

Restoring America's First Basilica

Renewing and revitalizing a sacred landmark

BY JULIE CRAVEN



RESTORING
BEAUTY
INSPIRING
HOPE 

A Campaign to Renew The Basilica of Saint Mary

“Your support is vital to preserving The Basilica of Saint Mary as a place of hope, healing, and spiritual renewal.”

— Fr. Daniel Griffith,
Pastor and Rector



Easter Fire 2025
Photo by Ken Fournelle

For more than a century, The Basilica of Saint Mary — America's first basilica — has stood as a beacon of faith, hope, and compassion in the heart of Minneapolis. Today, this beloved landmark faces urgent structural and aesthetic challenges, and we must act to ensure that its legacy endures for generations to come.

Through the Restoring Beauty, Inspiring Hope campaign, we seek to raise the \$45 million necessary to complete a comprehensive restoration of The Basilica of Saint Mary — an effort made possible through the extraordinary generosity of supporters like you.

With more than \$35 million already committed, we have reached approximately 75% of our campaign goal. This effort represents far more than an investment in a building; it is an investment in The Basilica as a living center of worship, service, and artistic expression for the future.

The Restoring Beauty, Inspiring Hope capital campaign will fund the first complete restoration of this iconic church in a generation and stands as the largest fundraising effort ever undertaken by The Basilica of Saint Mary.

A Vibrant Future

The Basilica is a gift we received from previous generations, but it is up to us to pass on its legacy.

We invite you to prayerfully consider how you will join other donors in safeguarding The Basilica as a beacon of hope, healing, and spiritual renewal for the next 100 years.

Together, we will restore and revitalize America's first basilica.✝

Julie Craven is a parish member and Marketing Chair at The Basilica.

LEADERSHIP TEAMS

The vision for the scale of this project requires close coordination across numerous stakeholders, disciplines, and workflows. Establishing a formal structure to manage alignment, decision-making, and execution is foundational to the restoration process.

Governance

The complex restoration work requires collaboration across The Basilica, The Basilica Landmark, and at times, our Archdiocese. Excellent and timely communication and effective coordination are needed so the various facets of the project are in sync and relevant information is shared among key stakeholders as well as Parish and Landmark leaders. To this end, in 2024 The Restoration Executive Committee was established to effectively coordinate this important restoration project.

Restoration Executive Committee (REC) Membership

- Fr. Daniel Griffith | *Pastor/Rector, Capital Campaign and Development, Aesthetics and Design, Archdiocese Liaison*
- Tom Paul | *Parish Trustee and Chair of REC*
- Susan Link | *Parish Trustee*
- Steve Sefton | *Landmark Board Past President and Archdiocese Liaison*
- Mary McMahon | *Landmark Board Past President and Archdiocese Liaison*
- Deirdre Palmer | *Landmark Board President and Liaison to Landmark Board*
- Steve Brown | *Landmark Vice President*
- Jill Ahern | *Interim Executive Director, The Basilica Landmark*
- Nathan Mueting | *Managing Director of Mission Advancement, The Basilica of Saint Mary*
- Peter Crain | *Contractor Liaison*
- Dan Ahern | *Communications and Branding*
- Emily Hjelm | *Campaign Advisor*
- Audra Johnson | *Finance and Operations*
- Johan van Parys | *Aesthetics and Design, Development*
- Doug Craven | *Building and Project Logistics*
- Brigitte Olson | *Administrative Assistant to REC*

Committees

Working under the REC are five specialized committees working on specific aspects of the restoration project:

- Communications and Branding
- Finance
- Construction and Logistics
- Aesthetics and Design
- Capital Campaign and Fundraising

RESTORATION PROJECT SCOPE

Exterior

Critical repairs are needed to ensure The Basilica stands in Minneapolis for the next century.

- Tuckpointing
- Exterior door restoration
- Storm drain replacement
- Exterior lighting
- New roof
- Masonry repairs

Interior

Planned interior work will create a place for worship and reflection that is beautiful and sustainable.

- Stone, stained glass, and plaster restoration and repair
- Surface cleaning
- Pews and flooring
- Sacred furnishings

Sacred Experience

The Basilica is renowned for inspiring liturgies and world-class music. Updates include:

- Enhanced acoustics and audio systems
- Upgraded livestream system
- Organ repairs

Accessibility and Safety

Updates will ensure that all visitors can fully and safely participate in our services.

- Exterior stair repairs
- Accessible seating
- Elevator repairs
- Improved signage

Security and Operations

To meet the current safety needs, security systems and tools are being modernized. Funds will also provide limited support for maintenance and essential Landmark and Parish operations during the restoration.

- Controlled access
- Designated entries
- Cameras
- Security glass on windows
- Plaza safety features



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS

It is an honor to serve as co-chairs of the Restoring Beauty, Inspiring Hope campaign. We invite you to join us in caring for this remarkable Building of Hope that has uplifted generations.

For more than a century, The Basilica has been a sanctuary of beauty and refuge. Time has taken its toll, but after years of thoughtful planning by dedicated experts, the moment for a full restoration has arrived.

Inspired by those who preserved The Basilica before us, we now share that responsibility. Your support will help ensure it remains a place of hope, inspiration, and welcome for generations to come.

Together, we can restore its beauty and renew its power to inspire hope.

With gratitude,

Mary McMahon and Steve Sefton

LEADERSHIP: BEHIND THE VISION

The Basilica of Saint Mary's, Restoring Beauty, Inspiring Hope campaign has called on parish leaders to guide its ambitious restoration. We spoke with a few of the campaign's leaders about what inspires them, the importance of this work, and what the restored Basilica will mean for the community.

Richard Anderson

For more than a century, The Basilica has been a vital spiritual center for Catholics and for people of all faiths in our community. Its care has been entrusted, generation by generation, to those who recognized its significance and safeguarded it for the future. Today, that same responsibility rests with us: to restore the first basilica in the United States so it may continue to accompany the spiritual journeys of generations yet to come. Guided by the Gospel of Matthew and its call to serve others, this work becomes more than restoration — it is an act of faith. Working alongside deeply committed parishioners on the Landmark project is, in itself, spiritually meaningful work.

Emily Hjelm

The full restoration of The Basilica has been a long-held dream for parish leaders, carried forward over decades of hope and planning. To see that vision now within reach feels almost surreal. With the opportunity to pursue a fully restored interior, involvement in this effort is both an honor and a responsibility — one undertaken in gratitude for the visionary leaders who came before and in service to generations still to come.

An architectural treasure and an unmistakable presence on the city's skyline, The Basilica continues to inspire awe. Even after twenty-five years, entering the space remains a moment of wonder for me. The prospect of renewal — restored stained glass masterpieces, cleaned stone and marble, repaired plaster, and renewed paint — brings that inspiration



into sharper focus. The artistry, color, and design will once again shine with radiance. Yet the restoration is about more than beauty alone. Knowing that The Basilica's light and mission will stand as a lasting testament of faith in the city fuels a deep commitment to the success of the campaign. At its heart, this work is a proclamation of love for The Basilica community.

WELCOME NATHAN MUETING

Managing Director of Mission Advancement

Nate joined The Basilica of Saint Mary staff in July 2025 to lead fundraising and mission advancement, bringing with him both deep professional experience and a personal connection to the parish. A Basilica member since 2021, Nate's relationship with the church extends well beyond his role. He has served as an OCIA sponsor, and he and his wife, Maxine, were married at The Basilica — milestones that have shaped his commitment to its mission.

With more than a decade of experience in fundraising and nonprofit management, primarily at the University of Minnesota, Nate brings a long-term perspective and a proven record of fundraising success and donor engagement.

What inspires him most about the current campaign is its lasting impact. The restoration work it supports will be admired and appreciated for generations, much like the original efforts of parishioners and community members who built The Basilica more than a century ago. Nate finds it both motivating and humbling to imagine future generations looking back with gratitude on today's supporters, recognizing their role in preserving this sacred space.

Nate and Maxine live in Minneapolis with their young son, James, and their labrador retriever, Pippin. As a family, they enjoy staying active and exploring local parks and trails — rooted in the city they call home and deeply invested in the life of The Basilica.



For more information about supporting The Basilica, contact Nate Mueeting, Managing Director of Mission Advancement, at 612.317.3407 or nmueeting@mary.org.

PROFESSIONAL PARTNERS

In preparation for the exterior and interior restoration, significant work has been completed. A nation-wide team of renowned experts has been assembled to assess conditions, research the most effective and efficient solutions, and plan the scope of this extensive project.

ARCHITECT

HGA is a national interdisciplinary design firm rooted in architecture and engineering. Their mission is to create a positive, lasting impact through design. They value empathy, are fueled by curiosity, and embrace the hard work that leads to innovation. Selected through an extensive search process, they were chosen to build a team to restore The Basilica of Saint Mary.

CONTRACTOR

JE Dunn has worked on hundreds of historically-significant structures across the country through their Twin Cities-based office including the American Swedish Institute and the United States Air Force Academy Chapel. They take pride in breathing new life into these buildings and environments.

MASONRY

American Masonry Restoration is one of the most respected restoration contractors in the Upper Midwest. Their recent restoration projects include the St Paul Union Depot and the Stone Arch Bridge.

ARCHITECTURAL RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION

Based in Brooklyn, New York, Evergreene Architectural Arts is the largest specialty contractor in the U.S., focused on the preservation of historic buildings, artifacts, and works of art. The Evergreene team has contributed to the restoration and preservation of many of our country's most significant and iconic masterpieces.

STAINED GLASS CONSERVATION

Liberty Stained Glass Conservation, LLC offers independent consultancy to ensure the responsible and ethical treatment of American stained-glass windows for our generation and those to come. Liberty considers stained glass as its own art form within a building and recognizes that each environment, building, and window is unique.

LIGHTING DESIGN

Fisher, Marantz, Stone: Interior and Exterior Lighting, with offices in New York and Seattle, is an architectural lighting design firm specializing in offering complete planning, design, and commissioning services specializing in museums, performing arts, and unique sites around the world.

SOUND | AV

Kirkegaard Associates is a design and consulting firm that specializes in architectural acoustics and integrated systems. Their portfolio includes nearly 3,000 successful projects including auditoria, concert halls, theaters, schools of music and the arts, recording and broadcast studios, libraries, and churches.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY EXPERTS



Support the Restoration

A once-in-a-lifetime gift

Prayerfully consider making a campaign gift that is meaningful to you. Through the Restoring Beauty, Inspiring Hope campaign, we aim to secure the \$45 million needed to complete the comprehensive restoration of The Basilica of Saint Mary — an effort made possible by the generosity of supporters like you.

Your generous support is vital to our success in reaching our ambitious goal.

Discover the many meaningful ways you can contribute to the Restoring Beauty, Inspiring Hope campaign. Your generosity is helping make the full restoration of The Basilica a reality. Thank you for preserving this sacred and historic place for future generations.

Fr. Daniel Griffith, Pastor and Rector

CONSIDER YOUR GIVING OPTIONS

Give online: restoreourbasilica.org

Mail checks to:

The Basilica Landmark/
Restoring Beauty Campaign
88 N 17th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55403



Pledge:

To maximize your impact, pledges may be fulfilled over a period of up to three years.

Please find the pledge commitment form at restoreourbasilica.org.

For information about additional giving options such as a Donor Advised Fund, Appreciated Stock, other assets, and recognition opportunities, please contact:

Nate Mueting, Managing Director of Mission Advancement, at 612.317.3471 or nmueting@mary.org.

The Restoring Beauty, Inspiring Hope campaign is an initiative of The Basilica Landmark, a registered nonprofit organization (Tax ID #41-1754864) dedicated to preserving, restoring, and enhancing the historic Basilica of Saint Mary.

All gifts to the campaign are tax deductible as allowed by law.

RESTORATION PRAYER

Join The Basilica community in prayer.

Ever-living God, you have created all things, and made your son the unshakable foundation of salvation.

We ask for your guidance and help as we restore The Basilica of Saint Mary.

Inspire us to generously use the gifts you have given us to bring this task to fulfillment.

Bless our Basilica staff and lay leaders who shepherd this initiative.

Bless the architects and engineers who give shape to our hopes and dreams.

Bless the contractors, artists, and artisans who use their skills to realize our vision.

Bless those on the capital campaign committee who guide our fundraising efforts.

Bless all those who through their generous gifts make this important work possible.

We ask this through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Patroness and our mother, and in the powerful name of your Son, Jesus the Christ, who lives with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

Amen.