

***Growing our Faith* Capital Stewardship Campaign One-Year Update (March 2014)**

In just one year, the ***Growing Our Faith*** capital stewardship campaign has made a big difference in the life of St. Francis de Sales parish.

The contributions received so far in our three-year campaign have allowed us to achieve a key goal of any financial planner — eliminating debt. We have paid off our share of the mortgage on the Corpus Christi Center and longstanding obligations to the diocese. These obligations were sapping our annual budget, and the money previously allocated to debt payment can now be devoted more productively to the work of ministry.

With our financial obligations taken care of, ***Growing Our Faith*** is now funding much-needed deferred maintenance and technological upgrades on our campus. Some, like the new sound system discussed below, are noticeable. Others are less obvious, but equally necessary, like the urgently needed floor scrubber to keep our church building clean, modern HVAC controls, new light ballasts for the Multi-Purpose Room and an updated telephone system for the office. Future improvements include a new, more energy-efficient boiler (replacing the pre-fire boiler we now have), a new fire alarm system, and new carpeting and furniture for the heavily used Gathering Space and Multi-Purpose Room. As funds allow, we hope to replenish financial reserves for the parish and for the Corpus Christi Center to give us a financial cushion to handle unexpected expenses, and start tackling more extensive renovations that would create more meeting space and a dedicated home for our youth groups.

No improvement funded by the Growing Our Faith capital stewardship campaign may be more noticeable to parishioners, and more important to our worship experience, than the installation of a new sound system in our sanctuary. As longtime parishioners know, sound has been an issue at St. Francis since the new church was dedicated in 1998. The architectural features that gave the new church possibly the best acoustics for choral music in Holland muddled the spoken word as sound bounced back and forth off the angled walls. With “dead spots” around the church, many worshippers had to strain to hear homilies and announcements — or never heard them at all.

An answer finally came in late 2013 thanks to funds raised by the Growing Our Faith capital campaign. A \$34,000 sound system supplied by Central Interconnect of Grand Rapids has dramatically improved sound quality within the church building. Music director Phil Konczyk, who spent 18 months planning the purchase and meeting with potential suppliers, says the system relies on a series of easily adjustable “line array” speakers that can precisely target where sound goes — and where it ends — to avoid needless bounceback. Sound is now directed to the pews where it belongs, rather than the walls. “You take one step out of the way,” Konczyk says, “and the sound ends.” Even the choir, long a notorious dead spot, can now hear voices from the pulpit and the altar clearly with the new system, while the sanctuary’s beautiful choral acoustics were not compromised by the installation of sound dampeners or acoustical panels.

The new sound system has several other advantages, Konczyk says. The sound board can be operated remotely with an iPad, allowing Konczyk to make adjustments without leaving his spot in the choir. In addition, speakers have been installed outside to accommodate Palm Sunday and other outdoor liturgies and in the Multi-Purpose Room, which was previously

served by speakers that survived the 1995 church fire. Finally, the improved sound system has helped St. Francis start live-streaming Masses on the church website. All in all, it's a major step forward in allowing everyone to more fully engage in worship at St. Francis de Sales, thanks to the generosity of donors to Growing Our Faith.

All of this depends on your continued support for ***Growing Our Faith***. If you have made a pledge, don't forget to make your scheduled payments, whether they're on an annual, quarterly, monthly or weekly basis. If you never got around to making a pledge last year, or if you've joined the parish since the campaign began, it's not too late to become part of the ***Growing Our Faith*** effort. Please consider prayerfully how much you can give – giving sacrificially, not from your excess but from your first fruits for the work of furthering the mission of Christ in Holland-Zeeland. You can fill out a pledge card at the office or just pick up a ***Growing Our Faith*** envelope in the kiosk in the Gathering Space.

GROWING OUR FAITH STATUS REPORT

Goal: \$1,500,000
Pledged: \$1,134,392
Collected to date: \$649,341