

# Collegiate parish plans to break ground on new chapel at OU

FROM STAFF REPORTS



This architect's rendering shows the new St. Thomas More University Parish and Student Center in Norman. [Image provided]

NORMAN — Almost 40 years after relocating from their first parish home on Boyd Street to what then, was the fairly barren southeast edge of the University of Oklahoma campus, St. Thomas More University Parish and Student Center will break ground on a new, larger chapel.

A groundbreaking ceremony will be at noon Sunday in the grassy lot just south of the parish's current location 100 Stinson St., at the corner of Jenkins Avenue and Stinson Street.

The Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, archbishop of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, and the Rev. James Goins, St. Thomas More's pastor, will join with parishioners, students, alumni and friends to celebrate the next major step toward meeting the needs of a rapidly growing Catholic community and parish.

"We have prayed for this day for some time," Goins said in a news release. "The population of OU Catholic students who are active in their faith and engaged in campus ministry grows every year, as does the number of families and individuals who support this parish. This is an overdue expansion and an exciting time for Catholics on campus and in Norman."

The new chapel will face Jenkins Avenue and be more visible to visitors who report driving up and down Jenkins looking for the campus' Catholic church. It will stand within blocks of more than 2,000 students living in the OU residence halls that now line the area. With the current sanctuary and atrium space being re-purposed for student study lounges, meeting rooms and a parish hall, the parish looks forward to welcoming both Catholic and non-Catholic students and community members to events and programs in addition accommodating larger Mass attendance.

"The response to our capital campaign, Our Faith Our Future, has been very generous, and we are ready to begin building, but we are still fundraising and inviting people who care about Catholic higher education and the Catholic ministry at OU to consider being a part of making all this happen," Goins said.

The groundbreaking will take place after 11 a.m. Mass, which will be celebrated by Coakley. A reception in the atrium of the current church will be held after the ceremony.

The public is invited to attend. Free parking will be available in the three St. Thomas More parking lots surrounding the church, but carpooling is suggested.

For more information about the groundbreaking, building project or giving or pledging to the parish's "Our Faith Our Future" campaign, call 321-0990 or go to [stm-ou.org](http://stm-ou.org).