

Work Space, proposed by Alliee DeArmond, Debra Spencer

Proposers: Alliee DeArmond, Debra Spencer

Title of project: Work Space

1. How does the proposed project align with and support our parish mission?

This project would provide a cafe-type work space, in the cafe area of our building and the patio adjoining, for neighborhood residents from high-school age to adult, to do homework, write, read, work on art projects, have coffee and tea, discuss important and frivolous issues, and attend and/or lead occasional classes and workshops. The project would give participating members of St. John's, as well as community members, the opportunity to meet and get to know our neighbors, and to offer services and opportunities to provide for all participants' mental and spiritual growth.

2. How will the project engage the congregation and the larger community?

St. John's members could volunteer to do homework, write, read, work on art projects, offer classes (ongoing) or workshops (one time), and get to know our neighbors. Also, neighbors with various skills could offer to teach parishioners and other community members in their skill areas. We imagine classes could be offered in bicycle repair, writing, arts and crafts, cooking, various kinds of prayer and meditation, keeping a journal, fixing things, and using the internet. Members could also volunteer to bake things to serve in the cafe, man the coffee maker, listen to neighbors' concerns, possibly do some community organizing as necessary, and generally be examples of caring Christians as the needs of our neighbors become known to us.

3. Describe the scope and purpose of the project.

We imagine that this work space would be held in the cafe of the church at specific times of day, starting with two afternoons a week from 1-4pm. It would be open to anyone who needed to occupy the space for the general purposes stated above, and possibly for some we haven't thought of yet. If needed, classes or workshops could be held in other rooms. Parish volunteers would need to maintain a calm and quiet, but not noiseless, atmosphere conducive to working on reading, writing, and other mental and spiritual projects. We imagine projects of a more physical nature could be entertained: building models, conducting mild experiments, and other nerdy pursuits. We also imagine that if people wanted to discuss or play instruments that other rooms in the church could be used, so as not to clash with more silent activities.

4. How much time will it take to prepare and initiate the project?

If this project is a finalist, we would begin at that time to speak to the parish about the skills they could offer to the community in this setting, and also to elicit which skills the neighbors might have that parishioners would be interested in. The goal is to foster an exchange of knowledge and expertise among the parish and the neighborhood, so that we as a parish don't come across as superior. Just because we have a nice building and aren't starving doesn't mean we're better than the rest of the community. We plan to speak to some specific people in the

Work Space, proposed by Alliee DeArmond, Debra Spencer

parish about their particular skills. We would need to publicize the project around our neighborhood and the community and recruit parishioners to participate in many ways.

We estimate we would need two weeks to confer with the parish to find out who would be willing and able to help with this project. Publicity, we think, might take a month before we achieve the necessary critical mass of participants.

5. What are the primary goals of the project and how will they be measurable?

Our goals would be

- to create a calm, inviting atmosphere in which people could work on various quiet or discussion-based activities
- to involve as many parishioners as possible
- to involve as many neighbors and other locals as possible
- to promote an atmosphere in which all who participate could get to know each other
- to discover in what ways we at St. John's might help our neighbors
- to identify neighbors with skills in repairing things, making things, teaching things that they could then offer in the cafe.

These goals could be measured by

- the number of parishioners, neighbors, and community members come to the cafe, either regularly or sporadically
- the number of classes that emerge from interaction among participants
- the number and kind of outreach and support projects are initiated as a result of interaction among participants.

6. What are the types of costs and expenses that will occur with this project?

We imagine the main expense would be increasing the church's wireless internet accessibility, so that any number of people could access the internet at one time. This could also benefit our church services on Zoom and YouTube. It's possible our insurance would need to be increased to cover hypothetical injuries incurred while using the cafe. We would make a budget to provide coffee, tea, food, and possibly books, computers, iPads, and other electronics, and possibly art supplies. PG&E bills, etc., would conceivably increase due to more people using the building.

We estimate an initial \$1000-2000 would be needed to increase web strength and to cover additional utility costs. We envision starting small--opening the cafe to parishioners and neighbors for individual work, three days a week for two hours each--and building from there to include the other activities mentioned above. Before starting classes, etc., we want to hear from those gathering to do individual work, as to the expanded activities they would like to see. Plus, we would need to coordinate the Work Space with all the other groups using the cafe during the week. Starting small would allow us to grow more organically (sociologically?) into something the parish and the neighborhood really need.

Work Space, proposed by Alliee DeArmond, Debra Spencer

We decided that we like the Slow Growth model for this Project. While it's easy to imagine a future with paid staff, blazing internet, dynamic promotion for classes, new furniture, a computer or two on site, an available printer, terrific snacks, and technical or homework help. . . All of which would easily use up \$80,000 within half a dozen years, we prefer the idea of starting small, moving forward with what the community has to contribute, and leveling up as the demand increases. The biggest early expense might be increasing our internet capacity—probably a couple hundred a month, or around \$2,500 a year. On the other hand we could find that we attract mostly people who like functioning with notebooks and fancy pens and having conversations in between Great Thoughts.

I've always been a fan of '*Going with what we have, instead on not going with what we don't have.*' We already have some vestiges of this project happening: think Gina's classes or my prayer, collage, and journaling classes with half or more of the attenders from the community at large. People already get together at church for conversations. We like the idea of beginning small and beginning right away. We'll look forward to seeing who shows up, what they have to offer, and how things develop.

7. Are there any feasibility or personnel issues that may arise with this project?

Parish volunteers and even community members offering instruction might need to be vetted by the diocese. Reading the insurance policy and consulting the diocese on the necessary background checks, etc., in reference to this project would be prudent.

We commit to actively promote and work on this project.

Signed:

Debra Spencer

Signed:

Alliee DeArmond

Date completed: September 1, 2023

Revised: October 7, 2023