

Facilities Master Plan

St. Mary Parish
Ridgefield, CT

Our Clergy

Msgr. Laurence R.
Bronkiewicz, S.T.D.
Pastor

Rev. Russell Augustine
Parochial Vicar

Deacon
Jerry Lambert

Deacon
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Master Plan Committee

Vince Falotico
*Implementation
Lead*

Michael Cardi
Communications

Tim O'Connor
Finance

Joe Fossi
Construction

Through him [Jesus Christ] the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; in him you are also being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. --Ephesians 2:21-22

Rebuilding Our Lord's House

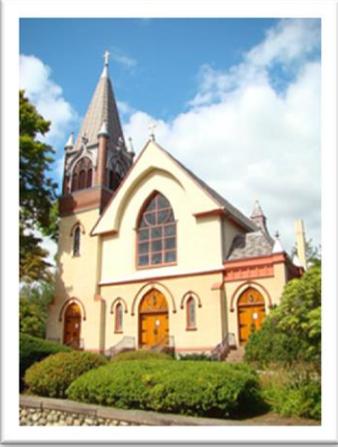
During our strategic planning process of several years ago, a significant number of Parishioners asked if our current facilities would be able to meet the future needs of Saint Mary Parish. To answer this question, we formed a Master Plan Committee of

Parishioners in 2014. With the help of Doyle Coffin Architecture, a Ridgefield-based architectural firm with substantial religious design experience, we have explored alternatives to better serve and grow our Parish. After a long and prayerful

consultation process, we are pleased to announce that one of the alternatives has been selected. In this communication, we will try to answer some of your questions about this exciting project.

What were some of the concerns raised about our existing facilities?

- Our Church, dedicated in 1896, and Parish Hall, are each too small to allow for more than a small portion of the 2,000 weekly Mass attendees to worship together at the same time. At Christmas and Easter, we need to use our Nancy Bossidy Recreation Center for Mass, and the size of our Church necessitates multiple First Communion and Confirmation Masses.
- Our current facilities provide no convenient gathering space either before or after Mass.
- Without an increase in the number of priests, further Mass consolidations may be necessary, and neither worship site could accommodate the number of attendees.
- We also lack meeting space for our active and growing Parish ministries.



Based in Ridgefield, Doyle Coffin Architecture has been providing exceptional architectural design to residential, commercial, religious and municipal clients throughout Fairfield County, New York and Greater New England for more than forty years.

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What does the recommended Plan include?

The Plan calls for building a new 750-seat church on High Ridge Avenue, facing down Catoonah Street. It would include much needed meeting space, a dedicated area for our Parish Youth Ministry, and an area where our families could socialize after Mass.

Is a church with that number of seats typical for a parish of our size?

Similarly sized parishes like St. Rose of Lima in Newtown, St. Pius X in Fairfield, St. Theresa in Trumbull, and St. Thomas Aquinas in Fairfield, all have churches in excess of 650 seats.

How many seats do the current worship spaces contain?

Our church seats 350, and our Parish Hall seats 375.

Is our Parish membership shrinking?

Our Parish has approximately 3,000 registered families since 2003, with attendance at Mass remaining relatively stable in recent years, at about 2,000 attendees per weekend. One of the most important goals of our building Plan is to foster the growth of our vibrant Parish and community spirit.

Why not just renovate and expand the existing church on the current site?

Due to existing building code requirements, it is difficult and costly to reconfigure the existing space in its current footprint, and it will not be possible to accommodate the required seating capacity for the new church. For example, the space between the rows of pews would have to be increased to allow for easier movement in and out. That would mean fewer rows of pews.

We have investigated the possibility of relocating and expanding our Church on the existing property, but the cost would be essentially the same as building a new church across the street. Moreover, it would not address the accessibility and safety issues that will be resolved with the new High Ridge Road location.

Will all Masses be offered in our new church?

Our new church with its increased capacity will accommodate all Masses, although our Nancy Bossidy Recreation Center still may be needed for Christmas and Easter.

What happens to our existing church?

It may be possible to keep our existing church to use for special events, such as weddings. However, this will depend on the findings of the financial feasibility study which will help us determine how much we can raise for the project as a whole.

How will this proposed Plan impact Saint Mary School and the Religious Education Program?

Our Parish Hall will no longer be needed for Mass, ministry meetings or fellowship space. Our Adoration Chapel will be relocated from our School building. Religious Education will continue to use our School classrooms. Our Parish Hall may continue to be used for some of our larger social activities.

What does the Town of Ridgefield think of this Plan?

The Town has indicated strong support for this plan because it eliminates the need for Parishioners to cross High Ridge Avenue, navigate a narrow sidewalk, and climb steps to enter the Church, all of which represent significant improvements with respect to safety and access/egress.

How much is this going to cost?

The final cost will be driven by the final design of the new church, and the feasibility study will determine how much we undertake now and what any future phases might include. Right now we are estimating a cost range of \$10-12 million.

What is the plan to pay for this?

The current plan calls for (1) selling some existing church property and (2) raising funds through a Parish-wide capital campaign. Our Parish will not incur any long-term debt to fund construction of a new church.

**AT-A-
GLANCE**

1881

Parish Founded

1896

Original Church Built

3,020

Number of Families

251

School Enrollment

7

Weekend Masses

350

Church Seating
Capacity

Through a host of Parish ministries and organizations, we strive to carry out our mission of living, learning, and sharing our priceless gift of our faith through our public worship and private prayer, education and service within our Parish and beyond.



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What property will be sold?

Our Parish currently owns two rental properties on Bryon Avenue that were purchased years ago in anticipation of building a new church. These homes, which have been rented to date, will be sold to partially fund our new church project. In addition, the land on which our Church sits (if we cannot keep the Church) and surrounding property will be sold.

How much will our Parish need to raise in our capital campaign?

Although the exact figure will be determined by our feasibility study, we are hoping to raise \$8-10 million in our campaign which will begin this fall.

Is \$8-10 million a realistic expectation?

Our Parish conducted a capital campaign in 2007 to eliminate its debt and was able to raise \$2.2 million. Although these are different economic times, we believe \$8-10 million is a realistic goal.

What can we expect next?

Our next step is our feasibility study with a series of interviews and focus group meetings, which we hope to complete by the end of June. Our Facilities Team will fine-tune our plans and design to a cost that reflects Parish support. A formal capital campaign would begin in the late fall of this year with the hope of commencing construction in the summer of 2018.

What if I have more questions?

We will be providing regular updates on our Parish website, Parish-wide emails, bulletin announcements, etc.

*Every Christian man and woman has received a mission”
to help build up the Church. Fulfilling that responsibility will require
“creativity in adapting to changed situations,” and require a “much more
active engagement on the part of the laity.” –Pope Francis*

