



SAINT JOHN
CATHOLIC
STUDENT CENTER



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN 2025



WHAT GOD STARTS, HE FINISHES.



St. John Catholic Student Center at OSU is the place where I went to pray, to receive the Sacraments, and to engage more deeply in my faith. It is because of the Newman Center that I was able to participate in mission trips and other enrichment activities that help me discern my vocation.

Most Rev. Daniel H. Mueggenborg

Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Reno, NV

St. John is a special

third place

After the COVID-19 pandemic, many studies released data about people throughout the world losing their “third place”.

Your first place is your home, your second place is a place of work or where you go to school, but the third place is always more significant than the previous two. Third places are where people find their friends, where people come together for leisurely activities, where someone goes to find themselves.

Saint John has been this place for many students over the past 70 years. Since 1965 the St. John church and Catholic student center have been a place where Catholic Oklahoma State University students came to study, pray, form friendships, participate in holy leisure, and worship God. This was their third place, and it continues to be for many students to this day.

Yet, this third place was lost in the mayhem of the 2020 pandemic like many others. Students were stuck in their dorms and homes in isolation, preventing them from attending classes or enjoying daily activities at St. John. They were losing friends, losing motivation to work, and above all, losing relationship. Now, an average of 80% of Catholics abandon their faith by the time they turn 23 years old. Loss of the third place means the loss of something people cannot buy, something unreachable with material wealth...



By God’s grace we endured this hardship, then He began to do something bigger than ever before. This beloved third place was on the brink of change and would be more impactful to the OSU campus than ever thought possible.

After the many years of planning in uncertainty, a year and a half of building, and hundreds of daily prayers sent from Catholics across the world, St. John became the place where college students reside and find God. The Father’s love is present here in the Sacraments and His joy is felt by each student that walks through the front door. It is filled with holiness and beauty as the Lord draws the students of OSU to the faith every day.

Even still, the mission of Building Saints is far from over. This third place has much work to be done as the number of students increases each year and campus ministry grows. We need you to stand with us as we see this mission to the very end.

What God started in 2016, He will finish.

How it all began

The Transformational Story of St. John, written by Fr. Kerry Wakulich



In October of 2016 after a football game on a Saturday night, a family approached me after asking to speak in my office. I didn't know these people well, but they began to tell me how they did not want college students to lose their faith on a college campus. So they offered to begin something new: a \$5 million donation to kick off a new Church and Student Center.

This was shocking to me because there was a parish merger between St. John and new St. Francis Xavier occurring on the west side of town. The next morning as I celebrated Sunday Mass, I thought about this family who wanted to donate \$5 million the evening before. After the student Mass at 5pm while the place was being cleaned up and tables put away in a very small closet, I began to walk out the back door. I was approached by another family who said,

“There is so much good going on here Father, and this church is not in very good shape... My wife and I were talking. We would like to give St. John \$5 million to start a Capital Campaign. Do you think that would help?”

So in 23.5 hours, not 24, God had provided \$10 million to a building project that did not even exist. That day launched a whole chain of events that would become a new mission at St. John: Building Saints for the Kingdom of God.

The Church of St. John had been a legacy since 1965. Yet it was in disrepair with a long list on ongoing needs: the roof was deteriorating, we new furniture upgrades for the growing student population, our kitchen well exceeded its lifetime, and handicap entrances did not exist. St. John had no development director to manage a Campaign, only one full-time staff member (me), and a database of about 450 names who had never been contacted. St. John was not in the condition to build a new Student Center...

But on that night in October of 2016, a new adventure began on the campus of Oklahoma State University.



Over a brief period of time, our team visited five Student Centers who were planning to build or were already built to gather design ideas; our team consisted of Bill and Rita Ryan, Denny Sheller, Paige Sheller, Matt Bond and myself. We visited another 26 Student Centers on our way just to see what they did as we strategically planned how the building will flow, function and be formed.

However, this whole plan was under the shroud of secrecy due to the parish merger. So the \$10 million gift remained a secret. If you're going to launch a Campaign, you have one chance to fire the cannon and we wanted to launch it with a bang.

January 2020, when the difficulties surfaced, a pandemic was on the horizon. The COVID virus arrived in America at the same time we were planning to build the new St. John. Costs skyrocketed, lumber prices rose off the charts, and inflation increased astronomically. The projected cost of new St. John climbed from \$18 million to \$24 million overnight. By June we exceeded \$30 million and with realignments the final costs settled at \$27.5 million in July 2020.

Prior to demolition, we prepared for another challenge: keeping ministry alive without a Church and a Student Center. A house down the street, known as the Hester House, became our center of campus ministry. Old St. Francis Xavier, which had been dismantled on the inside, was resurrected with the help of Fr. O'Brien and other St. Francis parishioners becoming our temporary parish home until April 29th, 2024.

In the midst of all these obstacles was the gloom of despair... how could we ever get this done? But a beloved employee, Taylor Akins, quoted a Saint which gave me peace in the midst of turbulence:

“What God starts, He finishes.”

God was ever present in the midst of our struggles. He began this new mission of Building Saints for the Kingdom of God, and He is going bring it to completion.



Father Kerry Wakuich

Pastor, Saint John Catholic Student Center

Over the years,

St. John has been a home and place of transformation for many young men and women. From receiving initial Sacraments and celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony, to finding deep friendships and graduating college with a calling to be missionary disciples of Christ...

St. John provides an encounter with Jesus to many students whose lives are changed forever.



Here's the facts

Or more FOCUS missionaries each year since 2023, compared to four each year since 2013.

26

Weddings in new St. John since April 2023 with a dozen more scheduled for the next year.

50

Students currently participating in Growing Discipleship to lead other students in a Bible study.

5

Student-led Bible studies this year.

30

Students coming into the Church and receiving their initial Sacraments this year.

54



“The Church is *alive and young.*”

Pope Benedict XVI



Increase in
students
attending
Bible studies
since 2021.

200

Students
enrolled in
Bible studies
in the Spring
of 2024.

700

Or more
students
attended Ash
Wednesday
Mass this year.

55%

Students
gathering for
Student Lunch
every Thursday

250

students or
more attend
Sunday Mass
every week.

1400



student stories



“ St. John led me to my best friends. Having them throughout the tough times of college is amazing. They always support me and love me, and remind me of things that are good, true, and beautiful.

**Emma Evins, 2026
Oakley, KS**

“ It is incredible to have a new Catholic student center on campus. The difference in outreach ability has increased at least tenfold since we can now invite our classmates to come study/work on projects at St. John, host world religion classes, and be a visible sign to current and prospective students of what living in Christian community can look like.

Drennan Ryan, 2025 | Argyle, TX





“ It fills me with immense pride to be able to see the church from Boone Pickens stadium. It really shows the campus and the community that there are proud, faithful, young Catholics here at OSU ready to welcome others in!

Lily Lavier, 2025 | Alamosa, CO



“ St. John has invited me to the Catholic faith and has also shown me how great God’s love for me is, as well as the greatness of God. St. John also shaped my faith through all the opportunities the Church brings whether that be daily Mass, confession, FOCUS, Bible studies and just having the church open to go pray.

Cutter Sheets, 2026 | Stilwell, OK

“ The formation here at St. John has increased my desire for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in Adoration. I have gone to Catholic grade school and high school, but I believe it was here at St. John that I truly bought into my prayer life.

Christian Barrientos, 2025 | Wichita, KS



“The friendship which draws human beings together in a tender bond is sweet to us because out of many minds it forges a unity.”

St. Augustine, Confessions

2016



You can support this mission



2024

After two years of being in the new St. John Church and Student Center, we have seen an immense number of students form a beautiful faith-centered community on fire for their love of Jesus which they share throughout campus. "Building Saints for the Kingdom of God" is not just a slogan for our previous Building Campaign, it is a motivation to all who live it out in their daily lives; and we see this in our students every day.

Now that the mission to build a new Church and Student Center is complete, it is time to finish the part of the mission that is often unseen. The remaining balance of the building loan is slowly decreasing, but the interest continues to add to the overarching cost. With your help, we can bring this loan to a close and St. John campus ministry may increase their outreach capabilities toward students and develop more opportunities for them to participate in.

When the Campaign comes to a close, we will put all our efforts toward building our Campus Ministry program and increasing student outreach. We have no doubt that the Lord will continue to blow us away with His providence, and grow the number of students who come to know Him because of this Church and ministry.

OPTIMAL GOAL

Covers the remainder of the building loan and interest gained from the loan.

\$6 MILLION

CHALLENGE GOAL

Covers the building loan, gained interest, and grows the Mission Advancement Endowment.

\$10 MILLION

With many methods of giving available,

you can prayerfully make a transformational gift to St. John with the method that is best for you *and* in the timeline that is best for you and your family.



Cash or Check



Credit Card



Stock



Real Estate



Securities



Life Insurance Policy



Planned Gift



Corporate Matching Gift

3-Year Pledge Budget

3-YEAR PLEDGE	ANNUALLY	SEMI-ANNUALLY	QUARTERLY	MONTHLY
\$500,000	\$166,700	\$83,000	\$41,700	\$13,900
\$400,000	\$133,000	\$66,700	\$33,300	\$11,100
\$300,000	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$8,300
\$200,000	\$66,700	\$33,300	\$16,700	\$5,600
\$150,000	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$12,500	\$4,200
\$120,000	\$40,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$3,300
\$90,000	\$30,000	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$2,500
\$45,000	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$3,750	\$1,250
\$30,000	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$830
\$15,000	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$1,250	\$420
\$9,000	\$3,000	\$1,500	\$750	\$250
\$7,200	\$2,400	\$1,200	\$600	\$200
\$5,400	\$1,800	\$900	\$450	\$150
\$3,600	\$1,200	\$600	\$300	\$100
\$1,800	\$600	\$300	\$150	\$50

FAQ

Frequently asked questions

WHAT IS A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN?

A Capital Campaign is an intensive fundraising effort designed to raise a specific sum of money within a defined time to increase the capacity of an organization to carry out its mission.

WHY ARE WE LAUNCHING A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN?

Due to material costs and inflation both increasing dramatically in 2020, St. John was left with more debt than previously anticipated. The goal of this Campaign is to actively retire the remaining debt on the new Church and Student Center while also creating an emphasis on building, forming, and growing our Mission Advancement Endowment.

WHAT IS THE CAMPAIGN TIMELINE?

Our Capital Campaign timeline is based off a 3-year pledge period from 2025 through 2028.

WHAT ARE OUR FUNDRAISING GOALS?

We have two tiers of goals we would like to reach with this Campaign. Our initial goal is set at raising \$6 million with a challenge goal set at \$10 million.

We have two main priorities with this Campaign. Our first objective is to pay off the remaining debt on the new Church and Student Center. Our second objective is to build, form, and grow our Mission Advancement Endowment.

WHO IS HELPING MANAGE THE CAMPAIGN?

St. John is working closely with our friends at the Steier Group, a Capital Campaign Fundraising Consulting Firm that specializes in the Catholic nonprofit sector.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT THIS CAMPAIGN?

We welcome all benefactors to support our efforts with pledges to our Campaign. Gifts in the form of stock, cash or checks, credit cards, planned gifts, real estate, life insurance, and corporate matching gifts are all accepted.

More questions? Email Brett at
brettcatholicpokes@gmail.com



WE ASKED OUR STUDENTS:

if you had the opportunity to thank the men and women who made St. John possible, what would you say?



“

I wouldn't know how to put into words the gratitude I have for them.

To say that St. John Catholic Student Center and this community has changed my life would be an understatement.

When I talk about other campus ministries with some of my friends that aren't Catholic, they are all in awe of how beautiful the Student Center is. They have asked to come in and get a tour and I have been able to show them around. They are struck by the reverence and beauty in it all.

St. John not only provides an incredible home for Mass and the Sacraments, but it also allows students to study together, hang out together, and grow in holiness together. It has changed my life and I will forever be grateful.

Cole Comeau, 2026 Broken Arrow, OK

“

From the bottom of my heart, thank you. Thank you for your generosity, your vision, and your belief in the power of faith to transform lives.

This space is so much more than just a building... it is a home, a refuge, and a place where deep, lifelong relationships with God and one another are formed. Because of you, I have found a family here.

I have grown in my faith in ways I never imagined, and I have had the incredible opportunity to lead others in their own journeys toward Christ.

Alivia Antinetti, 2025 Oakdale, CA





When two families walked into the Fr. Kerry's office at old St. John and offered to start a new building campaign, they took a leap of faith. We chose to trust God with them, and the fruits speak for themselves.

Our new building is already bursting at the seams after only two years. Standing room only Masses, more than 50 students in RCIA, and more vocations than ever before. In the shadows of secularism, St. John Catholic Student Center is the lamp for the Gospel's bright light, Jesus Christ.

In the same trust with which we started, St. John Catholic Student Center is pressing onward with a new capital campaign. We have faith that

God started this work, and He'll finish it. Philippians 1:6

Your support has been essential in our call to build Saints, however we need your help to finish what God has started. I would like to ask you to prayerfully consider making a gift to help us continue to serve more students than ever before.

With the proceeds from your generosity, we will pay down our remaining building loan and continue to invest into our Mission Advancement Endowment to provide for future financial security.

Thank you for your consideration and ongoing support of St. John. With your generous assistance, I am confident that God will finish this good work.

God bless,

Brett Akins

Director of Development,
St. John Catholic Student Center

You helped us get here,

let's finish this *together*.

Capital Campaign Committee

Fr. Kerry Wakulich

Pastor

Brett Akins

Director of Development

Kyle Doud

Director of Finance

Vic Schutte

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