

St. Elizabeth Catholic Church

Case Statement—Dec 2024

final

Our History and Mission

St. Elizabeth has a rich history of more than 140 years in the making. A missionary priest, Fr. Michael Smythe traveled through Eureka Springs around the year 1880 and started construction on a frame church which wasn't completed until 1882. St. Elizabeth Catholic Church was recognized that year by the Diocese of Little Rock, AR as a "station with a church". In 1904 a rectory was constructed nearby and also that year a memorial was built downhill from the Crescent Hotel referred to as the Rotunda or entrance of the church. Finally in 1908 a church proper was added to the existing Memorial Chapel and was officially dedicated on May 11, 1909 as St. Elizabeth Catholic Church. Today, the Parish family has 108 registered families and experience's many tourist guests annually who join the parish for weekly Mass celebration.

Our Generosity

St. Elizabeth is a very generous community! The Parish has endured many challenges and completed numerous parish improvements over the many years. These efforts have been supported with various fund-raising campaigns ever since 1904 when the first Memorial Chapel was constructed. A plaque in the Narthex recognizes **(9)** key events of the history of the Parish that through the generosity of our parishioners and tourist guests has made it possible to preserve our future. The last four fund raising campaigns starting in 2014 and the last in 2019 raised a combined giving in excess of \$200,000.

Our Challenge

It has become very evident in the past years that the 2013 roof repair may have missed the mark as the church has continued to experience many failures since these repairs were completed. There are various issues with moisture infiltration/seepage causing new interior damage, loose tiles, and even tiles falling off the roof causing great safety concerns. Parish leadership has recently sought out numerous professional tile roofing resources (Engineers, Architectural firms and Specialist tile roofing companies) on site to evaluate the situation. These investigations and inspections with experts have led us to the conclusion that the entire roof system of the Church needs to be replaced, with a long-term effort, rather than search for a short term/temporary solution. This project, named "**Project Revive**", is expected to take approximately three months and will offer a permanent 75-year warranty solution. The estimated cost is \$625,000 which includes replacement/repair of all roofing, guttering, and drainage systems. There will also be additional cost considerations to address the various issues caused by the current roofing system failures. There may be other improvements identify to enhance the beauty of our church.

The Need to Move Ahead Is Now

In order to address the urgency of this situation it has been determined by Parish leadership that the parish move forward by engaging professional consulting services to conduct a feasibility study that will inform and engage all parishioners in an effort to gauge the level of support for a potential major capital project. The potential of a capital project in excess of \$700,000 will mark the single largest capital fund raising event in more than 115 plus years of St. Elizabeth and represent a total effort of more than four times the annual giving of the parish.

Your input and opinions are vital! Thank you for your participation in the Feasibility Study Survey.