

**What has been happening behind the scenes with St. John Church?**

Fire investigators completed onsite inspections June 20<sup>th</sup> and we await final determination of origin and cause. FIRST ONSITE was given initial clearance to remove debris beginning June 23<sup>rd</sup>, but that progress was halted July 3<sup>rd</sup> due to one of the insurance parties requiring a building assessment which occurred July 11<sup>th</sup>. We are hopeful removal of debris will resume the week of July 14<sup>th</sup>. It will take 2 to 3 weeks to remove the remaining debris and then a structural assessment to determine the viability of the remaining structure. Insurance companies have begun assessing costs for rebuild as well as replacement, but also need to wait for the results of the structural assessment. Insurance companies, FIRST ONSITE and other professionals anticipate having viable options for the future of St. John the Baptist Church within 6 to 8 weeks.



**What's happening at St. John's Church?**

FIRST ONSITE was given clearance to begin removing debris June 23<sup>rd</sup> starting with cranes lifting large debris from the church, such as pillars and timbers, as well as shingles and other equipment left on the scaffolding. Crews began clearing smaller debris from the sanctuary June 30<sup>th</sup>. Using pickaxes and rakes, they carefully sifted through rubble looking for crosses and candlesticks and other smaller sacred items such as the bells rung during the Eucharistic prayer. Fortunately, volunteers had previously photographed and documented all the sacred items in church providing crews a catalogue of what to look for. Some of the items found included the cross sitting above the tabernacle, candlesticks and the processional cross.



They also retrieved the baptismal font and the ambo/pulpit.

### **What are the next steps for St. John Church?**

A St. John Building Committee is being formed. The initial focus of the committee will be to work with Fr. Ken, the Archdiocese, FIRST ONSITE, insurance adjusters, architects and others to understand the possible future options for St. John Church, explain those options to the St. John parishioners in town hall meetings, and help parishioners discern and decide the best path forward through consensus building. There are multiple scenarios that could happen from what we know at this time. The church could be rebuilt as it was. Parts of the church could be reused with new parts built on. The remaining structure could be raised and a new church built. The viability of each of these options may change as insurance settlement is determined, the integrity of the remaining structure is assessed and as the future needs of St. John's are discerned. The work of the building committee will then transition to oversight of the rebuilding or replacement process depending what is discerned as the best path forward. Additional committees will be formed as the process moves forward such as liturgy, art and environment and others. The whole process could take several years, so we need to be patient, work with the professionals and trust in the Holy Spirit to lead us.



### **What are the giving opportunities and will the money come back to St. John's Church?**



St. John the Baptist has been receiving inquiries from around the Archdiocese and the US asking how they can help financially. In conversation with the Archdiocese, the Archbishop approved an Archdiocesan wide special voluntary collection for St. John Church similar to collections held for other disasters such as tornados, hurricanes, etc. In addition, the Archdiocesan Stewardship office has set up an online giving platform and will assist with gift processing. Providing these services is a blessing to St. John's and alleviates additional work for our local staff. All proceeds received will come back to St. John Church.

### **When is the Firemen and First Responder Thank You and who is invited?**



A Firemen and First Responder Thank You will be held Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 – 3:30 PM beginning in the St. John the Baptist South parking lot with a Prayer Service led by Archbishop Casey. Please park at the Knights of St. John Hall where a gathering will be held after the Prayer Service. St. John the Baptist parishioners are invited to join firemen and first responders in prayer and thanks. We are forever grateful to the firemen, first responders, Archdiocese of Cincinnati, FIRST ONSITE and all others who came to our aid as fire ravaged our beloved St. John the Baptist Church. May God bless and protect them in their dedication and service to others.