

Saint Michael Parish Capital Campaign Exceeds Goal

(Lincoln – SNR) - Saint Michael parish in south Lincoln is one step closer to a new church. The parish's *Next Step* capital campaign, which ended at the end of April, exceeded its \$4 million goal by over \$650,000. The *Next Step* campaign, a three-year campaign, is the latest in a series of capital campaigns with the ultimate goal of building a new church and junior high classrooms.

109 Year Effort

Since the parish's beginning in 1909 in the unincorporated village of Cheney, the parish has not had a permanent church. The first, small wood frame church was constructed with a grant from the Catholic Extension Society. That church, which originally did not have electricity or running water, was abandoned in 1985. A second church was then built across the street from the first church.

From 1985 to 2011 the parish celebrated Mass and the other sacraments in a small, temporary church in Cheney. In celebration of its centennial in 2009, the parish repaid the grant for the first church, with interest, to the Catholic Extension Society.

Anticipating the significant and rapid growth in southeast Lincoln, the parish purchased 14 acres south of the corner of 84th Street and Yankee Hill Road in December 2006. Following months of planning that involved hundreds of parishioners, construction on a new facility began in 2010.

In August 2011 the parish moved to its new location which includes a 52,000 square foot PreK – Eighth grade school and temporary worship space.

Planning and Fundraising Efforts

Fundraising efforts for the current school and future additions began in 2009 with the *Moving Mountains* campaign. That five-year campaign raised \$3.8 million. A follow-up, three-year campaign in 2011 raised an additional \$750,000.

Funds from those campaigns, plus a \$5.4 million loan from the Diocese's Investment and Loan funded the parish's current facility.

In 2014, Bishop James Conley gave the parish permission to run a combined capital campaign parallel to the diocesan-wide *Joy of the Gospel* (JOTG) campaign.

This five-year capital campaign, *Our Faith, Our Family, Our Future* (FFF), conducted in 2014/2015, raised an additional \$6.2 million, far exceeding professional fundraiser's expectations. Saint Michael was the first parish in the Diocese to pay its *JOTG* obligation - \$736,000 - in full.

In 2016 the parish reengaged the architectural firms Clark-Enersen and RDG to continue site planning and to begin conceptual planning for a new church. Based on these plans Saint Michael parish engaged a professional estimator to provide expected construction costs of a new church and junior high classrooms. These numbers then guided subsequent parish communication and fundraising efforts.

Planning for the Future

In December 2017 Saint Michael parish retired its \$5.4 million debt to the Diocese and continues planning for the future.

The Next Step campaign was a three-year pledge period campaign which runs concurrently with the 2014/2015 *Our Faith, Our Family, Our Future* campaign. The goal of the *Next Step* campaign was to reach three primary groups of parishioners: 1.) Parishioners new to Saint Michael parish since early 2015 or who had not made a pledge to the prior campaign, 2.) Parishioners willing to extend their FFF pledge an additional year to 2020 and 3.) Those who had paid their pledge in full to FFF.

Parishioners began soliciting pledges for the *Next Step* campaign in October 2017. More than 40 parishioners volunteered as campaign workers. Two generous parish families stepped forward with one million-dollar pledges each as lead gifts. The pledges were made as matching offers.

As Saint Michael parish sought to complete the campaign, in early April 2018, one of the original lead donors offered an additional \$200,000 as a two to one match for the campaign's last weekend on *Commitment Sunday*.

If parishioners could raise \$100,000 the weekend of April 8th/9th, that family would give the parish an additional \$200,000. That weekend, parishioners pledged more than \$254,000, bringing that weekend's total to more than \$454,000.

Among the gifts made by parishioners was a completely restored 1954 Chevy Bel Air. Both *Our Faith, Our Family, Our Future* and *Next Step* campaign pledge periods are planned to be completed in December 2020.

As a final wrap up to the *Next Step* campaign, pastor Father Kenneth Borowiak sent letters to parishioners who had not yet made a pledge asking them to consider a gift of a dollar a day over three years or a total gift of \$1,095. "Our goal in this initiative was to give everyone an opportunity to be a part of the effort to build a new church," Father Borowiak said.

By the end of 2020, Saint Michael parish expects to have 50% of the anticipated project costs for the church and junior high classrooms cash in hand. Total project estimates in 2020 dollars are \$13,250,000.

Campaign co-chair, Nick Cusick, applauded fellow parishioners' generosity. "I cannot say enough about the stewardship of Saint Michael parishioners," Cusick said. "In nine years, Saint Michael parishioners have pledged more than \$15 million for construction of our current facilities and the proposed new church," he said. "This is all the more noteworthy because at the same time parishioners are supporting a more than \$1 million annual operating budget and multiple other causes."