

## **St. Mary of the Knobs Catholic Church Floyds Knobs, IN**

St. Mary of the Knobs (SMK) parish had outgrown its church facility. Built in 1906 for 160 families, by 2005 the facility was serving more than 1,000 families. It was clear to the parish leaders that they needed a new church building. Pat Byrne, one of four campaign co-chairs explained, "With the growth of our school and church ministries and our future needs we knew the current facilities could not accommodate us. We had to act."

Initially parish leaders had considered another consulting firm to help with the campaign. However, after one informational meeting with The Covenant Group they made their decision. Father John Geis, Pastor at SMK reflected, "The Covenant Group inspired us from the beginning. We saw it the first night we met with them. They were excited about our campaign." Father John explained further, "We didn't want a firm to come in, train our volunteers and then leave. The Covenant Group was there working alongside us throughout the whole process."

Byrne credits the pre-campaign planning process of The Covenant Group as a key to the campaign's success. "The feasibility study and the focus groups were invaluable," said Pat. "They helped us listen to our members, determine the needs and priorities and communicate openly." The feasibility study revealed that \$5 - \$6.5 million (at the high end) could be raised, but the parish needed both a worship center and a multi-purpose facility with a total estimated cost of \$8.3 million. The Covenant Group suggested putting the full project in front of the parish, even though it was a significant stretch knowing that the projects could always be phased. Campaign Co-Chair Gary Libs added, "The Covenant Group process gave us the tools to communicate and showed us how to get people on board."

Thus far, contributions total nearly \$8.6 million, with additional pledges coming in daily. Pat Byrne recalled, "No one anticipated we could raise this amount. Even the Archdiocese is surprised. The funds raised represent 13 times our annual giving. But it's not just the financial results." All of the Co-Chairs commented on the positive impact the campaign has had on the parish. Bill Sprigler noted that the church is more unified. "People are not in a hurry to leave church. They stand around talking more than they did before the campaign." Father John adds that he has seen families return to the church that had stopped attending and he feels "a renewed and energized spirit among the staff." Libs called the campaign, "the most exciting thing to happen in our parish in the last 100 years."

Father John and each of the Co-chairs enthusiastically affirmed that they would unequivocally recommend The Covenant Group to other churches seeking campaign counsel. Gary Libs concluded, "The Covenant Group is superior in their profession."