

Build or Not Update **Worship Space Expansion/Renovation**

While renovating or expanding the worship space might not immediately appear to be necessary, there are many things that should be considered for improvement. These changes would positively enhance our community worship.

-Lighting — The recessed canister-style lights in church are problematic because of their old technology, which is why we often have lights blinking on and off. Even when the lights are working properly, they leave quite a few dark, shadowy areas, especially in the rear pews all across the back of church. There is little natural light through the skylight during the daytime, and even less through the two banks of relatively small stained-glass windows. There is no lighting on the Stations of the Cross. Correcting these problems may not be a simple task.

-Blessed Sacrament / Adoration Chapel — Having moved the Tabernacle to the sanctuary behind the Altar, we no longer have space for prayer/adoration outside of Mass. Ideally, the Tabernacle should be in an accessible space, with kneelers and chairs or pews as we had before. Providing for such a space behind the altar probably would require significant building renovation and expansion of the current building on the north side. The Tabernacle would be accessible/visible from its current place in the sanctuary as well as from the chapel behind it. Depending on the design, such a chapel could also be used as a daily Mass Chapel or for perpetual adoration.

-Expansion of seating capacity — While it may seem that we do not presently need more seating in the church, if we are looking to a future of growing (rather than shrinking) membership, evangelization, and addressing the trend of fewer and fewer priests to serve the needs of our parishes, it would be prudent to consider expanding the seating capacity. Most of the priests in our diocese are already doing a maximum number of weekend Masses; therefore, it may soon be necessary to alter the Mass schedule. That means we would need room for more people at fewer Masses. We might consider a plan for expansion so that the space would simply be more flexible to provide more room for larger events - like Confirmation/First Eucharist, or Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday Masses (where we currently have to provide extra seating in St. Joe Hall).

-Aesthetic/Environmental change — Our building and worship space have many qualities that are quite beautiful and conducive to our full, conscious, active participation in the Liturgy. Artistic elements favor elegant simplicity. But many parishioners have expressed concerns about the lack of bolder, perhaps more traditional art and architecture, even with regard to the outer appearance of the church building itself. They have said that “it doesn’t look like a church.” While these elements “of taste” can be difficult to agree upon, these elements would be included in any discussions about expansion or renovation.