

September 26, 2025

Dear Families of St. Mary's Pella Parish,

Over the past few weeks, the Building Expansion Committee has continued its work with RDG Planning & Design, meeting alongside our parish commissions — Church and Family Life, Building and Grounds, Faith Formation, Liturgy and Social Action — as well as parish staff and parishioner volunteers. These conversations are part of Phase I of our Building Expansion Project, which focuses on gathering input through questionnaires and discussions to guide the programming and master planning process

Gathering Parish Input

As part of this process, RDG facilitated structured questionnaires with parish groups, focusing on several key questions:

- **Programs:** What are the specific goals and objectives of our parish programs for the next 10 years? Which programs are most successful today? Which may need redirection? What examples from other churches and/or parishes inspire us?
- **Facilities:** What spaces in our current facility work well? Which spaces need improvement? Which are dedicated to a single use, and which are shared? How are our multi-use spaces used today?
- **Participation:** How many parishioners participate in each program, and how might that shape our space needs?

RDG is now using this valuable feedback to compile a comprehensive list of our parish's current and future needs, along with recommendations for the types of spaces that can best support our mission moving forward.

In collaboration with the Expansion Committee, RDG also helped to establish Project Guiding Principles. These principles will serve as touchstones throughout the design process:

- *Preserve the heart and intimacy of St. Mary's:* Maintain the architectural character, connection to nature, and welcoming community feel of our existing space, while expanding to meet capacity needs.
- *Invest in the next generation:* Create additional safe and comfortable faith formation spaces to serve our active and growing parish.
- *Support the spiritual life of the parish:* Renovate and create spaces for both individual prayer and communal worship, ensuring our facility functions well for daily needs and sacramental celebrations.
- *Enhance hospitality and accessibility:* Remove barriers to ease congestion and improve access for all through flexible, welcoming entry and gathering spaces.
- *Create a visible and vibrant parish hub:* Expand our facilities to strengthen St. Mary's Catholic identity and position our parish as a lively center in the Pella community and the Diocese of Davenport.

Next Steps

With these guiding principles and parish input in hand, RDG and the Building Expansion Committee are now working to outline preliminary options for how our campus can grow in ways that faithfully serve both current and future needs. These plans will continue to be shaped by your feedback, prayers and support.

As we move forward, we invite all parishioners to continue praying our Expansion Prayer together:

Almighty Father, You sent your Son on a mission into this world to give us life to the fullest. You have granted us the blessings of sharing in that great mission by making Christ present in Pella, Iowa. Send forth Your Holy Spirit upon us and grant us the Wisdom, Generosity and Charity to guide us to bring our mission: "A Place for Everyone and a Future for All" forward. We entrust ourselves to the intercession of our Immaculate Mother Mary as we make this prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

We are grateful for your continued prayers and support as we work together to shape the future of St. Mary's Pella.

In Christ,
Brian Huddle
For the Building Expansion Committee