



Rationale for “Gathered in Your Name”

As our parish approaches our 75th anniversary in 2020, we can and ought to look back to our past, celebrating 75 years of history and tradition here at St. Edward. Yet, the celebration of our 75th anniversary is also a profound opportunity to look forward to the future, assessing the work that still needs to be done to ensure St. Edward is a home for future generations.

One major area of consideration for the future is the state of our parish facilities. We have already come to the realization, through the Fall 2017 **Giving Forward: Annual Sustaining our Parish Appeal**, that our facilities are always in need of updates and repairs.

We also realize that our facilities were built in another era, which, though they have served us faithfully, reflect a different emphasis and focus than what is being asked of us by our mission to share the gospel of Jesus through evangelization. *Architecture truly does inform and reflect our values.* The way a space is built signals to us *the intended use of that space and what are our shared values.* Looking at our current Church facility, it is clear the emphasis when it was constructed was squarely on Sunday Mass, which indeed is the source and summit of our faith. At the same time, there is no adequate and accessible gathering space, which would allow for a sense that a person’s involvement at St. Edward is *not limited to attending Sunday Mass.*

A gathering space helps to provide an essential place of transition to and from the liturgy. The U.S. Catholic Bishops speak of the importance of such a gathering space in their document *Built of Living Stones*:

“The gathering space helps believers to make the transition from everyday life to the celebration of the liturgy, and after the liturgy, it helps them return to daily life to live out the mystery that has been celebrated.”

A gathering space reflects the truth that our worship is meant to flow out into living the gospel, to “go in peace, glorifying the Lord with your life.” Without this architectural transition, where we can gather the many aspects of our busy lives into one worshipping community, it could be tempting to experience the worship of God in purely individual terms. We desire for our Church facility to embody our mission to be welcoming a community of faith here at St. Edward. For this to happen more effectively, we need a place to gather before and after Mass as a community and family of faith, sharing fellowship in preparation to go and share the life of Christ in the world. While the Sunday celebration is paramount to our faith, it cannot and should not end there.

Therefore, our parish leadership has begun the process of planning a gathering space renovation for our

Church. This new gathering space, built out towards Kimball Avenue off the front of the Church, will serve several purposes:

- **Welcoming:** the space will serve as an open, hospitable place for us to welcome not only parishioners who attend Mass each week, but also those who may be joining us for the first time.
- **Community Gathering:** We do not gather for Sunday Mass as strangers; we gather as a community of faith. A gathering space will offer a place for us to gather with our brothers and sisters in faith before and after Mass.
- **Space for Families:** Currently, parents do not have many options for places to take their children if they “need a break” during Mass. This space will allow parents and children to stay connected to the liturgy if they have to step out.
- **Accessibility:** To get into the Church through the front entrance requires one to walk up ten steps, most of them *outdoors*. The new gathering space would be designed to eliminate the need for steps to get into the Church proper. While our church does have an elevator, outdoor steps (especially in the winter) are unsafe for all and are remarkably difficult to maintain for safe use.
- **Funeral hospitality:** There is little space available for visitations prior to funerals. The space currently available can be unsafe, due to the steps in our current vestibule. The new gathering space would provide a safe, open, and hospitable place during this sacred time for families.
- **Relocation of Parish Offices:** Our parish offices are the place where many of the interactions of our parish family occur. The current location of our office, in a building originally constructed as a residence for our priests, is increasingly an obstacle for such interactions. The multiple sets of steps can be an obstacle to accessibility to many. Even more, parish offices more proximate to the parish church (and with additional needed meeting rooms) will render staff more visible and available where and when our parish family gathers.

What about the Parish Center? This building, as mentioned previously, was originally designed primarily to be a residence. The proposed return of this space to its original purpose (pastor’s residence) will allow us to make the accessibility modifications to a residence that would not be possible, according to building code, if the building remains an office space. Furthermore, it would be the hope to offer hospitality and residence to some retired priests, to provide them support in their retirement and to benefit from their ongoing pastoral care to our parish.

As part of its design, every effort will be made for the new gathering space to preserve the architectural integrity of our current facilities; namely, by an incorporation of the pillar design, a distinctive feature in all of the facilities on our campus.

As with any building project, there are many steps in this process, which will be detailed as we proceed. In the meantime, we ask for your prayers for this project, and for our St. Edward parish family, as we not only celebrate 75 years of what has been, but with this project continue to answer the call to make St. Edward the welcoming faith home we want for generations of families to come!