

Welcome

St. John the Baptist Church Fire and Recovery

Q & A Session



Slide Speaker: Beth Otte

“My name is Beth Otte, and I’m one of the twelve members of the Building Committee. Thank you for being here. Tonight is about more than updates—it’s about honoring our shared journey, grieving what we’ve lost, and beginning to imagine what comes next. We’ve walked through shock, sorrow, and resilience together, and we continue forward with hope.

Thank you to everyone who submitted questions in advance. Your thoughtful input helped shape tonight’s presentation, and we’ve worked to incorporate as many of those questions as possible. This session is designed to offer clarity, invite your questions, and hold space for reflection. We remain committed to transparency and stewardship.

There are some questions we won’t be able to answer tonight—because we simply don’t yet know the answer. These include the origin of the fire, whether we’ll repair or rebuild new, the future design, completion and dedication timeline, and overall cost. What we do know is this: we will have a church to call home again.

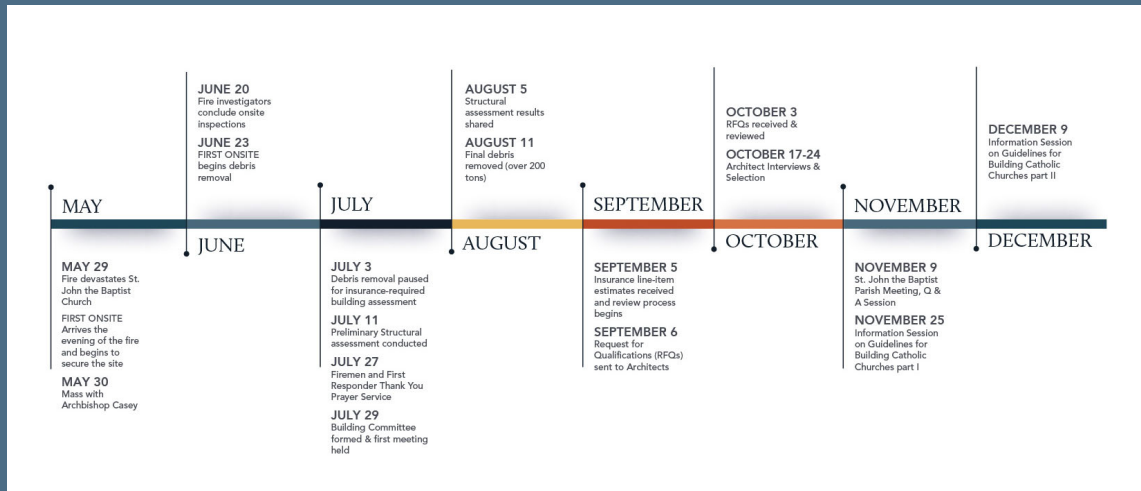
We’ll walk through where we’ve been, where we’re headed, and share updates on

donations received. Please hold your questions until the Q&A portion of the evening.

So let's get started. You'll hear from Father Ken, Jeremy Helmes the Director of the Center for Parish Vitality with the Archdioceses who will be our facilitator for the Q&A part of tonight's discussion, and Bill Maly who is the Director of Benefits and Risk Management with the Archdioceses. Bill will be walking us through the details of the church's insurance policy.

I'm going to hand over the mic and ask Father Ken to open in prayer..."

Timeline of Recovery Events



Slide Speaker: Father Ken

“Tonight’s handout outlines the major events in our recovery journey. As you’ll see, a great deal has happened since the fire devastated St. John the Baptist Church on **May 29, 2025**. Each step reflects the tireless work of parish leadership, the Archdiocese, FIRST ONSITE, insurers, parish staff, parishioners, recovery teams, and building committee—all moving together to stabilize the site, clear debris, assess the damage, discern future options and prepare for what comes next. We will talk about each of these steps as we move through the presentation tonight.”

Support From the Archdiocese

- ▶ Engaged structural engineers and recovery teams within hours of the fire
- ▶ Coordinated insurance claims across four categories: church rebuild, church contents, rectory repair and rectory contents. Mitigation is separate.
- ▶ Provided pastoral guidance, media coordination, and communication support
- ▶ Offered logistical and resource support during critical early steps
- ▶ Provided stewardship resources, an online giving platform and coordinated a special archdiocesan collection.



Slide Speaker: Father Ken

“The Archdiocese of Cincinnati has played a vital and ongoing role in our recovery efforts. From the earliest hours after the fire, they have provided logistical coordination, insurance advocacy, and pastoral support. Their self-insurance structure—managed through Gallagher Bassett and Sedgwick—ensures that our claim is being handled with care, expertise, and accountability.

This has been a true partnership. While we continue to lead locally, the Archdiocese has helped us navigate complex systems and ensured that our parish’s voice is heard at every step. Managing this process alone would have been incredibly difficult.

Their support has been both practical and pastoral:

- The Archdiocese arranged for FIRST ONSITE to secure the site immediately after the fire—preserving safety, protecting the integrity of the scene for fire investigators, retrieving sacred items, and beginning debris removal.
- Archbishop Casey visited the site the very next morning, offering Mass and prayers for the parishioners of St. John. Archbishop Schnurr visited later in the summer.
- Staff from Archdiocesan departments—including Risk Management, Property Management, Stewardship, Finance, Liturgy, and Media Relations—provided hands-on

assistance with the fire response and next steps.

- They leveraged Archdiocesan networks to connect us with experienced recovery professionals.
- They provided a temporary online giving platform at no cost, enabling donations from across the country to support our recovery. They also coordinated a special Archdiocesan collection for St. John the Baptist. That giving site has been assessment-free since day one, and the Archdiocese is working to keep it that way for as long as possible.

These contributions reflect a deep commitment to our parish and to the broader mission of the Church. We are grateful—and we are stronger because of it. We will talk specifically about the funds received at the end of the evening.:

Who is FIRST ONSITE?



- ▶ Started as a local business but joined a national disaster recovery and property restoration company
- ▶ Specializes in fire, water, mold, and structural damage
- ▶ Over 100 offices across North America

Slide Speaker: Father Ken

“**FIRST ONSITE**, based in Carlisle, Ohio, was brought in to handle the physical aftermath of the fire. Though they began as a local mom-and-pop business, they now operate with extensive national connections—connections that proved invaluable in our moment of need.”

FIRST ONSITE: Our Recovery Partner

- ▶ Security and site stabilization
- ▶ Coordinated crane work, fencing, and safety protocols
- ▶ Managed retrieval of sacred items and debris removal
- ▶ Enabled insurance assessments and structural evaluations



Slide Speaker: Father Ken

“They arrived on site the very night of the fire and worked closely with local staff and the Archdiocese to stabilize the structure, document the damage, and prepare the site for insurance inspectors and engineering teams. Their presence was necessary around the clock to ensure the site remained secure and that fire forensics were not compromised.

Because we accessed First Onsite through Archdiocesan channels, our standard \$10,000 deductible was reduced to just \$1,000—a significant financial relief during a critical time.

Much of their work has been behind the scenes, but it’s been essential to every step forward. They laid the physical foundation for everything that comes next—making the site safe, secure, accessible, and ready for discernment.”

Sacred Losses and Recoveries



Slide Speaker: Father Ken

“The fire took much—our historic structure, sacred art, archives, and the organ. But some items were saved, and their symbolism is powerful. The Tabernacle and Blessed Sacrament were recovered. Most of the vestments and sacred vessels were preserved.

The large bell has a crack and won’t resonate properly; it will sound like a dull thud. One option may be to melt it down and recast it in its original form. The two smaller bells appear intact but will be sandblasted to check for hidden cracks or structural weaknesses.

Window Creations has been engaged to assess and preserve the stained glass. The windows are being/have been removed and stored. Their team has expressed hope that many elements can be restored or replicated.”

Sacred Losses and Recoveries



Slide Speaker: Father Ken

“The organ console and electronics were destroyed, but approximately 1,040 of the 1,323 organ pipes remain undamaged, which hold significant value. The pipes were removed last week by Lima Pipe Organ. They were carefully cleaned with the help of parishioners and stored. They will be assessed to determine whether any can be reused in a future instrument.

There was risk of falling debris, especially in the choir area. FIRST ONSITE mitigated the risk by building a scaffolding system. The scaffolding was also used to remove the large cross remaining in the choir loft above the organ and stained glass windows in the choir loft.

It is questionable if the side altars can be reused, but it may be possible to recreate them in a new build. The beautiful main entry doors, frames and stained glass transom windows are being/have been removed, preserved and stored for possible use in the future church.

We are hoping to use scanning technology to preserve the design of the side altars,

document the entry doors and create molds of decorative detail on the tops and bottom of the columns that may be used in the new church. Once that is complete, we plan to recycle the steel in the columns.

In the rectory, heat and water have been restored. Decisions about the rectory's repair will be made in tandem with plans to repair or rebuild the church, once we are ready to move forward."

Building Committee

First Meeting: July 29, 2025 and have met bi-weekly

- ▶ Deep review of insurance categories and coverage limits
- ▶ Understanding the roles of Gallagher Bassett and Sedgwick
- ▶ Evaluating documentation and structural assessments
- ▶ Strategizing for a fair and comprehensive settlement of all church and content line items



Slide Speaker: Father Ken

“The St. John Building Committee was thoughtfully selected by members of the Finance Committee, Parish Council, Fr. Ken, and parish staff. It includes six men and six women, representing a wide range of professional expertise and liturgical backgrounds. This diversity ensures that our discernment is grounded in both practical wisdom and spiritual depth.

On July 29, the Building Committee had their initial meeting and has met every two weeks since. Their work is detailed and essential—unpacking insurance language, reviewing assessments, and preparing to advocate for a fair settlement. They have coordinated the architect search, interview and selection process. This group is laying the groundwork for informed, faithful decisions about our future that will include parishioner input.

It’s important to note, no design has been drafted. The Building Committee remains in the early stages of discernment, with its current focus on understanding our options as shaped by the insurance settlement process.”

Committee Members (with contact information) include:

Michelle Ashman: 419-852-0784

Eric Eyink: 419-305-9129

Beck Fullenkamp: 567-644-2581

Gary Hartings: 419-953-0728

Dave Heckman: 419-953-2412

Todd Heitkamp: 419-953-1868

Beth Otte: 419-302-4724

Maria Rethman: 567-644-6442

Kent Shaner: 419-733-4403

Jean Thobe: 419-305-6808

Mitch Thobe: 419-305-9951

Lynn Wolters: 419-305-9849

Structural Integrity of St. John the Baptist Church



- ▶ Foundation & Floor System
- ▶ Main Wall Structures
- ▶ Bell Tower
- ▶ General Structural Notes
- ▶ Infrastructure

*Full Structural report available on the St. John Fire Recovery blog

Slide Speaker: Father Ken

“A structural assessment of St. John the Baptist Church was completed by Mote & Associates. The report is broken down into 5 sections: Foundation & Floor System, Main Wall Structures, Bell Tower, General Structural Notes, and Infrastructure. For tonight, I’m going to focus on the Main Wall Structures and Bell Tower Sections. You can read the full report on the St. John Recovery website.”

Structural Integrity of St. John the Baptist Church

- Main Wall Structures

- ▶ NW sacristy: severely damaged, nearly fully burned
- ▶ NE sacristy: minimal damage
- ▶ South entry and choir loft: structurally sound
- ▶ Top portions of all walls weakened due to heat and water shock
- ▶ Brick and mortar at higher elevations show thermal expansion damage
- ▶ Walls lack structural tie support due to roof loss

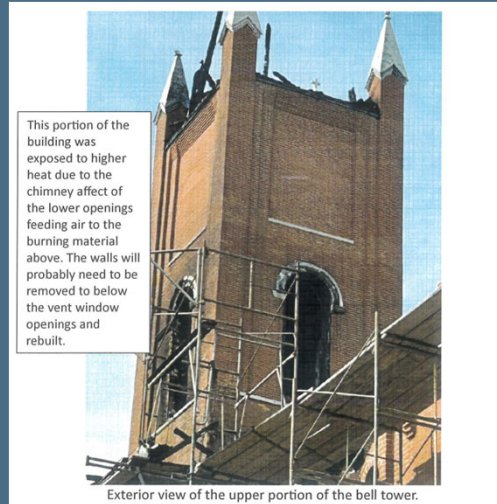
Slide Speaker: Father Ken

“While parts of the church remain stable, a significant portion of the walls have been weakened due to intense heat and water shock, showing signs of severe damage to bricks and mortar joints. To become structurally sound, these walls would need to be disassembled from the top down until a section is reached that has no fire damage and then rebuilt to the original height. It is estimated this would include 10-12 feet or more of the East and West walls and most of the Northwest wall, including all of the Northwest work sacristy.”

Structural Integrity of St. John the Baptist Church

- Bell Tower

- ▶ Chimney effect accelerated burn
- ▶ Wooden structure above bell platform completely destroyed
- ▶ Likely requires full rebuild from bell platform upward



Slide Speaker: Father Ken

“The bell tower sustained significant damage due to a chimney effect that accelerated the burn. The wooden structure above the bell platform is completely destroyed. Nearly half of the bell tower would need to be disassembled from the top down and rebuilt.

As we move into winter, our immediate concern for the remaining structure is preventing further deterioration. Open brick walls are vulnerable to freeze-thaw cycles, which could worsen existing damage. The Archdiocese and FIRST ONSITE are actively consulting structural engineers to determine what may be salvaged and protected.

Key questions include:

- Can portions of the tower or front façade be preserved?
- Are there cost-effective options for partial demo, tarping, or protection?
- Could bricks or decorative elements be reused in reconstruction or repurposed for fundraising?

We hope to engage an architect soon to help guide these decisions. The goal is to buy time for thoughtful discernment—understanding what can be safely preserved, what must be removed, and what options may exist for rebuilding.

This isn't just a technical process—it's foundational to our future. Every decision about design, cost, insurance, and liturgical function begins with structural clarity. That's why the Building Committee and parish leadership are proceeding with care and intention.

Now, I'll turn things over to Bill Maly, Director of Benefits and Risk Management with the Archdiocese, who will walk us through the church's insurance coverage."

Understanding Our Insurance Coverage

- ▶ Archdiocese of Cincinnati Insurance Coverages

- ▶ Self-Insurance Program (SIP) covers these major categories:

Property & Automobile	Fiduciary
Third Party Liability	Student and Volunteer Accident
Directors & Officers	Terrorism
Sexual Misconduct	Fine Arts
Workers' Compensation	Foreign Exposures
Boiler & Machinery	Kidnap & Ransom

Funding of the SIP
Managing payments from the SIP

Slide Speaker: Bill Maly, Director of Benefits & Risk Management, AOC

“Thank you Father. Once again, my name is Bill Maly. My role in the archdiocese finance office is to manage the insurance operations.

All insurance is based on spreading risk. The Archdiocese Self-Insurance Program (SIP) provides insurance coverage for over 200 entities under the trusteeship of the archbishop. Bringing together number and array of risks under the program allows for economies of scale in administration and services. To fund the program, Parishes and Schools of the archdiocese pay a monthly fee.

Essentially, this Self Insurance Program is your insurance company.

In the unfortunate occasion of a claim, and depending on the nature of the claim, we use a combination of a Third-Party Administrator services and legal council to assist in adjudicating the claim.”

Reinsurance for Property Catastrophes



Reinsurers are represented by their Third-Party Administrator, Sedgwick. Sedgwick manages the communication with the many participating reinsurers contributing to this coverage.

Self-Insured Retention (SIR) – Partner with TPA Gallagher Bassett / local counsel.

Slide Speaker: Bill Maly, Director of Benefits & Risk Management, AOC

“To mitigate the risk of catastrophic property claims or liability demands, the Program purchases **reinsurance** from the commercial insurance market. We are fortunate to have a group of reinsurers who understand the unique nature of Catholic Church exposures and participate in many other diocese programs throughout United States. Many of our reinsurers have participated in this program arrangement for many years. A portion of the monthly fees paid by the parishes and cost of reinsurance.

For each property claim event, the Self Insurance Program retains the first \$500,000 of damages or Self-Insured Retention (SIR). To help me with claims, we are contracted with a Third-Party Administrator, Gallagher Bassett. We have a 40+ year relationship with Gallagher Bassett.

When a property claim event exceeds the \$500,000 retention, the reinsurers are represented by a Third-Party Administrator, Sedgwick. In this claim situation, Sedgwick is the conduit for the eight reinsurers contributing to loss payments.

All together, the Sedgwick team, Gallagher Bassett, the archdiocese, local parish and its architect, work together to assess the damage, document the losses and arrive at a fair settlement.”

Covered Items

Church Building	Church Contents	Rectory Building	Rectory Contents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Structure and attached items➤ Pews➤ Bells➤ Lights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Sacred items➤ Furnishings➤ Organ➤ Electronics➤ Liturgical supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Structure and attached items➤ HVAC➤ Flooring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Appliances➤ Furniture➤ Personal items

+Extra Expense, loss of income - cost to continue operations

Slide Speaker: Bill Maly, Director of Benefits & Risk Management, AOC

“Coverage Categories

First, for each structure, expenses fall into either a Building or Contents category. There is reimbursement bucket for each of these main categories.

There is an extra expense category for the cost to continue operations when you don't have the structure. Primarily, the cost is associated with having activities at Precious Blood.”

Coverage Payment Categories

Mitigation

- Fencing & Security
- Debris removal and preservation (cranes, lifts, disposal, environmental testing , etc.)
- Dehumidification and smoke soot cleaning (rectory)
- Origin and cause investigation/subrogation

Repair or Rebuild

- Design
- Engineering
- Building code compliance
- Cost of harvesting and refurbishing contents to save on replacement
- Cost to preserve portions of building to save on rebuild expense
- Repair or Reconstruction costs
- Contents repair or replacement

Slide Speaker: Bill Maly, Director of Benefits & Risk Management, AOC

“Next there is a mitigation bucket. All of the activities from day one - setup fencing, retrieve the bells, the labor to clean up and sort through the burned remains, the temporary office, dumpsters, crane and equipment rental: nearly everything to get to the point we are today, falls into this mitigation expense.

It is important to understand mitigation and extra expense do not reduce the building and content determinations.

For those who are interested, the archdiocese agreement with First Onsite has a fixed fee schedule and these expenses are reviewed by both Gallagher Basset and outside auditors.”

Repair or Rebuild?

“Adjustment of loss or damage shall be valued at the cost to repair or replace (whichever is less) at the time and place of the loss with materials of like kind and quality, without deduction for depreciation and/or obsolescence.”

This clause is the start. We arrive a fair reimbursement amount with the assistance of our architect, building committee, contractors, Gallagher Bassett and Sedgwick partners.

Slide Speaker: Bill Maly, Director of Benefits & Risk Management, AOC

“What does the insurance pay? The terms of our agreement read:

“Adjustment of loss or damage shall be valued at the cost to repair or replace (whichever is less) at the time and place of the loss with materials of like kind and quality, without deduction for depreciation and/or obsolescence.”

This clause is the start. We arrive a fair reimbursement amount with the assistance of our architect, building committee, contractors, Gallagher Bassett and Sedgwick partners.

The reinsurers do not just hand over check and walk away.

As we learn more about costs from our architects and in the bidding process, reimbursements amounts are expected to adjust.”

Subrogation

What about Wellman Brothers?

The archdiocese has strict criteria for contractor contracts. This criterion also includes evidence of Workers' Compensation coverage and presentation of a Certificate of Insurance which names the archdiocese and parish as additional insureds.

Slide Speaker: Bill Maly, Director of Benefits & Risk Management, AOC

“As Sue Roeckner can attest, the archdiocese has strict criteria for contracts. For a contract like the Wellman roofing project, our department will review and typically wrap the work order into our standard services agreement. The review includes strict requirements for property, auto and Workers' Compensation coverage.

While no one expects problems, this review process protects us from negligent acts.

Quite frankly, this is a terrible situation. Blair Walls and his crews have done excellent work for years on structures throughout the archdiocese and this community. We wish them well as they too are going through a recovery of their own.

One of the reasons the site was idle in the days following fire was due to an exhaustive investigation process to pin down the “Cause and Origin”.

Be assured that our reinsurers and the archdiocese have provided notice to Wellman Brothers, their insurers and attorneys of our reservation of rights to Wellman's policy limits. Also be aware this process may take many, many months to resolve and will not impact the recovery process.”

What Comes Next?

- ▶ Building Committee continues line-by-line review of the insurance claim
- ▶ Contents claim has been processed and estimates received
- ▶ Architect interviews completed; selection phase underway
- ▶ Next steps will include scope of project, validation, design exploration, and parish engagement



Slide Speaker: Father Ken

“The St. John Building Committee continues its detailed, line-by-line review of the insurance claim. There are over 200 line item estimates for the church building and over 200 line items for contents. Sedgwick uses general formulas, square footage and other metrics to estimate values. Unfortunately, these do not always reflect the beauty, intricacy and detail of St. John the Baptist Church. For example, they estimated pews at \$41,000 and we have an estimate for \$258,000. Estimates must be validated by third-party experts and reviewed by architects to ensure accuracy. This process takes time—but it protects us from underestimating the true cost of recovery and getting a fair value. The contents claim—which includes items like furniture, liturgical pieces, and equipment; —has been processed, and we’ve received formal estimates to support our claim. As one adjuster put it, *if you turned the church upside down and shook it, whatever falls out is considered contents*. That’s the scope of what this portion of the claim covers.

We have also completed architect interviews and are now in the selection phase, choosing a partner who can help us validate scope, interpret estimates, and begin exploring design options.

As we move forward, we'll shift from assessment to visioning. That means engaging the parish community, understanding our liturgical and functional needs, and beginning to imagine what comes next—not just structurally, but spiritually. To help guide that conversation, I'd like to invite Jeremy Helmes, Director of the Center for Parish Vitality with the Archdioceses to take the mic and introduce, "Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship."

“Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship”

Published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

- ▶ Serves as the Church’s official guide for designing and constructing sacred spaces
- ▶ Intended for architects, liturgical consultants, artists, and contractors
- ▶ Rooted in Catholic tradition, theology, and pastoral practice
- ▶ Helps ensure that every element of a church reflects its sacred purpose
- ▶ Offers insight for parishioners into the meaning behind church architecture and art

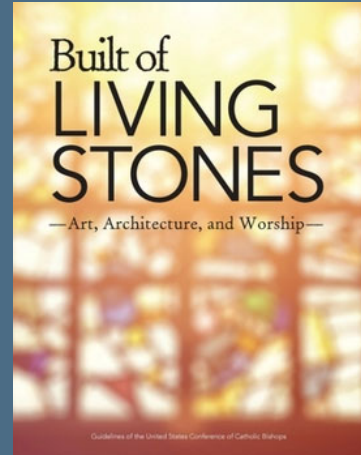
Slide Speaker: Jeremy Helmes, Director of the Center for Parish Vitality, Office for Divine Worship & Sacraments, AOC

“As we begin to imagine what a new worship space might look like, we’re not starting from scratch. The Catholic Church provides a rich and thoughtful framework through the USCCB’s document *Built of Living Stones*. It’s more than a design manual—it’s a theological and pastoral guide that ensures our new space reflects the sacredness of our worship and the identity of our community.

This document will be used to shape what the future church will look like and will be a key resource for our architects, consultants, and all of us as we discern together—not just what we build, but why and how we build it. And that discernment begins with you.”

You're Invited!

- ▶ November 25, 2025 at 7PM
Chickasaw Church Basement
- ▶ December 9, 2025 at 7PM
Chickasaw Church Basement



Slide Speaker: Jeremy Helmes, AOC

“Father Ken and the Building Committee warmly invite the community to join Father Jeff Kemper for this two-part series focused on learning, reflection, and visioning.

Father Jeff is a priest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati who formerly taught at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary, where he also served as Dean. He brings firsthand experience from his time as Pastor of St. John the Baptist in Harrison, where he led the parish through the process of building a new church.

These sessions are designed to help us begin imagining what comes next—spiritually, liturgically, and structurally. The dates of these sessions are listed on your handout for tonight.

These gatherings are open to all. Whether you’re curious, hopeful, grieving, or full of ideas—we want you there. This is a chance to listen, reflect, and begin shaping what comes next together.”

Design & Decision-Making

- ▶ Design process will include input from parishioners
- ▶ Consensus will be built through prayerful dialogue and shared discernment, focusing on key elements of layout, function, and worship needs—seeking unity, not unanimity, in service of the parish mission
- ▶ Financial oversight and approvals will follow established parish and Archdiocesan structures
- ▶ Final design will be reviewed by the Archdiocesan Sacred Art & Architecture Committee and finally approved by Archbishop Casey

Slide Speaker: Jeremy Helmes, Director of the Center for Parish Vitality, Office for Divine Worship & Sacraments, AOC

“While we are not to the design phase, it is important to share that when we do move into a design phase, our goal is to build consensus—not just agreement, but a shared sense of direction rooted in prayer, dialogue, and mission. This reflects the Beacons of Light framework, which reminds us that consensus is not unanimity—it’s unity in purpose, shaped by respectful listening and openness to the Holy Spirit.

Architect selection is underway, and once finalized, we’ll begin exploring layout, function, and worship needs. Parishioner input will be gathered through dedicated subcommittees, ensuring that voices across the community help shape the future space.

Financial oversight and approvals will follow established parish and Archdiocesan structures, and ultimately, the final design will be reviewed and approved by Archbishop Casey.

This is a collaborative journey—spiritual, practical, and deeply communal.”



Q & A Session

Slide Speaker: Jeremy Helmes, Director of the Center for Parish Vitality, Office for Divine Worship & Sacraments, AOC

“For this portion of the evening, we’re opening the floor for your questions of clarification based on the information shared tonight. A member of the Building Committee will bring a microphone to you—please wait until you have the microphone before speaking so everyone can hear your question clearly. This portion is specifically for clarifying questions, not broader visioning or design ideas. At the end of the evening, you’ll receive a card where you can share your hopes, ideas, or questions about the vision for our new church. If time runs short, we encourage you to use that card to ensure your voice is part of the conversation moving forward.

I’d like to begin with a question that was submitted to the Building Committee: “How will Beacons of Light impact decision-making, and if parish finances are combined, how will that affect our recovery funds? Father Ken, would you like to answer this?”

There are several aspects to answer with this question, I will break it down into three parts:

1. Beacons of light parameter 3 states: By September 1, 2022, every Family of Parishes

must form a Planning Team, led by the pastor, to coordinate pastoral planning geared toward the unification of the Family by June 30, 2027. The AOC has clarified that families of parishes are not required to be unified families of parishes by July 2027, but that we must discern the possibility. The answer may be not at this time. We have a lot of discernment and work that would need to happen before unification would happen.

2. The AOC has assured us that even if family of parishes would become unified with shared finances, entities could be set up in that financial structure for each church to keep their respective income and expenses separate. It could be like a national corporation that has individual entities under it.
3. We're already a family of parishes and so our decisions affect one another. Part of the role of the Christ Our Light Staff and unified Pastoral Council is to understand what is happening in each of our churches and how the decisions of each church fits into the overall plan for the family of parishes. For example, Holy Redeemer has been exploring ways to expand seating due to regular overcapacity. Similarly, we will discuss the future St. John Church with the COL staff and unified Pastoral Council not to dictate what St. John has to do, but so that the plan also fits with the larger COL plan. "

Donations

- ▶ \$965,000+ has been donated as of November 5, 2025!
 - ▶ \$500,000 from the Sisters of the Precious Blood, Dayton, OH
 - ▶ \$6,670 from St. Paul Lutheran Church, Jenera, OH
 - ▶ Over 300 donations received—mostly local and throughout Ohio but other states as well!



Slide Speaker: Father Ken

“As mentioned earlier, one of the significant supports we received from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati was the establishment of the *St. John the Baptist Maria Stein Community Fund*, created through an online giving platform. To date, we’ve received over **\$965,000** in donations with another \$30,000 in process, so very close to \$1 million.

Of that total, **\$500,000** was generously donated by the Sisters of the Precious Blood from Dayton. In their letter, they shared that the gift was intended “for the restoration of the church in terms of building, for the compassionate healing of the people, for new vestments, for liturgical replacements, or whatever you dream would be healing after the fire.”

They continued: “We talked about waiting and donating later when the need is known, and yet we wanted to send our support and encouragement now. We have a long history with St. John’s Church and the people of Maria Stein. We have been there for Masses and other prayer times and have experienced the faith and prayer of the people. Along with the donation, we send our prayer for healing and compassionate caring and understanding of one another. In this Jubilee Year as Pilgrims of Hope, we journey with one another, relying on the Precious Blood of Jesus to bring forth new life and healing.”

There was another heartwarming donation we wanted to share with you. It comes from St. Paul Lutheran Church, Jenera OH. Their letter says:

Under a separate cover, a check in the amount of \$6,670.00 was sent to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Stewardship Department, attention St. John the Baptist Community Fund.

St. Paul Lutheran, Jenera congregation once suffered a fire and loss. They tried to build over the ruins, but eventually the on-going efforts to maintain the old structure was too expensive. In 2010, the decision was made to build a new church. The new church was completed and dedicated in 2013. In 2023, the new-building debt was paid in full. At the time, our congregation decided to turn the portion of giving that had been for the "building fund" into a quarterly "designated giving fund." St John the Baptist was chosen as our third quarter giving this year.

This cause was near and dear to my heart, as my great aunt was a Sister of the Precious Blood and lived in the convent in Maria Stein for most of her life. As a youth, I would often visit Sr. Mary Adelcia (Clare Freeman) with my family. Sr. Adelcia, as I grew up knowing her until she became Sr. Clare, took care of the flower gardens and grounds around the convent and Shrine. She also welcomed guests to the Retreat Center when it was built. I recently spent four days in retreat at the center and met some members of St. John the Baptist cooking and serving meals. Walking the sacred grounds and visiting the Shrine connected me with Sr. Clare and my memories of her. It was a blessing for me.

The St. Paul congregation is holding St. John the Baptist in our prayers for a good and positive recovery of their beloved church.

In Christ's Love, Minister Deb Noll and St. Paul Lutheran Church.


These donations have been transferred into investments, earning interest and will come back to St. John Church to be used for church fire recovery efforts."

What St. John Means to Us

▶ Exit Cards

Building Our Future Together

Please share your vision for our new church electronically by scanning the QR Code or writing your thoughts in the area provided below.



Exit cards can be returned by dropping off or mailing to the parish office.

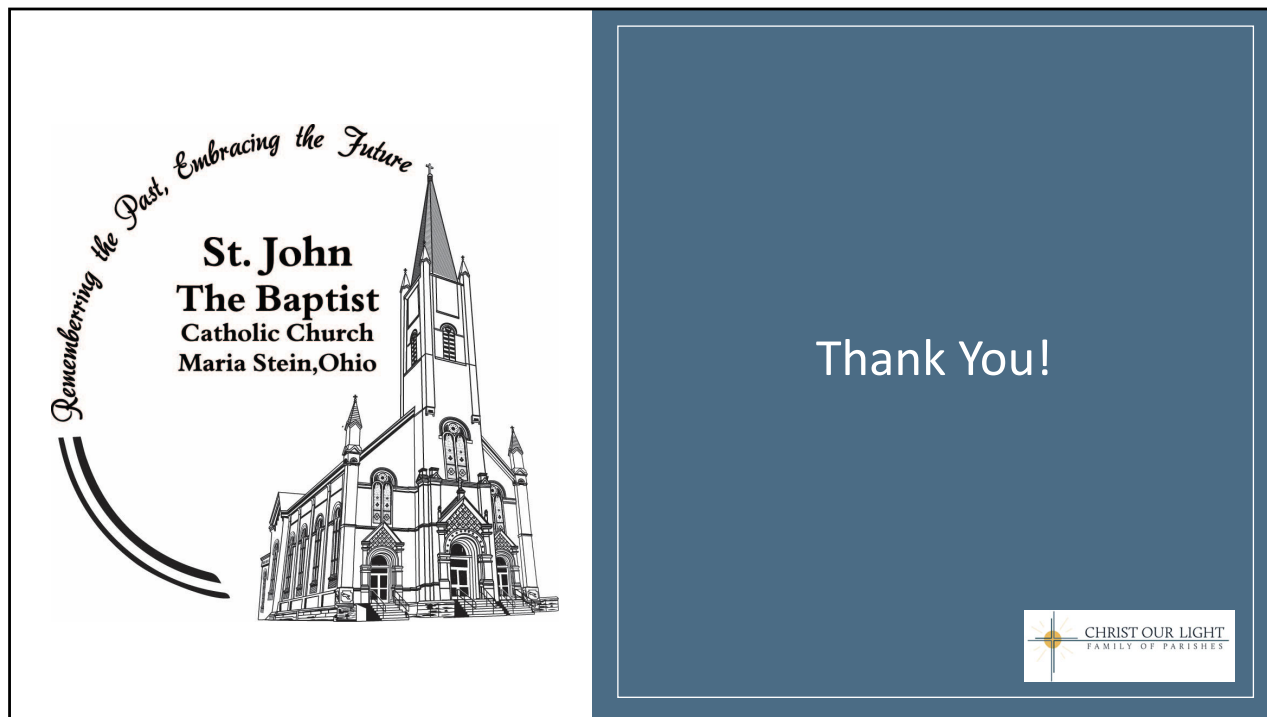
Slide Speaker: Beth Otte

“The St. John Building Committee extends heartfelt thanks to everyone here tonight—and to all who have shared questions, comments, and inspiring visions for the future church. Your input is deeply valued and will play a vital role as we enter the design phase. These contributions help ensure that what we build reflects the hopes and identity of our entire parish community. As committee members, we are honored to represent you—and we can only do that faithfully when your voices continue to guide us.

Many of the parishioners who submitted questions also shared thoughtful comments and suggestions. We want to reassure you that we’ve read every one of them, and they will be part of our discernment as we move forward.

As previously mentioned, you’ll find reflection cards available at the door. Please take a moment to use these cards to share your ideas, hopes, or visions for our future church. Think boldly—what features will matter most over the next 100 years? You’re welcome to submit your card tonight or hold onto it until we know more. The next few months will bring more updates, and the timeline will continue to evolve.

Please continue to send us your vision for our future church—we're listening, and we're building together."



Slide Speaker: Beth Otte & Father Ken

“Thank you for your presence, your trust, and your voice. We’ll continue to update you through the blog and future sessions. We walk forward together—with faith, with care, and with each other. Father, can you close this evening in prayer?”

You may recall from the weekend Masses that today we celebrate the Feast of the Dedication of the St. John Lateran Basilica in Rome. It was the first Christian basilica dedicated November 9th, 324. The inscription written over the doorway says, “Mother and head of all churches of the city and the world.” It is the cathedral of the Pope because he is the bishop of Rome and the world. Today’s feast reminds us that while we are focusing on our St. John the Baptist Church in Maria Stein, we are part of the universal church with Pope Leo as our head. The closing prayer tonight is from today’s feast.

Let us pray,

O God, who from living and chosen stones
prepare an eternal dwelling for your majesty.

increase in your church the spirit of grace
you have bestowed,
so that by new growth your faithful people
may build up the heavenly Jerusalem.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen”