

That's the spirit

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The Rev. Joseph Jacobi, pastor of Holy Spirit Catholic Church, shows the location where the parish's new \$8 million church building will be built at 1100 N Sara Road in Mustang. [Photo by Chris Landsberger, The Oklahoman]

Editor's note: This story is part of "How the West was Won," an ongoing series about houses of worship in the fast-growing western segment of the Oklahoma City metro area.

MUSTANG — A Catholic house of worship and the Canadian County city it calls home have both grown exponentially over the last 30 years.

Now, Holy Spirit parish is moving forward to address its growth with an \$8 million building project.

The church will host a groundbreaking ceremony on Sunday for a new permanent church building at its current location at 1100 N Sarah Road. The Rev. Joseph Jacobi said the project is expected to be completed by the end of 2019 or early 2020.

Holy Spirit began as a church plant led by the Rev. Larry B. Gatlin in 1983. Gatlin and his fledgling parish initially met in a Mustang funeral home then later moved to a rented store front in Mustang. In 1986, the congregation built a family life center that was meant to be only a temporary home for the church.

Thirty-six years later, Holy Spirit parish is bursting at the seams and Jacobi, the church's current pastor, is leading the way to build the new building adjacent to the family life center which has served parishioners all these years.

The priest said the church currently has more than 1,000 registered families and more than 1,000 attend four weekend Masses. However, he said the sanctuary in the current building only seats about 300 people.

The new church building will seat about 710 people with temporary overflow seating bringing seating to 800 total. Jacobi said the new building is being constructed so that the parish could eventually expand the structure to seat up to 1,300.

The clergyman said the church's current parish hall seats about 120 people so the church typically rents a big tent in order to hold many events and activities.

He said the current building will become the parish hall or family center, which is what it was originally designed to be.

The \$8 million project cost includes architectural fees and furnishings but does not include a new pipe organ or stained glass windows. Jacobi said the parish hopes to add those elements at a later date.

Growing together

Jacobi said the burgeoning parish's growth should come as no surprise to metro residents because Mustang is considered one of the fastest growing cities in Canadian County and the surrounding area.

He said that although the city is just 12 square miles, its school district encompasses a wider area. The area seems to draw people who want to feel like they live in the country while still within an urban core, Jacobi said, plus the school district is considered one of the best in the metro.

He said Holy Spirit draws Catholic families from Mustang but also other areas like Tuttle, Minco, south Oklahoma City, Blanchard, and Bridge Creek.

"We have more than 10 different high schools represented in our youth group," he said.

Also, the church has a growing Hispanic population, and one of its four weekend Masses is a Spanish Mass to accommodate these families.

Jacobi has previously led a church construction project at his former church, St. Eugene Catholic Church in The Village. He said that prior work has helped him with the current project but he gives a lot of credit for the project's progress to the Rev. Jim Greiner, Holy Spirit's former pastor, and to the church's parishioners. Jacobi was appointed to the church in 2014.

He said Greiner and Holy Spirit parishioners had raised some funds for the project over the years and had purchased the adjacent five acres of land where the new church will be built. He said the additional land brings the parish's total acreage to 15.

Jacobi said he had a special prayer created for parishioners to pray in regards to the building project and they have been faithful to lift the project up to the Lord for his blessing and guidance. The priest did the same thing at St. Eugene and he said it was well received there, just like at Holy Spirit.

Going on

Holy Spirit Festival & Groundbreaking Ceremony

When: Festival will be noon to 5 p.m. Groundbreaking ceremony will be at 2:30 p.m.

Where: Holy Spirit Catholic Church, 1100 N Sara Road, Mustang.