

Stillwater Catholic Community
Frequently Asked Questions regarding
the dedication, the new parish, and our path forward

When is the dedication of the new parish?

The new Saint Francis Xavier church will be dedicated by Bishop David Konderla on March 11, 2018 at 9am. Doors will open at 8 am.

Who can come to the dedication?

Anyone is welcome at our parish. For the dedication Mass, we are hoping that members of the Stillwater Catholic Community can have all available seating in the main body of the church. There will be overflow seating in the new parish hall. If you're not associated with the Stillwater community, we hope you'll join us for the Masses later in the day on March 11th or at any time after that.

Will there be other Masses that day?

Yes. Masses for the 4th Sunday of Lent will be at 3 pm Mass in English and at 5pm Mass in Spanish at the new church. There will also be a 5 pm Mass at Saint John the Evangelist.

Will there be enough seating at the dedication?

Unfortunately, no. The new church seats about 600 in the main body and another 120 in the choir loft. We have about 900 households in the Stillwater Catholic Community. We are planning to have overflow seating in the new parish hall with live-streamed video. We are planning to have two Masses later that day and an open house for the larger community at a future date.

How do I get a ticket to the dedication?

There are no tickets for the dedication. Seating will be first come, first serve. No seats may be saved at any time.

Will there be seating for the elderly and handicapped?

Yes. Seating will be set aside for our older parishioners and those for whom mobility is an issue. We're asking everyone who wishes to sit in this section to arrive for the dedication by 8:15 am in order to have a seat.

Will child care be provided?

Yes. Child care will be provided for the dedication starting at 8 am that morning.

Will there be enough parking? Is it accessible to the elderly and handicapped?

For the dedication, we encourage people to carpool, Uber, and arrive early to secure parking as adequate parking will be an issue for such a large event.

Some parking areas at the new church are a healthy walk to the church. In addition to marked parking places for the certified disabled located close to the church, we plan to

have golf cart service from the south parking areas to the church main entrance. In addition, there are drop-off areas close to the facility doors for the west, south, and east parking areas.

Will there be food after?

Yes. There will be a reception to follow with drinks and light fare served by the staff and students from St. John the Evangelist.

What should I expect at the dedication?

The dedication of a new church is a glorious event. It is Sunday Mass but with many rituals not in a regular Sunday Mass. The entire building will be blessed and there will be special readings for the dedication which are different from the 3rd Sunday of Lent on which the dedication takes place. There will be a lot of incense. We expect the Mass to last approximately 2.5 hours.

At the very end of the Mass, Father O'Brien will be installed by Bishop Konderla as the pastor of the new parish. This was delayed until the dedication to signify that he will be pastor of the whole community, whether a parishioner or family is coming from St. John the Evangelist or from St. Francis Xavier.

What should I wear?

As with any Sunday, we encourage you and your family to dress up!

What languages will be represented in the liturgy?

The majority of the Mass will be in English. The 2nd reading and the Gospel will be proclaimed in Spanish.

Can I visit the new church before the dedication?

On Saturday, March 3 at 10 am, we are hosting "Fill a Seat/Sneak a Peek". We're asking for everyone to come to the new church (711 N. Country Club Rd) to help us test out the building. We are testing the sound system and testing how the procedure will work for the distribution of Holy Communion during Sunday Masses. Families are encouraged to come. The event will last about 90 minutes.

I currently go to St. John and will be going to the new parish. What do I need to do?

Everyone new to the parish will be asked to register at St. Francis Xavier as members of the new parish. That involves filling out your information on paper or online. Sacramental records will remain at St. John. Financial records for what's been given in 2018 will remain at St. John. In early 2019, you will receive a financial statement from St. John for gifts through your transition to the new parish.

I currently go to St. Francis Xavier and will be going to the new parish. What do I need to do?

Everyone will be asked to register at St. Francis Xavier. If you have previously been a member of St. Francis Xavier on 6th Avenue, your financial records and sacramental

records will follow to the new parish but you will need to register nonetheless. Registration involves filling out your information on paper or online.

What will become of the current Saint Francis Xavier property and church?

At this time, much of the current St. Francis Xavier property will stay in our possession for the next 6-12 months. The west side of the property (the classroom building, parking lot, green space, and playground) have already been sold. That buyer has been wonderful to us, allowing us to continue to use the space through all the construction delays at the new parish.

The church, parking lot, and parish office will remain ours but will not be used for any sacramental activities. We are exploring several options as to what to do with the current church. Should the building be sold, we will have the opportunity to remove all those items that are important to the community (windows, shrines, statues, etc.). We are exploring multiple uses for the building.

When you say, " a new parish", what do you mean?

The Stillwater Catholic Community has a rich and diverse history. Over the 100+ years Catholics have been in Payne County, both St. Francis Xavier and St. John have undertaken many changes in leadership and in the buildings we use. Many long-time residents have, at different times in their lives, been part of both communities.

With the construction and dedication of the new parish, a new era is beginning in Stillwater. Saint John University Parish will be focusing on its original purpose, the sacramental care and evangelization of the Oklahoma State University graduate and undergraduate population. Under the leadership of Fr. Kerry Wakulich, St. John will be serving these students and their varied needs at that important time of life.

St. Francis Xavier, under the leadership of Fr. Brian O'Brien, will be focusing on the sacramental care and evangelization of the wider community in Stillwater and neighboring towns.

Anyone is welcome at either parish, but programs and Mass times will be geared towards the population each parish is called to serve.

When will the last Mass at the current St. Francis Xavier be?

The 5 pm Mass on Saturday March 10th, will be the final Mass at the current St. Francis Xavier church. That evening the church will be left open until 8 pm for anyone who wishes to visit, pray, or take pictures. At 8 pm the church will be locked and the Blessed Sacrament moved to St. John.

Are we doing anything else to help the transition?

Yes. There are several activities that have been planned by the Transition Committee which is composed of members of both St. John and St. Francis Xavier and chaired by our Parish Nurse, Brandi Bishop.

Beginning the weekend of February 10th and 11th, both St. John and St. Francis Xavier will be praying a "Thanksgiving Prayer for Blessings Received in this Holy Place." This will continue up through March 10th. Copies of the prayer will be in the pews.

On the weekend of March 3rd and 4th at Saint Francis Xavier, prayers of thanksgiving will be offered at the end of Mass for all the sacred items in the church that have served this community so well.

In addition, the weekend of March 3rd and 4th, Fr. Kerry and Fr. Lawrence will be offering "a blessing for departing parishioners" for anyone who wishes to receive it. This will take place at the end of Mass.

Finally, a memory book has been placed at both parishes as a way for parishioners and visitors to share important memories in their life and in the life of their family.

What will become of St. John's?

The ministry at St. John will become singularly focused on the graduate and undergraduate student population of Oklahoma State University. St. John University Parish will continue its regular Mass schedule and office hours schedule through the end of the Oklahoma State University school year, May 13, 2018.

One of the important outreaches of St. Francis Xavier will be St. John's. Knowing that many parishioners have a heart for the students, we want to provide many opportunities for everyone to assist the students in their walk with Christ and to do the work of the Church together.

We also anticipate that students from St. John will be active in the ministries at St. Francis Xavier. St. John students are already helping with our youth group and plans are being made for St. John students to do service projects at the new parish.

Financially, considerable improvements have been realized with the help of Matt Bond, the new Director of Development at St. John. With the startup of St. Francis Xavier, both parishes will experience some short-term challenges but adequate reserves are in place to maintain operations. St. Francis Xavier parishioners are encouraged to continue to support the ministry of St. John with the stewardship of their time, talent, and treasure.

What are the two Stillwater parishes currently doing together?

A lot! While not perfectly smooth, one of the reasons we expect this transition to go so well is that the two parishes have been working on so many things together for a long time. Here are a few examples of initiatives already underway with members from St. Francis Xavier and St. John:

- Stillwater Catholic Women
- Parish Pastoral Council
- Youth Choir
- Dedication Mass Choir

- Rectory Building Committee
- Youth Group/EDGE/LifeTeen
- Children's Religious Education
- First Holy Communion Class
- Confirmation Classes
- Youth Advisory Board
- Stewardship Committee
- Health and Wellness Ministry
- Adoration (takes place at both parishes)
- Knights of Columbus
- Shared Sunday bulletin
- Stephen Ministry
- Preschool Advisory Committee
- Transition Committee
- Mother Theresa Ministry
- Sunday Student Dinners
- Supporting OSU FOCUS Missionaries
- Shared 2018 Lenten Mission
- Both parishes gave \$150,000 to the building fund
- Weekly meeting of the pastors
- Our four deacons minister at both parishes and have for many years

With these initiatives already underway we have a firm foundation on which to build up even more initiatives to help the Catholic Church of Stillwater to grow.

Will there be Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at the new parish?

Yes! The new parish has a chapel specifically for easy access to the Blessed Sacrament. It has an outside access door that will allow parishioners and OSU students to take advantage of spending time with Our Lord whenever their schedule allows.

As we move in and get situated, a regular schedule will be developed for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (where the Eucharist is exposed in the monstrance).

Will Mass times stay the same at St. John?

Through the end of the 2017-18 school year, they will remain the same. The Sunday May 14th 11:30am Mass will be the final one in the month of May. St. John the Evangelist will close her doors from Sunday afternoon May 14th through Sunday June 2nd. During the summer, St. John's will offer a 10 am Sunday Mass only.

What will the Mass and Confession times be at the new parish?

Masses will be held Saturday at 5 pm, Sunday at 8 am, Sunday and 10 am, and Sunday at 1 pm in Spanish. Confessions will be offered before most Masses, from 3-4:30 on Saturdays, and from 5:30-6:30 on Wednesdays.

These times could change based on the needs of the new parish and the many people that will join the new parish. A survey will be conducted before any Mass time changes are decided upon.

Where will the priests live?

Father O'Brien will continue to live at the current St. Francis Xavier rectory on Hester. Father Kerry and Father Lawrence will continue to live in their residence off of 12th Avenue just a few miles from the OSU campus.

When the new rectory is complete, all Stillwater based priests will live together further signifying the unity of the Stillwater Catholic Community.

Designed by a committee of parishioners from St. Francis Xavier and St. John. The rectory is designed in anticipation of growth thus the need for more priests and our desire to host seminarians and possibly a retired priest who wishes to reside in Stillwater.

Design and construction on the new rectory is expected to take 18-24 months. No funds have yet been raised for the design or construction.

What will become of the current St. Francis Xavier rectory and CYO house?

Both will be sold. The CYO house will be put on the market immediately. The current St. Francis Xavier rectory will be sold when the new rectory is completed.

Is the new church totally complete?

No. As with almost all new construction, there will be punch lists for items needing attention, which our contractors will be working on for a number of weeks after the dedication.

There are also no stained-glass windows in the new church. In the years ahead, we plan to fundraise for these new windows and install them as they are completed.

As we go forward, many ideas will likely come forward for additions to the St. Francis Xavier campus. Father O'Brien will be putting together a committee to discuss long term plans for the available land and to discern any ideas that may develop.

Will the new parish have any debt?

Yes. On a nearly \$22,000,000 project, we have a debt of about \$350,000. We will work to pay that down as quickly as possible. Contributions to the building project are needed and encouraged both to pay down the debt and to cover expenses that have come up in the move.

Several pledges to the new church are to be given over the next several years so right now the debt is around \$1.8M that we are covering with a loan from the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma.

What is happening with the preschool?

The Preschool Advisory Committee has been meeting and is preparing to re-launch the preschool in August 2018. The classrooms at the new parish will be the home for the preschool. Our next steps include hiring a preschool director, developing materials for parents, planning an open house, and giving tours to prospective parents.

Are there future plans for expanding the new parish?

There are a lot of ideas floating around the community. We are planning to get moved in, get settled, and then look at what projects would come next. Father O'Brien plans to form a group that will look at various ideas that come forward before we launch into any plans.

Submit questions or comments

to frobrien@sfxstillwater.org or frwakulich@gmail.com