



St. Stephen Parish

129 West Park Ave.

Niles, Ohio 44446

"Preserving our Faith, our Heritage and our Church."

August, 2016

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Stephen Parish,

In less than two short years, we will be celebrating the 165th anniversary of when many of our ancestors embarked on a historic effort – the founding of St. Stephen Church. By God's grace, this parish has flourished over the years, and I firmly believe that our best days are ahead of us.

While looking ahead to this joyous and historic time in our history, we need to not only look back, but more importantly look forward to times ahead in preserving our rich history and church for future families to come. Now is the time for us to once again unite and support the foundation and mission that spurred the founding of our beloved parish. Standing at this crossroad, we can see how current and future generations will benefit from the work that we are now challenged to embark upon.

After much prayer, consideration and due diligence, both the Parish Council and Parish Finance Committee have found the necessity to conduct a campaign to address many issues now facing our parish. We are calling this campaign **"Preserving our Faith, our Heritage and our Church."** This campaign is a serious and important challenge to all of us. We must pray for its success, lend our many God-given talents to its completion, and make equal financial sacrifice on all our parts to make it happen.

The financial goal for the **"Preserving our Faith, our Heritage and our Church"** appeal has been set at \$300,000, to be offered over the next two years, concluding on our 165th anniversary. While we still have an outstanding debt to the Diocese of Youngstown, which we continue to address with our weekly second collections, we must address more imminent issues that can harm the very structure of our parish church building.

Each person or family is asked to make an equal sacrifice — not an equal pledge— for our campaign. We are asking you to commit \$1,200 over the next two years. While some of you cannot make that large a sacrifice, there may be many of you who can give beyond that amount. Donating appreciated stock or property is an optional way to give. Such things as real estate, mutual funds, bonds and personal property are a few alternative ways to support the campaign. Another option is retirement funds and IRAs. You can possibly save paying capital gains and get a tax deduction. If you have questions about any of the alternative ways of giving to the church, please call the parish office for more information.

Enclosed with this letter is a fact sheet and a pledge card. When your pledge card is completed, please return it in the collection basket or mail to the parish rectory. Before you decide on the amount of your gift, please prayerfully consider the generosity that God has shown you and the importance of the mission we have been given to ensure our legacy of serving those who come to worship our Lord.

May God bless you for your prayers and support,



Rev. James Korda
Administrator



Frank Dillon
Parish Council



Charles Nader
Finance Committee

enc.

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**"Preserving our Faith, our Heritage and our Church"
St. Stephen Church Restoration Campaign**

The Need

As we are approaching our parish's 165th anniversary in 2018, we not only look back at our rich history, but look ahead to preserve the church that our ancestors built and bequeathed to generations that followed. As the years have gone by, time and the elements have not been kind to structures built back those so many years ago. As you have probably observed, we have interior walls that are crumbling due to moisture wicking in through the missing mortar on the brick. Due to the pressing nature of this problem, it was necessary to start the tuck pointing of the church while the weather allowed it. The Finance Committee along with Parish Council have obtained quotes from contractors who have a history of preserving churches like ours, to get our problems corrected to maintain our beautiful place of worship. In addition to this particular project, the funds raised will be used for the following projects with their estimated costs:

Tuck-pointing	\$90,000
Handicapped accessible main floor restroom	\$25,000
Repair and repaint interior moisture damaged areas	\$18,750
Exterior door restoration	\$20,245
Carpet replacement	\$20,000
Sidewalk repairs, new code-approved entrance ramps, parking lot expansion	Estimates pending

Questions and Answers

1. What is the amount of money that needs to be raised?
We are looking to raise \$300,000 to cover the costs of expenditures to correct the structural problems of our church. This figure will allow for a contingency for any cost overruns, and once the above projects are completed, if funds allow, we may also look at other projects.
2. When will the needed projects begin and when will they be completed?
As stated above, the tuck pointing has begun with a down payment made on the project. The other projects will follow as the funds become available.

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3. How long is the fund raising campaign?
The fund raising campaign will begin now and will conclude in 2018, the 165th anniversary of the founding of St. Stephen Church.
4. What amount of money is each parishioner being asked to donate?
Each person or family is asked to make an equal sacrifice—not an equal pledge—for our campaign. We are suggesting however, to commit \$1,200 over the next two years. While some of you cannot make that large of a sacrifice, there are many who can give beyond that amount. All gifts will be gratefully received.
5. Do I need to give this money all at one time?
If you do not wish to pay your pledge at one time, payments can be made over a one or two year period.
6. When is my pledge card/commitment due?
We ask that all pledge cards be returned by September 30.
7. Are cash pledges the only kind of gifts I can donate? Can I donate stocks or bonds?
Non-cash gifts of stocks, bonds, IRAs, real estate and personal property are other alternatives. Please contact your attorney or the rectory for details.
8. To what extent is my campaign gift tax deductible?
Any cash, check or credit card contribution would be classified as a charitable donation. For non-cash gifts, please consult your tax adviser to determine to what extent it is deductible.
9. What about our debt to the Diocese? Will this money go there? What are we doing about it?
Money raised in this campaign will be used only for restoring our church. Last year we were able to reduce our debt to the Diocese by \$21,245.05 through our second collections. Once the school sells, the Diocesan debt will be paid off from those funds. We do not know when that will happen, so for the time being we must continue to show our good faith through our debt reduction collections.

Finance Council members will be available after Masses this weekend (Sept 3/4) to answer any other questions, or feel free to call the rectory.

NOTE: We are in the process of implementing online giving for those who would like to make their donations by debit/credit card. More information on this process will soon follow in the bulletin. If you are interested in this option, please make a note on your pledge card.