

Expanding and improvements at St. Ignatius

For the last decade St. Ignatius, Hickory, has had a vision for expansion in a rapidly growing parish and community. In 2001 the parish's new church, positioned on the property so the old church would still be prominent, was dedicated and in late spring of this year the \$7.5 million loan will be paid off.

Monsignor James Barker, pastor, and the parishioners of St. Ignatius are now developing and planning for new construction, refurbishing and renovations in the next 10 years.

It is their hope that by 2017, the parish's 225 anniversary, a new education wing and youth room will be added on to the parish center to accommodate the 1,300 children in the religious education program. A plan has been designed to refurbish the interior of the historic church and restore it to its original beauty. A new space for fellowship, parish socials and general meetings and a renovated space for administration are in the works, said Monsignor Barker.

"I'm very excited about the whole project," said Monsignor Barker. "Many people have asked when we can begin."

There have been some concerns from the parishioners about parking but Monsignor Barker is confident that these new plans will not take up too many parking spaces. With 4,100 registered families at St. Ignatius, and growing, it is important that the existing facilities are up-to-date and there is enough room for the numerous parish activities.

Rita Mayor, president of the parish council said, "I believe it (the new plan) will satisfy many of the needs for a wide variety of parishioners."

Ms. Mayor said there are different groups that want to meet at the parish but finding the space for them is becoming more and more difficult. With additional rooms and hall space the groups, like the boy scouts, will have a place to get together when they need to.

“We will have a dedicated facility for the youth to have fun,” said Ms. Mayor, who is also on the building committee. “We need to give the kids a place to go and call their own.”

Joseph Oricchio moderated the session and said the meeting “went exceptionally well.”

“The questions the parishioners raised showed they are taking this very seriously,” said Mr. Oricchio. “They were all answered to the parishioner’s satisfaction.”

According to Mr. Oricchio, who works for Talisman Consulting Services, LLC, all of Harford County will be dealing with realignment of military bases in the next few years. This realignment will increase the population and create some 8,000 new jobs, said Mr. Oricchio.

“A good portion of those jobs will hopefully be filled by Catholic parishioners and our parishes in the area will have to minister to these people,” said Monsignor Barker. Mr. Oricchio said these new plans for the parish are mostly to satisfy the needs of the large population the parish is serving today.

This new plan will “safely and effectively and comfortably accommodate our parish needs,” said Mr. Oricchio.

Monsignor Barker said the old church needs some improvements including a moisture barrier, restoring some damaged wood and painting.