



Saint André Bessette Parish

St. Rose of Lima, Fall River – St. Bernard, Enfield – Holy Cross, Middle Musquodoboit

November 15, 2023

Dear Parishioners:

This note is intended to provide you with an update on the St. Bernard church building assessment, which was undertaken in March 2023 on behalf of the Diocese. The report was issued in May 2023. The report states that both the church and the rectory buildings are structurally sound but recommends that extensive repairs are required both in the immediate near term and over the next 20 years. Costs of the required upgrades are estimated to be at least \$500,000 in the next 10 years.

Over the summer and fall, the Parish Leadership Team pondered the report to determine next steps. The conclusion reached is that we should first focus on the church because our liturgical celebrations should be the number one priority. Discernment on how to proceed with the rectory building is being deferred for now.

Immediate repairs to the church are necessary, including windows, siding, ceiling insulation and heat pumps. Further repairs are required by 2026, including furnaces and electrical system. The cost of these works are estimated to be over \$200,000. We are currently uncertain as to how this significant amount of funding can be put in place. There are fundraising initiatives underway; however, these will not meet the significant funding needs within the identified timelines. At this point, we have reached out to the Diocese, seeking advice and any potential assistance.

The 2023 recommended repairs should be undertaken as soon as possible and then we will explore the 2026 repairs. We have established a small building committee tasked with prioritizing the necessary repairs so that we can determine how to launch this project and proceed. However, the committee is small, and we need more help to make the right decisions. We are appealing to those who have experience in this area to assist by sharing their insights on how best to proceed. We realize and respect that you have time commitments. With that in mind, we are inviting you to participate in the committee planning work as you are able. If you have some time to share your experience in an area of this project, please contact me or a member of the parish leadership team.

Discerning the priorities of safe keeping our physical spaces must be balanced with our responsibility to ensure that the Mission of the Church continues. We must continue to focus on faith formation, building the Domestic Church, meeting the spiritual needs of the community, and supporting the needy within the wider community.

I hope that this is a satisfactory explanation on the status of the St. Bernard building assessment, but if you have any questions, please contact me or any member of the Parish Leadership team.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Gerald David, Pastor and the Parish Leadership Team
Deacon Dan Bowden, Sarah White, Phil Francis and Shannon McDonald