

Plans ready for new church

Tim Johnson

tjohnson@nonpareilonline.com | Posted: Sunday, June 7, 2015 12:00 am

Plans are shaping up for construction of a new home for St. Patrick's Catholic Church at the intersection of College Road and Valley View Drive.

Architectural firm Clark Collaborative 3 has designed a 26,000-square-foot structure that is expected to cost \$6 million to \$6.5 million, said the Rev. Glen Wilwerding, pastor.

"People are excited," he said. "I think people's excitement is shown overall by how well the campaign went."

The congregation kicked off a fundraising campaign last fall that wrapped up in December, Wilwerding said.

"We were able to raise in pledges \$3.3 million overall," and the church received \$700,000 as part of a bequest from Bud Skalla, a farmer who left millions of dollars to about a dozen southwest Iowa churches, he said.

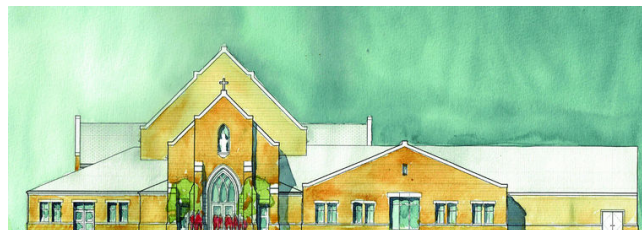
The church's current facility at 223 Harmony St., dedicated in 1926, will need a variety of repairs and upgrades in the coming years, Wilwerding said, and members park in a lot across the street owned by CHI Health Mercy Hospital. In the next two years, part of the parking lot will become the home of the Charles E. Lakin YMCA.

The new church will be larger and more accessible than the current building, Wilwerding said. The sanctuary will seat 500, up from the current capacity of 325, and the parish hall can seat as many as 368 people.

The parking area will hold about 250 stalls, with possible expansion to 293.

"Our primary thrust for building a new facility is we have to have better handicap accessibility, a hall that is larger and better quality and the support services to go with it, like proper restrooms and a proper kitchen," he said.

The new parish hall will allow the church to host larger functions, such as wedding banquets and community events, Wilwerding said. The current hall is located in the church basement, and there is no elevator.



St. Pats

Submitted graphic This drawing from architectural firm Clark Collaborative 3 shows the front entrance of the planned new facility for St. Patrick's Catholic Church. The building will be located at the intersection of College Road and Valley View Drive across from College View Elementary School.

“There’s a lift, but it doesn’t always work,” he said.

The restrooms are not accessible.

“One thing people want is a bigger entryway,” Wilwerding said. “Right now, if you get five people in the entryway, it’s full.”

The existing facility will be sold, but elements of it will become part of the new church, he said

St. Patrick’s was founded in 1924, although other churches had previously stood on the same property. Its current facility was assembled in 1925 from stones that had once paved Broadway and was dedicated in 1926.

“We’ll incorporate our stained glass where we can, and our statues that we have (St. Patrick, St. Joseph and St. Mary),” he said.

From its new location, the church hopes to minister to students at nearby Iowa Western Community College.

The new building will contain a larger baptistry and “proper confessional,” Wilwerding said. The current makeshift confessional shares a doorway with a storage area, and only a curtain separates it from the sanctuary. He uses background music to cover up private conversations.

The church will also have a small adoration chapel where people will be able to go anytime to pray, he said. The chapel will be accessible 24 hours a day via a separate entrance and keypad.

The project has been a long time coming. The church bought 12 acres on State Orchard Road in 2007 and originally intended to build there. But the hilly terrain would have posed some challenges, so the church later sold that land and, in January 2014, bought the 10 acres along Valley View where it now plans to locate.

“Far more land is usable at the new site,” Wilwerding said.

HGM is currently conducting a site survey, which got a late start because of all the rain Council Bluffs has received this spring, Wilwerding said. As a result, the groundbreaking is still a ways off.

“The soonest we could start would be late fall,” he said. “We don’t want to jump the gun – we want to get it right.”