

Saint John

THE EVANGELIST CATHOLIC CHURCH
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

RENEW THE LEGACY
PRESERVE OUR CHURCH

“For it is in giving that we receive.”

—PEACE PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Our Story

Saint John the Evangelist Catholic Church, affectionately known as Saint John's, has been proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ in Center City, Philadelphia for more than 187 years. Saint John's was originally built to be the city's first cathedral and served as such from 1838 to 1864. People come to Saint John's to pray. They light candles and pray for their children who are in trouble, for their sick and dying loved ones, and for their own health and happiness. At Saint John's people offered prayers for peace during the Civil War, two World Wars, and several other conflicts. Saint John's is a church that welcomes people of all races, political ideologies, and social and economic classes. Since 1991, Saint John's has been staffed by Capuchin Franciscan Friars. Saint John's has a Franciscan identity of simplicity, prayer, and inclusion of poor and marginalized persons. Saint John's also hosts a dynamic Secular Franciscan fraternity of lay Franciscans who base their lives on following Jesus after the example of Saint Francis.

Saint John's has survived two fires and the anti-Catholic riots of 1844. During the Great Depression, the Saint John Bread Line fed 700 starving people every day and this continued until 1963 when Saint John's Church founded Saint John's Hospice for a more organized outreach to Center City's poor and homeless people. Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic church was founded as Saint John's missionary outreach to Philadelphia's Chinese community. Holy Redeemer is now a thriving Catholic presence in the Chinese community, with a church and school, and is still staffed by the friars of Saint John's.

Two home-grown Philadelphian saints prayed and frequented Saint John's Church. Saint John Neumann's

installation and funeral Masses were held at Saint John's. Saint Katherine Drexel received first communion and confirmation here. She prayed before the statue of Mary (still standing in the church today!) before she entered religious life.

Mostly, Saint John's is a center of peace, prayer, and charity. All are welcome at Saint John's. Saint John's welcomes Center City residents, workers, visitors, and tourists from every US state and country. Saint John's is known as a place for confession of sins and forgiveness, for prayer and silence, and for rousing liturgies with magnificent music.

Many people remember making visits to Saint John's for prayer, Mass, or confessions when they came to Center City for shopping, doctors' appointments, or work. Saint John's is still famous for offering 4 Masses and 44 liturgies every Ash Wednesday when thousands of people line up for prayer and ashes. Ash Wednesday is Saint John's busiest day of the year!

People come to Saint John's for weddings (80 each year). One quarter to one third of our Sunday congregation are people in their 20s and 30s, resident doctors, young professionals, and students. Saint John's has an active and dynamic young adult ministry. Young Catholics come to Saint John's and go on to raise families, pursue careers, and become leaders in Catholic parishes across the United States and the world. Saint John's forms young Catholics who will, in the future, bless the Catholic Church in many places.

Center City tourism has grown in recent years, especially with the Convention Center. One third to one half of Saint John's Sunday congregation are visitors to Philadelphia. In recent years, Saint John's ministry to tourists and visitors has grown. Saint John's is in the heart of Philadelphia's historic, cultural, and convention districts.



A priest from Saint John's is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, 365 days a year, for Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. Saint John's priests visit patients who want to talk to a priest, receive communion, or pray. Each year, our priests celebrate the anointing of the sick with nearly 1,000 patients and make about 150 end-of-life urgent visits.

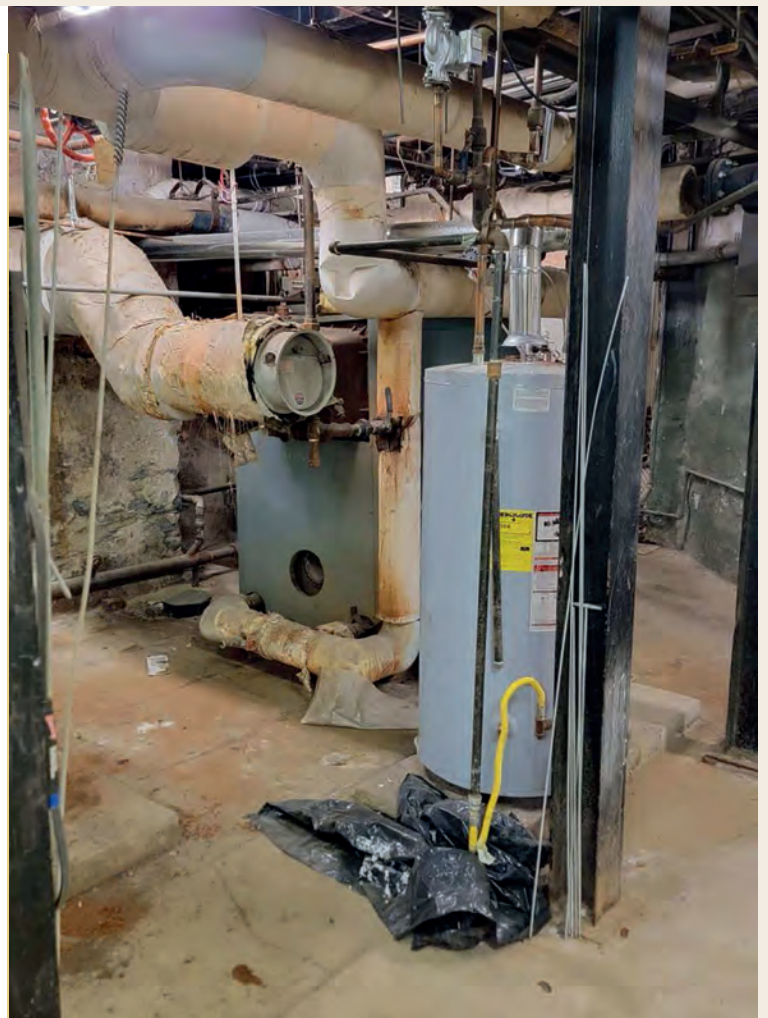
The Project

Saint John's is worth preserving.

Saint John's is a beautiful Church, old and often needing repairs, but overall well maintained. However, we now face a serious crisis, a predicament that threatens Saint John's survival.

Behind the church and friary, there is a courtyard. The courtyard is a small square concrete cover for the major mechanical systems for the church and friary, which are under the courtyard. The courtyard is deteriorating and must be repaired or replaced. Additionally, both the electrical and the air conditioning systems are old, very old, and need to be replaced soon. Here's a summary of our capital needs:

- 1. The courtyard is deteriorating and will be deemed unsafe for use.**
- 2. The electrical system is from the 1960s and is expected to fail.**
- 3. The air conditioning system for the upper church is old, past its predicted useful life, and expected to fail.**

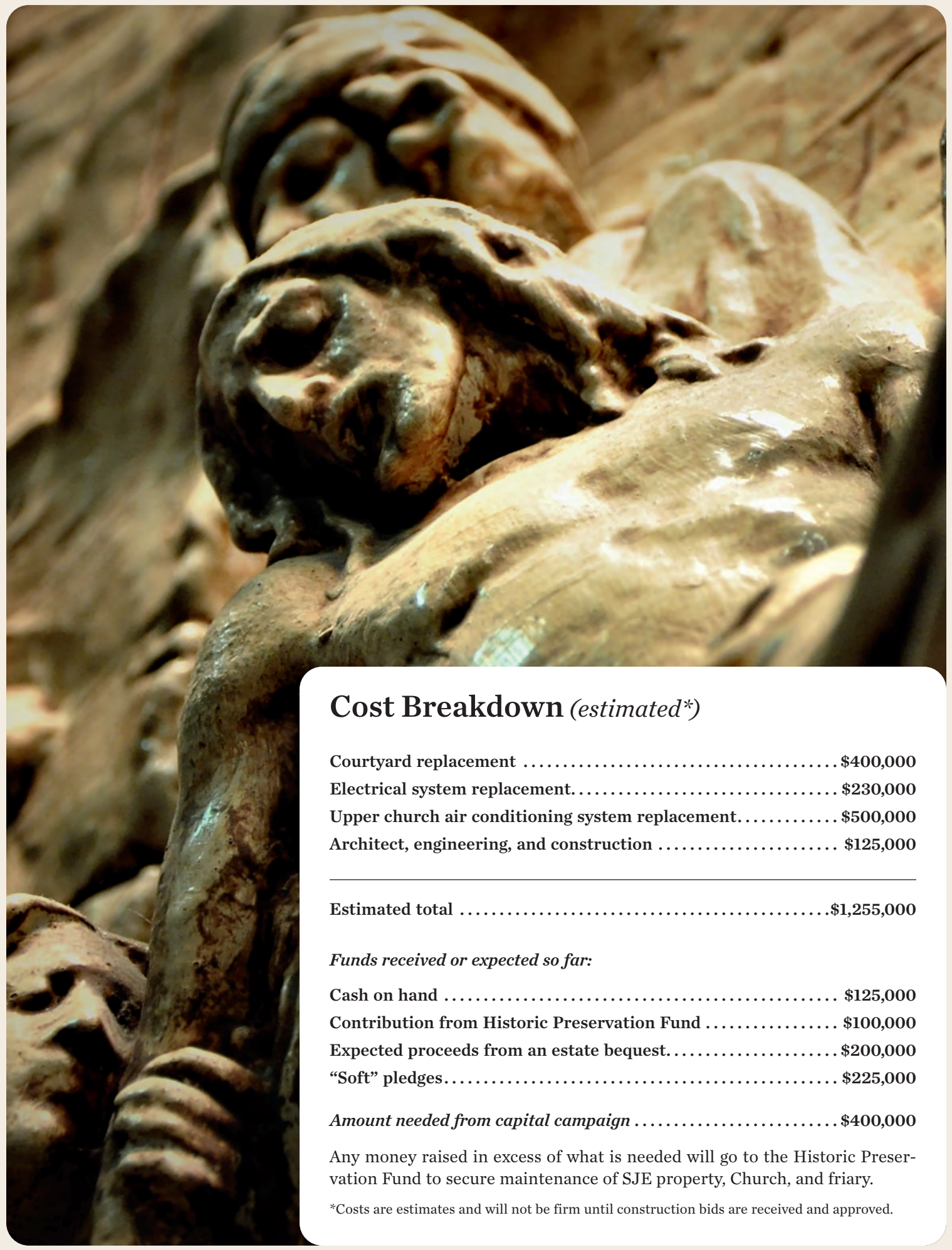


The price of this project will be determined in a competitive bidding process. Rough estimates are that the air conditioning will cost \$500,000; the electrical system \$230,000, and the courtyard repairs \$400,000. The total cost of the project is estimated to be about \$1.2 million.

This is a lot of money for a small and poor parish! This money will have to come from Saint John's parishioners and friends. There is no outside source and the Archdiocese will not cover the shortfall. Saint John's still owes about \$700,000 to the Archdiocese for bell tower repairs and unpaid bills from the early 2000s. Each year, we make a payment on our debt, but for this project, we are on our own!

But we can raise the money we need! Saint John's loyal parishioners and friends love our Church and our ministry. We will come together, and we will save our Church.

We ask all our parishioners and friends to make a sacrificial gift to assure the existence of Saint John's for the next quarter century and beyond. We don't anticipate any similar needs for many years to come.



Cost Breakdown *(estimated*)*

Courtyard replacement	\$400,000
Electrical system replacement.....	\$230,000
Upper church air conditioning system replacement.....	\$500,000
Architect, engineering, and construction	\$125,000

Estimated total\$1,255,000

Funds received or expected so far:

Cash on hand	\$125,000
Contribution from Historic Preservation Fund	\$100,000
Expected proceeds from an estate bequest.....	\$200,000
“Soft” pledges.....	\$225,000

Amount needed from capital campaign\$400,000

Any money raised in excess of what is needed will go to the Historic Preservation Fund to secure maintenance of SJE property, Church, and friary.

*Costs are estimates and will not be firm until construction bids are received and approved.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will my donation be shared with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia?

All gifts received for this project will be used exclusively by Saint John's for this project. All funds collected will be held in a restricted account.

Will the weekly offerings support the campaign?

No, this project is above and beyond the operational costs of the parish. The weekly offertory is used to support our normal operations. We are asking you to consider a gift or pledge in addition to your weekly gift.

Who will be asked to contribute?

Everyone is invited to partake in this project—Saint John's welcomes all people. We understand that not everyone has the same financial ability and every gift is appreciated.

How much should I give?

Only you know your personal circumstances and only you can make that decision.

Is Saint John's worth supporting?

Our parish is much more than the building in which we gather. Giving to this project is caring for our present and making an investment in the future of our parish and its parishioners. But Saint John's impact goes far beyond those who are registered parishioners. Ensuring our continued presence in the community enables Saint John's to provide a religious foundation and support to the neighborhood.

Is there a minimum gift or pledge?

No, all gifts are needed and welcome. We are asking our parishioners and friends to prayerfully consider what Saint John's has meant to them and how their financial gift can make a difference in this campaign.

How to Support Saint John's

Pray for Saint John's that we can continue to serve the people of God in Center City Philadelphia for many years to come. Prayer is as important, actually more important, than financial donations. And after praying, make a sacrificial gift to support this project.

- Checks, payable to Saint John the Evangelist Church, can be mailed to:
Capital Campaign
Saint John the Evangelist Church
21 S. 13th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
- If you wish to pay a pledge over time, please fill out and return a pledge form, which is available at the church and online at stjohnsphilly.org
- For donations by PayPal, Venmo, or Parish Giving, please go to our website stjohnsphilly.org or open the QR code below:



Venmo



PayPal



Parish Giving

