



THE GESU CENTURY

One Faith • One Family • One Future

A CAPITAL AND ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN FOR
CHURCH OF THE GESU AND GESU CATHOLIC SCHOOL

LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

This is a very exciting time for our community! As we prepare for our 100th anniversary in 2026, I am amazed by how this parish has grown and all that it has accomplished over the past century. Gesu began in 1926 with approximately 40 families, including 80 school children learning in a small home on Silsby Road. Today we are blessed with an ever-growing parish and school community with over 2,300 families and 735 students in Preschool through Grade 8. I am thrilled to report that in this last year we welcomed a record number of new families into our parish. Gesu keeps growing! I am confident the founding Jesuits who stood on this vast prairie 100 years ago and envisioned a great future would be proud of the vibrant parish and school we have become.



As we reflect on the past, we also dream about our future. In 2019, the parish began a strategic planning process that would look to Gesu's 100-year anniversary and serve as a roadmap for the years ahead. The end product is a strategic plan that focuses on Gesu our Home and Gesu on Mission. As a result of this strategic planning process and after in-depth planning and research, the need for a capital and endowment campaign became apparent in order to ensure that we have the financial resources to carry out this plan and continue our mission of Eucharistic Living, Lifelong Learning and Generous Serving.

In the following pages of this campaign case statement, we reflect on Gesu's humble beginnings and summarize this plan as we share with you our hopes and dreams for the future. Through much information-gathering and feedback from parishioners, we have identified what it will take to continue the dream and also dream anew for a faith-filled next Gesu Century.

So, it is with great excitement that we kick off *The Gesu Century: One Faith, One Family, One Future*, a capital and endowment campaign that will ensure the vibrancy of Gesu for years to come. We look to you for help and pray that you will join us in this exciting endeavor. We must commit to unite as one to ensure this community we call home. Let us dream big and imagine Gesu in the next century. I have great confidence in our amazing community and look forward to what lies ahead of us. Come join me on that prairie and dream with me of Gesu's future!

God bless,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Lukas M. Laniauskas SJ".

Fr. Lukas M. Laniauskas, SJ

Pastor



OUR MISSION

Gesu Parish, a Catholic community in the Jesuit tradition, is committed to

- Eucharistic Living
- Lifelong Learning
- Generous Serving

“All for the greater glory of God.”

Eucharistic Living: We center our lives in Christ and in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Lifelong Learning: We engage, at all ages, in learning and being formed in the image of Christ.

Generous Serving: We use our gifts to serve God and others.

100 Years of **GESU** *From the beginning...*

The beautiful story of Gesu began in the early 1920's when outward migration from the City of Cleveland to the rapidly developing Cleveland Heights area was heavy. There were only two parishes in the area to care for the expanding population of Catholic families. In response to a need for another parish to service this growing Catholic community, Archbishop Joseph Schrembs founded a parish in University Heights, an area designated for the building of a new campus for the Jesuit College of St. Ignatius, now known as John Carroll University. Archbishop Schrembs asked the leadership of the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus to mission a Jesuit priest to serve as pastor of this new University Heights parish which was to be named Church of the Gesu after the Mother Church of the Society of Jesus in Rome.

The founding pastor of the Church of the Gesu, Father Francis Rudden, SJ, celebrated the first parish Mass in the University Heights Town Hall on Easter Sunday, April 4, 1926. Just a few months later on September 7, 1926, Gesu Catholic School opened in a rented duplex on Silsby Road with eighty children and four Sisters of Notre Dame serving as the first faculty members. This newly organized parish and school included fifty-three families. Despite congested conditions, a genuine school spirit developed.

Rapid growth of the worshipping congregation and school student body in the 1940's contributed to the building of a great parish. The first permanent classrooms were built in 1940, and what is now the Bulldog Gym served as the parish church until the late 1950's. That decade saw the construction of the magnificent church we worship in today, which was dedicated in April 1958. Gesu's other building projects include the construction of the Family Center and Marian Chapel in the 1990's, the renovation of the parish offices in the early 2000's and, most recently, the development of the Breen Family Educational Center for STREAM Learning which opened in 2016.

From its humble beginning, Gesu has flourished as a center of learning and a faith-filled community dedicated to living the Word of God. We have remained true to our Jesuit heritage and commitment to serving others.



GESU today...



735 Children enrolled in
Preschool – Grade 8



2,319
Active parish families



Students enrolled in our
Parish School of Religion

77



Over 70

Parish ministries
and organizations

100+ Outreach service opportunities
offered throughout the year



71 Faculty and staff
members



500+

People celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation,
First Holy Communion, Reconciliation and Marriage each year



OUR PLANNING

From in-depth analysis and critical questions . . .

STRATEGIC PLAN

- In anticipation of the Gesu Parish 100th Anniversary Celebration in 2026, a long-range strategic plan was completed to guide the parish into its next 100 years.
- Through the long-range planning process, themes were developed to help articulate the direction, vision and mission of our future. These themes are: Gesu our Home and Gesu on Mission.

PARISH EXAMEN

- At the request of the Midwest Jesuit Province, Gesu participated in a process for reaccreditation as a Jesuit work. This process included a parish-wide survey, multiple focus groups and a visit by the accreditation team.
- Gesu was accredited as a Jesuit work, and the process further supported the goals and dreams of the parish community as identified by the strategic plan.

GETTING STARTED

- Gesu built a relationship with Advancement Partners to help guide the parish through the planning process for a potential campaign.
- Together a feasibility study, survey and informational sessions were conducted to determine a preliminary sense of potential financial support for funding initiatives brought forward by the strategic plan. There was much positive feedback.

“Growing up in Gesu Parish was a wonderful experience for our kids. I always felt they were well prepared for high school, and I also enjoyed watching them participate in parish and school life through athletics, extracurricular activities and - most of all - serving Mass. Gesu was more than just a school or church; it was our spiritual home.”

JOAN CARNEY

Lifelong Parishioner of Gesu

OUR CONCLUSIONS

... come insights

- As the cost of a Catholic school education continues to increase, the issue of affordability and accessibility of a Gesu Catholic School education must be addressed by continually increasing the endowment fund so that adequate financial aid is available to those in need.
- The parish, church and school buildings have served us well for many years, but they are now in need of repairs and upgrades.
- To provide a complete and fulfilling parish and school experience and ensure maximum utilization of the entire campus, we seek to create outdoor educational and play spaces and a worship area with fresh landscaping and outdoor seating.
- With over 400 students participating in athletics annually, an athletic field could benefit our families.



OUR RESPONSE

...and opportunity!

OUR CAPITAL AND ENDOWMENT FOCUS/GOALS:

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PRESERVATION: APPROXIMATELY \$5,000,000

Gesu's campus is aging and the property needs must be addressed. Possible items that have been slated for replacement include:

- HVAC systems, tuck pointing, lighting and bathrooms

Some areas on campus that also need to be refreshed include:

- Painting, refurbishing the pews, updating McAuley Hall

ENDOWMENT: APPROXIMATELY \$5,000,000

Gesu currently has an endowment, and it is imperative that we grow it. Growth in the endowment will sustain our mission for the next 100 years. The endowment would provide the following:

- Financial assistance for students, faculty compensation and retention
- Resources to continue faith formation programming, outreach funds, campus maintenance and general operations

NEW OUTDOOR CAMPUS: APPROXIMATELY \$2,000,000

Gesu has green space on the front of the property. This new space could create an opportunity for individuals and groups to gather and embrace God's natural creations through play, learning and prayer.

- New educational and play spaces, plus a worship area with fresh landscape and outdoor seating.

EXPANSION OF GESU CAMPUS TO PROVIDE ATHLETIC FIELD(S)

An exploratory committee is being formed to research possible athletic field space and the costs involved (purchase, maintenance, security, insurance, etc.)

For almost 100 years, the families of Gesu Parish have committed to supporting our mission for today and for the future. So many individuals have contributed their time, talent and treasure to assure a legacy of spiritual and educational excellence.

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AN INVITATION TO PARTNERSHIP

Funding the Vision

We invite you to play an important role in continuing this legacy. Let's work together to keep Church of the Gesu and Gesu Catholic School strong for the next 100 years. Below is an example of the number of gifts needed to reach our goal.

GESU CHURCH & SCHOOL PRESERVATION NEW OUTDOOR CAMPUS

\$7 MILLION

GIFT LEVEL X NO. REQUIRED = CUMULATIVE TOTAL

VISIONARY GIFT LEVEL

\$2,000,000	1	\$ 2,000,000
\$1,000,000	1	\$ 3,000,000
\$ 500,000	2	\$ 4,000,000

LEADER GIFT LEVEL

\$250,000	3	\$ 4,750,000
\$100,000	5	\$ 5,250,000

CHAMPION GIFT LEVEL

\$ 50,000	10	\$ 5,750,000
\$ 25,000	20	\$ 6,250,000

FAITHFUL GIFT LEVEL

\$ 10,000	40	\$ 6,650,000
\$ 5,000 and under	many	\$ 7,000,000

ENDOWMENT: **\$5 MILLION**

The importance of endowment to Gesu Parish especially with Gesu Catholic School cannot be overstated. Our mission stipulates that the education we provide be available to anyone, regardless of financial ability. The earnings from the endowment reinforce the operating budget which supports our mission in perpetuity.



INVESTMENT OPTIONS

Your investment in our future is tax-deductible,* and there are a variety of ways to invest in Church of the Gesu and Gesu Catholic School. We invite you to participate in one or more of them.

INVESTMENTS OF CASH

Commitments may be paid over a period of five years or any appropriate timetable. Extending the payment terms of your investment, with the option of making annual, semi-annual or quarterly payments, provides flexibility and might help you consider a higher level of support.

INVESTMENTS OF STOCK OR SECURITIES

Gifts of stock—one-time gifts or multiple gifts over a period of years—are an ideal vehicle for both you and Church of the Gesu and Gesu Catholic School. In gifting appreciated stock, you avoid capital gains taxes, receive the full benefit of a charitable contribution, and provide us with a significant and immediate gift. Please contact the Gesu Development Office for transfer instructions.

INVESTMENT THROUGH A DEFERRED OR PLANNED GIVING VEHICLE

Planned gifts must become a greater source of funding for the long-term health of the school and parish, and they are another way that supporters can participate in The Gesu Century! Giving through an estate provides you with a gift of a lifetime. Life insurance, annuities, trusts and investing through your will are excellent ways to make a lifelong commitment to Gesu and have a profound impact on our institution. With a planned gift to Gesu, you join the Madonna della Strada Planned Giving Society. As a member of Madonna della Strada Society, you will receive various benefits.

**This information is not intended as financial or tax advice. Consult with your financial or tax advisor to determine specific tax implications and the right strategy for you.*

“*I think building on a 100 year history is a gift, and to do that we have to build on what the past has given us and plan for the future. Gesu is a vital part of the Cleveland area and we want to ensure the community and our families that we will be here in the future.*”

SR. LINDA MARTIN, OSU

THE CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

Father Lukas Laniauskas, SJ
Pastor

Colleen Clemens
Development Assistant

Mary Kate Farrar
Development Director

Regan Kazel
School Principal

Susanne Knauer
Director of Finance and Operations

Lori Wright
Executive Assistant to the Pastor

Bill Beck
Donna Conry
Cynthia Druckenbrod
Kerianne Hearn
Chris Jones
Chris Kelly
Jared Limberg
Dan Malone
Sal Miroglotta
Michael Santelli
Jody Salata
Mary Supler





To learn more about the exciting opportunities happening at Church of the Gesu and Gesu Catholic School, please call Mary Kate Farrar, Director of Development and Communications, at (216) 932-0617 or mkfarrar@churchofthegesu.org.



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