



Key Moments in St. Peter's History

A series of historical highlights from the first 200 years of St. Peter – Libertytown.

Building a Church for Future Generations



Figure 1 Architectural drawing of Third Church by Rubeling & Associates

Once we knew where the third church would be situated, the next question to be answered was, what would our new church look like?

The Archdiocese required that all new churches have the ability to seat at least 800 people with the ability to expand to 1000, and the growth in Frederick County suggested that this was a prudent size. Insurance proceeds from the burned church provided \$3.6 million of the total cost, which was estimated to be \$9.5 million (that figure increased to \$11 million). A church of the size being contemplated would therefore require a capital campaign and a residual mortgage.

Early in the process, Fr. Dietzenbach, the Parish Council and Parish staff took a bus tour of recently constructed churches in the Archdiocese – St. Ignatius (Hickory), St. John's

(Westminster), Sacred Heart (Glyndon), and St. John Neuman (Annapolis) to see potential blueprints for our new building. The overwhelming consensus was that St. Ignatius (Hickory) was the church we wanted to be.

Beginning in November 2004, the Parish Council held a series of town hall meetings and Sunday coffees after Masses, to keep parishioners updated. Rubeling & Associates, the architects responsible for St. Ignatius in Hickory, were hired to create the architectural design. They confirmed Deacon Mike Misulia's calculations would allow for an addition to the remains of the existing church, resulting in a T-shaped building. Parishioners roundly endorsed the plans, which included a replicate of the landmark steeple from the second church. While original designs did not contemplate use of the Second Church as a daily mass chapel, that concept was introduced before long.

St. Peter's commenced a capital campaign 'Remembering the Past... Building for the Future' to raise the funds needed to in order to begin construction. A resounding success, the Parish – significantly surpassed its goal of \$1.7 million, thanks to the Pastor, the Parish Council, the Planning Committee and parishioner teams – who personally visited parishioners in their homes, week after week, to obtain the needed pledges.

On June 3, 2005, preceded by an Anniversary Mass of the fire, Chuck O'Connor, Chairman of the Planning Committee, presented to the parishioners an animated "fly around" video of the church exterior

and interior and Fr. Dietzenbach presented his special design for the baptismal font, which originated from his visit to St. John's Basilica in Ephesus, Turkey. The new church would be three stories and 33,000 square foot – considerably larger than the approximately 4,500 square foot second church; and would cover the footprint of the two previous churches and the original rectory. Portions of the new church would be reserved for future use – namely the upstairs choir loft and the basement.

On April 21, 2006, the day of groundbreaking arrived. On that same day Fr. Dietzenbach received word that the Parish had surpassed \$4 million in pledges – over twice our goal. William Cardinal Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore blessed the grounds during the ceremony, and announced that Pastor Dietzenbach would shortly become Monsignor Dietzenbach. Such a wonderful way to usher in the next phase – the actual construction.



Figure 2 Groundbreaking for Third Church April 21, 2006

As recalled by members of the Parish Council, the biggest debate in this phase concerned where to place the tabernacle – in the center of the church behind the altar or on the side. St. Peter's Mission Statement reflects that we are a Eucharistic parish and so the decision was made – the tabernacle would be located in the center of the sacristy behind the altar. As providence would have it, the Catholic Center in Baltimore had a tabernacle in storage, which had been given to the Archdiocese by the Dominican Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary of Baltimore when their convent closed. It was made available to St. Peter's and it had the added feature of two doors, front and back, which allowed for the simultaneous use of a single tabernacle in the Church and the Adoration Chapel.

The Pastor, Parish Council and Planning Committee worked with the architects to replicate the intimacy from the prior church in this new, larger building. Sean Mackey, the primary architect at Rubeling & Associate, listened; and with Oak Contracting, the plans started to become reality. The roof was lowered, rejecting a Gothic style, wood was added to the perimeter of the interior and warm colors were chosen. Blue coffers in the ceiling were created, reminiscent of the ones in the second church. The new church would have two steeples – one which everyone would recognize from the Second Church and a second one – atop the south tower of the church – an open arched steeple which took its design from the steeple on the original chapel. Care was taken to match the brick color of the original building with the new portion of the building and also the ornate arches, corbels and dentals which were part of the original building.

The stained glass windows which were destroyed in the fire could not be replicated, but through the efforts of Doug Johnson, construction coordinator at the Archdiocese, the Parish was able to obtain twelve windows created by Meier & Co. of Munich Germany, the same company that was commissioned to make the stained glass for St. Peter's in the early 1900's. The windows which we received through the Archdiocese, had previously been at St. Pius V Church in Baltimore and would bring a much welcome feeling of familiarity to our new church.

And finally, on June 28, 2008, the cornerstone was laid for the new church – it wouldn't be long now!