

May 5, 2014 General Assembly Approves Capital Campaign Funding!

In this article Father Andrew discusses the future plans adopted by the Spring General Assembly of Assumption Greek Orthodox Church in 2014.

Humble beginnings are a good thing to remember. One man sows and another reaps. Many have labored and others enter into that same labor. The blessings we all enjoy by being a participant in the life of Assumption exist today because of the labor of those in the past. Each generation has given its “gift” to make us and define us as we are now. The initial development of a Church and its supporting buildings mark a very special and unique time in each community’s history. To participate in these times was a frequent occurrence in the United States as Greek Orthodox Churches came into existence some 40, 50 or 75 years ago. The Assumption community is one of few today that mark the expansion of Orthodoxy in the West which Metropolitan Anthony envisioned. During his twenty-five years of ministry, he gave the blessings for twenty-five churches to be built and Assumption was one of his last before he died in 2004. Assumption was just a house on a vacant lot until October 28, 2001! We are now about to take our second most important step in completing the vision of Orthodoxy in Scottsdale!

On May 4, 2014, the Assumption General Assembly approved to move forward with fundraising for the updated Master Plan developed by the Building Committee which is chaired by Irene Clary. The next phase of the Master Plan is referred to as “Phase II.” The building of the church was Phase I. Phase II (pictured below) is an approximately 19,000 square foot building which consists of the following elements:

- Fellowship/Multi-purpose Hall – seats 412 (at tables), 800 theatre seating: 6,180 sq. ft.
- Commercial kitchen: 1,431 sq. ft. banquets, festivals
- A Café (837 sq. ft.) & Bookstore (400 sq. ft.)
- 7 classrooms (540 sq. ft.)/multi-purpose rooms
- 2-3 Offices & Conference Room/Library
- The current “Community Center/Office Building” will be re-purposed as a Youth Center

The updated Master Plan also includes a “Phase III ~ Future Expansion” (pictured below left) which is a one story, 16,500 square foot “Education Building.”

What is Our Vision for Building God’s Kingdom?

The Christian vision is to proclaim God’s Kingdom as the ultimate goal of all our actions, projects and aspirations as His chosen community.

- We are embarking upon creating structures that are meant for “God’s Business” and the proclamation of His Kingdom having come and being present in our Church.

- We are building facilities so that our children will have adequate space for learning and so that we can expand fellowship among ourselves and our neighbors.
- This means we are not going into the “Banquet Catering Business” in order to make money for the Church. We are creating a multi-purpose Community Center that can be used to raise money for charities and host outreach events (i.e. spiritual concerts, plays, seminars, Festivals etc.) to the community in order to bring them into the Orthodox Church.
- Likewise, the purpose of expanding our bookstore is to make it into an outreach center to deepen the faith of parishioners and to bring outsiders into the Orthodox Church.

How Does a Church Grow?

After considering our own past building project and the negative effects of debt, the Parish Council has affirmed two principles which will foster Church growth.

- Build only when funds are available – avoiding a mortgage
- Expand the ministry staff by adding a second priest/youth worker

Simply put, there are many aspects of ministry being left undone or overlooked because of the limitations on the current staff.

- Expanding Ministry Staff is vital because it will allow us as a Church to meet the responsibilities for preparing couples properly for marriage, to offer adequate pre-baptismal counseling, pre-godparent classes, men groups, campus ministries, young adult ministries, and newly-married ministries.
- Additional staff would facilitate Church growth by ministering to a unique demographic.
- Additional staff would also facilitate church growth by training and developing parishioner leadership and new ministries.

What is a Capital Campaign?

A Capital Campaign is a professionally-managed process that utilizes parishioner leadership to help us achieve our vision and fundraising goal. It consists of stewardship education, development, communication of our vision and a spiritual challenge to prayerfully engage in making a decision to participate. A Capital Campaign culminates with parishioners making a three-year commitment to fulfill a pledge towards a Building Project.

Who is RSI Stewardship? **(www.rsistewardship.com)**

RSI stewardship is a Christian-based stewardship and Capital Campaign-managing resource company. The principles they employ are non-manipulative, Christ-centered and do not put the priest in the position of personally asking individuals to give. The basic approach is to engage parishioners in the meaning of the phrase, "Not equal gifts but equal sacrifice."

- RSI has worked with 10,000 Churches over the last 42 years including 12 Greek Orthodox Churches.
- Mark Blackmore, who was our first consultant, has been doing this for 18 years.
- He has worked with 160 communities and helped those churches collect over \$500,000,000.

Assumption Has Completed Two Capital Campaigns

In 1998, Assumption embarked on our first three-year Capital Campaign, "Building on Faith, Hope and Love" for the building of the new Church. This Campaign resulted in collecting \$1.1 million dollars from 100 families! It broke every record of giving at RSI; we raised over ten times our annual operating budget. In 2002, Assumption had another campaign which was a "Debt Reduction Campaign" to retire an \$800,000 mortgage. The Campaign collected over \$600,000 and with additional efforts the mortgage was retired on December 9, 2008.

Setting a Campaign Goal

Every Capital Campaign must have a substantive plan as a starting point. The Building Committee has worked extensively to provide us with a Master Plan that will meet our current needs as well as allow for future expansion. Based upon their work, the following proposed goals for our Capital Campaign have been made.

- Based upon current construction costs, to completely build phase II with furnishings and fixtures it will take an estimated cost of \$5,000,000
- To build just the "shell" and not completely furnish the building would be approximately \$3,500,000

Your Role?

The next step is the formation of the Capital Campaign committee which will involve almost everyone in the community. There will be a core group of leaders that once assembled will be the driving force of the Campaign. I'm asking each of you to prayerfully seek God's guidance as to your role in this process. There are critical times in a Church's history which define its future. We have been blessed by individuals of the past who came forward and gave sacrificially of their time and talents who have defined

who we are today. My prayer is that this legacy of service and sacrifice may continue to find new faces and new inspiration so as to continue to shape and define us as God's chosen people.

+ Fr. Andrew