

Saint John the Baptist Catholic Parish

Annual Stewardship Report: July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009

Wouldn't you know it!

Someone was here at St. John's recently for a wedding. They observed the circular seating, the curved sanctuary platform, and the rounded altar. Their comment was: Wouldn't you know it? Even the church in Howard has a roundabout!

Our "roundabout" was designed to convey boldly and strongly that all are welcome at St. John's.

We convey that message not merely in words or architecture. Most importantly, we convey it in the way we live our daily lives. In these difficult economic times, real communities are stepping up and making sure that all continue to feel welcome.

We never, ever, want people to shrink from coming to St. John's because they are without work or financially stressed. It is heart breaking to receive notes from people explaining why they have had to cut back. It takes a lot to write such notes. To the writers of such notes, thank you for caring so much!

Others know in their gut how much the work of St. John's is needed and they even increase their giving in tough economic times. To those who have sacrificed to give or, even, gave more knowing that others couldn't, thank you for showing how deeply you care!

It is a witness to our deeply-held faith that St. John's has continued to be the place where all are indeed welcome. Thanks to all who support St. John's by stewardship of giving (not equal gifts surely but equal sacrifice). Thanks to those who share their time and talent for others. You are many!

Thanks, too, for those who allow us to keep a modest food pantry. And, for help with special needs – socks and underwear and things that go far beyond an annual report!

Thanks for allowing the message that all are welcome to become increasingly imprinted in your personal DNA and that of St. John's!

God Bless everyone!

Father John

FAITH FORMATION

Our Faith Formation program's mission is to provide all members of the parish the opportunity to be involved in Catholic Faith Formation; to explore and develop their religious faith; to nurture spiritual growth in a positive, prayerful and sacramental way; to enable all members to accept the responsibility of living and sharing the Gospel; to offer sacramental programs in which parents work with their children to prepare and receive sacraments. (Number of youth who celebrated the sacraments: 61 First Eucharist, 76 First Reconciliation and 73 Confirmation)

Faith Formation sessions were held on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6:15-7:15pm for grades 1-8 and 7:30-8:45pm for grades 9-10 and for Confirmation Candidates (grade 11). There were 230 youth in grades 1-6, 128 youth in grades 7-10. These sessions are led by over 60 catechists, aides and volunteers. The year included service projects and retreats.

Programs:

CHURCH TIME, a program for 4-7 year old children offered during the 10:00am Mass in the west Narthex, has an average attendance of 60 -80 children per week is directed by Cathy Seidl, along with the help of many adult and middle/high school volunteers. They also put on a Nativity Christmas program for the parents of attending children in December.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, was held the last week in July. The theme was "Crocodile Dock" Where fearless kids shine God's light. 120 children ages 4 through going into 4th grade attended. There were 95 middle/high school and adult volunteers. The week was a time of singing, praying, listening and watching skits of stories from Scripture, making crafts, games, eating fun snacks, giving to others and making friends in Christ.

G.I.F.T. (Growing in Faith Together), our intergenerational faith formation program averaged 310 households (800-1000 adults and children) attending on a Monday or Wednesday evening, five times during the year. The year's theme was "Prayer", in which there were opportunities to explore different prayer forms. There were also opportunities for participants to share fellowship in a meal and then attend a session. Participant were given the choice of areas of interest for break-out sessions, as well age specific break-outs and community sharing with all ages together. There were guest speakers, prayer, Ash Wednesday Service, God Spell concert and Stations of the Cross. It is a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together and share in our Catholic faith.

YOUTH MINISTRY, Middle and High School Youth, The parish is engaged in the VITAL Youth Ministry training program promoted by the diocese. Although there was significant turnover in the role of Coordinator of Youth Ministry during the year, the VITAL Team persevered and was able to begin setting goals with a 3 year strategic plan. They continue to proceed to meet these goals as to grow a thriving support team for Youth Ministry. The "old Church" now called the "Ministry Center" underwent a beautiful transformation allowing the upper level to be used for speakers, bands and performances and class sessions. The lower level was named

the "Fish Bowl" by the youth and is set up with a serving window "café", pool tables, foosball, ping pong, jukebox, television and many other fun items, as well as set up for class sessions. The Ministry Center was used to hold the Diocesan "Youth Jam", and middle school events such as movie night, Valentine Bingo and Middle School Mania open from 5:30-6pm on Wed. nights for pizza, games and fellowship before Faith Formation, led by parent volunteers.

Liturgy and Music

The parish is blessed to have so many people who are willing to step forward as Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Altar Servers, Ushers and Musicians. Training for these ministries is done throughout the year, but especially in fall. There are approximately 40 Lectors, 60 Ushers, 95 Eucharistic Ministers, 50 Altar Servers and 75 Musicians.

The Art and Environment Committee's main task is to keep the Church decorated for the seasons. The membership of this committee is becoming more stable. They also care for all of the plants in the church year round.

By the time this report is read you have seen a new coordinator of music, Karen Bernsteen, who is working hard to enhance our music liturgy.

PASTORAL MINISTRY

ADULT CONFIRMATION: There was one person who went through the parish Lenten preparation program for Confirmation. She chose to be confirmed here with the high school youth.

BAPTISM PROGRAM: This program is offered monthly on the last Thursday of the month. There are 5 families currently facilitating this program. From July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, there were 60 baptisms. The majority were celebrated at a weekend liturgy.

ELIZABETH MINISTRY: An outreach to those who are pregnant, adopting a child or having a baby baptized. 41 bags were delivered by 12 trained ministers. One new minister was trained. Several parishioners donate homemade booties, blankets, and angels.

NEW MEMBER REGISTRATION: Registration was done the first Tuesday of the month, after weekend liturgies and by appointment. 109 families joined the

parish. Pictures are taken of new families and posted monthly.

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults): Three adults and three children participated in the process this past year. The catechumens were baptized, confirmed and received First Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Three smaller children who were family members were also baptized on that night.

SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE: This committee is responsible for the Thanksgiving outreach, Advent Giving Tree and Lenten food drive, all which benefit those in need. It supports NEW Community Shelter through a monthly meal and other donations. It provides support to the diocesan mission in the Dominican Republic and St. John the Evangelist Homeless shelter. It serves as liaison to the Mission Group which meets twice a week and sews for various orphanages in third-world countries & does medical mission preparation as rolling bandages and sorting supplies. "Helping Hands" provided meals and transportation to our elderly and those in the hospital. The parish emergency food pantry is another of its ministries.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE: This group coordinates the three campaigns for Stewardship of Sharing, Prayer and Service.

VISITATION: One parishioner completed training and assists the pastoral associate and other previously trained ministers bringing communion to over 40 homebound monthly.

Two parishioners were trained and join 8 others who currently rotate holding a Sunday communion service at three assisted living centers in our parish boundaries, Brookview Meadow, Cardinal Ridge and Hampton Manor.

There is ongoing visitation at all four hospitals by the pastoral associate. Deacon Nick Williams is a strong pastoral presence at St. Mary's Hospital. Fr. John also visits the hospitals, when necessary. Follow-up cards are sent when the parish is aware of someone having a hospital stay.

MISCELLANEOUS: Cards were sent to relatives of parishioners who have celebrated their funeral liturgies at the parish. Birthday cards are sent to our senior parishioners over the age of 70.

A summer retreat day at Chambers Island was held in conjunction with the other west side parishes. Eleven men and eleven women were sent for training in leading Christ Renews His Parish retreats. The first parish CRHP weekends were held here in May.

There are seven trained lay leaders of prayer, including the Pastoral Associate. They regularly lead Tuesday Liturgy of the Word services, Advent Vespers, Lent Vespers and Morning Prayer during Holy Week. They also presided at the Liturgy of the Word communion services during Lent.

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick was offered three times, after Mass during the year as well as by appointment.

St. John the Baptist School

This past year the school's enrollment was 290 students in grades K-8 and 104 students in three and four-year-old preschool. The average class size was seventeen students. Thirty-four students graduated from grade 8 going on to attend Notre Dame Academy and Bay Port High School. We began an Extended Care Program before and after school. Twenty families took advantage of this service. Our guidance counselor's time was increased to 50%.

Our school participated in the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. In our third grade, our students scored higher than 73% of students in the nation in math and higher than 80% of students in the nation in language and reading. Our fifth graders scored 76% higher than other students in the nation in math, 80% higher in language, and 79% in reading. Seventh graders scored higher than 64% of students in the nation, 69% higher in language, and 71% higher in reading. All students in our accelerated Spanish program began high school taking Spanish II or III.

Costs per student were \$4433 this past year. Costs were covered by the following: Tuition \$1950 per student (44%); fees and fund raising \$584 per student (13%); parish investment \$1899 per student (43%).

Parish Administration

It has been another busy year on the administrative side. The completion of a new rectory, the implementation of Advancing Our Mission Campaign, (which will help us to pay our 2009 Bishop's Appeal, funds owed to the Diocese of Green Bay from 2003 through 2007, and

our commitment toward our church mortgage), the election of a trustee and selection of new parish council members are all part of parish administration.

We continue to work toward a solution for the church roof and have begun the process to determine the final costs for the demolition of the old rectory. A contract has been let and installation of a new lighting system for the gym will begin shortly. This will reduce our costs of lighting the gym by as much as fifty per cent over a three year period. Pot holes in the parking lot will be paved before school begins in the fall. All these maintenance items are funded each year from the money the parish earns from your SCRIP dollars. Please continue to use SCRIP and help us save even more on our expenses. Financially, the parish had a very good year. Through the generosity of our members the parish finished in the black for the third straight year since 1996. Even as our costs continue to rise, we managed a moderate gain of 3% overall in income and an increase of 2% in expenses. We will continue to look for ways to minimize expenses while getting the best "bang" for your buck.

Minutes of the 2008 Annual Parish Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 11:25 am, Sunday, September 21, 2008 in the church of St. John the Baptist in the village of Howard WI, by Lynn Greisinger, Secretary Trustee.

First on the agenda was Father John Bergstadt who thanked all of the Parish Council members, trustees and Deacon Manny Torres for all of the work they do for the parish.

The minutes from the 2007 annual meeting were review and a motion of approval was made by Mike Herman and was seconded by Ginny Lemmens.

Business Administrator, Deacon Manny Torres then handed out the latest St. John the Baptist Parish balance sheet and lead the meeting with the following details.

This is the second year since 1996 in which the church finances finished in the black. Expenditures are 1% below last year. An increase in church attendance and giving has lead to a revenue increase of 4% over last year.

The first meeting of Advancing the Mission will be in the first week of

October. Representatives of our parish will be there to discuss the necessary participation requirements of St. John the Baptist.

The plan for this year is to build a Rectory on the lot next to the new church.

We are just waiting for permission from the Village of Howard as well as the Diocese of Green Bay. All of the money needed for this project has been donated by a very generous parish member. The old Rectory is to be used for ministry storage space and a potential museum of precious church relics. (As it was estimated at \$25,000 to demo the old rectory). Boiler, plumbing and repair issues were discussed for the school, current rectory, and office building.

Our first priority is to pay off our current debt on the new church, so as to avoid a lot of interest payments, and then approach the building of a new office facility. With that in mind, there were concerns voiced from parishioners on the safety and needs of their children to have more green space in which to play during recess time. It was noted that we have a large green space on Cardinal Lane, which was all beautifully restored, by many hours of hard work, all done by volunteers from our parish. This space can be used now will the help of volunteer supervision from parents/ parishioners. The Athletic committee is also looking at getting swing sets to be placed on this green space. The play ground equipment which is currently next to the church will remain even with the building of the new office facility.

Father John stressed the importance of everyone working together on our church mission, which is "To be a visible sign of the risen Christ", and to live out the Gospel.

Three of the windows from the old church have been refurbished and installed in the new church to date. The remaining six windows in the alcoves of the church, and one in the chapel, are expected to be completed by October 6, 2008. The final window of the Annunciation, which is above the front door of the church, should be finished before Thanksgiving 2008.

A motion of adjournment was made by Dave Withee and seconded by David Kattar at 12:10 pm.