

One Church virtual event to show needs at Hamburg church

written by Malea Hargett |



One Church support for Holy Spirit Church in Hamburg didn't go as planned, but the parish is partnering with St. Joseph Church in Conway this month in a virtual event to highlight needs of the southeast Arkansas mission.

"We had plans for the spring of doing some work on the building together with St. Joseph in Conway and Our Lady of the Lake in Lake Village, but COVID-19 interrupted those plans," pastor Father Stephen Hart said. "We had also been hoping to have a health fair of some kind this month in partnership with the Christ the King Mission (in Little Rock), but again, COVID derailed things for us."

The Diocese of Little Rock started One Church in 2018 to give mission churches a one-time boost toward becoming a thriving community.

On Saturday, Aug. 29, St. Joseph Church will host a virtual event beginning at 7 p.m. on the parish Facebook page and the parish website, sjparish.org. Donations can be mailed to St. Joseph Church or made online at dolr.org/one-church.

Greg Wolfe, diocesan finance director, said \$67,950.22 has been raised for One Church since Sept. 1, 2019. All funds raised go toward paying down Holy Spirit's mortgage. The church still owes \$152,000 on the church building completed in 2013.

The parish received an anonymous \$10,000 donation more than a year ago to help with its debt. After reviewing the parish finances, Father Hart said the parish also has been able to pay

off more of its debt by increasing its monthly mortgage payment by 30 percent.

“Our long-term goal is to build up a better culture of tithing and financial stewardship in the parish in order to address any remaining debt,” he said. “I know that potential is there, even while I’m not sure how many dollars and cents that would translate to.”

Father Hart has said when the parish is debt free it would have more resources to put toward ministries. The church has one Sunday afternoon Mass in Spanish for its 60 families.

Because One Church donations are lower than hoped for, Father Hart said he is grateful to St. Joseph Church for hosting the online fundraiser.

Joe Cordero, St. Joseph Mission Committee member, was planning to host an in-person gala for One Church in May.

“This was going to be a big event and the whole diocese was going to be invited,” he said.

Cordero is the committee’s regional outreach coordinator and looks for ways to help other Catholic churches in the state. For years the parish helped St. Luke Church in Warren with minor repairs before its move into a new building in 2019.

The online event will feature an interview with Father Hart and testimonials from parishioners. All donations to One Church by Aug. 31 will be directed to the Hamburg church.

Beginning Sept. 1, St. Bartholomew Church in Little Rock will be the 2020-2021 partner. That parish will break ground later this year on its new parish hall and offices.