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## St. Perpetua community breaks ground on new social center

By Pippa Fisher



Members of the St. Perpetua community at the Nov. 12 groundbreaking ceremony kick off the new construction, from left: Pat Fela, Kelly Daggs, Ruben Galindo, Kathleen Radecke, the Rev. John Kasper, Bruce Brady, Rick Bruzzone, Karen Goodshaw, Peter Heiskell and Jim Hogan. Photo Pippa Fisher

After 65 years St. Perpetua's Church in Lafayette will be realizing its dream of a beautiful new 10,500 square foot community center, roughly three times the size of the old one.

Following the demolition of the old church hall, witnessed a couple of weeks earlier by about 260 enthralled students of the school that shares the same premises, the St. Perpetua community broke ground on Nov. 12 with much anticipation.

The new expanded facility will provide many benefits for the church and school and will be able to host many new events that had previously been impossible to consider in the old hall.

"The Catholic community of St. Perpetua is comprised of many wonderful people - those who have been members for decades and young families who are new to our area. Over the past 65 years the old hall had been the site of many community-building events. However, we were limited by the small size and outdated condition of the facility," commented the Rev. John Kasper, St. Perpetua pastor.

Longtime parishioner Monica Chappell says that she and her family are excited to see St. Perpetua Parish expand their facilities to include a much-needed social hall. "The sense of community a project of this size requires is truly inspiring."

And this is indeed a community effort. The design is the result of feedback and input over the past two and a half years from parishioners, parish and school staff, religious education leaders and all the many parish ministries.

Led by Kasper, a team of architects worked with the Parish Design Committee to plan the new facility which includes a great hall, a religious resource center, a commercial kitchen, storage areas, ADA bathrooms, a reception atrium and corridors and an outdoor patio. The new construction will adjoin the existing church, which is hidden away, nestled into the hillside on Hamlin Road in Lafayette.

Just as the community is largely responsible for the design, so too is the community raising the estimated \$7 million in cost for construction through a capital campaign supported significantly with nearly 400 pledges and gifts from both parish and school families. They continue to raise funds. Kasper says that while the Diocese of Oakland supports their efforts and provides a loan, the St. Perpetua community must raise all funds locally.

St. Perpetua School Principal Karen Goodshaw is looking forward to the new center too. "Our school community is thrilled to be partnering with our parish to make this community center a reality. We know that we will be able to improve the programs that we offer to our students in both the school and our faith formation programs with the addition of this new community center."

This particular project is the second phase of the St. Perpetua Master Plan inaugurated by the community over 15 years ago. The first phase was the renovation of the parish school about 12 years ago, a facility used both for St. Perpetua Catholic School (260+ students, K-8) and the faith formation program (350+ students, K-12). Construction is expected to take around 15 months to complete so Kasper says they are looking for a dedication date in late 2018 or early 2019.

"We'll be able to do so much more with and for our members to sustain and increase the great spirit that is the heart of our St. Perpetua community," says Kasper.

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