



Church of Saint John the Evangelist of Little Canada

380 Little Canada Road
Little Canada, MN 55117

(651) 484-2708 • FAX (651) 484-0567 • www.stjohnsoflc.org • www.sjolc.org

August 22, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we approach a new school year, we have a lot of exciting news to share regarding the Pastoral Planning Process I initiated with a parish-wide survey last October. I am committed to transparency, and as such I am providing quarterly updates on this process, which to date includes forming the pastoral planning committee to sort through the data and set goals (Welcoming, Finance, School/Church Unity, Stewardship), and now updates on the progress of these goals.

Back in April, we shared the serious challenges our parish was facing: Mass attendance down 22% and contributions down 10%, while school enrollment declined by 117 students over the past 10 years. A Budget Committee was tasked to balance the budget for the church and school, and this month the Finance Council will have a final draft of this recommendation! It should be noted that the proposed balanced budget will take a couple of years to achieve, and we are setting milestones to ensure we are on track to achieve these.

Key to balancing the budget as well as improving a unified and welcoming church and school community has been the addition of two new employees, communications coordinator Laura Haraldson (who works about 10 hours a week in both the school and church offices), and new principal Dan Hurley, who started full time in June. Dan has spent the summer fundraising and marketing—all in efforts to recruit and set the stage to increase enrollment. Big events this summer included a presentation from former Viking Matt Birk in July, planned by a collaboration of multiple church and school committees, and a Teddy Bear Band concert earlier this month, which welcomed more than 200 people from the parish and beyond. Additionally, thanks to the incredible stewardship and generosity of a couple of key donors, we are rolling out a new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) curriculum this year, complete with 3-D printing capabilities and one-to-one Chromebooks in the middle school. And lastly, our accredited preschool program will now operate year-round, lending more flexibility to parents who might be interested in long-term Catholic education here at Saint John.

Many more good things are happening as well: The Website Committee, chaired by Eric Cooley, has chosen a vendor and is actively updating and unifying both church and school sites. To this end, a photographer will be here Sunday, September 30, and Monday, October 1, to take professional photos of our parish—both church and school. The committee has set an ambitious goal of going live by year's end. A Stewardship Committee has been re-established, chaired by Donna Lehmann, and this committee is finalizing an exciting new approach to our annual stewardship efforts for the fall. A Welcoming Committee has also been formed, with John Simpson as its chairman. This group's goal is to focus on ensuring new members and visitors are welcomed with open arms. In addition to all of

his other work, Director of Faith Formation Joe Block will have a stronger presence in the middle school this coming school year. And lastly, you may have noticed new signage by the school and in the Gathering Space, fruits of the generosity of more donors, and of Dan Hurley's fundraising efforts and grant-writing. Yet to come: A new LED digital sign to replace the aging one on Little Canada Road.

While the efforts of these committees are resulting in exciting achievements, true success only comes from an engaged parish community and strong leadership. With all these new beginnings, I encourage each and every one of you to find some way to attend one of the many exciting events we've got on the horizon (check the calendar on our website for more information, www.stjohnsoflc.org). As we continue down this very important path, I am committed to leading our beautiful parish with transparency in our initiatives; I welcome any and all feedback and ideas.

Our next update is scheduled for the end of the year, and I am truly optimistic that through the Holy Spirit's guidance and the continued efforts of our parish staff, volunteers and committees, new and old, we will have many more new gifts for which to give thanks come winter.

Peace,

Fr. Tom