

A STEADFAST HOPE IN A NEW MILLENIUM (2000 – Present)

The members of the Eparchial Building Commission met with Thomas Kerns and Andrew Cheng, of Kerns Group Architects and the members of the parish building planning committee at the parish on September 18, 2000.

At the meeting two more criteria were articulated. Father Alan Borsuk, the chairman of the Eparchial Planning Committee, said the church should be designed to accommodate the parish for Christmas, Great Week and Easter but not be perceived as too large by the congregation at Sunday and holyday liturgies. Father Michael Mondik stated that the form of the church should follow its function in facilitating the Byzantine rite or ritual. Later, Bishop Pataki would add that a well-designed church is one in which all seven sacraments can be celebrated. The desire of the parish planning committee was that dedicated classrooms for catechesis for all ages be included in the lower level of the church as most appropriate since catechesis is part of the Liturgy of the Word. Previously, January 6, 1996, The Congregation of the Eastern Churches at the Vatican issued the *Instruction concerning the Application of the Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* which included a section containing directives for the proper construction of new churches. With the desire of the parish planning committee in 1992 to build a church that reflected the wooden churches of the Eparchy of Mukachevo as presented in the book of photographs by Florian Zapletal taken after World War I the guiding criteria were now fully presented to the architect.



Elmer Pekarik, a parishioner of Epiphany parish, was ordained a deacon January 13, 2001 and assigned for service to our parish.

Seminarian Scott Boghossian was assigned to Epiphany parish for his pastoral year in June, 2001. Scott would be ordained a deacon at our parish and a bus for parishioners went to Saint Michael Cathedral, Passaic, NJ for his ordination. He later celebrated a Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving at Epiphany Church.

Our parish witnessed the tragic attack on the Pentagon September 11, 2001. God spared our parishioners who worked at the Pentagon, and we prayed for those whose lives were lost.

Bishop Pataki signed the contact with Kerns Group Architects in 2002 to develop the schematic design, design development, and construction documents for the new church the founders had envisioned and for which they hoped and prayed and which many parishioners prayed, contributed to the building fund and worked at the fund raising events in order to raise the needed funds.

When John Kakalec, who had served as the chairman of the Parish Building planning committee, moved from the area in 2003 Don Springer was appointed as chairman in his place.

Peter Turko, a member of the parish, was accepted in the second Eparchial deacon formation class.

During the schematic design phase the parish planning committee sought the suggestions of cantors, the sacristan, the catechetical coordinator, and the clergy to provide a church that would address the requirements of the parish for worship and for the catechetical formation of children and adults.

Saint Thomas Sunday Agape Dinner, April 3, 2005 was the occasion for the presentation of the 100% complete schematic design to the parishioners by Thomas Kerns and Andrew Cheng and the financial presentation by Don Springer. A period followed for parishioners to ask questions.

The plans were submitted to Fairfax County for review to prepare for the hearing before the Land Commissioners in order to request rezoning and special exception to build at the residentially zoned parcels 3420 and 3424 Woodburn Road. In this the parish was assisted by Attorney Lynne Stroebel of Walsh, Collucci. Father John, Don Springer, John Onufrak and Andrew Cheng had meetings with Dr. Linda Q. Smyth, the Providence supervisor. Father John and Don Springer with Lynne Stroebel and Andrew Cheng met with the local civic associations: Woodburn, Camelot, Strathmeade Square and Woodburn Condominium Association to present the plan and to listen to the concerns of our neighbors.

Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning began their review procedures and Father John and Don Springer attended the all information sessions of the Staff representative along with Andrew Cheng.

After a lengthy and arduous review by Fairfax County Planning and Zoning, who's Staff required numerous adjustments to the plan as presented by the parish especially in location, exterior height, square footage, seating and number of classrooms, our parish application received Staff Recommendation February 19, 2006. The hearing before the Land Commissioners took place March 2, 2006. In addition to Father John and Lynne Stroebel, certain parishioners offered presentations for the record and one hundred ten parishioners who were in attendance were asked by Chairman Murphy to stand to have their presence acknowledged. The Commissioners unanimously approved the application.

Following the successful vote, Atty. Stroebel presented the proffers to Bishop Pataki for his signature. The application for rezoning and special exception was unanimously approved by Chairman Connelly and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors April 3, 2006.

After changes to the storm water management that were requested by members of the parish planning committee were made, Bishop Pataki was made aware of the cost estimate by Stan Lewicki, the cost estimator. The estimate revealed that because of increases in the price of goods, especially steel, the parish might not have the resources to complete the project as planned. Since the parish had already expended substantial funds it was determined that the parish would request Bishop Pataki to give Kerns Group Architects permission to proceed to produce two sets of construction documents: one a reduced plan with no bell tower and no lower

level for catechetical offices and classrooms, and one with those features included. Both plans would make use of cement board for the upper levels to save steel and of stamped asphalt instead of pavers that the county would accept as a substitute to their requirement of paving differentiation in the circle. This way the parish would not lose time and both sets could be bid by contractors.

At this time, Pope Benedict XVI accepted the retirement of Bishop Pataki and the parish waited for the installation of his successor. In April, 2008 Bishop William Skurla gave permission for the construction documents phase.



Bishop William Skurla

Because of the financial crisis, the complete project with the lower level and the bell tower became affordable but the completion of the classrooms had to be delayed for a period.

Don Springer spoke to a member of the Diocese of Arlington Office of Planning, Construction and Facilities for the list of contractors approved to work for the Diocese of Arlington. Three firms were selected and request for bids solicited.

In May, 2009 the bid by Miller Brothers Contractors was accepted by the Parish Planning Committee and this recommendation was sent to Bishop Skurla for his approval. Following legal review Bishop Skurla signed the contract in October, 2009.

The applications for the Building Permit and the Performance Bond was a lengthy administrative process requiring us to enlist the services of the Eparchial Insurance company, Althans Insurance Company, and was made more complicated when it was determined that because Fairfax County had required us to move the location of the proposed church, it now rested on the boundary of 3410 and 3420 Woodburn Road and on the utility easement.

Finally, the Building Permit was released by Fairfax County, the bond was issued, VDOT permit issued, the hazardous materials study done, tree preservation areas identified and demolition of the two houses accomplished in May 2010.



Planting the Cross.

Bishop Skurla blessed the foundation of the new church and with the assistance of the members of the parish planning committee planted the cross while representatives of the architectural firm, the contractors and the parish participated in the groundbreaking May 16, 2010 with the participation of over two hundred parishioners and guests and an honor guard of the Knights of Columbus.

At the festive banquet for that occasion, Bishop Skurla announced that one of our parishioners, Lewis Rabayda, had been accepted as a seminarian of the Eparchy of Passaic and would enroll at Ss. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The parish hosted a special visitor Saturday, June 6, 2010 when Archbishop Cyril Vasil, S.J. celebrated the Divine Liturgy. A reception in the parish center followed which provided parishioners with the opportunity to meet the Archbishop, the secretary for the Congregation of the Eastern Churches at the Vatican. As secretary, Archbishop Vasil, originally one of our priests of the Eparchy of Kosice, Slovakia, is the second highest official of the Eastern Catholic Churches at the Vatican. This was not the first time that our parish welcomed distinguished visitors from our churches in Europe. Bishop Milan Šašik, Bishop of Mukachevo and a successor of Blessed Theodore Romža, Bishop Jan Hirka and Metropolitan Archbishop Jan Babyak, S. J., both successors of Blessed Paul Gojdich, and Bishop Peter Rusnak of the Eparchy of Bratislava each celebrated the Divine Liturgy at Epiphany. In addition, the parish welcomed the seminary choirs of Blessed Theodore Romžha Theological Academy in 2007 and Blessed Paul Gojdich Seminary in 2011.



In front of the iconostasis in the temporary church. From left to right: Lewis Rabayda, Peter Turko, Msgr. George E. Dobes, Archbishop Cyril Vasil, Luke Naccash, Very Rev. John G. Basarab, Stephen Bell, John (Jack) Figel.

In reference to the church building effort, the Eparchial Finance Council required a project manager for the parish to insure the Eparchy's and parish's investment. Instead, two parishioners serving on the parish planning committee with degrees in engineering volunteered to serve as owner's representatives. The resumes of John Onufrak and Jack Figel were reviewed by the Finance Council and their proposal accepted, saving an estimated \$100,000.



Steel frame of the new church

Through the second half of 2010 and most of 2011 the construction continued. Bishop Skurla determined that the Eparchy would loan the parish the needed funds from its resources at a favorable rate. A church cannot be consecrated if it is not owned by the church so a loan from a bank or other financial lending institution would mean that the church could only be blessed and would have to await the retirement of the loan to have the consecration. Through the work of Bishop Skurla and members of the Eparchial Finance committee such as Bert Reimann, the funds for the loan were accumulated by the Eparchy for our loan.

The desired day for the consecration of the holy table and the church was set for Sunday, November 20, 2011. The relics of the martyrs, Blessed Bishop-martyr Theodore Romžha, Blessed Bishop-Martyr Paul Gojdich, Blessed Bishop-Martyr Basil Hopko, Blessed Priest-martyr Method Dominic Trčka, the Praetorian Prefect and Consul Martyr Florentius, the Martyr Felix, and the Holy Men and Women Martyrs of the Catacombs, were placed and sealed in the Holy Table. The Holy Table was washed and then anointed with chrism to consecrate it. On that day, the pastor and parishioners rejoiced at the beautiful design of Architect Thomas Kerns as rendered by Miller Brothers Contractors and we prayed that God bless them. The words of the psalmist were ours on that day:

I rejoiced when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

Psalm 122:1

We recall the sacrificial donations and labors of the parishioners who God inspired to want to build a church for His glory and for salvation of the human race despite all obstacles. Reading the history of the parish and especially the narrative of the desire and the work to build a church and even a reflection on the obstacles overcome to achieve this holy work, the word of God spoken through King David three millennia ago are verified:



Bishop Skurla anointing the Holy Table.

Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.

Psalm 127:1

On December 8th and 9th Epiphany parish hosted a special visitor, Bishop Milan Šašik, the Bishop of the Eparchy of Mukachevo. The inspiration church for the newly completed church had been Saint Nicholas Church, Husnyj, Transcarpathia, Ukraine, a church in the territory his eparchy.

At the Divine Liturgies on Sunday, December 9th, Bishop Milan complimented the parishioners on their beautiful new church and then asked them, "Why do we build churches?" Why did the parishioners of Epiphany parish pray, work and donate for so many years? Why do the parishioners of the mission work and pray dreaming of the time when they can have a church? He noted that the constitutive element of the Catholic Church, of the Church of Jesus Christ, from Pentecost, was not the New Testament, or the Creed, for these came later. It was that the apostles offered, and the disciples participated in, the Eucharistic Divine Liturgy and in the community prayers. We build churches



Bishop Milan at Epiphany with Father Zeyack.

to gather the clergy and faithful for the Divine Liturgy, the other sacraments and the prayer. He said that the completion of the new church was only the beginning of their work. Now the real work begins. Fill the church to allow people to meet Jesus who will assist them on their way to heaven.

So the work has now begun. When the Word of God is proclaimed in church God speaks to us. When the sacraments are offered in church Jesus, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, meets us to make us holy, to make us God-like. The history of God working in the lives of the Baptized continues at our parish. Come, join us.

Also, if you have any recollection or reminiscence to share from the remote past of recent events from the church or mission, please share it with us at epiphanyofourlord@verizon.net.