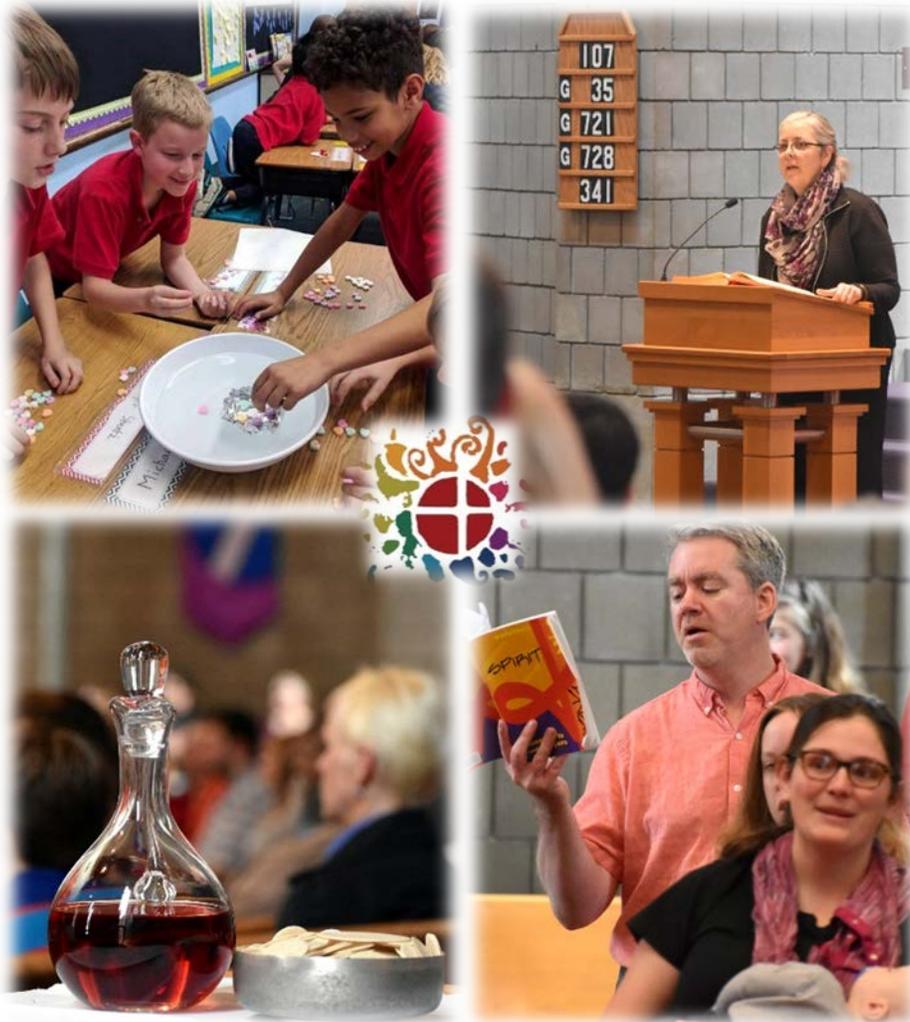




ST THOMAS AQUINAS CHURCH AND SCHOOL



Renewing Our Community Campaign

2017

An Exciting Opportunity

Renewal . . . from time to time, we all feel the need for it. Sometimes it is a matter of renewing ourselves physically or spiritually. Stress, fatigue, disappointments, and even our daily routine can cause our spirits to flag or our faith to falter. Sometimes it is a matter of renewing our physical environment. Our homes and work spaces can become dated, worn, and in need of repair. So it is with our church and school community and the facilities in which our community comes together.

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish is a diverse and welcoming community, committed to serving the will of God and living the gospel of Jesus Christ through prayer, vibrant liturgy, educational excellence, personal sharing, and social action. All are welcome to join us for liturgy and events.

Parish Mission Statement

St. Thomas Aquinas Church and School is embarking on an exciting endeavor to reinvigorate and renew the collective spiritual lives of our members while also updating and repairing our church and school facilities. With the ***Renewing Our Community Campaign***, St. Thomas Aquinas seeks to fund essential facility improvements and energy conservation measures aimed at making our facilities more reflective of our values and conducive to the sacraments, liturgical celebrations, ministries, faith formation, and community engagement that define us as a faith community.

We invite you to be part of this important endeavor, described more fully in the following pages, to renew our facilities as we grow as a community of faith, hope, and love.

A Dynamic Community

From our earliest days, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish has been a welcoming home for Catholics in Indianapolis. Our almost 80-year history has been dynamic—much like the diverse Butler-Tarkington neighborhood on the north side, in which our parish is located.

Founded in 1938 with traditional roots, we evolved in the mid-1960's, under the leadership of Father Raymond T. Bosler, to become a more diverse, socially-minded parish where people of different races and economic backgrounds worshipped and served together. Today, we continue to be an open, welcoming, and engaged parish. We are a strong, tightly-knit faith community of 500 households that integrates the strengths of our diversity and emphasizes social justice and active outreach to our neighborhood and beyond.

Although we are based in a distinct neighborhood, we attract parishioners and others from across central Indiana. We offer a range of ministries and programs that fulfill our mission and serve our community—engaging a multitude of people in expressing our Christian love for each other and our larger community.

Complementing our ministerial and sacramental activities is our award-winning school. St. Thomas Aquinas School, a core ministry of the parish, has provided a high-quality Catholic education since 1941. It focuses on developing students spiritually, academically, socially, and physically. Approximately 225 students in grades kindergarten through eight are engaged not only in academic and faith formation programs but also enrichment activities such as robotics, gardening, raising chickens, speech team, art programs, social justice and environmental projects, and community service. “We want the youngest of our kids thinking of other people and doing something—and finding that there is joy in that,” noted principal Cara Swinefurth. The school, like our parish, is intentionally inclusive and strives to remove barriers of ability, race, nationality, and socioeconomic status so that any child can receive a St. Thomas Aquinas School education.

Promoting Spiritual Renewal through our Physical Environment

Building off the strengths of our diverse, vibrant, and active Catholic community, we are launching the ***Renewing Our Community Campaign***, focused on renewing our facilities as well as reinvigorating our spirits and our faith. Parish leadership has identified crucial building needs that must be addressed over the next several years—needs which impede the celebration of the sacraments and the carrying out of ministry, faith formation, and community engagement activities. We will address these needs and promote greater energy conservation by taking significant steps toward being designated an *Energy Star Congregation*.

Our parish has a history of strong leadership in caring for God’s creation in all that we do. Pope Francis’ encyclical, ***Laudato Si’***, impels us to further our environmentally responsible actions: “Christians... realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith.” (***Laudato Si’*** 64). By renewing our facilities, we will lessen waste, decrease energy usage, and lower utility expenses. We will be the first parish in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to achieve the national *Energy Star Congregation* designation and one of the few religious organizations in the state to be so recognized—thus building upon our legacy as a leader in social justice by allowing us to become an environmental role model for other parishes and religious organizations as well as in our own homes.

School Distinctions

4 Star School (2013) • Blue Ribbon School (2005) • Green Ribbon School (2014), for meeting specific environmentally-conscious practices, procedures, and curriculum • **Robotics team** competed in 2016 Vex Robotics World Championship • **Diverse students**, representing 16 countries and almost 25% are not Catholic



As part of the ***Renewing Our Community Campaign***, we will seek to grow our community faith life and inspire greater Christian love for one another. In doing so, we will enable the many gifted spiritual leaders in our parish to share their faith for the benefit of all. We also will seek to promote family spirituality and a better understanding of the important roles of stewardship and philanthropy in family spirituality.

The ***Renewing Our Community Campaign*** seeks an investment of \$1 million over three years in our parish and school community, as outlined in the following pages. Should the campaign exceed the goal of \$1 million, the additional monies will be allocated to campaign components and/or related projects in accordance with a plan approved by parish and school leadership. This campaign will reflect our progressive spirit and protect the investments we have made throughout our nearly 80-year history. It will be an outward reflection of our values to both ourselves and the larger community. With this investment by members of our parish, we will renew our parish and continue to attract future generations to participate in our dynamic parish and school.

Campaign Components

1. Spiritual Renewal Fund

\$60,000

Growing in our spiritual lives is the reason for our existence as a parish and school. To foster this growth in our relationship with Jesus Christ, there are many tools beyond Mass and the sacraments. These tools—programs and activities—may be ones we can create and share with each other and the larger Christian community. They can include helping individuals at all stages of life, families and households, and various identity groups. They can also include finding deeper spiritual meaning in our many different service programs.

Your gifts will provide a financial base for spiritual growth activities and programs. The Spiritual Renewal Fund will help to spur creativity in our spiritual life.

2. New School HVAC Units

\$275,000

Our school boiler has reached the end of its useful life and is being shut down. The heating and cooling units in each classroom, office area, and hallway are old and need to be replaced.

Your gift will support installation of new, energy-efficient heating and air conditioning units in each of the classrooms, and in other spaces, to ensure our school's HVAC is modernized and will support a stable learning environment for our students for the long-term. Energy efficient units will also save on the cost of utilities—savings that can be used for other church ministries.



3. Other Energy Improvements for Energy Star Rating

\$135,000



Energy Star is a voluntary program by the Environmental Protection Agency which measures the energy efficiency of buildings, including churches and schools. Buildings that demonstrate a high level of energy efficiency are awarded Energy Star certification. While the HVAC upgrades will contribute to improving energy efficiency, there are additional steps we will take to help achieve the goal of being as energy efficient as possible. We will seal the building and properly insulate the heating and cooling ducts throughout the church, school, and parish center. Older lighting fixtures will be replaced with energy efficient lighting. Programmable thermostats and vacancy sensors will help to ensure that spaces are lit, heated, and cooled only when occupied.

As part of these improvements, appliances and equipment will be evaluated and upgraded as needed to maximize energy efficiency. This will specifically include upgrading appliances in the parish kitchen, which is utilized by many of our ministries and programs. Your support will supplement the generous \$50,000 raised at the 2016 Gala Auction for kitchen remodel needs, by covering the costs associated with purchasing new energy efficient appliances.

4. Parish Hall/Gymnasium and Computer Lab Roof Restoration

\$100,000

The parish hall/gymnasium roof is prone to regular water and air leakage. During heavy rainfall and as snow melts, water streams down structural columns onto the hardwood floor. This raises safety concerns, causes inconvenience during parish and school events, and requires regular vigilance at other times—and it has led to early stages of rust on the structural columns, which could cause significant structural issues in the future if left unchecked. The roof repair would also protect the expensive technology in the computer lab, located on the second floor.

With your support, we will replace the parish hall/gymnasium and computer lab roof, as well as install new flashing, to stop leaks and protect our building and equipment. We will seal the cracks and make these areas more energy efficient. We will also repair and restore the damage to the structural columns in the gym for the space to be enjoyed by our community.

5. Sanctuary Lighting and Electrical Systems

\$75,000

Due to the tall ceiling in the sanctuary, the lighting fixtures are hung high and do not cast sufficient light into the pews. This is a challenge for many parishioners and does not facilitate an inclusive, welcoming feel that matches our parish.

Your gift will help replace the current lights in the central part of the sanctuary with fixtures that are lower and closer to the pews. These lights will feature energy-efficient LED bulbs which are more efficient and last longer. The lighting focused on the altar will not change. We will also update the interior electric systems such as emergency exit lighting, circuits, and fire alarms. These investments will create a safer and more friendly and welcoming environment for all who enter our sanctuary.

6. Interior Upgrades

\$70,000

School students spend hundreds of hours each year learning in the classrooms. These rooms need equipment, furniture, and aesthetic improvements to create a great learning environment for our students. Similarly, our highly-utilized parish offices look worn and are not welcoming to parishioners, staff, and guests. Some areas of the school still cannot be accessed by those with mobility challenges, such as the library and computer lab, which can only be accessed by stairs.

We will invest donor support in new furniture and equipment for the classrooms, focusing attention on the greatest need in each room. We will paint classrooms and the parish office and make other improvements to the parish office that may include new carpet and office kitchen improvements. We will also build a ramp into the library so that all students, parishioners, and guests can access these spaces—regardless of physical ability.



7. Exterior Maintenance and Masonry

\$50,000

The exterior of our building has several general maintenance concerns that are isolated to specific areas, such as masonry, window leaks, handrails, and painting. Your gifts will help address all high-priority exterior issues, so our building is well-maintained and secure. This investment will help us be in the best possible position for future investment in other expansion and renovation projects.

These updates will enhance our facilities while removing barriers to accessibility, complementing the investment we have made in the elevator, and furthering our value of inclusivity.

8. Sanctuary Side and Skylight Windows

\$30,000

The tall, floor-to-ceiling windows and upper skylight in the sanctuary provide beautiful, serene natural light throughout the space and enhance liturgical celebrations. These 50-year-old windows are rusty and leaking. Repairing the windows and skylight will also reduce energy output.

With your help, we will repair and re-glaze the side and skylight windows to ensure that they will be weather resistant and protect our sacred space. We will also install new access ladders leading to the roof.

9. Ensuring our Future Fund

\$130,000

“Both our church and school buildings are critical to our outreach and to our continued diversity. They really need an update so we can move forward.”

Ed Delaney
Parishioner

In keeping with our history of prudent financial management and in accordance with our current fiscal policy, we seek to maintain a three-month operating reserve to protect ourselves from unpredictable income and unforeseen expenses. To achieve this, we rely on weekly stewardship giving and revenue from our school and fundraisers every year. As Mass attendance varies and major fundraisers like Sausagefest depend on good weather, our income can shift, so it is a challenge to maintain our reserves. Recent capital expenses have depleted most of our reserves. With your help, we seek to rebuild our capital reserve funds so that we can sustain our fiscal management practices and be prepared for unexpected future needs.

Renewing Our Community Campaign

1. Spiritual Renewal Fund	\$ 60,000
2. New School HVAC Units	\$ 275,000
3. Other Energy Improvements	\$ 135,000
4. Parish Hall/Gymnasium and Computer Lab Roof Restoration	\$ 100,000
5. Sanctuary Lighting and Electrical Systems	\$ 75,000
6. Interior Upgrades	\$ 70,000
7. Exterior Maintenance and Masonry	\$ 50,000
8. Sanctuary Side and Skylight Windows	\$ 30,000
9. Ensuring our Future Fund	\$ 130,000
10. Campaign Expenses	\$ 75,000
Total	\$1,000,000

Renewing Our Community

We at St. Thomas Aquinas are socially-minded Catholics who value every human being as a gift from God. We cherish our traditions, sacraments, and gatherings, and provide our children an education that emphasizes quality, exploration, openness, and our Catholic faith. We take seriously our impact on the environment and the need to sustain our community and world for subsequent generations. We combine our strengths and unique perspectives to work collectively to achieve the mission of our parish, to work toward our common values, and to serve one another and our community.

We are called to act to address the needs of our community and make sure our facilities are well cared for so that they can be a spiritual home for members of our community into the future and a visible sign of our parish's progressive spirit. Just as a parish we strive to help our fellow parishioners keep their spiritual lives in good repair, we parishioners must also help keep the parish facilities in good repair.

We ask you to prayerfully consider making a bold personal commitment in support of the **Renewing Our Community Campaign**. With your generous support, together, we will renew the spirit and facilities of St. Thomas Aquinas Church and School and give gratitude to God for the many blessings showered upon us.

"Stewardship is about our responsibilities to strengthen and hand on a community of faith that remains a blessing for ourselves and our families, as well as the local and global communities."

Father Steven Schwab

