

For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will grow rich, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. Matthew 25:29

Throughout three listening sessions held on December 7, 2024 (23 parishioners attended), and January 9 (17 attended) & January 12 (28 attended), 2025, the parishioners of Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church in Luray, Virginia, gathered to discuss the future of their church facilities. The discussions were moderated by Phil King, with Father Perez providing opening prayers. Kathy Murphy was the timekeeper, and Monica McCourt and Susan Finlay recorded the minutes.

***Key Concerns and Suggestions Raised**

Narthex

- A larger narthex to accommodate more people.
- Space for bulletin boards and information tables.
- An area for socializing without disturbing those in the nave.
- Restrooms accessible from the narthex.
- A covered portico to protect from weather during drop-off and pick-up.
- A cry room for children.
- Bulletin boards and tables for volunteers.

Nave and Sanctuary

- Increased seating capacity to accommodate the growing congregation.
- Side aisles to facilitate movement during communion.
- A unified seating arrangement to prevent divisiveness.
- Relocation of musicians and choir to a less obtrusive position, such as a choir loft.
- Improved lighting and acoustics for better visibility and audibility.
- Expanded sanctuary space for special services like weddings, funerals, and sacramental ceremonies.
- Reinstallation of altar rails for a more reverent Mass experience.
- A new sanctuary is needed for a more adoring atmosphere.
- ADA ramps, entrances, aisles, and hallways.
- The current altar is distracting.

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- Hazardous stairs to classrooms for students and the elderly.
- The church layout does not provide for easy exit in case of an emergency.
- The church is not well-insulated.
- New lighting in the church.

Bathrooms

- Enlarged and ADA-compliant restrooms to accommodate individuals with mobility aids.
- Bridal bathroom for bridal parties.
- Inclusion of diaper-changing tables in the restrooms.
- Relocation of restrooms to avoid disrupting the sacristy and main altar area. Restrooms should be in the narthex.

Music and Choir

- Relocation of musicians and choir to the rear of the church or a designated choir loft.
- Improved audio systems to ensure clear sound throughout the church.
- Space allocation for the music program to flourish without occupying pews.

Sacristy

- Redesign of the sacristy to prevent it from doubling as a pass-through area.
- Dedicated space for Mass preparations.
- Additional storage for liturgical items.

Confessional

- A proper confessional that is accessible and private.
- Clear signage to direct parishioners and visitors to the confessional area.

Kitchen

- A larger, modern kitchen to support parish events and gatherings.
- Adequate storage and preparation space for meals.
- Functional layout for high-capacity cooking.

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- Hospitality difficulties with the current setup.

Parish Hall

- Dedicated parish hall for community events and meetings.
- Flexible space for large gatherings without reconfiguring the church.
- Meeting rooms and classrooms for religious education and ministry groups.

Parking Lot

- Improved parking facilities with additional spaces and better lighting.

Miscellaneous

- Maintain a warm, quaint, welcoming country parish.
- Recognize the talent in our parish.
- Ensure the church is not seen as a second-class structure.
- The church could serve as a destination wedding venue.
- Implement ramps and other measures to make the entire building ADA-compliant.
- Install panic buttons for emergencies (fire, police, or medical).
- Enhanced insulation for better energy efficiency.
- Create a playground and garden area, including a space to honor the Virgin Mary.
- Design thoughtfully to balance aesthetics, functionality, and community charm.
- Recognize that a new church will provide opportunities for community growth through outreach and events.
- When will the parish and finance councils get involved?
- Note that very few members of both councils attended any of the three sessions.
- Provided statistics for the potential growth in Page County.
- Addressed that older parishioners have difficulty attending Mass due to the noise from active children.
- A gazebo was suggested.
- If a new building is constructed, the current building could still host Mass.

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- Note that during a recent visit, the Bishop indicated receptiveness to a new church.
- The new church building will cost millions.
- A parishioner expressed concern about the financial impact and debt left for the next generation.
- Recognized that the new church will be enjoyed and loved by children, though many current parishioners may not be around to appreciate it.
- A parishioner highlighted three keywords/themes: Aspiration, Responsibility, and Community.