



Frequently Asked Questions

What is included in this capital campaign?

In recent years, parish leadership underwent a strategic planning process to accommodate Saint Mary Magdalene's growth. The strategic plan calls for the eventual completion of a parish hall, a building to house a future school, a gymnasium, and a convent.

The first step in realizing this strategic plan is constructing a new parish hall, complete with classrooms, a dedicated youth group space, a large gathering space for meetings or events, and a kitchen. Completing this first will allow religious education and the ministries within Saint Mary Magdalene the space they so desperately need. Most importantly, it allows our existing worship space to be used for the sole purpose of serving God.

The Steier Group, a Catholic fundraising firm, conducted a planning study that indicated Saint Mary Magdalene was capable of raising between \$3.5 million and \$4.5 million in a capital campaign. Architects indicate that total costs for completing the new parish hall will be near \$3.5 million. Any additional funds will be directed towards church renovations.

Who participated in creating these plans?

This plan resulted from hours of prayer and discernment undertaken by Fr. Will and the rest of the parish leadership team.

Parish staff, pastoral council, and the parish finance council, along with Bishop Olmsted, the Diocese of Phoenix Buildings and Properties Office, various architects, and other pastors who recently built, or are in the process of building, new churches contributed in the many discussions that led to this plan.

This is a complex idea that required many discussions with the Diocese of Phoenix Buildings and Properties Office and architects. To avoid sharing incorrect or outdated information parish leadership preferred to wait until all details were defined before presenting the plan to the community.

When will construction begin?

Ideally, as soon as possible. As time passes, construction costs continue to rise. Saint Mary Magdalene leadership is currently working with the Diocese of Phoenix Buildings and Properties Office and the City of Gilbert to approve plans and receive the necessary permits. Once these steps have been taken, we'll have a better idea.

What are the next steps for beginning a capital campaign?

We are working with the Steier Group, the firm which assisted with our campaign planning study. Right now, we are in the preparation phase finalizing our campaign goals, recruiting and training campaign volunteers, and creating all of our campaign materials. After completing our preparations, we will enter our public phase. During this time, all of this information will be shared with you and the rest of the Saint Mary Magdalene community. The public phase should begin in March.



Frequently Asked Questions - Continued

How may I participate in the capital campaign?

Volunteers are always needed in a variety of fashions. If you wish to assist with fundraising efforts, any campaign-related events, or with any administrative efforts, please contact Christian Warneke, our representative from the Steier Group, at (402) 981-5219 or at cwarneke@steiergroup.com.

How may I support the campaign financially?

Each parishioner will be asked to prayerfully consider making a three-year pledge to our capital campaign. More information will be sent to all parishioners in March. Saint Mary Magdalene will work with you to determine the most comfortable means for you to make and fulfill your generous gift.

Why did we choose these plans, rather than constructing a new church building?

The original plan, developed in 2006, was to build a new church, capable of seating 1,800, on the south side of the property facing Williams Field Road. The estimated cost of a new church that size is at least \$10 million.

Additionally, this same plan called for the renovation of the facility currently serving as our Church to include the official parish hall and a small basketball court/cafeteria for the future school. Our architects estimated the cost of these renovations to be \$1 million- \$2 million.

That means, following the original plan, the total costs would be a minimum of \$11 million - \$12 million. To complete this project, the parish would need to take on an additional significant debt, further increasing the total project cost significantly.

Instead, the updated project plan agreed upon by leadership costs \$6 million-\$8 million and allows for a larger parish hall than the original plan. This plan also can be completed without incurring substantial debt, which means a significant savings in dollars for Saint Mary Magdalene. Parish leadership believes this new plan is more feasible and fiscally responsible.

Does the parish have existing debt?

In 2010, we took out a bond loan of \$4.1 million with a 7 percent interest rate to pay for the existing building. Last year we refinanced the loan and reduce the interest rate to 4.1 percent. This refinanced loan is now saving us nearly \$100,000 per year. As of Sept. 1, 2016, our remaining debt was \$2.99 million.



Frequently Asked Questions - *Continued*

What is our obligation to the campaign run by the Diocese of Phoenix?

The Diocese of Phoenix has agreed to allow Saint Mary Magdalene to focus solely on construction of the new parish hall and remodeling the church. In three years, after all pledges for Saint Mary Magdalene's current campaign have been collected, we must then satisfy our obligation to the Diocese of Phoenix's *Together, Let Us Go Forth* campaign. Our goal for the campaign at the Diocese of Phoenix will be determined at that time. As a part of the diocese's campaign, Saint Mary Magdalene will receive a portion of the raised for the diocese. These funds will be used to complete any outstanding church remodeling projects.

How will campaign information be shared?

Our goal is complete transparency and clear communication throughout this process. We plan to share all campaign-related information through the bulletin, on a dedicated campaign page on the Saint Mary Magdalene website, our social media pages, Flocknote, email, and through occasional mailings to your home. Be sure you register or follow all of these pages so you will have access to all of this information!

Once we complete the parish hall, will the renovated church building be large enough to accompany Mass?

Yes. The current church seats just under 1,000. The new church will seat nearly 1,300. As Gilbert continues its population growth, the Diocese of Phoenix will likely add more parishes (potentially one to the east and one to the south of our parish). If new parishes are established, some of our parishioners will transfer to them and reduce our parish population.

Once church renovations begin, where will Mass be held?

The beauty of this proposed renovation plan is that it can be accomplished in stages so that we can continue to use the worship space for Masses as much as possible. We are anticipating that the only time we will need to move out of the church for Sundays is when they install the tile flooring and pews. While this is happening (which will likely be toward the end of the renovation process), we will likely hold Masses in the new hall with some additional Sunday Masses.

What is the plan for the future school?

The proposed plan places Saint Mary Magdalene in a position to build its school faster than the original plan. The proposed new hall with classrooms would eventually be a shared building with the future school. The classrooms and social hall in the proposed plan would be utilized by the school.

Schools are usually built a few grades at a time with regular expansions until reaching maximum capacity. Our plan puts us in strong position to launch the school. In addition, the reworking of the master site plan to move the future school closer to Williams Field Road is of great benefit to the school. Especially since it moves the day-to-day traffic away from the neighborhood and gives the school greater roadside exposure.



Frequently Asked Questions - Continued

When will the new school be completed?

It depends upon the success of this campaign and the progress made on the parish hall and church remodeling. Construction of a new school will follow completion of those projects.

Is Saint Mary Magdalene building a new rectory? How does a new rectory fit into the proposed plan? Is this rectory a part of this campaign?

Yes, Saint Mary Magdalene is constructing a new rectory. No, the rectory is not part of the current campaign.

Currently our priests live in a small, single family home in the neighborhood across from the parish. When this home was purchased, Saint Mary Magdalene had 900 families and one assigned priest. We've grown into a parish with 4,800 families featuring three full-time priests, with a fourth in residence. The original rectory can no longer accommodate our priests.

Parish leaders have been watching the housing market in the neighborhood with the intent of purchasing a new rectory. Since 2012, only two homes capable of meeting the needs of our priests have entered the market. One was too expensive, and the other required serious repairs, which would have led to higher costs. At the recommendation of the Parish Finance Committee, research into the cost of building a new rectory on site began. This option will be less expensive than purchasing a large enough home to accommodate our priests.

Please note that we can replenish our savings by selling the current rectory. We expect to net a profit on this building equaling two-thirds the cost of new construction fees. Plans, independent from the current idea for a parish hall are underway to begin construction of the new rectory on Saint Mary Magdalene's campus. Once the rectory is built, the current rectory will be sold.

Since we have the funding needed to build a new rectory, we have begun plans to build one. Once those plans are finalized and the new rectory is built, we will sell the current house and put that money into the building fund toward the proposed parish expansion plan.

The new rectory will allow Saint Mary Magdalene parish to host discernment internships (young men discerning priesthood), summer seminarians and visiting priests.

How did we identify the funding for the new rectory?

For several years, Saint Mary Magdalene has saved money to construct a new rectory. These dollars came from surpluses in the parish budget, which are held in a general savings account, and donations to the Building Fund.



Frequently Asked Questions - Continued

What is the Building Fund?

The Building Fund is a restricted account providing support to any project related to fixed assets at Saint Mary Magdalene. This account has funded projects such as the new office building and the Saint Michael the Archangel Adoration Chapel, paving the parking lot, the installation of new church doors and new sound equipment within the church. The existing rectory should recoup at least two-third of the cost of the new rectory, with these funds being deposited back in the Building Fund.

I still have questions regarding this campaign, what should I do?

If you have questions relating to the campaign, you are welcome to contact the parish office at (480) 279-6737. You are also welcome to contact Christian Warneke, our representative from the Steier Group, at (402) 981-5219 or cwarneke@steiergroup.com.