

FREQUENTLY ASKED

ABOUT THE PROJECTS

Questions

What do we expect to accomplish in our three-year plan?

The overall goal of our campaign is to raise funds to meet our obligation to the *Upon This Rock* campaign (in support of priests), retire the debt incurred on the land and to construct the new Catholic school in northeast Bettendorf. Elements of the construction project include:

- Two classrooms each for grades K-8
- STEM and Arts classrooms
- Commons area with attached chapel
- High school-rated gymnasium
- Preschool and childcare facility
- Administrative offices
- Playgrounds, parking and separate drop-off areas for school and preschool

The intention is to complete all these projects by the fall of 2025.

In what order will the projects be completed?

Once the campaign is completed and funding projections are known, the order in which the projects are completed will be decided by parish leadership, in cooperation with architects and the Diocese of Davenport. Many factors are taken into consideration, including the most urgent priorities, the school calendar, and projects that must take place chronologically or simultaneously to avoid disruption to family and school schedules.

What is the long-range plan for the two parishes?

The long-range vision is to build a new school and church at the northwest corner of Hopewell Avenue and Criswell Street and eventually seeing Our Lady of Lourdes and St. John Vianney becoming one parish: St. Joan of Arc. There are many decisions yet to be made as we travel this path, but this is the direction we are moving.

What is the long-range plan for the existing properties? Will they be sold?

Since we are focused on the new school, we are not addressing this question in the short-term. Long term, yes, we would expect to sell the current properties. However, that decision would be made by parish leadership and the diocese.

What other options were considered for the school?

In addition to purchasing surrounding homes, we considered many options including various building sites, renovating, even relocating to Saint John Vianney and not having a school. Taking into consideration economic, societal, demographic and diocesan trends, a master plan for a combined church and school on a single Bettendorf campus in the growth area was determined to be the best option.

What would be the estimated project debt incurred for this project? How would it be divided between the parishes and the diocese?

Up to 40 percent of the project's overall cost could be financed. Whatever debt is incurred will be borne by the combined parish entity. The diocese must approve the debt, but it is not responsible for the debt. We absolutely want to minimize the debt.



Other than the current market value of the OLOL complex, what other assets of both parishes would be used to fund the project?

Our Lady of Lourdes received an estate gift of \$2 million from the estate of Jim Victor. One million dollars went toward the purchase of the new property, and \$1 million will go toward the campaign for the new building. Our Lady of Lourdes has set aside some extra funds to begin the process.

Additionally, the land that was ultimately purchased is larger than the need for the project, and the additional acres are an investment that can either be held for future development or sold later at a profit. In the meantime, the additional land will remain as rent-paying cropland.

What's the projection for long-term maintenance, and how will it be funded?

While specific numbers aren't available, it is reasonable to expect that a newer facility will be more energy efficient and require less maintenance than current structures, especially in the short-term. Even before construction of the new school is completed, the newly formed Scott County Catholic School System will lease our education facilities and fund long-term maintenance through tuition and parish assessments.

How did we "size" the various classrooms, childcare and Pre-K areas? Do they meet or exceed our needs and approved standards?

The classroom sizes meet standard requirements, are on par with Pleasant Valley district standards, and are larger than what Lourdes Catholic School has currently.

The original plan was to fit on 25 acres. Is that still the plan, and could some of the 65 acres purchased remain as rent-paying cropland?

As the long-range plan for the parishes and the diocese became clearer, it became apparent that a 25-acre site would not provide the space needed to grow the school and eventual church. Until we break ground to prepare the site for construction, it will remain rent-paying cropland. Once we break ground for the new school, keeping a portion of the property available to rent is an option we are considering.

What are the current and projected enrollment trends in the diocesan Catholic schools?

Catholic News Agency recently reported that, prior to COVID-19 restrictions, Catholic school enrollment nationally was trending down 2% to 3% annually. That rate more than doubled during the pandemic. However, after returning to in-person learning, enrollment in Catholic schools began trending toward pre-pandemic numbers and continues to grow – in some areas, at rates higher than the pre-pandemic, downward trends.ⁱ

Trends in Scott County Catholic K-8 schools show similar patterns: Pre-pandemic enrollment trending down, sharp declines during the pandemic, and post-pandemic enrollment trending upward: Given this context, it's noteworthy that enrollment at Lourdes Catholic school remained relatively steady during this same time frame.ⁱⁱ

The opportunity for maintaining that trend in the new Bettendorf Catholic school is even greater now that the Iowa state legislature has approved Educational Savings Account (ESA) grants for students attending private and parochial schools at the same time a growing number of parents that desire an alternative to public schools.



A Campaign for the New Bettendorf Catholic School



We're facing fewer parishioners and fewer priests, but is a new school the best source of evangelization?

Yes! Without a Catholic school that offers non-Catholic/Christian parents a choice, it becomes more challenging to introduce the Christian faith to students and parents who are not Catholic. Sure, there are other avenues and ways to give witness to the Gospel, and we should use them. But Catholic education remains one the most effective outreach tools the Church has for making disciples. It equips young Catholics to live out their faith, and it helps non-Catholics experience the love of Christ in how teachers nurture their children and in how the parish ministers to the community and its families.

ⁱ <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/252491/catholic-schools-are-booming-new-ewtn-poll-sheds-light-on-possible-reasons>

ⁱⁱ Enrollment data from Scott County Catholic School System