

**St. Mary Church
Huntley, Illinois**

Statement of Need

St. Mary Parish has a wonderful history spanning over 140 years of dedicated service to the Lord and to the people we serve. Our parish has a reputation for being welcoming, generous, and faith-filled.

Over the decades, we have grown from a small worshipping community to our current vibrant parish of approximately 5,200 households. Over 50 ministries and/or organizations enrich our parish life and provide numerous ways for parishioners to share their talents and serve one another and the larger community. The small group of individuals who met in John Kelley's blacksmith shop in 1870 to discuss the organization of our first church would surely be astonished and proud of today's church and parish.

Facilities are important to any vibrant faith community. They provide the means for us to live our mission and to build a faith community in the name of Jesus. Over 15 years ago, our parish of only 350 households provided the enthusiasm and energy to lay the foundation for the building of our current beautiful church. They had the vision to anticipate the potential growth in our area and the urgency to design and build a new church that would draw people. They looked upon this responsibility as an opportunity, not a challenge.

Today we have another opportunity to realize. Currently we do not have ample space for the large number of activities in our parish. We rent classrooms from Marlowe Middle School in Huntley for our Religious Education Program with its 1,300 students. The annual cost of rentals is approximately \$50,000. We have a small number of meeting rooms that are inadequate to accommodate our ministries and programs. Without a parish hall and kitchen we are unable to have pancake breakfasts, dinners, funeral luncheons or other large ministry gatherings to build up our community.

This Parish Ministry Center is as important to parish life today as was the church a decade ago. It will give us a place to gather, not just for liturgies on the weekends, but throughout the week – because “church” is not just a weekend experience. We need space to gather daily as a faith community – space for activities such as religious education, youth ministry, social events for all age groups, retreats, community outreach, service programs, meetings and parish offices for administration.

Parishioners have been involved throughout the planning of the Parish Ministry Center. Town Hall Meetings were held last spring and again in February. The Building Committee sought input through a parish survey. Our Parish and Finance Councils have been involved in the discernment of our direction, as has the parish staff. A feasibility study was conducted May 2011. Fr. Steve continues to provide updates in the bulletin to keep the parish informed, including presenting the building design to parishioners in June.

The proposed one-story Parish Ministry Center will be approximately 32,000 square feet. The

facility will be designed to complement the exterior of our church, with interior space configured to meet the practical demands of our Religious Education Program, our meeting and gathering requirements and parish ministries. We'll have ample storage space and large restrooms that are handicapped accessible. We're also examining ways to improve our parking lot design and the flow of traffic.

The Parish Ministry Center will house 17 classrooms which will be designed for multipurpose usage. The staff offices that are currently in the lower level underneath the Gathering Area will become meeting rooms and additional religious education classrooms. The Parish Hall will be able to seat up to 600 people at tables and will have partitions to allow for smaller gatherings. We'll also add a number of staff offices.

A small Eucharistic Adoration Chapel will be located in the Parish Ministry Center. We'll continue to have the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle in the church; and, in addition, in the new Eucharistic Adoration Chapel. With all the liturgies, funerals, weddings, rehearsals, and activity in our large church, having a small prayer chapel devoted to Eucharistic Adoration will be a real blessing for our parish because people will always have a place to go for quiet prayer.

The youth ministry room will be built to be "youth friendly" and provide a space that our parish youth can call their own. In order to make this area multi-purpose, partitions will allow it to be used as a place for religious education classes during our more crowded sessions.

What is the ultimate goal of this project? The goal is to create more ministry space so that parishioners can come together to grow in their relationship with God, to experience a Christ-centered community, and to be strengthened in faith and love to go forth as disciples of the Lord in the world.

This project is vital to our parish. It will greatly enhance our beautiful church and fulfill worship, educational, fellowship, ministry, and meeting requirements for an active, vibrant parish. With God's help and your prayers, volunteerism and financial support, we can make this happen and fulfill our campaign theme of *Building Community Together!*