

**KEEPING SAFE AND SECURE
PRESENTATION TO PARISH – MARCH 2018**

Presented by Margaret Windle, Parishioner

I hope that
you are inspired when you enter St. Stephen Cathedral;
that you are inspired to pray,
that you feel you are in the presence of Jesus.

This beautiful church that we worship in is 92 years old. There have been many happy events here: Baptisms, Ordinations, Marriages, Reconciliations, Masses, rosaries, and millions of silent prayers. And there have been funerals and wakes.

92 years of them.

Our parish, St. Stephen, has such a rich faith history. It is hard to fathom now, but we began as mission outreach of St. Lawrence Catholic Church. The faithful gathered in each other's homes and welcomed Fr. Robert Abel who arrived on horseback to celebrate the Mass. That was in the 1820s. In a few years, we will be celebrating 200 years of the Catholic faith here. Yes, 200 years.

How blessed we are to be the recipients of those frontier families' dream of a Catholic community here on what they called the Yellowbanks. We have a responsibility, a duty, and frankly, *the privilege* to carry on that faith tradition so that future generations will continue to pray and celebrate the Eucharist here in Owensboro, here at St. Stephen Cathedral.

Several months ago, Fr. Jerry asked if I would serve on a committee which was originally called the Porch Committee. However, it has been renamed "**Keeping Safe and Secure**".

You may be aware of the ongoing deterioration of the porch and steps, caused primarily by intermittent freezing and thawing of the concrete.

Water seepage is also damaging the restrooms downstairs. Structural engineers have advised that we may have a few years of usefulness left, but the continuing problems cannot be corrected until we remove and rebuild the porch and steps.

Included in this project is the updating of security for our entire parish campus. There will be additional security cameras, and better cameras, and card key access.

The project is expected to cost \$850,000. I know this may seem a daunting number, but there is lots of good news that reduces the amount of money we still need to raise.

Firstly, we are grateful to Bishop William Medley for the Diocesan pledge of up to \$150,000.

Next, many of you continued to give after we paid off **Restoration and Renewal** in anticipation of a porch project. Thank you so much for your foresight and generosity these past two years. Because of you, the generous pledge from the diocese, pledges from Campaign Committee members, and our Pastoral Council members the total campaign goal was reduced to \$550,000.

But wait, there is more good news!

Since printing the campaign brochures we have received additional money and pledges. I am thrilled to tell you the amount now needed is \$255,000.

The actual work of removing the steps is set to begin July 1st. We are praying for good weather. It is expected to take 6 months to complete the project, as there are technically two sets of steps to be removed, and a 92 year old foundation wall that we do not want to disturb.

If you were not aware, our original steps had virtually no landing area at the golden doors and went immediately downward toward Locust Street. About 60 years ago, new steps were poured over the old to create the larger landing area beyond our entry doors and the steps that go north and south, parallel to Locust Street.

For those of you wondering about getting extra bathrooms, that is just not feasible at this time. We are hoping that the existing ones will be more usable once the water damage can be repaired and mitigated.

In order to make the steps and porch safer during ice and snow events there will be heating elements in the new landing and steps. And new railings will be installed, including center rails that can be removed for funerals.

And more good news; the Fire Marshall says we can continue to use the church during construction by using the elevator and the two parking lot entrances.

The bottom line is that we need to receive additional pledges of \$255,000 to complete this project. The pledge period is three years from January 2018, to December 2020.

If you have not already pledged, you will be receiving a packet in the mail: a brochure explaining the project with a letter from Father Jerry, a pledge card with a return envelope that you can put a stamp on and mail to the church office, or leave in the Sunday collection basket, and most importantly a prayer card.

Everyone, please pray for the success of this project. Prayer does move mountains. Then pray about what God is calling you to do.

Knowing that you love your parish as I do, I know you will pledge what you can. It is our sincere hope that every parish household will participate.

On behalf of Father Jerry, the parish staff, the parish council and the ***Keeping Safe and Secure*** campaign committee THANK YOU. And GOD BLESS YOU.