



OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION
AMONG THE HURONS

**THIRD REPORT:
RESURRECTION**

Presented by: Paul L. Mullins, B.A., L.L.B.
APRIL 6TH, 2019

Our Lady of the Assumption Among the Hurons of Detroit

Third Report: Resurrection

1. It is with a sense of urgency that I write this Third Report. It has been ten years since Assumption Parish began a campaign to raise funds for a comprehensive restoration of the historic Assumption church. Assumption church has now been unoccupied for over five years. Basic maintenance has continued and minimal heating has been maintained. However, the building shows ongoing deterioration of the plaster with evidence of scaling of plaster that is falling from the walls to the floor in some areas. There is a distinct sense of abandonment, which is common in buildings that are unoccupied for many years.
2. The first Interim Report provided a comprehensive account of all of the events surrounding two unsuccessful fundraising campaigns. It described the factors that resulted in the transfer of the weekend celebrations, weddings, and funerals from Assumption church to Holy Name of Mary church in the fall of 2014.
3. The Second Report provided updated estimates for the restoration of Assumption church of \$17–26 million. An interim fundraising target of \$20 million was established. Al Quesnel pledged a donation of \$5 million, subject to being matched. At that time, \$1 million was committed from the Diocese of London and \$3.25 million was committed informally by various donors.
4. Another year of delay can add hundreds of thousands of dollars to the ultimate cost because of inflation and because of ongoing deterioration of the building.
5. The sense of urgency is compounded by the fact that the generous offer of \$5 million from Al Quesnel is going to expire in August 2019. In addition to matching, Al Quesnel requires firm costing and evidence that there will be sufficient money to complete the restoration.
6. Meetings have been held with over twenty potential donors. Several have declined to participate, while others have not yet decided because they need more complete information. Many more potential major donors still have to be contacted.
7. Many of these potential donors, all of whom are generous in their support of multiple worthwhile causes, have identified legitimate concerns. Most of the business people do not believe that it will cost \$20 million to restore Assumption church. Many prefer that the restoration be conducted under the direction of a local architect because they believe this will reduce the costs. There is a concern that enough money may not be raised to complete the project. There is a strong belief that, in order to justify saving this historic building, it must serve a public use beyond its function as a parish church. There is concern about the long-term viability of Assumption Parish and its ability to maintain Assumption church if it is restored.

8. The issue of what architect to use for the project has been the subject of ongoing discussions. Compliance with the Ontario Heritage Easement, and the specialized nature of restoration work drives the need to work with a firm that specializes in this area. Allan Avis enjoys the confidence of the Diocese based on his many years of experience working on heritage buildings. Allan Avis is exploring partnering with a local Windsor firm and has agreed to aim to reduce architectural costs by at least 25%. This could be a reduction of over \$600,000 of projected architectural costs.
9. Various ways to share the facilities with the public are being considered. Many donors have emphasized that this as an important factor to justify their support. It will also be the basis for requests to The City of Windsor, to The Gordie Howe Bridge Community Benefit Program, and to The Ambassador Bridge group of companies for donations.
10. A redesign of Rosary Chapel to create a more flexible space is being considered. This could include the creation of an Indigenous and French museum with display cases along the walls and flexible seating. Rosary Chapel could be designed to continue its use for the weekday Masses while also being available to serve as a gathering place after weekend masses. It could provide a meeting space for a variety of community groups. It could also be available to accommodate tourists, including bus tours, throughout the day.
11. A complete restoration requires a reconstruction of the Sacristy area between Assumption church and Rosary Chapel. This can be designed to provide public washrooms to meet the needs of both Assumption Parish and the public, including tourists and potential bus tours.
12. Another alternative would envision removing several pews from the back of Assumption church to create an historic display instead of using Rosary Chapel. Both the Rosary Chapel option and the display area within Assumption church would be consistent with honouring the commitment, made long ago, to provide 25% of the space for the Hurons to use in recognition of their donation of the land to Assumption Parish. They were not expected to pay “pew rent”.
13. The ability to maintain Assumption church, if it is restored, continues to concern potential donors. The restructuring of Assumption Parish by the consolidation of four former parishes has had a positive impact on Assumption Parish finances. The closure of Blessed Sacrament and St. Patrick churches has reduced operating costs significantly. Assumption Parish has operated with a surplus in each of the last five years. It has accumulated over \$900,000 in savings. There is a high degree of confidence that the parish can maintain Assumption church if it is restored.
14. The sale of Holy Name of Mary church would result in savings of over \$100,000 per annum because of the reduction in utilities, maintenance, snow removal, employee wages, insurance, and other expenses.

15. There are ongoing concerns about the need for a parish hall. Parish hall facilities are important for the operation of a healthy, vibrant parish. There are two primary functions for a parish hall. The first is the need for multiple meeting places for a great variety of parish services and functions, e.g. catechetics, Assumption Cares Outreach program, coffee socials after services, meetings for parish groups, etc. The second purpose is to provide a banquet hall to accommodate wedding receptions and other major events.
16. Several options are being considered to meet the parish hall needs – Rosary hall, flexible seating in Rosary Chapel, Orman Freed Commons, St. Vincent de Paul facilities, Holy Name of Mary hall, and Forrester High School. The City of Windsor has numerous banquet hall facilities, including two within the Assumption Family of parishes, i.e. St. Angela Merici and St. Alphonsus. It may be difficult to establish a business case for Assumption Parish to build and operate a banquet hall of its own.
17. After six weeks of effort to formalize the informal commitments of \$3.25 million of matching funds, some of these donors were raising new concerns and no new commitments were being received. A fresh approach needed to be considered. Three options were developed and a meeting with the Diocese was requested.

Option 1: Current Plan - continue the current plan to seek further firm donation commitments in order to reach the \$20 million goal before beginning any restoration.

Option 2: Phased Restoration - begin a phased restoration program based on existing funds currently available and proceed as further funding becomes available.

Option 3: Sell Assumption Church - abandon restoration efforts and put Assumption church and its property for sale while retaining Holy Name of Mary as the parish church.

18. **Option 1**
Continue the current fundraising effort with a \$20 million target. Potential donors who have declined, or have not yet formally committed, have raised the following issues or concerns:
 - they do not believe it will cost that much
 - they do not believe it will be possible to raise that much money
 - they are only willing to contribute to Assumption church itself, not a parish hall
 - they are concerned that the parish will not be able to maintain Assumption church in the future if it is restored
 - they do not believe Assumption church is needed. They believe Holy Name of Mary church can continue to meet the needs of the parish, with limited improvements
 - they require firm costing based on current estimates
 - there is a residue of distrust resulting from the prior campaigns
 - they are not convinced that the Diocese is actually committed to the restoration

19. Unless most of these concerns can be satisfied, this \$20 million goal is unlikely to be achieved based on the responses received from over twenty potential major donors. A combination of these concerns has prevented the formalizing of approximately one-half of the informal commitments indicated in the Second Report. We have been unable to complete the match for the \$5 million at this time.

20. **Option 2**

Begin restoration now with funds that are already on hand or firmly committed. The primary focus would be to stabilize Assumption church itself, with the intent of returning it to regular use as soon as possible. The restoration of Rosary Chapel, the reconstruction of the Sacristy, and a parish hall would be addressed in later phases.

21. **In order to determine the feasibility of this approach, current estimates were obtained from contractors/suppliers to address the items of highest priority. The priority is based on the need to stabilize the church, and to return it safely to regular use as quickly as possible. The scope of the work includes the following items:**

Foundation wall repairs	
Reinforcing roof structure	
Replacement of deteriorated floor joists	
Fireproofing boiler room(s)	
Asbestos remediation	
Upgrade alarm and exit lighting	
Replace domestic water supply	
Install new hot water heating system	
Remove redundant exterior electrical wiring	
New long-term roof (copper shingle)	
New fire alarm system	
Total Construction Budget	\$1,626,000
20% Contingency	325,000
Net HST on construction	62,000
Professional Fees, Disbursements & HST	<u>254,000</u>
	\$2,267,000

22. All of the work would be completed in compliance with Diocesan Policies and Procedures. These policies require the tendering of almost every element of the proposed work under the direction of an experienced, historical restoration architect. It would also require compliance with the Ontario Heritage Trust Easement, including preapproval by them of all significant components of the work. Once this work is finished, it is hoped that Assumption church might be able to host weekend celebrations while the brick and masonry work on the exterior of the church is being performed.

23. **Option 3**

Sell Assumption church and its property while continuing to provide minimal maintenance in the interim. It is assumed that ongoing maintenance and utility costs would be offset by parking lot revenues until the property is sold.

Holy Name of Mary church would require significant investment of over \$5 million based on the May 15, 2018 Condition Report. It would also require a rectory, parish offices, and an expanded parking lot. It is not likely there will be any outside sources of revenue.

Holy Name of Mary is located on the eastern boundary of the parish. Bussing is not available for the many parishioners from Sandwich who rely on public transit. Because it is located on a residential street, it does not receive priority for snow removal.

The sale of Assumption church would betray the legacy recognizing the centuries of service rendered by the Basilian priests, and by our French and Indigenous predecessors.

24. A meeting was held on January 31, 2019 with Bishop Fabbro, Diocesan officials, Fr. Restivo, pastor of Assumption Parish, Allan Avis, and myself where all three options were considered at length. A consensus was reached to apply to the Building and Loan Commission of the Diocese of London for approval of Option 2 to implement a plan for a phased restoration using funds that are currently available. It was agreed that current cost estimates should be obtained, and that the work would begin by installing a new copper shingle roof, which has a life expectancy of over 100 years. This roof would demonstrate the long-term commitment to Assumption church.

25. In preparation for the application to the Diocesan Building and Loan Commission, current price quotes were obtained from several consultants, engineers, and suppliers to confirm the condition of the essential components of Assumption church, to determine the scope of the work required, and to obtain current cost estimates.

26. A revised construction budget has now been determined. Provisions for the installation of a copper shingle roof and air conditioning have been added to the budget while architectural fees have been reduced by \$600,000. **The revised construction budget is \$14,574,000.** A 20% contingency allowance, professional fees, and HST results in a total budget of \$20 million. It is hoped that the contingency allowance of \$2.9 million will not be required.

27. **A further analysis of this construction budget shows:**

Assumption church	\$12,911,000
Rosary Chapel	257,000
Sacristy rebuild	<u>1,406,000</u>
Total Construction Costs	\$14,574,000

28. The Building and Loan Commission was requested at its February 28, 2019 meeting to grant approval to proceed with a phased restoration of Assumption church based on the following priorities:
 - i) work required to stabilize Assumption church, including installing a new copper shingle roof, complete asbestos remediation, and the installation of a new hot water heating system;
 - ii) testing of the ceiling plaster to be completed in March 2019, to determine if Assumption church is safe for occupancy;
 - iii) consolidation of the ceiling plaster, which is required to be completed prior to the restoration of the exterior brick and masonry work;
 - iv) if feasible, the plaster work could be completed this summer, prior to the installation of the new heating system. In the alternative, the church could be vacated in the summer of 2020 to perform this work. The intent would be to reopen Assumption church for regular services as soon as it is safe, and consistent with accommodating the restoration work;
 - v) fundraising efforts would continue with the target of \$20 million. This target is based on budgeted construction costs of \$14,574,000, plus 20% contingency provision, professional fees, and HST. The total funds committed to date are \$2,775,000. Several contributions of millions of dollars each are under serious discussion.
29. By letter from the Diocese of London dated March 1, 2019, Rev. Maurice Restivo, Pastor of Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, received the following decision:

"The Building and Loan Commission approved the parish to go ahead with Phase 1 of the project up to a cost of \$2,267,000 as detailed in paragraph 19 of the Draft Third Report, Version 4 that was distributed at the meeting. This approval is contingent on the parish having sufficient funds available to award the tender for this work."
30. The completion of both a new copper roof, the asbestos remediation, and a new heating system demonstrate the strong commitment of the Diocese of London to a restoration that will preserve Assumption church, this historic icon, for generations.
31. The second phase of the restoration requires that the plaster in the ceiling be consolidated to ensure its adherence to the lathes. This work involves applying a compound from inside the attic. Several applications of this compound are required. At the same time, scaffolding is required to ensure that any compound that may penetrate the exposed surface is removed immediately. The scaffolding required for plaster repairs can also provide the opportunity to restore the paintings on the ceilings.

32. This consolidation process will take several weeks during the summer months, at which time the church might not be able to be used. It is important that this consolidation of the plaster be completed prior to the commencement of the exterior brick and masonry work. The estimated budget cost is \$3 – 3.5 million.
33. An application to Ontario Heritage Trust for approval of the Phase 1 work has been submitted. Preliminary discussions have been positive and supportive, including for the copper roof.
34. Tenders for the roof and related work have been drafted and will be issued in a few days. Tenders have also been prepared for a construction manager and will be issued shortly to a list of at least six local, pre-qualified, commercial contractors. All Phase 1 work is scheduled to be completed by October 2019.
35. Of the \$2,775,000 committed over time, Assumption Parish has \$1,775,000 currently available for Phase 1. In order to satisfy the condition attached to the Building and Loan Commission approval, an additional \$482,000 is required before Assumption Parish can award all of the tenders for the approved work. In order to complete the match of Al Quesnel's \$5 million pledge, a further \$2,225,000 needs to be raised in cash or pledges.
36. The Phase 1 work that has been approved is designed to stabilize Assumption church. It is a significant first step toward the complete restoration of Assumption church and it is very exciting. However, the permanent return of regular services to Assumption church, and its complete restoration, remain dependent on the success of further fundraising.

ASSUMPTION CHURCH NEEDS YOUR HELP

For further information or to donate to the restoration of Assumption Church:

Assumption Parish	assumption@cogeco.net	519-253-2493
Paul Mullins	paulmullins@xplornet.com	519-982-3300

Donations can be made through <https://assumptionparish.ca>

Click the **DONATE HERE** banner at the top right corner of the website to link directly to our campaign on Canada Helps (canadahelps.org)

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Assumption Church	\$12,911,000
Rosary Chapel	\$257,000
Sacristy Rebuild	\$1,406,000
 Total Construction Costs	 \$14,574,000
 Grand Total (including contingencies, professional fees and HST)	 \$20,000,000

AL QUESNEL DONATION

Funds required to match Al Quesnel	\$5,000,000
Funds pledged	\$2,775,000
Balance required by July 31st, 2019	\$2,225,000

FINANCIAL NOTES

- Assumption Parish has accumulated \$991,000 in savings as of March 2019
- Returning to Assumption Church would result in operational expenses reduced by over \$100,000 per annum
- Alan Avis Architects have agreed to aim to reduce architectural costs by 25% (approximately \$600,000)

PHASE I FINANCES

Budget	\$2,267,000
Cash on hand	\$1,775,000
Cash required	\$482,000

ATTENDANCE

- 2014 to 2015 Decline
- 2016 to 2019 Increase

42.3%

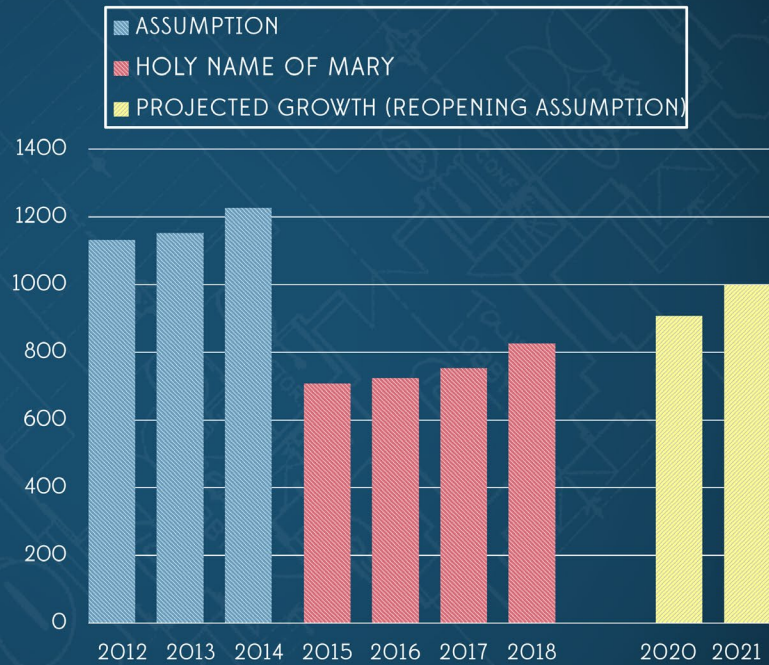
MASS ATTENDANCE DROP UPON
CLOSURE OF ASSUMPTION CHURCH
(2014 – 2015)

16.7%

MASS ATTENDANCE GROWTH
(2015 – 2018)

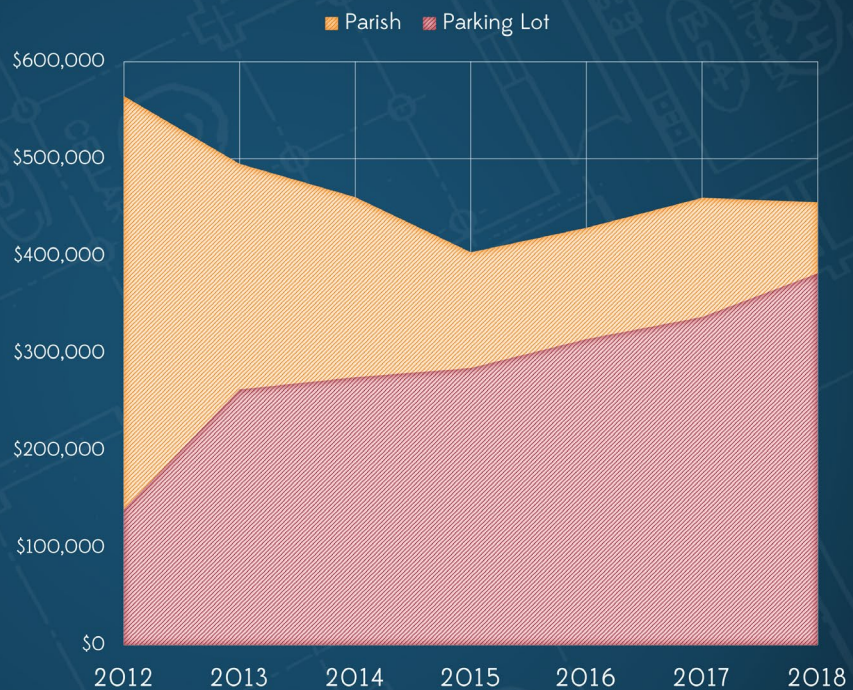
10.0%

PROJECTED GROWTH PER YEAR
(REOPENING ASSUMPTION CHURCH)

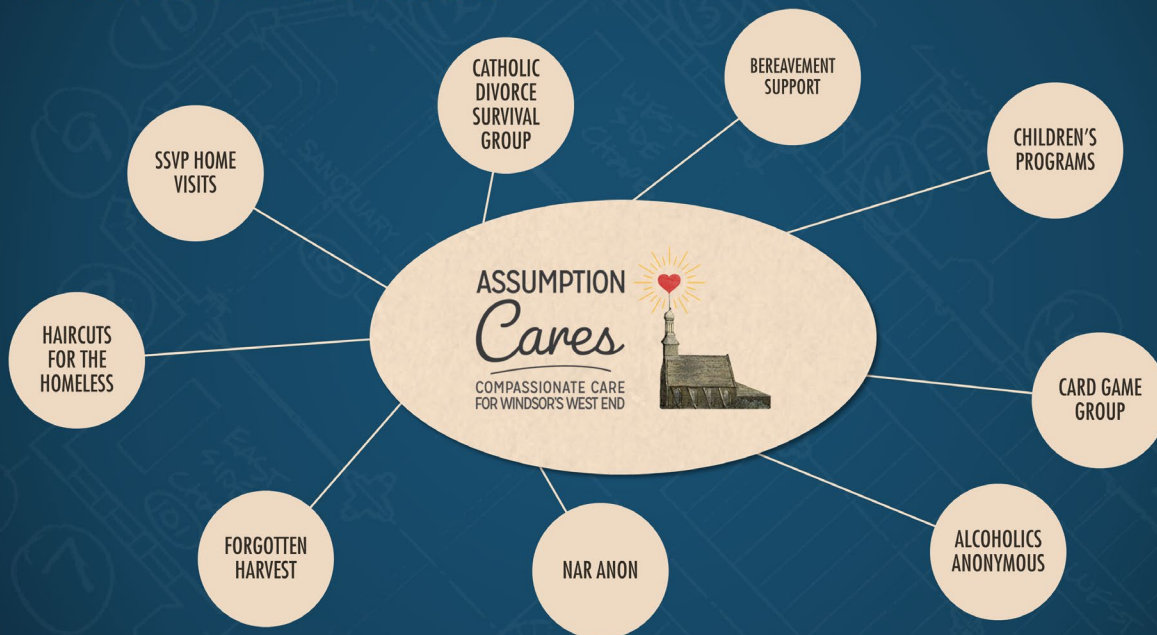


REVENUE

- Two revenue sources
 - Collections
 - Parking Lot
- Revenues declined upon moving to Holy Name Of Mary in 2015.
- Revenues have since recovered and are growing.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH



PHASE I Stabilization

IMMEDIATE

- Copper Roof
- Asbestos Remediation
- Foundation Repairs
- New Heating System

PHASE II Interior

- Ceiling Plaster Consolidation
- Ceiling Paint Restoration

PHASE III Exterior

- Brick/Masonry Restoration
- Stained Glass Restoration

PHASE IV Sacristy/Chapel

- Sacristy Rebuild
- Chapel Restoration

AS FUNDS BECOME AVAILABLE