

PRESS RELEASE

TO: The press

FROM: City of Bellevue Economic Development Department

DATE: 12-21-20

The upper scaffolding at the Sacred Heart Church in Bellevue, Kentucky, is finally being dismantled after months of renovation to the historic and iconic structure.

The Catholic Church at the corner of Taylor Avenue and Division Street has been undergoing a renaissance with much needed maintenance and repairs to one of Bellevue's most historic structures.

The home of weddings, funerals, gatherings and masses for generations of Bellevue families will be preserved for future generations due to the effort to restore and preserve the structure.

On December 21, 2020, a long awaited event--the removal of the scaffolding and the unveiling of the new copper cross and dome at Sacred Heart.

"The copper steeple is done," said Bellevue Mayor Charlie Cleves.

"The brand new copper on the church will glisten and will be visible by Christmas.

"Now we have an issue with the louvres under the clock in the clock tower," said Cleves. "We are being advised to replace them with copper louvres by the contractor. That way, they will last a lot longer and will be less costly to maintain. Of course, there is an expensive upfront cost that's not in the budget."

As progress continues on replacement of the roof, gutters and flashing (to protect the interior of the church from continued weather damage), more and more of the newly restored, beautiful exterior of the church will reveal itself, with copper gutters and flashing, and roof so new it calls the attention of all parishioners, residents, and passersby.

However, as with any project involving a 100-plus-year-old building, unexpected challenges, issues and costs have been encountered. The most pressing of those issues right now are the louvres immediately below the four clock faces which need to be repaired and reinstalled. The church has two choices; they can be repaired, painted and reinstalled; or repaired, wrapped in copper and reinstalled.

"The latter choice is better for so many reasons," said Dave Fessler who is working with Mayor Cleves to help raise funds for the renovations. "Painting the louvres will obviously require more repair and painting at regular intervals, which means continuing costs. By contrast,

wrapping the louvres in copper will make them maintenance free for decades and decades to come.

From an aesthetic perspective, the copper on the louvres will provide the steeple with a beautiful accent, and add grandeur to the copper cross and dome like a perfect necklace. The copper choice is advocated by the roofing contractor, Imbus, Charlie Cleves who is the Cost Oversight Committee Chairperson, and David Fessler the Capital Campaign Chairperson

“While the choice is clear, the cost is not.”

Divine Mercy Parish is still raising funds for the original project and other construction issues encountered along the way. While they are close, money still needs to be raised. The copper wrapped louvres will add an additional \$38,000 to the project. The cost is \$9,500 per louvre.

Sacred Heart Church is a historic landmark, and its steeple is a beacon of Christian faith.

It is also a landmark used by travelers to gauge their location, as well as a simple symbol of man-made beauty on the horizon.

“Surely this church deserves the durability and lack of regular maintenance that copper will provide,” said Fessler. “Surely Sacred Heart Church should be the most beautiful landmark on the horizon. To make that happen, Divine Mercy Parish needs you now; needs you, in the spirit of Christmas giving, to make a donation that will last for decades to come, and for generations after us to marvel at and enjoy.”

“Are there 76 people in our community who will donate \$500 to make this happen?” asked Cleves. “Are there 38 people in our community who will donate \$1,000 to make this happen? We hope and pray so.”

To make a donation, please make checks payable to Divine Mercy Parish.

Donations can be mailed to Divine Mercy Parish, 318 Division St., Bellevue, Ky. 41073.

In addition, donations can be made to: <https://dmsbcatholic.com/divine-mercy/capital-campaign/>

Perhaps a family would like to sponsor a louvre for \$9,500.

“Many people come to Bellevue to see the church,” said Cleves. “It benefits our whole community, including our businesses.

“The church is an icon for Bellevue,” said Cleves. “It means a lot to so many. We’ve gone through wars, economic downturns, and many struggles, but the church has always been there for Bellevue and its people.”