

DAVID

Good evening.

My name is David McDowell and to begin I want to tell you briefly a little about myself and why I am here.

I am a proud grandfather of seven beautiful grandchildren and I have been a member of St. Mary's since April of 2012.

I was not originally Catholic, but became one shortly after the death of my brother Terry, who joined this parish family in April of 2011. Many of you may remember him as he attended this very Mass, sitting towards the back on the south side.

When Terry died, it was a shock. In my grief I was overwhelmed by the open arms extended to me by this parish. That fellowship inspired me to learn more about becoming Catholic, and a year later I became a full member of this parish family. This parish has continued to be a place of support and fellowship, particularly after the passing of my son Jon in August of 2013. I have made many good friends here and my faith deepens by the day.

In short, this church and its people have become a very important part of my life.

With that said, I have to echo something Suzi said which is, I had no notion of addressing you tonight.

I will also say that I was a skeptic regarding this building project.

However, after much prayer and consideration of the revised plan, I this project has my full support. I hope that some of you who may be sitting here tonight who may be skeptical, to prayerfully consider this project as I have.

I believe that God speaks to us, and we have to be open to what he is saying. That can be hard, but I believe God challenges us to become better than we are. This project is a challenge. Financially it is a challenge. The very notion that it is "Change"... is a challenge.

However, with every challenge, God provides us with a path.

In the coming weeks and months, there will be fundraisers for this project. Do your best to support them. If you can't contribute, volunteer and give of your time and help. At the end of this month, I encourage all of you to commit to this project and do what you can, with what God has blessed you with to do what you can to help see this project to completion.

I know that some of you have given much and some are still considering what they can do to give. I know that some of you cannot give much or anything at all financially towards this project. In the end, no matter your position, I would say, HELP- step up - do what you can - volunteer, support the fundraisers, and last but not least, pray.

This is a project that requires many hands and is ultimately bigger than a building. It's about us, as parish family. It's about being a beacon to others. Much like when this parish was a beacon to me when my brother Terry passed and a refuge of peace and support when my son Jon passed as well. This project is about our legacy for generations to come.