



***By Jan Schultz***

***The Imperial Republican***

Eleven months ago, site clearing and dirt work started on a new parish hall for St. Patrick Catholic Church on Imperial's main street.

And this past Sunday, parishioners enjoyed their first major event there with a brunch after Mass.

Now that it's nearly 100% complete, church members continue to get more familiar with the new facility, which features a large fellowship area that will seat 200, a spacious kitchen, three classrooms and a large meeting room.

The community will have a chance to get a better look at the new parish hall on Sunday, Oct. 25, when an afternoon open house is planned. Bishop Fabian Bruskewicz of Lincoln will be here for Confirmation that day, and will also bless the facility during the festivities.

Fr. Bernard Lorenz, pastor at St. Patrick, is enthused with the facility.

"It's the right size, it's very efficient and a good-looking building, too," he said.

But, he is also pleased with how well the parishioners worked together on plans for the building.

"I was very pleased and happy with that," he said.

He said he's been very impressed with the professionalism and expertise of the parishioners on the parish council and building's steering committee.

Nick Schultz, who's worked as the on-site inspector for the parish, said there are only a few minor punch list items to be taken care of by the general contractor, C&S Construction.



Church members will also be completing some landscaping this fall and next spring, which will include grass and tree-planting and decorative rock around the foundation.

The fellowship area within the building encompasses 2,500 square feet and the kitchen includes about 650 square feet of the building's total 6,400 square feet.

The kitchen includes a large serving counter, two commercial dishwashers that can wash loads in three minutes, four sinks and two large freezers in an outer area.

Schultz said the kitchen also includes a commercial fire suppressant range hood that will automatically release a dry chemical when a fire in the stove is detected.

The entire building also houses state-of-the-art fire sprinkler and fire alarm systems, and handicap parking is available on both the east and west.

Classrooms in the building are being used for catechism classes, and the large meeting room is also being used for those weekly classes. On the southwest side of the building, that large meeting room was also designed for overflow crowds from the fellowship hall.

Parishioners named the four classrooms/meeting room after the writers the Gospels, Matthew,

Mark, Luke and John.

One of the most impressive features of the parish hall is the specially designed window on the north in the shape of a cross.

The new hall is just south of the church's Friendship Hall on Broadway. Plans are to demolish Friendship Hall eventually.

The new hall is available for public use. Parishioner Michelle Spady is coordinating the event scheduling at the hall.



**'Tailgate' on Sept. 18**

Area residents can get an even earlier look at the new hall next Friday, Sept. 18, when the parish's Altar Society hosts an authentic Mexican dinner prior to the home Longhorn football game against Cambridge High School.

The "tailgate party" feed will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. The public is invited to the feed that will include homemade burritos, rice, beans, dessert and a drink.