

To: Parishioners of Good Shepherd Catholic Community
From: Fr. Michael J. Higgins, TOR – Pastor
Re: Questions about the Capital Campaign

As of this writing – November 25, 2022 – we have reached the midpoint of our Capital Campaign through the generous contributions of only 10% of our registered parishioners. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to those of you who have pledged – and encourage all who have yet to participate to take part in this endeavor. Working together we can reach our goal.

During this initial rollout of the Capital Campaign, I have received a number of questions related to two items listed in the scope of our project – the establishment of an endowment fund and the need for a new lighting system in the church. With this in mind, I welcome this opportunity to share my thoughts on these proposed projects.

Endowment Fund

The addition of an endowment fund as part of our Capital Campaign is in response to a recommendation of the Advancement Foundation of the Diocese of Fort Worth. The Foundation holds almost 200 different funds to benefit parishes, schools, cemeteries, seminarians, ministries, Catholic organizations and other purposes throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth. A list of the parishes and other Diocesan entities that already have an endowment fund can be found at: <https://www.advancementfoundation.org/endowment-funds-list> . Any donations raised for the fund as part of our campaign will be placed with the Advancement Foundation.

The use of monies generated by the fund will be used for the future care of parish facilities and grounds. The decision to set the goal of 2.6 million for Good Shepherd was arrived at after long discussion and discernment of the Parish Finance Advisory Council. It is hoped that this amount will allow Good Shepherd to generate adequate financial resources for future maintenance issues and/or beautification projects. In this way, we would not need to constantly turn to you for additional financial support when we need to address these issues.

As I mentioned in my presentation to the parish, the endowment fund will not be a “slush fund” for the pastor. It will be under the control and supervision of the Parish Finance Advisory Council and will be used only for the maintenance and beautification of the grounds and buildings that are part of the parish campus and the parish outreach center.

Church Lighting

There are two main reasons why we need to replace the lighting in the Church. The first deals with the aging of the current system. The lighting and dimming controls that we are currently using were installed in 2004 and are out of date. As with many other things that are that old, replacement parts are getting more and more difficult to find. The system controls 264 incandescent lights:

- 150 - 500 watt bulbs
- 104 - 250 watt bulbs, and

- 10 - 100 watt bulbs.

These bulbs are getting harder to find and are very expensive. For example, the 500 watt bulbs cost \$60 a piece. Also, if and when the systems need to be repaired or replaced it is going to be a challenge.

The second reason is financial. During an average year it costs the parish \$3,672 to replace burned out bulbs. In addition, due to the height of the ceiling in the church, when the overhead bulbs need to be changed we need to rent a special lift and an operator to have the bulbs replaced. Normally we have to do this three times a year. This costs us \$2,700 for each of the three days we normally need to replace bulbs for a total of \$8,100 a year. In addition, the parish pays approximately \$4,000 a year for the electricity needed for the incandescent lights. Added together, this means that the parish pays close to \$16,000 a year for lighting in the church.

An installation of LED lighting would require a high initial expense – but, over time, the parish would be paying much less. For example, an average American home has around 40 lightbulbs. Replacing all of those with LEDs could result in savings of \$300 a year on energy costs. As I mentioned above, we are currently using 264 incandescent bulbs. The parish would see a significant savings with a move to LED lighting.

As part of this project, we are planning to engage a lighting consultant to help design what we need in the church for both regular and accent lighting. We hope to have this project completed during the 2023 calendar year.

Please let me know if you have any other questions or concerns about the Capital Campaign. I would be happy to provide any information you would like.

God bless!

Fr. Mike, TOR