

St Joseph School Capital Campaign (Part One)

From the Pastor's Desk

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For the past decade or so, St Joseph has had a vision when it comes to our campus and its facilities. Many of you can remember the old school buildings, the old hall, cafeteria, and rectory. I am new to St Joseph, so I can't remember those old buildings or what shape they were in. But I do know that a decision was made over a decade ago to build a new parish center and new school buildings. There were three phases to this construction program. First, the Spiritan Center was built with space for the parish offices, cafeteria, a parish hall, and enough classroom space for religious education programs and the school while the high school was built. Secondly, the high School (grades 7-12) building was constructed. Finally, the hope of a new elementary school attached to the new high school which will bring all our children to this side of Harkrider. The Spiritan Center was completed in 2018 and the High School in 2022. It is my desire to complete this vision and build a new elementary school for our children.

My reasoning is simple. It is needed because the elementary school building has outlived its usefulness and does not provide our youngest students with a facility worthy of what we can offer them. They are separated from the rest of the student body and can't easily participate in activities that happen on this side of Harkrider. For example, they must be bused across the highway to attend Mass. The middle school, although a newer facility keeps three grades of students separated from our older students and younger ones. The elementary building is old and needs a lot of repairs to keep it operational for our children. The middle school will be retrofitted to house our pre-school 3- and 4-year-old students.

A new elementary school allows our entire student body (K-12) to have not only new facilities to study and learn, but it also provides them with a space that is safe, bright, and a sense that they are members of one student body: St Joseph School. Our parish will benefit as well because young families with school-age students will see in our parish the ability to care for our children by providing them with a school and will want to be members of our parish and send their children to our school.

St Joseph School is growing. Our pre-school program will have 6 classes next year. We are maxed out in space. Our facilities at the elementary school are limited. Even our middle school can't offer 3 classes each for grades 4 through 6. Our space is limited. Our plans are to build a new elementary school with three classes for grades k thru 6 so that any of our Catholic families that want their child(ren) at St Joseph will be able to get them in our school. Our parish is

growing with young families. I want to assure them that our parish school is ready to help raise them in their faith, and this new facility will help us to do exactly that!

What I am asking you is simple. The bishop has signed the contract with Petrus Development to help us raise the funds necessary to construct this new school. The cost is about \$18 million. At some point, all of you will be asked to give and/or make a pledge towards this new school. All I need you to do at this point is to plan to help us make this school a reality for our children, school, and parish. If you have the means, help us. If you are receiving money from the LEARNS ACT (EFA's), then pledge something to ensure that future families can call St Joseph School their home. Even if you do not have any children or grandchildren in the school, pledge or give for the future of our parish and the church. What I am asking you is simple; give and donate to this project whatever you can.

I will write another article on the campaign in September and give you an update on our progress. Currently, our timeline is as long as it takes or as quick as possible. Much depends on your openness to help us. I ask for your prayers during this campaign. Not simply for its success, but for our children, our school, and our parish. The Lord will provide.

Go Bulldogs!

St Joseph...pray for us.

Father John