

Parish Rectory Exterior Improvements

The need to update and repair the exterior of the rectory, especially the siding, has been known for some time. More noticeable after we had the rectory's insulation upgraded (plastic caps covering holes drilled done to insulate walls). That was in February of 2014, 5 years ago. At the time, we were told that the vinyl windows were not a good insulated type so the wall insulation would not have the full benefit it should. Adding insulation to the attic has helped lower energy bills somewhat. Energy will always find the path of least resistance to escape. The rectory has 36 windows (not counting doors or basement windows, or the breezeway); all are uninsulated except for 3; those that do not have Insulated Glass (IG) get very cold.

We are looking at new vinyl framed windows, but with IG and insulated frames. And siding with premium vinyl to replace the over 50-year-old aluminum, with the house wrapped. We've reviewed some estimates and picked a contractor. The siding will cost \$20,600, and the 33 new windows will cost just over \$15,000. There is now \$31,500 in our savings. I'm confident we will have enough by the time the project is finished. The plan is to have the work done later this spring. The furnace funds are not being considered for this. Yes, this will deplete most of our savings, but the savings are there to be used for important improvements, and urgent needs, and our current savings account held at the Diocese is due to the generosity of our late pastor, Father Verhoye.

While from a distance the house may look okay, siding and windows; up close it's a different story. The siding is not in good shape in looks, or more important, in function. There is still unseen damage to the structural sheathing that needs to be fixed in the exterior walls; due to past problems with roof leaks. Most the vinyl windows may also look fine, being 20 years old. But most have some amount of damage. And their design, a budget 2-pane glass separated by a seal, is not IG. Then there's the large (1976) casement windows in the back; also, non-IG.

When the work is done, the old window frames will be insulated (filling a cavity containing the old weight/pulley system still present from the original 1889 double hung windows), and new IG vinyl windows installed. The entire house will be wrapped for a better seal (after repairing damaged sheathing), and new premium siding installed, and new aluminum flashing. The 3 stained-glass-windows on the front east side of the rectory will be preserved but will have insulated storm type windows installed replacing the non-insulated 1-pane storms on the outside.

We are wondering if anyone would be interested in the old windows in the rectory; Please contact the pastor or one of the parish trustees if interested in offering a donation for any of the old rectory windows.

With the insulation from 5 years ago and the 3-zone heat control, winters are much more comfortable now in the rectory. But still within rooms, the temp varies quite a bit. Advantages to doing the new windows and siding with the wrap: making the air temp more uniform throughout the house, improve the humidity level (air quality), help sound insulate the rectory, increase the value and appeal of the house, extend the life of the house, and lower the energy usage.

Certainly, some parishioners will question these improvements, at least the expense. It's impossible to please everyone. Why does the priest need a more comfortable house? Plus, the rectory has been vacant for long stretches of time these last 20-30 years. Is it worth spending money now when the future is uncertain as to a resident pastor, and even the parish itself? Safe to say, an active and Diocesan supported faith community will continue here for many years to come. But as to a parish and a residing pastor, it depends on the level of community activity in the area, how well maintained are the structures, paying all the bills and paying the ADA.

While true, no one knows how much longer a pastor will reside here; but it would be more likely if the house is improved. When I first arrived in Annawan in 2012 and had the choice of living in 1 of 2 rectories, the choice was easy. The rectory in Sheffield clearly wasn't well maintained, except maybe parts of the 2nd floor. Some may gawk at this observation. It's one thing to work in a house, have an hour meeting; another to live in it. The mold, foul smells, poor heating, non-function AC, leaking roof, water pipe problems, electrical problems, etc, most all that has been addressed in the last 6 years. If I was given that choice today, it would be harder. The past improvements have certainly helped the rectory here, but the siding and windows need to be done.

Both Al Corwin and Jon Pickering, the 2 parish trustees, and I have met and approved these projects. We are now seeking approval from the Bishop. Please keep this in mind the next few months when considering your charitable giving, maybe kicking-in something extra to our Improvement Fund. Lent of course is the time for prayer, fasting and (of course) alms-giving. We also must keep paying our regular bills, which hasn't always been easy, and has required dipping into Improvement monies to get through some months. Thank you to everyone who have shared their time, gifts and talents to help support our faith community.

Happy St. Patrick's Day to everyone.

In Christ,

Reverend Mark Miller, Pastor

Saint Patrick, our patron, pray for us.