



ST. JOHN ARMENIAN CHURCH

# Renovation and Refurbishment Plan

September, 2021

# “Enter Into the Joy of Your Lord”

(Matthew 25:21)

As you walk into the sanctuary from the lobby, these words are written above the doors to our beautiful sanctuary. Indeed, when we enter into our sanctuary, we enter into a place of joy and relationship with our Lord.

For fifty-five years now, our sanctuary has been a place of both joy and sorrow. Our entire complex, including the sanctuary, is a testament to a 1,700-year-old legacy which has been passed down to this generation. For over sixty years, our entire complex has been a place of Christian fellowship, wedding receptions, baptismal receptions, memorial meals (hokejash-es), Christian education, cultural education, sporting events and many many other occasions.

It is now OUR time to renew our sanctuary and renovate our entire complex. As we approach this reality, we should be excited and do this with joy in our hearts. With the same joy and relationship we have with our Lord in our sanctuary, we need to embark on a renovation with Christian joy and gladness. It is truly my hope and prayer that as we renovate our complex, those who come after us will appreciate the hard work and also the joy with which we are embarking on this project. I hope that they will be the ones to truly enjoy the enhancements to our buildings and complex for decades to come.

Through Christ’s resurrection we have spiritual renewal and life. As Christians we are also called upon to be good stewards of our households. The first home we need to be stewards of is our spiritual home. I am looking forward to our physical (building) renewal as well as our spiritual renewal as we journey towards having joy in our Lord in His house.



Fr. Aren



**BUILDING FOR OUR FUTURE WHILE HONORING OUR PAST**

# Special Parish Assembly Chairman's Letter

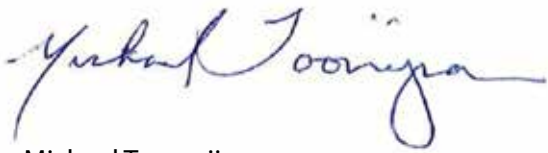
Dear Parishioners,

We are pleased to provide the following information to support your St. John Armenian Church Renovation decision. The renovation details were reviewed at the August 22, 2021 Town Hall and we were very pleased with the support and enthusiasm witnessed at that event. It is our hope that this enthusiasm will continue to grow after more people review the details of the renovation.

A video of the Town Hall was posted shortly after the meeting, to give parishioners who were not in attendance, the opportunity to hear the presentations. Presentation material, and other supporting written information, was made available on the St. John Armenian Church website to ensure our parishioners will have the best understanding of the renovation prior to voting. We will also have a table at the Bazaar where people can talk to members of the PC and Renovation Teams, in person, and obtain answers to their questions. Additionally, an email link ([sjacrenovation@gmail.com](mailto:sjacrenovation@gmail.com)) has been made available to further facilitate our ability to obtain feedback from the congregation. It has been our utmost desire to make certain that complete information has been made available, and easily accessible, to facilitate parishioner decision making prior to the Parish Assembly.

We hope that after reviewing the information contained in this booklet, you will be as excited as our team members who worked so diligently to present this plan to you. We hope that you will find it worthy of your "Yes" vote to lovingly provide our aging facility much needed updates.

Regards,



Michael Toomajian  
Parish Council Chairman  
St. John Armenian Church



**LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD**

# ST. JOHN ARMENIAN CHURCH

## Renovation and Refurbishment Plan

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### Renovation Committee and Professional Team

#### ST. JOHN ARMENIAN CHURCH RENOVATION COMMITTEE

Rev. Father Garabed Kochakian  
Annrae Anusbigian  
Howard Atesian  
Sara Sarkisian Bell  
Ann Marie Egigian  
Michael Kazarian  
James Leacock  
Janet Mardigian  
(Apostolic Society Liaison)  
Mark Mardirosian  
Nayiri Misirliyan  
Correne Akarakian  
(Parish Council Liaison)

#### *Past Members:*

Ara Atesian  
John Shekerjian

#### *Consulting:*

V. Rev. Father Aren Jebejian  
Rev. Father Armash Bagdasarian  
Dn. Rubik Mailian  
Paul Andonian

#### *Committee Members (longtime parishioners and volunteers)*

#### *Fields of Expertise:*

Architecture  
Design  
Liturgical Arts &  
Architecture  
Construction  
Property Development  
Restaurant Development  
Art  
Accessibility  
Museum Exhibit Design &  
Collection Management

#### RENOVATION PROJECT PROFESSIONAL TEAM

##### **McIntosh Poris Associates (MPA) – Architects**

The Parish Council retained the services of MPA to provide architectural services, advise and prepare interior design recommendations (ie. flooring, wall and ceiling treatments and other decorating / design issues and prepare specifications) and provide preliminary design, schematic design, design development and construction documents for the renovation plan. MPA is an award-winning architectural firm based in Birmingham, Michigan. Some of their other clients include Detroit Athletic Club, Ford Motor Company and Franklin Hills Country Club.

##### **Peter Basso Associates (PBA) – Engineering Illuminart Lighting Design (part of PBA)**

MPA requested mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) engineering services from PBA. They assessed the mechanical systems and proposed upgrades and/or changes for all areas impacted by the renovation plan. MPA requested lighting consultant services from Illuminart Lighting design to assess the lighting needs of the facility and campus and develop a lighting plan and schedule.

##### **Monahan Construction**

The Parish Council retained the services of Monahan Construction who is a general contractor to provide pre-construction services and construction management services to implement the renovation plan

# Renovation Plan Overview

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The renovation plan is aligned with the Parish Council's Visioning Strategy to serve all of you, in the best way possible, to enable all of us to better serve God. First and foremost, we are a church. It is our duty to serve God by delivering sacraments and improving the ability of our parishioners to serve Him through; worship, good works and by sustaining the church for future generations to do the same.

The following bullet points highlight some of the key priorities from our strategy.

- **PARISHIONERS**  
We want to create a warm, welcoming environment that inspires everyone to gather for worship, fellowship, Christian education and ministries.
- **VOLUNTEERS / STAKEHOLDERS**  
We want to improve conditions for all our volunteers who do such an amazing job donating their precious time and energy working to support the church – and hopefully, attract more volunteers to do the same. We also want an inviting space where our youth can spend time together for youth ministries and education (including updated classroom appearances, better technology in classrooms and meeting spaces and, per Town Hall feedback, a nursery).
- **LEGACY**  
We want to honor the legacy of those who came before us and built the Sanctuary and facility for our use all these past years. For all of us who have enjoyed using our church complex, it is time for us to “pay it forward” so our children and grandchildren can enjoy St. John Armenian Church for years to come. There is an old proverb that says, “the first generation builds it, the second generation maintains it and the third generation loses it” – we don’t want to be the generation that loses it.
- **MAINTENANCE**  
Our facility is 60 years old and its renovation is long overdue. We wouldn’t let our own homes go that long without an update. We can all agree that it’s even more important to care for God’s house. Even if we don’t renovate, we will still need to spend money to repair, update and refurbish our aging facility. We believe it’s best to roll those expenses into a renovation, in order to have a much better facility. Also, if we don’t renovate now, we will eventually need to renovate at some point in the future – it will likely cost the parish more money to do it later.

## Planning Process

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The steps that we followed to create this renovation / refurbishment plan are listed below:

1. Initially, Jim Berryman met with Church organizations and parishioners. He created an extensive report summarizing their desires. We are grateful for his steadfast and enthusiastic efforts.
2. Established a Renovation Committee, who in turn developed a master planning process. Refer to page 4 of this booklet for Committee members.
3. Interviewed and hired a professional team. Refer to page 4 of this booklet for details. When McIntosh Poris Associates (MPA) was hired, they began to research Armenian designs and had discussions with the Renovation Committee and clergy in order to better understand Armenian heritage, cultural and religious symbolism. In turn, they incorporated various Armenian symbols found in the Sanctuary into the renovation plan. For example, the ceiling design in the Cultural Hall picks up the design which appears on the face of the bema at the Altar. The pattern on the doors leading into the Cultural Hall is an Armenian motif. The design of the accent wall in the lobby (refer to the lobby rendering) is to be determined. For this and other design features an Armenian artist who is also an interior designer is being consulted.
4. Parish Council Reviews
5. Touchpoints with Apostolic Society
6. Touchpoints with Key Stakeholder Groups: Women’s Guild, Men’s Society, Youth Programming, Catering Committee, Komitas Choir, Sunday School, Manoogian Museum & Bookstore, Security Committee, Parish Administrator and Maintenance team
7. Parish Town Hall Presentation
8. Approval at Parish Assembly

## Benefits of the Plan

The following objectives guided the Renovation Committee in the development of the renovation and refurbishment plan:

1. Provide Better Experience for the Parishioners
2. Create a Timeless Design
3. Enhance Safety & Security (for parishioners, guests, administration and clergy)
4. Improve Income Generating Spaces for Both Parishioners and Outside Groups
5. Provide More Efficient Administrative Operations
6. Improve Conditions for The Choir
7. Enhance Classroom Experience

As a result, the renovation plan provides the following benefits to St. John Armenian Church parishioners, visitors and outside renters:

- New interior décor of the Cultural Hall, lobby, St. Vartan room, Flex Meeting room, Nursery, classrooms and corridors. This will include flooring, ceiling treatments, and wall treatments.
- Main Restrooms – significantly improved design and size of women's and men's main restrooms including new flooring, wall treatments, fixtures and lighting. Reconfiguration of the main restrooms to accommodate ADA requirements and improved function.
- New ADA single-stall family restroom for use by parishioners and visitors with visible and non-visible disabilities or special needs. The west entrance restrooms will also be updated with new finishes.
- Sanctuary – enhanced lighting design, refurbish pews, new carpeting
- Lighting improvements throughout the facility
- New Komitas Choir room on the main floor in close proximity to the Sanctuary for weekly choir practice, robe lockers, changing room and music storage. The choir room will be relocated from the Sanctuary basement for ease of access and convenience. It will also have a permanently located piano.
- New Tahlij (reception) room will provide a private space for parishioners for weddings, funerals and special events. The space will also be conducive for private priest and parishioner meetings and a possible church school classroom. Also, a space to greet and meet with visiting clergy and dignitaries and a supplement space to the Sanctuary Vestry for visiting clergy.
- New dedicated nursery room
- Audio/visual (AV) and information technology (IT) enhancements in gathering spaces including the Cultural Hall, St. Vartan room, Flex Meeting room and possibly the Sanctuary and classrooms (the Renovation Committee is in discussion with an AV Consultant to develop the plan and costs; NOTE: although these costs were not included in the make-up of the \$3.5 million, they are currently being developed and expect to contain them within the project budget).
- Acoustical improvements in the Cultural Hall, Sanctuary, and Flex Meeting room
- Improved design and function of the Parish Bookstore. A permanent bookstore located in the lobby will be able to display more merchandise in a more aesthetically pleasing environment.
- New dedicated meeting room for bible study, Church organizations and other groups. A large conference room which will seat a minimum of 20 people, includes a counter and large permanent display monitor for presentations. It is the intent that this room will remain set up for large groups, reducing staff workload due to repetitive setup and teardown tasks and operating costs.
- New storage room and reconfigured pantry for the St. Vartan Room.
- New storage room for the Women's Guild
- A Sunday School Classroom/Brides Room – A multi-use room that would function as a bride's changing and landing room as needed. It is across from the west entrance restrooms and away from the main lobby and circulation areas.
- New walk-in freezer and cooler (already installed). Improved workspace in the kitchen food prep area. Improved transition between the kitchen and cultural hall.
- Improved efficiency of main catering storage area (tables, chairs, supplies etc.)
- A new dry storage room outside of the kitchen to support kitchen operations. Food storage cages will be provided within the kitchen to support Women's Guild cooking requirements.
- Administration Offices – To increase operational efficiency, the administrative and clergy offices are located in a large contiguous space and/or in close proximity across the hall. The offices are located at the west lobby building entrance which will be used as the work week entrance to the facility and support security and access control objectives. The lobby entrance will remain the main entrance for weddings, baptisms, funerals and Sundays.

As a part of the potential improvements to the facility and campus, security and safety are of primary importance. Per the Security Committee recommendations, the plan will provide practical physical improvements and support the security protocols the Church adopts. The Plan has considerations for controlling and limiting access points, installing an access control and monitoring system and includes such features as security film on entry point glass and a security station and/or desk area. The Committee toured Temple Beth-El, a place of worship with similar programic elements to our facility, that has developed innovative security solutions with leading-edge technology.

Aesthetic improvements to the common spaces, including the Cultural Hall and other auxiliary spaces, such as the St. Vartan and Flex Meeting rooms, will enhance the experience for the parishioners and may also allow for greater income derived from the improved spaces. It is important to restate that the improvements to the Cultural Building are first and foremost conceived for the benefit of the parishioners. We have not factored additional revenue generation into the plan, but acknowledge it is a likely outcome.

### Cost of the Plan

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Financial Information related to the Renovation and Refurbishment Plan will be provided to St. John steward donors of record during the week of October 4.

## Renovation Plan Renderings

1. Please keep in mind that the Church's interior furnishings are not reflected in these renderings, including paintings and memorials. There is a sub-committee within the Renovation Committee that will determine location of final interior appointments.



**CURRENT**

2. Furniture presented in the renderings is for sense of scale only, and does not reflect the Church's actual furniture.

## Renovation Plan Layout

1. It's a natural part of any design process that the layout plans and details may be fine-tuned as the project nears completion. We plan to post project updates to the Church website.
2. An artistic feature wall is being developed in the lobby.



**RENDERING**



**CURRENT**



**RENDERING**

## Lobby to Cultural Hall and Sanctuary



## PHOTO GALLERY



Cultural Hall



## PHOTO GALLERY



St. Vartan Room





RENDERING



RENDERING

Cultural Hall and Tahlij Room



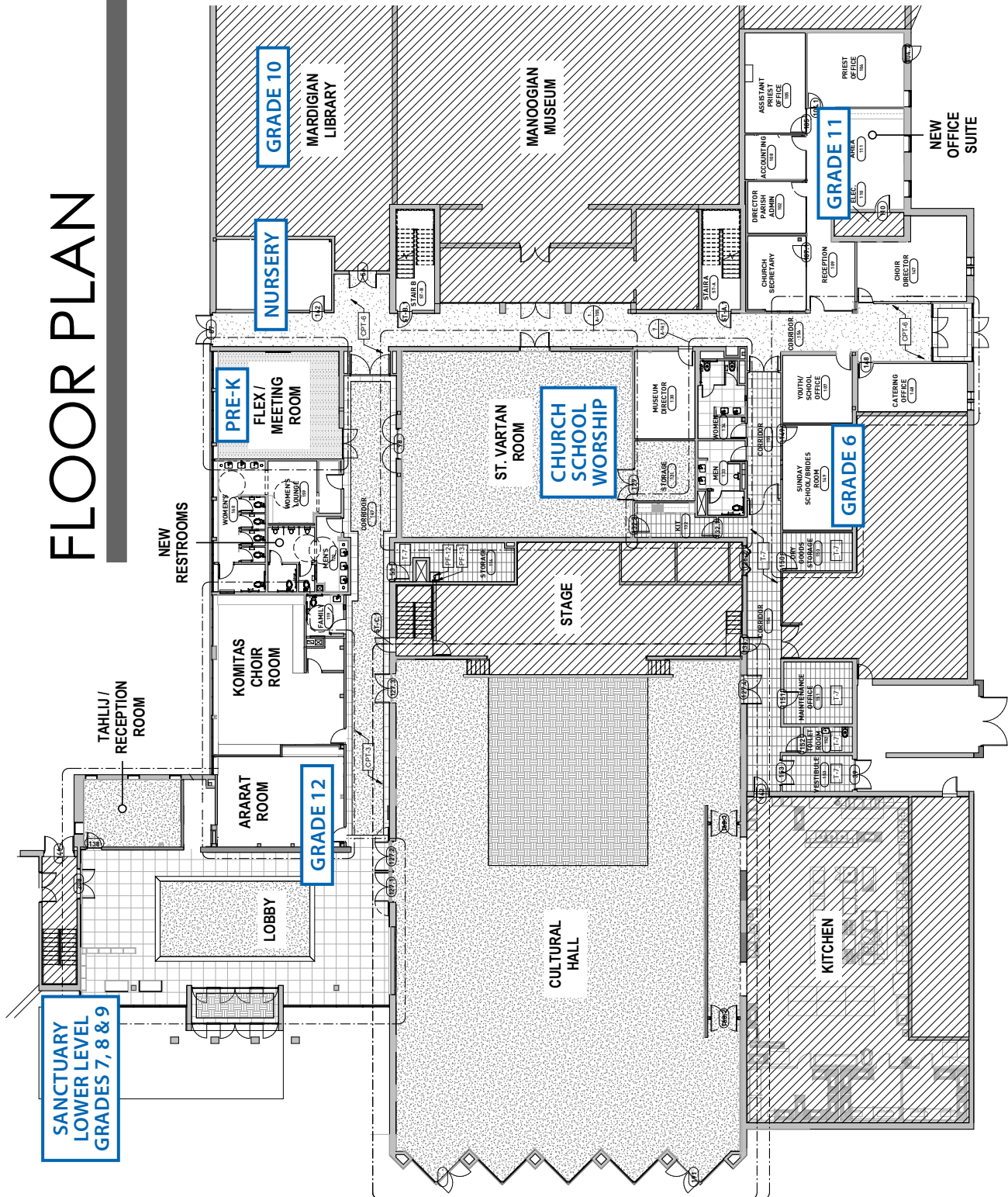
PHOTO GALLERY



Women's Restroom and Lounge



# FLOOR PLAN



## Funding the Renovation Plan

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Financial Information related to the Renovation and Refurbishment Plan will be provided to St. John steward donors of record during the week of October 4.

We need to be certain that we have adequate reserves to ensure the church survives (and thrives) to continue serving God and His ministries – while also remembering that we are not an investment bank whose success is measured by wealth accumulation. The following reasons explain the Parish Council's rationale, regarding our ability to invest the funds in this Renovation and Refurbishment Plan:

1. The goal of the renovation is to help us better serve God, by improving our Church (His House) and enabling our parishioners, volunteers and youth to better serve Him.
2. The expenditures are prudent given our present level of available funds. Even in a disaster scenario, where we have a severe recession, and zero revenues, we would still have enough reserves to continue operations for over 2.5 years. (The worst recession, in the past 50 years, was 2.5 years long – the other 8 were less than 1.5 years long.) Also, as we have witnessed, our parishioners have been generous, even in the face of a global pandemic – the likes of which hasn't been seen in 100 years. We believe that even in the worst of times, some of our parishioners would still be willing to support the church (even in the Great Depression, 75% of people were employed). Therefore, the zero-revenue assumption is extreme. Under a more realistic assumption, with only 50% of our normal income, we could operate for 4–5 years.
3. We were conservative in our estimate of parishioner contributions toward renovation costs (at \$400K). We benchmarked another parish's renovation who, with half as many parishioners, received three times as much. We believe that many of us, who have been grateful for having used the facility for so many years, will want to help "pay it forward" for future generations. Remember that the annual Dues/Stewardship contributions only cover about 25% of the annual cost to run our church – the renovation costs were not part of the annual budget (something to consider for future budgets!).
4. In the time that we first began evaluating our renovation needs, God has blessed us with gains in our investment account that cover most of the renovation expenses.
5. We have not assumed any increased revenues from improving the appearance of our banquet hall and facility. (Likewise, we haven't assumed a decrease in revenues due to our facility continuing to age and becoming less desirable.) Note: the church we benchmarked doubled their rental income after their renovation.
6. If we don't renovate now, we will still need to renovate the building at some point in the future. The longer we wait to do it, the more it will likely cost our parishioners. Also, the longer we wait, the more money we will need to spend updating, repairing and refurbishing the existing structure, just to keep it looking presentable.
7. We can't guarantee that the renovation will result in more people returning to Church. However, we can be fairly certain that not renovating won't do anything to help that cause.
8. The Renovation is an investment (a long-term investment in our future!) not just a "cost". (If you divide our renovation cost by 30 years – or the 60 years it has taken to start this renovation – it is a very reasonable expenditure.) The Renovation will make the church a better place for Worshipers, Sunday School Students, the Choir, Volunteers, Weddings, Church Meetings, Security and all the other things we value in serving God.

# Renovation Plan Approval

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## Next Steps – Special Parish Assembly Meeting

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In a separate communication forthcoming, we will outline the required next steps to move this project forward. We will outline the guidelines and agenda of a required Special Parish Assembly meeting. The main purpose of the meeting will be to take a vote to approve the plan as outlined.

### THE VOTE

When we gather for the Special Parish Assembly – Renovation Plan meeting, the ballot will contain the following proposal:

“St. John Armenian Church to move forward with a renovation and refurbishment project as previously presented by the Parish Council at the August 22nd Town Hall Meeting as well as in the September, 2021 Renovation and Refurbishment Plan booklet. St. John Armenian Church will limit the expenditure of church asset funds to a cost not to exceed \$XX.”

**Yes or No**

### AFTER THE VOTE

The Parish Council, in addition to the Renovation Committee, has and continues to conscientiously monitor this project very closely. Project financials will be presented to the parish on a quarterly basis. Regular project updates will be made to Parish Council by the Renovation Committee. We also plan to post project updates to the Church website.

It has been over two years since our parish embarked upon this journey to create these plans. Several design development stages were required to create this beautiful new design and address the many needs of our growing community.

As noted in our Town Hall meeting, none of this renovation plan is about any one individual. It's about what we are all doing, collectively, to help “Build Up the Body of Christ”. As in any project of this magnitude and type, trade-offs are inevitable. Much thought, discussion and time has been spent reviewing every level of detail by the Renovation Committee with MPA and Parish Council. Based on this, what is being put forth is the best overall plan while incorporating the desires of our auxiliary groups and community needs.

We have had many highly qualified people and professionals studying the best way to incorporate the wants and needs received from our church Stakeholders/Frequent Users of the facility. The Renovation process has taken years of intense study and debate and has culminated in the plan you will be voting on at the Special Parish Assembly.

We hope you agree that the plan is worthy of your “Yes” vote.

If you have any questions or comments, please email them to [sjacrenovation@gmail.com](mailto:sjacrenovation@gmail.com). Thank you.

