

Master Planning and the Needs of Other Ministries

Ministries at St. Edward's provide support and services to our parish community and the needy in the greater Capital District. The wonderful work done by each of these ministries is part of what makes St. Edward's such a vibrant, Catholic community. Previous bulletin inserts have discussed the needs of our Faith Formation and Youth Ministry programs and how the proposed project will address those needs. In addition to these two important ministries, there are many others that require space within our parish facility to allow them to carry out their mission.

When the Master Planning Committee began this process, we met with ministry leaders to discuss their needs. These leaders identified adequate storage and meeting space, as well as a space to hold large events, as their greatest needs.

Think of how our Gathering Area is used on a typical weekend. Parishioners gather in this space after mass to share coffee or juice, donuts and, most importantly, fellowship. This same space is also used to support a number of other ministries. Tables are set up to support our Fair Trade initiative, for signups for Christmas gifts for families and the elderly, for the Parish Nurse Program and many other activities as well as signups for Faith Formation and various ministry needs and outreach events. The Christmas gifts are stored in two Faith Formation classrooms during the pre-holiday collection period. In addition, donations for activities such as food pantries, Mary's Corner (a support group for young mothers and their children), Birthright, and Christmas gifts are collected here. Due to a lack of storage space in the building, collected goods of all sorts are stored in this space. All of this activity results in a very overcrowded Gathering Area.

The Parish Community Outreach programs operate in the inner cities of Cohoes and Albany serving meals to hundreds of the elderly and needy. The parish kitchen is used for cooking two of the three community meals served at different times throughout each month. There is not enough room to store all of the food for these community meals at St. Edwards. As a result, our volunteers bring food items home to store and sometimes are forced to use their own kitchens to prepare these meals. The Knights of Columbus also use parish facilities for weekly breakfasts and fundraising dinners throughout the year. Cooking for any large group is a challenge out of our small kitchen.

The lack of meeting space is a common concern of almost all ministries in the parish. The Social Hall, Faith Formation classrooms, the Chapel and the back of the current Worship Space are all

currently used for meetings. The parish staff does an incredible job of assisting ministry groups in finding meeting space, but often the space limitations and heavy use of the facility don't allow them to accommodate all requests. During the first two months of this year over 75 different groups met in our facility, some of them on a weekly basis. Trying to find room for all the various groups to meet is frequently a challenge.

Our youth and adult groups do not have an adequate space to put on performances or hold large social events. These activities are so important in creating and maintaining our sense of community.

As we noted with Faith Formation and Youth Ministry, we will free up space in our current facility as soon as the new worship space is completed. We will not have to wait until subsequent phases to provide the space needed to support and grow our many ministries

If you have any further questions about our space requirements please review the materials on our parish website (www.stedwardsny.org) or contact a member of the Master Planning Committee.