

Growing *More* in Faith Campaign

St. Thomas More Parish is well known as a very welcoming parish. In fact, we have reached a point where an addition to our current church is necessary to adequately welcome our growing parish family and we originally began a \$7,000,000 campaign entitled “Growing ***MORE*** in Faith.” The COVID-19 Pandemic largely paused our campaign efforts and as we began to pick up where we left off pre-pandemic we found that we were not immune to rapidly rising construction costs. We asked our architects to trim back the designs in an effort to cut costs so our new design trimmed down 150 seats leaving us with a seating capacity of roughly 1,050. Our initial target goal of 7 million has increased to roughly 12 million.

Our recent history

St. Thomas More Parish has expanded rapidly since moving to Coralville in 2009. When the parish opened in Coralville in 2009, 600 households were officially registered. As of Feb. 2020 we had nearly 1,400 registered households in the parish-as of August 2022, we have over 1,500 households registered.

The current worship space is designed only to seat 475 people so at many weekend masses an average of 50 - 75 people must go to the multipurpose room or to the lower level for Mass. On Easter Sunday, the two Masses were attended by 900 and 950 people respectively.

Census numbers show that the Iowa City metro, which includes Coralville and North Liberty, was the second fastest growing metro area in Iowa between July 2010 and July 2016. Iowa City's metro saw population grow 10.4 percent to more than 168,800. Clear Creek Amana Community School District recently indicated Tiffin Elementary likely will reach capacity by 2019, and North Bend Elementary will reach its capacity even sooner. Officials are considering building a new elementary near Tiffin Elementary and potentially expanding North Bend. The new Liberty High School is driving additional home building.

We must be prepared for future growth and look forward to Growing ***MORE*** in Faith with our Parish Community.

In his homily on the weekend of our parish picnic (August 27th & 28th 2022), Fr. Chuck updated the parish on the progress of our Growing More in Faith Campaign and the church building process. Here are some of the highlights:

- 1) Initial estimates from two separate contractor confirmed prices were rapidly rising, so we asked architects (Emergent-Novak Design) to revise their plans, cutting the design's square feet and seating space. They came back with a design that utilized more of the current space, cutting back some future Gathering Space and cutting seating capacity from 1,200 seats to 1,070.
- 2) Contractors tell us that even with the changes, our initial projected cost of \$7,000,000 is now projected to be \$12,000,000.
- 3) Our time frame for breaking ground will be adjusted accordingly. The Diocese of Davenport requires 60 percent of total funds to be collected prior to starting construction. We had already arrived at the 60 % of \$7,000,000, in order to reach our new goal, we would need \$7,200,000 to get started.

4) As of today, (August 27, 2022), we have collected about \$4.5 million with at least another year left for most of our pledges to be fulfilled. Our total current pledges and expected income is \$5.8 million. Of that \$600,000 has come from non-pledged gifts. Those came from estate gifts, visiting family members of parish members, and generous donors, some of whom have been worshipping on-line.

5) At least 50 households have already fulfilled their pledges and are continuing their payments to extend their pledge. We are grateful and want to encourage that from others as they are able.

6) We have hovered around 50 % of total parish members participating. We want to continue the All-in-4-STM campaign and will be reaching out to speak to anyone who may be waiting for a personal invitation.

7) Future fundraising events include the October 8 “Dance-More-A-Thon” and we hope many will plan to attend the dance and live and silent auction.

8) This summer our parish membership exceeded 1,500 households. Our continued growth shows the need to move forward with the campaign and not be discouraged.

9) God is faithful and if we all do our best to respond, God will grant success to our campaign and our new worship space.

10) We are all encouraged to keep praying, keep doing what we can, and keep moving forward--- Growing **More** In Faith.