

Frequently Asked Questions
for:

Our Future

Our Lady of Lourdes
Catholic Church



August 2020



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Section 1: Overview

1.1. What is the capacity of our current church? What will be the capacity of the new church?

Our current church was built to hold approximately 250 people. With the addition of chairs along the side aisles and squeezing extra bodies together, there is typically 350 people during 10:00 a.m. mass. The new church design will have capacity for 450 – 500 people.

1.2. Why not renovate the church instead of rebuild?

There is limited opportunity to expand the current church building and incorporate the many needs that have been expressed by parishioners. For example, having a larger Narthex area (also known as the gathering space) is not possible with the current footprint as there is no room to expand towards Boulevard. There is also minimal room to expand northbound without major work due to the slope/grade of the Boulevard parking lot.

Building a new church will enable us to add the much-needed space for parking, meeting rooms, classrooms, and storage.

1.3. Numbers at mass, except for 10:00, do not justify a bigger church. Why not build a smaller church?

The Catholic Church is currently experiencing a shortage of priests. As such, many are being asked to do more (i.e. serve multiple parishes). In order to better serve Catholics in the United States, many are building slightly larger churches that would also serve a greater number of people.

In addition, a larger church would allow Lourdes to build a greater sense of community and celebrate the Eucharist together by potentially offering fewer masses (i.e. perhaps offering two masses on Sunday). We will also be able to celebrate Christmas and Easter together at “home” versus celebrating at a nearby location.



1.4. Will we still have three masses on Sunday?

While nothing has been decided, one idea is to offer two masses on Sundays. This would allow for greater connection and sense of community with one other.

1.5. How does this project reflect a church of the poor? For the poor?

The needs of the poor and of our community are one of the many reasons why we need this expansion. Expanding the space for our ministries and programs will directly impact those Lourdes serves. This project will allow us to better instill in our parish our mission to know, love, and serve as Jesus did. We currently serve the poor in our community through Lourdes Lunch, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Habitat for Humanity, and Catholic Charities. More space on campus will allow us to increase our support in ministries that help us to serve others as Jesus did.

1.6. Why build a new church when the 2016 survey indicated this was not an immediate priority?

The 2016 survey indicated a need for additional space. The space could be utilized for ministries, meetings, Sunday school, and storage. In order to create the space needed and desired, a new church building is imperative to the overall plan. By building a new church first, this would allow us to convert the existing church building into a parish hall which would enable us to then renovate the Drexel Center and cafeteria to create the much-needed space for classrooms, meeting rooms, and storage.



Section 2: Master Plan Design

2.1. What are the phases of the Master Plan and the timing of each phase?

The anticipated timing to complete Phase I (new church) is to begin in the fall of 2022 and complete in early 2024 (subject to change).

Timing for the additional phases of the master plan (which include converting the existing church into a parish hall and renovations of the Katharine Drexel Center building) are to be determined.

2.2. Will priority be given to minority and women architects, artists, builders, contractors, etc.?

Careful consideration will be given to businesses that reflect Lourdes values including diversity and inclusion. We seek to give opportunities to woman-owned and minority-owned businesses that will help Lourdes achieve our vision.

2.3. Will there be space for each ministry in the renovated spaces?

There will be additional space for ministry meetings/gathering spaces in the Drexel Center. In order to maximize use, many of the spaces will be flexible to adapt to a variety of needs.

In addition, we know more storage space is needed and we are exploring options to make the best use of the storage space/organization that will also be easily accessible.

2.4. Will there be a plan to incorporate more restrooms/showers for guests of Lourdes Lunch?

Plans for each space/area have not been fully developed yet. As we pray and discern the best use of the space, respecting the dignity of our guests is a priority.



2.5. What is a columbarium?

A columbarium is a structure that is appropriately respectful, where the earthly remains (ashes) of church members receive care in perpetuity, located on church property much like the church cemetery of an earlier time. Many people find great comfort knowing that their ashes are near good people in a religious environment.

2.6. What are the plans for Drexel Center?

The Katharine Drexel Center building will be renovated to include classroom space on the first floor (where parish hall is now), additional office space and meeting rooms, and more storage areas.

2.7. How will the spaces be more accessible for persons with a disability?

The vision is to create more “connectivity” with the campus by covering walkways and allowing a person to easily move around the spaces. This will also include an elevator and ramps. We want to be a campus that can be used and accessed by all.

For the church building design, accessibility is an important and primary consideration. For example. Seating for persons with a disability are located through the pews in order to be able to sit with friends and family. In addition, the altar design will include ramps so that persons with a disability may serve in the liturgy if he or she feels called to do so.

2.8. How will the education space change?

We would like to include additional education space to accommodate our thriving Sunday School yet also allow rooms to be used for other purposes (i.e. meetings) when Sunday School is not in session. Further design decisions regarding the Katharine Drexel Center will be at a later date and will include additional input from parishioners and Sunday School teachers.



2.9. Will the dance studio be renovated?

While plans have not been determined yet, the cafeteria and dance studio would also be renovated as part of renovations to the Katharine Drexel Center and cafeteria building.

2.10. Will there be a space large enough for large events, rentals, etc.?

The plan is to transform our existing church building into a new parish hall. This space will be able to accommodate large events for parish use or for others to rent as available.

2.11. Will there be gathering space for coffee/donuts/beignets?

We could utilize the cafeteria or new parish hall space, and/or the gathering space (narthex) in the new church for gathering and socializing over coffee and donuts/beignets. Providing space for enhancing community through socializing and other activities is an important consideration in the design process. Our goal is to provide additional spaces for connecting with the community before and after Mass.



Section 3: New Church/Sanctuary

3.1. What will be done with existing church building?

The plan is to renovate the existing church building and convert it to a parish hall/space with a catering (warming) kitchen. With this plan, we will have a larger space for parish gatherings, and we will be able to convert the lower level of the Katharine Drexel Center to Sunday School classrooms and meeting rooms.

3.2. Will there be solar panels for power in the church?

Making a campus that reflects our call to care for the earth is an imperative and we will be seeking parishioner input on the best ways to accomplish this goal. While decisions and implications for specifications such as solar panels have not been discussed or decided yet, it is an area that will be considered.

3.3. Will there be electrical receptacles for in-house programs?

As we are able, we would like to include receptacles and make each space more accommodating to technological needs.

3.4. Will we be able to have Christmas and Easter mass at Lourdes?

Imagine celebrating mass at “home” in a familial environment. With a new church, we will be able to celebrate Christmas and Easter masses at Lourdes instead of an off-site location. This will also eliminate the need to rent space such as Symphony Hall.

3.5. Where will mass take place during construction?

By doing the construction and renovations in phases, we will be able to minimize the inconvenience and disruption. The first phase will be a new church. Mass will take place in our current church building while construction on the new church is occurring.



3.6. Will there be a cry room? Will there be a small chapel/adoration area?

The new church building will have a much larger Narthex with glass walls connecting it to the sanctuary. This will allow for families to take kids out if needed yet still feel connected to the mass and congregation.

We have gathered parishioner input as part of the design plans with the architect.

3.7. How will acoustics be addressed so church does not feel cavernous?

Sound engineers and acoustic experts can help us ensure that the church is designed for an optimal listening experience. This may include ideas such as using a mix of hard materials (wood, metal) and soft materials (carpet, cushions).

3.8. Where will the baptismal font be placed? Why?

The importance and history of the baptismal font has been discussed with our liturgical consultant, Ken Griesemer. You may refer to the Envisioning Our Future video from October 8, 2018 (<https://vimeo.com/306494838>).

It is at the font that we sacramentally enter into the Christian community for the first-time becoming brothers and sisters in Christ. Throughout history, the baptismal font has had many different locations. There is a current directive that the baptismal font should be placed near the entrance of the church so as to remind us all of our baptismal promise as we enter.

The design, with the input of experts and parishioners, includes a baptismal font as you enter the nave. This is subject to change.

3.9. Why is the seating arrangement, “church in the round”, preferred?

Imagine you are having a dinner party for 10 people. Would you prefer to sit at a round table where you can see and connect with each person? Or would you rather sit at an elongated table where you may not be able to converse with the folks at the other end?



By having a U-shaped seating arrangement, this allows us to face each other more (similar to when we face each other during opening procession at Mass) and share in the Eucharistic celebration.

3.10. What about other design elements i.e. chairs, pews, sloped floor, stained-glass windows?

We learned about and discussed many of the topics that go into creating a wonderful worship space during the Envision Our Future series with our liturgical consultant. The videos of the presentations are most enlightening on these subjects.

Throughout 2021-2022, we will begin the schematic design process and make decisions on details such as chairs and windows. We will seek input from parishioners and experts ensuring that we balance needs and desires with budget.

3.11. What are the plans to save/reuse existing fixtures?

We will keep, reuse, or re-purpose as much as we can, as deemed appropriate. For example, it may be determined to reuse the stations of the cross in the new church building. Final design and plans have not been determined at this time and will likely occur later in 2021.

3.12. Where will seating be for persons with disabilities?

There will be dedicated and flexible seating for persons with disabilities. The current architectural plans include seating for persons with disability at the end of a number of pews by having a “shortened” pew. This allows for space for wheelchairs and/or scooters. This would also enable persons to sit with family and/or friends in the pews vs. be required to sitting in a specific section (i.e. front of the church).

3.13. How much space will there be for dancers?

As we consulted with the architect on the vision and needs, additional space for dancers was discussed as well as making use of flexible space and ensuring that there is not too much distance between the sanctuary and the



nave. For example, having adjustable seating near the front of the altar that can be removed for performances. Exact spacing has not been determined at this time.

3.14. Will there be any meeting spaces in the church?

Dedicated meeting space will be available in Katharine Drexel Center and the renovated parish hall (current church building). As for the church, the final design has not been determined yet.

3.15. Will the altar be flat or slightly elevated?

In the current draft design, the altar will be slightly elevated. This allows the altar to be simultaneously seen by all the faithful in the body of the church. In addition, the current design includes ramps that wrap around the sides of the altar. This helps us to accommodate persons who may have trouble walking up steps to serve as lectors or extraordinary ministers if they should so desire.

3.16. How are you incorporating African-American influences? How about the architecture history of Lourdes in the new space?

It is imperative to reflect our African-American identity and history in the new church building. Design choices will incorporate African-American influences. Our liturgical consultant has provided us with some resources to help us ensure we are incorporating African-American influences; this could be in areas such as artwork, seating plan, materials used (e.g. wood vs. marble), colors in the interior, etc.

There may also be dedicated space to “tell” the history of Lourdes.

3.17. Can we elevate the left side of the exterior space for a drive-in for funerals/weddings/etc.?

We have a few constraints such as the size and grade of the lot that eliminated elevating the left side as a viable and economical option.



A drive-in space will be located where our current Boulevard parking lot is now. This will connect to a covered area that will lead directly to the new church. This will provide easy access for special occasions such as weddings and funerals.

3.18. Where are there covered areas in the front of the church? Will balconies be included?

The front door facing Edgewood will be set back thus creating a ‘covered porch’ effect.

3.19. The design looks suburban. How can it be adjusted to reflect a more urban environment?

The design concept is to keep the architecture in line with the neighborhood and surrounding areas. Our architect studied the surrounding areas of Auburn and Edgewood. For example, the arched doorways and red brick were inspired by the historic fire station on Boulevard. The overall design of the new church’s facade reflects the Queen Anne style of architecture that can be seen in historic fire station, Dr. King’s birth home and other homes along Auburn, as well as other homes and buildings in the area.

We did conduct three parish-wide session with the architectural team to gather input on preferences which were taken into consideration during the design process.

3.20. Will the front entrance be on Edgewood?

The front entrance will be on Edgewood. The parish hall (existing church building) and Katharine Drexel Center will continue to face Boulevard.



Section 4: Centennial Property and Parking

4.1. How many cars park on the Edgewood lot during mass?

Our Edgewood parking lot has capacity for up to 100 cars.

4.2. What happens to the Centennial Property? Is it sold? Do we still own it?

The Centennial Property has been sold to the real estate developer, Lucror Resources. This was a win-win solution as Lourdes could not build a parking lot/structure without partnering with a developer. This was due to city zoning requirements, neighborhood governance, beltline overlay guidelines and historic district guidelines.

Lucror will develop a mixed-use property including a shared-use parking garage. We were able to use the land as leverage to get a parking structure that we will not be responsible for building or maintaining. Building our own parking garage was going to be cost prohibitive. The conservative cost estimate for underground parking is \$50,000 per parking space. So to build a garage with 200 spaces would be \$10M not to mention on-going maintenance, upkeep and other costs.

4.3. Who would own the parking structure/land?

The parking structure/land will be owned by the developer. As a part of the contract, we negotiated to have permanent parking designated for Our Lady of Lourdes. This includes 30 spaces available 24/7 and 170 spaces available on Saturday evening and all day Sunday.

4.4. What will be on the Centennial Property?

Lucror's mixed-used development will be called Waldo's on Boulevard. The development includes an 125-key boutique hotel, 10,000 sq. feet of food & beverage space, office space, and townhomes. There



will also be a good amount of 'community space' such as a courtyard that can be enjoyed by all Lourdes members.

4.5. What are the plans for security around the campus?

Feeling safe and secure is a primary need for parishioners and guests. As such, security will be an area that will be continually monitored and evaluated. Security systems and plans will be developed as we begin the design phase of the project.

4.6. Where would we park on weekdays?

There will be 30 designated spaces in the parking structure for weekdays. In addition, there will also be spaces on the Auburn lot as well as street parking available.

4.7. Where will handicapped parking be located?

Parking for persons with a handicap will be located on the Auburn lot for easy access to all buildings. The plans for that lot include 21 parking spaces.

4.8. How many parking spaces will there be?

The parking structure will have 200 spaces for Lourdes use on Saturday night and all day on Sundays as well as Christmas Day. There will also be additional parking spaces in the Auburn lot.

4.9. Where will we park during construction?

Several options for alternative parking during construction are being considered and will be evaluated as needed. Our primary option is to wait to begin construction on the new church when the parking deck is completed on the Centennial property. The anticipated completion for the parking structure is October 2022.



4.10. Will we be able to expand the Auburn parking lot?

Expanding the Auburn parking lot is not possible due to boundaries and neighborhood regulations. We are constrained by our surroundings and buildings that are part of the National Park Service and/or have historical significance.

The Auburn parking lot will have approximately 21 spaces that will be mostly dedicated parking for persons with a handicap.

4.11. With rapid growth in the area surrounding the Centennial property, what are the plans to ensure a smooth flow of traffic?

The developer of the Centennial property, Lucror Resources, has committed to making the property pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly. As such, they are in discussions with the City of Atlanta and the Department of Public Works to manage traffic and ensure safety.

Several ideas are being considered such as improving crosswalks, eliminating parking on Daniel Street and/or Gartrell Street, and making Daniel Street a two-way street.

For Saturday vigil and Sunday masses, as well as certain special occasions, Lourdes may enlist police officers to help with the flow of traffic. This is currently a practice that is implemented at many parishes throughout Atlanta. As we progress in plans, we will continue to seek parishioner input and evaluate options.



Section 5: Financial Info

5.1. What are the project costs (by phase)?

The final project costs for the new church are estimated \$7M - \$9M. Some of the costs will be dependent on items such as design choices that will be discussed and made in the coming year. Once we are close to a final design, we will provide an update on projected costs.

5.2. What financial return will come from the Centennial Property?

Lourdes was able to leverage the sale of the land to gain a much-needed parking structure. The parking structure will be underground and built by the developer and managed by a parking company. Typically a parking structure of this type would cost \$10M (\$50,000 per space). This is beneficial to Lourdes as we will not be financially responsible for maintaining the garage among.

5.3. How will Centennial Property be financed?

Lourdes has sold the Centennial Property to Lucror Resources. In exchange, Lucror will build a two story underground garage. Lourdes has permanent rights to 30 parking spaces 24/7 plus 170 spaces on Saturday night, all day Sunday, and Christmas.

5.4. What were the findings of the 2016 feasibility study [of a Capital Campaign for new church]?

The 2016 feasibility survey reported:

- 91% of respondents rated addressing expansion and renovation needs as important or very important
- 89% rated a new, updated and larger worship space as important or very important
- 95% rated improved parking as important or very important



- 91% rated renovations to Katharine Drexel Center as important or very important.
- The study indicated the possibility of raising \$3M within the parish and there are other avenues for raising additional money from outside sources.

We also revisited the feasibility study in 2019. Key findings included:

- 95% responded positively to making a gift to the capital campaign
- 54% believe we can raise \$4M+
- 91% feel informed or well informed about Lourdes' needs and plans

5.5. How much will the archdiocese fund or lend?

The Archdiocese requests a parish to raise a percentage of the total cost of the project. The land value counts in this amount so that would impact the amount of cash we need to have on hand. All of this is based on the Archdiocese's agreement as to the need and the parish's ability to repay the loan in a reasonable amount of time.

5.6. Does Lourdes have money to embark on this project?

We conducted a feasibility study to ensure that we have the financial support needed to embark on this journey. We are planning a capital campaign for 2021.

We will also work with our Capital Campaign consultant to identify additional funding sources such as grants.