a master plan for the parish that would guide us for the next twenty-five years regarding our facilities to meet the vision of our parish. The master plan would include a current plan on what we want to do soon and a long-term plan on what we want completed in 25 years.

The committee initially identified possible directions for moving forward to address the future facility needs of the parish:

- Remodel/renovate/expand existing facilities.
- Build new facilities such as a parish hall and/or a small new church.
- Do nothing except maintain and replace equipment as needed.

The committee collected and analyzed data and formulated multiple scenarios. The committee then recommended to the parish council and finance committee to contract with a local architectural firm to create drawings based on the committee's recommendations. The committee recommended the use of Cole Architecture of Bend which had merged with John Kvapil Architecture a few years back. This firm had done the original drawings for a new church back in 2006 for the parish.

Once these drawings were created by Kimberly Stroup of Cole Architecture, they were given to C&S Construction and their managing partner Matt Cohen to generate cost estimates. Matt and his family are parishioners of St. Edwards and offered to do this work at no cost for the parish, which was and is greatly appreciated. Matt included line items to capture soft Costs (Design, Permits, Engineering etc.). He also included allowances in each option for FF&E (Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment). Finally, he included a line item for 15% total project contingency on each of these to account for the conceptual nature of things. With this approach we now have budgets based on Total Development Costs and not just cost of construction.

The committee met in late January of 2023 to review the drawings from the architect and the cost estimates from C&S Construction. During this meeting the committee decided to rank all the options after looking at all the pros and cons to each scenario or option. These options were revised and updated multiple times between January and July.

The outcome scenarios were presented to Father Sibi and the parish council and Finance Committee in July of 2023:

When it was all said and done, the future facilities committee recommended to the parish council and finance committee a drawing and cost estimate to renovate and add to the current facilities. The parish council and finance committee agreed with this recommendation as did Father Sibi. This then meant we had to then send this recommendation to the Bishop for his approval. Father Sibi and Dr. Dempsey met with the Bishop in November 2023 with these recommendations and the Bishop asked us to go back and look at a cost of a stand-alone church that would hold 400 people along with the costs for some renovations to the existing structure. The architect made new drawings, CS construction created new cost estimates and Father and I took these back to the Bishop less than two weeks ago. After that meeting Bishop Cary approved St. Edwards to move forward on the original recommendation to renovate and add to our current facility.

So, what was it that the Bishop approved and was recommended to him by our parish council, finance committee and future facilities committee? In this recommendation, the following things would be completed:

1. Remodel our bathrooms to meet ADA standards.
2. Replace two of our three aged out HVAC units and add an additional unit.
3. Expand the parish hall by taking out the current storage area, store and office.
4. Add to the north side of the parish hall, several classrooms and offices.
5. Create a new main entrance to the church at the NE corner of the church and include a covered drop off area to the new entrance.
6. Install sprinkler systems to protect our new and existing structures from fire especially our expensive, beautiful carved statues. This work is also required by current building codes.
7. Expand the main church to the east to mirror the existing west side of the main church.
8. Build a new sacristy on the south side of the church behind the existing main altar wall.
9. Build a small 24-hour adoration chapel where the existing sacristy stands.
10. Install stain glass windows in the new addition on the east side of the church.
11. Provide whatever new or redesigned parking area is needed along with required landscaping.
12. Clad the rectory to match the new siding that would be installed on the outside of the church and hall when all the work is completed.

Our committee believes the cost to do all the work I just described will cost our parish about \$3.8 million. This is quite a bit of money but if we can raise the money and then do the work, the committee believes we will have met our current facility needs and create a structure that will meet our needs for the next 25 years.

As with all Catholic church ventures, we as parishioners will decide with our pocketbook whether we want to do this work or not. For a small parish like ours this is going to be a big lift. But this effort will not only meet all current needs but will also address our needs for the foreseeable future. Trying to do something like this can be a great challenge but it can be done. We as parishioners can expand and renovate our church and parish hall to meet the needs of our parish in the next 25 years. The future facilities committee hopes our fellow parishioners will agree to support our efforts to prepare our facilities now and in the future.