



**THE PARISH PROPERTY** at the southwest corner of 60th and Lake Michigan Drive (M45) occupies approximately 14.5 acres and was sold to the Diocese of Grand Rapids in the early 1980's by Joe and Grace Ponshair (Dick & Jim's parents).

It is a small part of what was the Ponshair Fruit Farm, whose land has history dating back to the 1830's. The much larger fruit farm was purchased by the Ponshairs in 1944. [According to a history for the Allendale Historical Society penned by Jim Ponshair.]

At the time of its sale, it was certainly the desire and hope of the Ponshairs that the Diocese of Grand Rapids build a church building at that location.

This dream looked like would come to pass, in April 2007, when Bishop Walter Hurley called for the establishment of Saint Luke University Parish to be staffed by the Paulist Fathers. As indicated by its name, the parish would always be linked to both university and parish ministry and be reminded that it's mission was expansive, not simply parochial.

On Sunday night, August 26, 2007 at 4:30p.m. the work of the parish began with the first Mass on campus. The Catholic Campus Ministry office in room 120, in the Cook-DeWitt Center, which served students since 1991 was now part of St. Luke's ministry.

In September 2007 we began forming the parish community with information meetings held at Main Street Pub, in Allendale, and the Catholic Information Center, then on Ionia Street in Grand Rapids.

Sunday Masses in town began at Allendale Christian School on September 23, 2007. The first "in town" parish office was 6261-A Lake Michigan Drive, which we moved into on Monday,

February 4, 2008 with a ribbon cutting (just in time for Ash Wednesday Masses on February 6). This was our home office until January 2011.

After Christmas Masses in December 2010, 6163 Lake Michigan Drive became our full-time parish office center and worship space - where, of course we still are today.

One question has always been asked by parish leadership, "how do we connect parish and campus ministries better? With our slogan, "Two Ministries, One Parish" - you knew we'd have to come up with an answer.

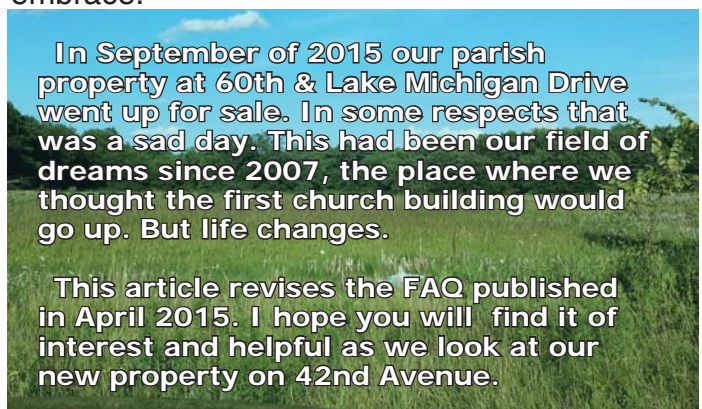
### **TWO MINISTRIES, ONE PARISH**

Until October 2014, the question of bringing together the parish and campus ministries was framed by how we could help the students get to the parish center and future church. The given was always the 60th & Lake Michigan Drive site in Allendale.

Parish leaders wondered about locations closer to campus, speculating what that might mean for student presence, but there were no properties that seemed to present themselves. When Bishop Walkowiak became Bishop I asked if he would help us with parish fundraising, and he said he would. He has taken an active interest in our parish project.

One of the great things about being Catholic is that we are not a congregational Church, we're bigger than that. It means we can do ministry locally, but it also means we are connected to both a bigger Church that can help us and that we are responsible to and for.

The Bishop and diocese have always helped St. Luke's to push forward locally, but their wider vision of ministry is also our own and one we embrace.



In September of 2015 our parish property at 60th & Lake Michigan Drive went up for sale. In some respects that was a sad day. This had been our field of dreams since 2007, the place where we thought the first church building would go up. But life changes.

This article revises the FAQ published in April 2015. I hope you will find it of interest and helpful as we look at our new property on 42nd Avenue.



In October 2014 Bishop Walkowiak and I talked about the parish and he expressed an interest that we be closer to campus. Later that month I joined him and two others to look around for properties closer to GVSU.

In February 2015, Fr. Chuck and I were invited down to Cathedral Square where we were presented with the diocese's plan to acquire property on 42nd Avenue that was being divided and sold by a private owner.

The new property, at 10144 42nd Avenue, is just south of GVSU; past the South Apartments, and across the street (east) from the new Campus View Cottages. Approximately 16 acres, it is comparable in size to our existing property, but obviously much closer to campus.

Behind the scenes, the diocese was negotiating for the sale of the property, doing due diligence, revising plans and investigating if acquisition was feasible. On April 15, 2015 a site plan was presented to the Georgetown Township Planning Commission, where it was disclosed that the property was being sought for the future site of St. Luke University Parish. The commission approved development of the site plan.

The diocese continued due diligence, preparing for a closing date at the end of May, but the actual closing did not happen until the end of July.

The property includes wetlands, and concerns for drainage in harmony with GVSU plans, as well

as other environmental impacts which needed to be studied and prepared.

The diocese, along with Integrated Architecture, Erhardt Construction and other companies continued to work with the various governmental agencies to develop plans that would work for our site.



### Changes in Master Plan

Our first building plans in 2009, included a simple squarish office-type building that would connect into future phases with a projected cost of \$3,000,000. After we moved in to our 6163 building (the current space), we realized the new building would need other facilities and a more interesting facade. The reworked design took the price tag up to \$4,000,000.

The current plan is an enlarged version of that building, plus a rectory. The projected cost is near \$9,000,000.

The new location means a larger building because people will come from campus. We need to build a building that realistically meets our many different needs: worship, education, meeting, social, food pantry/outreach, storage, office,

maintenance and even nursery spaces to accommodate all of our parish constituencies. Hence the higher cost.

The 13,000 square foot building is still not huge, but is designed to be Flexible, enabling us to make good use of limited space. The new site brings a more unique direction to church design, making it of more interest to our donors (alumni, parents, benefactors, other parishes), as our ministry to campus expands its reach and goals.

The highlights of our last capital campaign for the parish were a 70+% participation and an average gift of \$3,000/household. What we missed were large gifts/donors in the over \$50,000 range.

Since November 2015, the new parish buildings have been under construction. It is a great joy to be looking to the near future and a possible completion date in December 2016.

While it has been difficult to let go of the 60th & M45 site and its legacy and history in the community, it has been easy to embrace our new location, and realize a building that better brings the parish ministries closer together as we develop the ongoing mission of St. Luke University parish.

May God bless us all as we discern our gifts, abilities and calls to serve the Church in Western Michigan and beyond.

*Fr. Brad Schoeberle, CSP Revised 6/7/2016*

