

St. Munchin Church is over 100 years old and has undergone several renovations. In designing this one, we wanted to preserve many features of the historic building. We cleaned and reinstalled three stained glass windows, including the large one in the south. We restored the original wood floor. New pews imitate the design of the old ones. The tabernacle occupies the central position it used to have; two angel statues adorn it because the original St. Munchin Church had statues like that. The roofline, bricks and shingles of the addition match those of the old building. The original walls are intact, and a basement lies under the part of the addition that does not touch the original foundation. Lamps in the gathering space match those that have hung here in the nave for many years.

At the same time, we wanted the building to answer some modern needs: accessible restrooms and ramps, a gathering space for conversing outside the service, a better reconciliation room, and storage space. Extra donations have made other improvements possible: for example, an improved sound system and new altar furnishings; stained glass windows that used to belong to the Presbyterian Church across the street; and landscaping that makes St. Munchin's look like the prettiest church in Cameron.

You contributed generously to this project. Thank you for your faith, your trust, and your charity. Right after mass today, you can hear a presentation about the costs of this project and get your questions answered. In round numbers, let me give you these basics: We estimate the total costs to our parish to be \$778,000. So far we have received \$458,000 from campaign contributions. That means we have borrowed approximately \$320,000 from the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. At the moment, the interest rate on that loan is rather low, 4.5%, but it adjusts with the market; we expect to pay about \$27,000 in interest over the next 3 years. We are now launching a second capital campaign to eliminate our debt, and we've set the target at \$400,000, to give us a little cushion. I think we can pay off our debt in 3 years – maybe sooner, and that would be an extraordinary accomplishment for this parish.

I've asked a number of volunteers to visit your homes and personally bring you the campaign materials. You will receive a brochure explaining the project, a pledge card, a refrigerator magnet, and a letter from me in a sealed envelope. In my letter, I'm suggesting a contribution for you to make over the next 3 years. The volunteers do not know what's in that letter. You take the letter, wait for them to leave, open it, pray about it, fill out the pledge card, and bring it back to church.

Last month I told the volunteers they could pick up their materials after mass today, but it will be another week or so before they are ready. We have only just received some of these figures, so we still need to print

the brochure. Our campaign chairperson is Barry Arthur, and I've asked him to say a few words at masses next weekend. After that, you can expect a call from a parishioner who would like to visit your home. Please welcome them.

In today's second reading, St. Paul praises the faith of Abraham. God promised Abraham that he would become the father of many nations, but throughout most of his life, Abraham remained childless. He and Sarah had their first child, Isaac, when they were about 100 years old. Those who have faith receive extraordinary rewards from God. So here we are, in a building over 100 years old, and God has brought new life to us because we have faith. We have a lot of memories about the past of this building. Now we're ready to create memories for a new generation. Let us express our gratitude to God with a generous gift our new campaign. In this way we can honor those who came before us and prepare the way for those who will follow.