

Dear Parishioners,

November 12, 2020

As many of you know, over the past 18 months our Planning Committee has been working on a plan for our future. As you remember, we conducted a survey concerning the building of a new multi-purpose hall to expand our space for social gatherings and accommodate our Religious Education classes as well. In that survey, 80% of those responding said they felt we needed a new hall and 79% said that they would support it financially. With that in mind, the committee went forth working on a plan to build a hall that could be used for our growing needs.

Earlier this year, many months of discussion and work culminated in a plan for a new hall to be built behind our church. In working with a design/build company, details of a new structure were completed. I was so proud of the progress that our committee had made. In anticipation of presenting this new hall to our parishioners, colored drawings were made, and pricing was finalized for the new building.

Then in March, just as we were ready to present our proposal and begin funding, the virus took the wind from our sail! Because many of our parishioners have not been able to come to Mass, we decided to postpone our presentation until a later date. Recently, we reached out to a small number of parishioners to get their feedback and to see if they were willing to attend a presentation on what was being proposed. For the most part the responses were positive about the plan and wanting to learn more about it. However, more than a few respondents felt that the timing for this project was not good and a big question remains as to how many parishioners will be back to OLM once we get back to normal. In short, how do we raise money for a social hall and classrooms when we cannot use either?

We feel we have a great plan that will serve our parish for many years, and we feel that this building is needed given the crowded environment and growth of our parish. But for now, too many questions remain as to what our parish will look like after the virus gets under control. Therefore, we have decided to shelve the plans for now. When the opportunity arises again, we have the plans for a wonderful addition to our parish. But until then, let us all pray that we can get back to some semblance of normality.

That having been said, you may see the illustrations for our planned "St. Joseph Hall" go up in the narthex soon. You can see for yourself, just how beautiful it will be, once we can take it up in earnest. I want to express my gratitude for all those on our committee who worked so tirelessly to form a consensus, and to present this excellent plan. I still have hope that in the not distant future, we will need to once again revisit this plan, for OLM is a parish that has a rich future before it.

In faith,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Byrd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "F" and "B".