

# CELEBRATING OUR FAITH, *Embracing our Future*



## Learn more about our sacred space and the planned renovations!

Our church was constructed as a temporary church, designed for a limited period of use. The longer-term plan was to design and build a permanent church where our athletic field is today. The nature of the temporary design did not accommodate certain elements which we are now able to. See below to learn more about the sacred space of churches and how our new designs respond to them.

### The Vestibule and Narthex

In church design, the vestibule and narthex originally served separate functions, though now they are often combined. The vestibule is a place apart from the body of the church and should dampen distractions from the world outside. The congregation first enters the vestibule and begins their journey away from the world and towards God's house. The narthex is considered a gathering space separate from the nave but within the church. It is placed immediately before entering the main part of the church. Our renovations will combine these and allow for a proper vestibule and narthex, distinguishing this space from the body of the church. Our patron St. John Neumann<sup>†</sup>, raising the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance, will greet all upon entry to the vestibule and narthex. The wall that distinguishes this area from the nave will feature two rescued stained-glass windows\*, the Presentation and the Resurrection and so will begin to focus our attention on the sacred space of the church. The new design will allow this space to transition into a much sought-after quiet room during Mass; permanent seating will be available together with four doors of clear glass to see the Mass (a monitor displaying the Mass and sound are also planned).

### The Nave

† **The nave** is the area of the church where the congregation gathers for the celebration of Mass and other liturgical rites. The nave will be brighter with white (or similar) wall color. Our existing windows will be more prominently featured with wood trim. The replacement of our aged A/C system will eliminate the use of the large white soffits, creating more space and sense of height in the church while managing climate control through a modern system. New pews will replace the current pews damaged by years of use and the treatments against COVID. Notably, new pews are more ergonomically designed. It is important to know that the cost to remove, refurbish, re-stain, and reinstall the existing pews is similar to the purchase of new pews. Our next design phase will address handicap seating.



† **The baptistry** will be appropriately placed in the body of the church, thus serving two purposes: In baptism, the catechumen becomes a member of God's family, the Church, accordingly the baptismal font is placed at the entry of the nave. However, its location after all enter the nave also serves as a reminder of our own baptism, the beginning of our new life in Christ. Considering these important aspects of baptism, the baptismal font should be constructed of durable material and permanently placed. Our renovated church will now place the baptistry appropriately in the body of the church rather than the vestibule. The baptismal font will be a rescued marble piece\* reflecting the permanence of baptism; it will no longer be moveable on wheels.

† **The music ministry** for the piano and cantor should not be located in the sanctuary as it is today. Thus, this ministry will be moved to the nave and become part of the congregation in the front left section of pews. This location will facilitate communication between the music ministry, the celebrant, and the congregation.



### The Confessional

The new confessional will redress the older format which is no longer desirable. Confessionals today offer separate doors for the priest and the penitent; our current confessional has only one entry/exit. The new confessional will also offer ample, appropriate space for those seeking a face-to-face setting for the sacrament of reconciliation and an appropriate option for those seeking an anonymous setting.

### Restrooms

Our present church struggles to support larger Masses and services with only one restroom. Additionally, our current restroom cannot support ADA needs. The renovations will allow for two restrooms and the ability to support those with ADA needs.

# THE SANCTUARY

*The sanctuary* is a place set apart in the church where the most sacred actions of the Mass take place. It is considered the holiest part of the church, representing heaven and the heavenly liturgy. It is where we find the altar, crucifix and the Body of Christ reserved in the tabernacle. It is desired that these elements be raised above the other areas of the sanctuary and church to draw focus to them and to elevate the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the sacrifice of the Mass. The altar and stand for the tabernacle, like the baptismal font, are a sign of permanence and thus should also be of durable and lasting material. The new pieces are marble, also rescued\*, and bear the sign of eternity. Our crucifix will be suspended above the altar of sacrifice. Behind the tabernacle will be three rescued\* stained-glass windows, depicting scenes from the Passion which are so closely related to the sacrifice we celebrate: the Agony in the Garden, the Scourging at the Pillar and the Crowning of Thorns.

The sanctuary also is the place for the ambo, where the Word of God is proclaimed. Additionally, the presider, concelebrant and deacon chairs, seating for the altar servers, and various other items to support the celebration of Mass are in the sanctuary.

Our sanctuary today is like a stage with one elevated area that contains all the actions of Mass; this is not desirable for the Liturgy. Additionally, we have a significant amount of unusable space: the lower large step, the flight of three steps from left to right and a final step and platform in the back. The resulting area is confining and limits the fullest celebration of Mass and other liturgies and cannot accommodate all the participants in some celebrations.



To increase the space in the sanctuary, the side walls will be straightened, the walls facing the congregation will move back to the next beam and the entire area except the altar will be on one level. Moving the walls will expose unfinished areas of the ceiling. To avoid installing a new ceiling throughout the full church, a new ceiling will be installed above the sanctuary. The front arches will allow the ceiling to be securely installed, however, it will be beautifully decorated to harmonize the sanctuary with the rest of the church.

The sanctuary is typically flanked by shrines to Mary and Joseph. The renovation will incorporate a shrine to the Madonna and Child and to St. Joseph. Both shrines will feature exquisitely carved white marble statues, both are rescued\* pieces.

\* From St. Charles Borromeo Seminary

\* From the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Chester (now closed)

