

St. Benedict of Nursia Campus Update FAQ – June 2026

With our recent announcement about the future of our parish campuses, especially the future closure of Our Lady of Fatima, our goal is to be open and transparent. We don't have every answer yet but commit to keeping you updated on our progress. We understand how difficult these changes are for those who call Our Lady of Fatima home, and we commit to offering our support as the process unfolds.

It is important to remember that changes to our campus structure affect our *entire* Parish. As changes occur within our parish community, we need to keep our eyes fixed on Christ and on His never-ending care for His Church. Let us also thank God for the blessings He continues to bestow on St Benedict of Nursia parish as we navigate these changes.

Below is a summary of what we know at this time, as well as additional background information.

Why is Our Lady of Fatima campus closing?

It is important to first revisit the context of our parish merger and the realities we face as a Catholic community in Connecticut and across the nation. Present Mass attendance and financial contributions, coupled with demographic changes*, have dramatically altered the landscape of parishes all over New England including our Wallingford Catholic community. After much consideration of all these factors, it has become clear that maintaining three church campuses is no longer sustainable.

Following the merger last summer, an engineering study of every building which belongs to St. Benedict Parish was completed. During this time, we continued to make repairs (some more visible than others) at all three church campuses often using funds restricted* for these projects. We carefully evaluated which buildings will not only best serve our new Parish right now, but also in the years to come. This evaluation included the location of each campus in relation to one other, the amount of deferred maintenance, as well as the overall sacramental life*. Our Lady of Fatima campus currently requires approximately \$1.5 million in repairs, including major projects such as replacing the air conditioning in both the church and church hall, and repaving the parking lot. Additionally, in terms of sacramental life, Our Lady of Fatima has seen a more pronounced decline in Mass attendance, Baptisms, and weddings than our other campuses over recent years.

In addition to the above, the annual cost of maintaining just this one campus last year was approximately \$181,000. Given our present levels of parishioners and financial contributions, moving forward the mission of our parish will best be served with two church campuses.

Why not just hold a big fundraiser to make all of the repairs?

While a major fundraiser might address some immediate repair needs, it would not resolve the larger realities facing our Parish and the Church more broadly. While there are currently more men in formation for the priesthood than in years past, and we are also beginning to see a modest increase in the number of worshippers in the Archdiocese of Hartford, the reality is that we have faced many years of significant deficits in both areas which continue to challenge us. Additionally, the ongoing cost of carrying three campuses is more than our parish can sustainably support.

When will the sale take place? Who are you selling it to?

The entire OLF campus will be purchased by Saint Joseph Housing Corporation, an entity organized within and controlled by the Archdiocese. Saint Joseph Housing Corporation will take on the responsibility of redeveloping the property for a purpose in line with the Church's charitable mission and the Archbishop's vision that our surplus properties be developed for mission-related purposes, reflecting gospel values. This process is estimated to take anywhere from 1-3 years. For the near future, the OLF campus will remain open and continue to be utilized for Masses, Faith Formation, and other Parish functions.

*See Glossary on Page 2 for the definition of this term.

St. Benedict of Nursia Campus Update FAQ – June 2026

What happens to Faith Formation?

Faith Formation for grades 1-8 for the 2026-27 school year will continue to take place at the OLF campus. Meanwhile, it is our intention that Confirmation classes will move to the COR campus as a part of our revamped preparation program for that sacrament. As the sale of the OLF campus unfolds, we will be exploring options for the relocation of the remainder of the Faith Formation Program.

What will we use for a church hall once OLF is sold?

The long-term plan is to continue to utilize the Church Hall at the MHT campus, as well as to expand the existing building currently serving as the rectory and classrooms on the COR campus.

How will this affect the Mass schedule?

There will be no immediate changes to the Sunday Mass schedule since this process will take time. Eventually, we will need to move the OLF 9:00 am Mass to a different campus and eliminate one of the two existing 10:30 Masses. As we noted in March 2025 when the new Mass schedule was announced, it has always been an “interim” schedule; the simultaneous 10:30 Masses were never intended to be permanent. The eventual final weekend Mass schedule of 6 Masses will need to be a schedule that one priest can celebrate, both in an emergency and perhaps also down the road as a parish with a single priest.

How will our parish keep the legacy of Our Lady of Fatima alive?

It is our intention to preserve, honor, and celebrate the legacy of Our Lady of Fatima campus to the greatest extent possible. Additionally, we hope to incorporate as much from OLF into our other campuses as appropriate.

How will we find out the latest updates?

These FAQs will be posted to our parish website and updated as needed. We will also utilize all of our communication platforms: the website, bulletin, email, social media, and further opportunities for information and pastoral support as needed. You can also email us with any questions at wlftransition@gmail.com. Finally, as in all things, we continue to ask for your prayers and your patience as we move forward together.

Glossary:

- *Demographic Changes:* Our present regional reality of an overall decline in the number of regularly worshipping Catholics, a movement of population away from the Northeastern United States, and a surplus of aging church infrastructure which no longer viably serves the present number of practicing Catholics.
- *Restricted Funds:* Monies specifically designated for a particular purpose. They are permanently restricted to that purpose and cannot be used for other expenses of the parish. By contrast, unrestricted funds may be used at the discretion of the pastor for any legal purpose appropriate to the parish.
- *Sacramental Life:* The rate of sacramental and liturgical participation as an indicator of parish vitality and growth (ex. number of baptisms vs. funerals, weekly Mass attendance, etc.).
- *The Mission and Vision of the Church:* The mission of the Church, given in the Great Commission, is to make disciples. The Church’s structures (dioceses, churches, schools, hospitals, etc.) serve to advance that mission. In every age, we must discern and reevaluate what structures we need to effectively carry out our mission.