

BUILDING ON FAITH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Frequently Asked Questions

(Updated 3/24/2026)

Introduction

Our parish has prayerfully decided to build a new Byzantine-style church that will serve as a landmark of faith, beauty, and community for generations to come. This document provides answers to many of the most common questions and outlines the projected roadmap that will guide us from design to completion.

Q: What is the status of the project?

A: The Parish has decided to move forward with the construction of a new church. We now have a conceptual design in place. The projected project costs are **\$5+ million**, though due to inflation and possible tariff pricing, final costs may be higher. We must raise **at least \$4 million** before construction can begin.

Q: What is the urgency?

- **Ageing Building:** Every building has a natural lifespan, and our existing church has reached its limit. It continues to require costly maintenance. An example is the recent repair of the major leaks in the dome and flat roofs—to allow us simply to continue worshipping safely in our church. While these funds could have gone toward the new building, the Parish Council determined the repair was essential to allow continued worship in the existing church as we prepare to build.
- **Rising Costs:** Each month of delay increases construction costs due to inflation, material shortages, and rising fuel prices. Beginning as soon as we are able will potentially save the parish hundreds of thousands of dollars and ensure that every contribution is directed toward construction expenses—not toward offsetting escalating prices.
- **Leadership and Continuity:** The **leadership team responsible for this project is not getting younger—and neither is our architect.** Their combined experience, commitment, and vision are vital to ensuring the new Holy Trinity Church is built with integrity and faith. The time to act is now, while their guidance and expertise are still actively leading the effort.
- **Momentum and Mission:** The energy, unity, and generosity within our parish are strong today. This is our moment—an opportunity to transform faith into action and secure a beautiful, lasting sanctuary for future generations.

If we wait, we risk losing not only resources—but also the people and momentum that make this vision possible.

Q: What is the plan for building?

A: As we move forward with faith and gratitude, our community will proceed with the building of our new Holy Trinity Church in possibly two phases, depending on the generosity of our faithful and friends.

- **Phase 1 – Shelled Sanctuary:** Begins once \$4 million is raised. The entire structure will be built, and the main sanctuary completed for worship and sacraments. Some interior spaces (Bell Tower, Upper Gallery, chapels, and ministry rooms) will be finished later, as fund raising permits.
- **Phase 2 – Construction Completion:** The unfinished interior spaces will be completed as fund raising continues.

• **NOTE:** If we reach \$5 million or more before Phase 1 is complete, the full church will be completed at once — including all chapels, galleries, and ministry areas — ready to serve our parish family and future generations.

Q: Who is the architect, and how was he chosen?

A: The architect for the Holy Trinity new church is **Christ J. Kamages, FAIA**, of **CJK Design Group** in San Francisco. Mr. Kamages is one of the most distinguished architects of Greek Orthodox churches in the United States and Archon Architekton of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, blending Byzantine tradition with modern design and engineering. He has designed and built more than **250 Orthodox and liturgical projects** nationwide, including cathedrals, monasteries, and parish churches.

Q: Who will be our contractors?

A: Holy Trinity is blessed to have **Bob Coste** and **Carol Kafkalas** lead our *Building on Faith* construction team. Both are deeply committed parishioners who bring decades of professional experience and heartfelt dedication to this sacred project. Their services are being **donated**, saving the church hundreds of thousands of dollars in construction management and oversight costs. **Bob Coste** is the owner of a custom home building company in Ocean City, NJ, with over 40 years of experience. **Carol Kafkalas** is the owner of a construction management firm in Northfield, NJ, with extensive experience overseeing municipal, school, and commercial projects across South Jersey. Guided by their faith, Bob and Carol will ensure our new church is built cost-effectively, with precision, integrity, and devotion to God's glory.

Q: Who is our Civil Engineer?

A: We have enlisted the Civil Engineering services of Rami Nassar of Schaeffer Nassar Scheidegg Consulting Engineers, LLC.

Q: What is the projected cost?

A: In January 2024, our projected construction costs were \$3.9 million for the Phase 1 Shelled Sanctuary and a \$4.9 million for Phase 2 Construction Completion. We will know the final costs after we complete the construction drawings and receive all subcontractor bids.

Q: How are inflation and tariffs affecting the overall project cost?

A: Our baseline budget (January 2024) will be affected by inflation. The full extent will be known during the bid phase (anticipated to be July 2026). Our architect, **Christ Kamages, FAIA**, is proactively sourcing alternate materials and suppliers to control costs without compromising quality or beauty. However, **the longer we wait, the more expensive construction will become**. Beginning sooner will save significant costs and bring our vision to life within reach.

Q: What is our fundraising goal? How much do we need to begin?

A: We must have **\$4 million** on hand to begin construction. The total projected Project Cost is **\$5+ million**, subject to inflation and tariffs. Project Costs include not only the "hard" construction costs, but also the "soft" costs such as architect/engineer fees, permit fees, legal and accounting fees insurance, and other indirect costs required for a construction project. Our Building on Faith Committee will continue fundraising will continue until we reach our \$5+million goal of a Phase 2 Construction Completion.

Q: Can we take a loan to finance?

A: We want to pay for the church ourselves. Building our new Church is the work of our community and is our responsibility. At the moment, we have the remaining debt from our Community Center that we are working to pay off that makes taking additional loans challenging. We have raised **\$3.615 million** as of early Spring 2026, and with God's grace, are on track to raise what will be required.

Q: Is demolition included in the budget?

A: Yes. Although it will be an emotional day, the demolition of the existing church is included. Removing the structure entirely is more straightforward and cost-effective than partial deconstruction

Q: Will additional site investigations, such as soil borings, be conducted?

A: Yes. Soil borings took place in November 2025 by ACER, a licensed geotechnical engineering firm. The results of these borings did not indicate any cause for concern or directed remediation of the site. They will also be on hand to advise when excavation of the site begins.

Q: What is the architectural design of the new church?

A: The design follows an **octagonal Byzantine plan**, inspired by Sts. Sergios and Bacchus in Constantinople. It will feature a column-free interior and a smaller yet higher dome, with clerestory windows, creating a sense of openness and divine grace. It will be a beautiful witness to our Greek Orthodox faith, and landmark monument for all South Jersey as the only Byzantine church in the region. As has occurred after other such churches have been built, the new church will attract new people to join our parish. This is the reason we are planning for a slightly larger church.

Main Features

Sanctuary & Worship Spaces

- Central Byzantine-inspired **Dome** over the sanctuary
- **Altar & Solea** – Focal point for liturgy
- **Psalti & Choir Apses** – Designated spaces for chanting and music
- **Upper Loft** – Additional seating

Clergy & Acolyte Spaces

- **Vestry** – Clergy vesting and sacristy
- **Acolyte Room** – With dedicated bathroom for clergy
- **Ambulatory** – Passage behind altar; storage for icons and liturgical items and movement between Vestry and Acolyte room

Chapels & Baptistry

- Two **Exedras** – St. Nectarios (right) and St. John the Baptist (left)
 - Adult baptistry in St. John chapel; infant baptisms on the Solea

Narthex & Functional Spaces

- Large **Narthex** – Candle storage, Parish Council office, choir robes/books
- **Cry/Bride Room** – Doubles as a quiet room for infants or pre-wedding room for the bride and her attendants
- Four **Ministry Rooms** – Greek School, Philoptochos, and two flexible spaces
- Two **Bathrooms** – Handicap-accessible near the entrance

Exterior Features

- **Bell Tower** – Prominent visual and liturgical feature
- **Exo-Narthex/Portico** – Transitional sacred space
- **Circle of Hope** – Drop-off area for parishioners, weddings, funerals
- **Walk of Faith** – Processional pathway surrounding the church
- **Memorial Wall** – Space for remembrance and prayer
- **Mosaic Icons**- Holy images at the front of the façade of the church

Q: What is the size and seating capacity of the new church?

A: The new Holy Trinity Church will measure **8,627 square feet** which is slightly larger than the existing building, though with a more efficient and purposeful use of space. It will seat **240 worshipers in the main nave**, preserving the open, uplifting feeling of the current church while providing room for our growing parish family. As has been shown other cases, our new church will attract many new families.

Q: Are there zoning or height restrictions for the dome?

A: No. The dome is an architectural feature exempt from the 35-foot limit.

Q: What material will be used for the dome?

A: Most likely, the dome will be steel or aluminum with a Titanium nitrate ceramic coating, with a tested lifespan of over 200 years, available in gold and copper finishes.

Q: What about the Bell Tower?

A: It will serve as both a **stairway to the Upper Gallery** and a **symbolic call to Christ**.

Q: Will solar energy be included?

A: We are exploring this option; solar tiles or panels may be integrated.

Q: Are interior furnishings and iconography included in the budget?

A: No. The project includes architectural finishes but **not** iconography, pews, or furnishings such as the altar, iconostasis, or candle stands. Many existing items may be reused (see below), and new iconography will require separate fundraising. We will examine the existing iconography, Pantokrator and Platytera, which is currently stored in a climate-controlled space, to determine if it can be used in the new space both in terms of size as well as style to blend with any new iconography. Any iconography that will not be used will be donated to a mission church in need.

Q: What items will be reused?

A: As of now, the intention is to keep the altar table, as it has been consecrated, the iconostasis and the bishop's throne and chanter stand. The pews will also be reused, though with a plan to be replaced in the future when we have funding.

Q: Will the design include a loft or gallery?

A: Yes. The Upper Gallery over the Narthex will be finished as storage or perhaps ministry space in Phase I. It may also offer overflow seating during major holidays and be a place parents can bring their young children to watch the Divine Liturgy from above.

Q: How will the new church relate to the Community Center and Trinity Learning Center?

A: The new church will stand as the anchor point beside the **Spiros Alexander Malaspina Community Center**, blending in visually with our community center to unite worship and fellowship/ministry.

Q: What are the next steps?

A: We are transitioning from conceptual design to detailed design and pricing, followed by construction documents, permitting, and sub-contractor bidding.

Q: Do we have to go through Pinelands Approvals?

A: No. Our Civil Engineer, Rami Nassar met with the Zoning Board Technical Review Committee in March 2026 to determine if this project can be approved through Administrative Review. It was determined that we are within the parameters simply to do Administrative Review, which avoids the lengthy and expensive Planning Board and Pinelands Review Process.

Q: How will the project move forward?

A: The church will progress through seven stages, ensuring readiness and stewardship at each step.

Stage / Date	Description & Key Milestones
Stage 1: Pre-Construction Planning <i>(March-April 2026)</i>	Establishes the foundation for the project —finalizing the architectural and engineering (A/E) contract, and refining the overall project budget, scope, and definition.
Stage 2: Documentation & Building Permits <i>(March- Jun 2026)</i>	Finalize design development, work on detailed construction documents, submit Administrative Review materials, submit building permit applications, and ensures that all technical reviews and code compliance requirements are fully satisfied.
Stage 3: Bidding <i>(Jul – Aug 2026)</i>	Subcontractor bids are solicited and reviewed — allowing the parish to evaluate cost proposals and finalize total project pricing.
Stage 4: Fund Raising <i>(Aug 2026)</i>	Marks the milestone of raising \$4 million goal required to begin Phase 1 construction.
Stage 5: Construction	Groundbreaking will depend upon weather and having optimal conditions for the construction process. Once construction begins it will include the demolition of the existing church and continue with site and building work (11-12 Months)
Stage 6: Project Completion & Opening	Concludes with final inspections, blessing, and the joyous opening of the new Holy Trinity Church — when the doors of our new sanctuary open to the faithful.