

St. Michael's Church

Summer 2021

Dear Parishioners,

I am writing to inform you of a few things going on in the parish. Much has happened since I last wrote to you. I hope and pray that your summer is going well.

We Are Open-

In case you missed it, registrations and masks (as long as you've been vaccinated) for Sunday Mass are no longer required. We will continue to provide hand sanitizers at the door and to sanitize the Church after the Masses. Eucharistic Ministers will continue to wear masks while distributing Holy Communion. We ask that you maintain a comfortable distance between you and the person next to you when you come to Mass. We will continue to distribute the Precious Body, but will refrain from sharing the Sacred Blood until the bishop gives us the go-ahead. Our Mass Schedule remains the same: Saturday at 5:00pm and Sunday at 9:00 and 11:00am.

The Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help located near the tabernacle is on loan from a parishioner. It was placed there last year at the beginning of the pandemic and survived the last pandemic over a hundred years ago. We seek the Blessed Virgin Mary's help during this challenging time.

We are able to have funerals in Church with the same regulations as the Sunday Mass. We will try to accommodate funeral luncheons as we can with the number of available volunteers. Although the Health Department has relaxed the serving of food, it still remains an issue of getting the help to donate, serve and clean up. Mary Klebba is working to set up teams of volunteers for future funeral luncheons. If you are interested in helping, please call Mary Klebba at 231-972-5208.

Daily Masses- Monday and Thursday morning Masses are in the **Chapel** and Fridays at the **Grotto** (weather permitting) beginning at 9:00am. Wednesday Mass is in the **Church** at 7:00pm. Come and join us.

The Parish Office is officially open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00am to 4:00pm. We ask that you be conscious of the fact that Mondays are extremely busy for the staff. Please **avoid coming on Monday**, if possible, or call ahead to make an appointment when it might be a good time to come in and to assist you.

Obviously, if you are not feeling well or have been exposed to someone who recently contracted Covid-19, **please stay home!** Let's be careful not to expose others to some ailment. If you haven't been vaccinated, please don't hesitate. It has been reported that the Delta Variant is already present in Mecosta county. It's not a matter of when it reaches us, it's here and highly contagious, even deadly for those who haven't been vaccinated. If you haven't been

vaccinated, please get one immediately. Go to your nearest pharmacy as to when and where you can be vaccinated and its free! If you have questions regarding the vaccine, please talk to your doctor. We need everyone healthy!

Catholic Services Appeal or CSA

It's time to wrap up our CSA campaign which began the 1st of May. To date we have received almost \$50,000 our target is \$63,000. If you haven't yet pledged or made a donation, please do so soon. You may make a pledge in one of two ways: You pay your pledge monthly or quarterly or the other option is to make a one-time gift by writing a check and on the memo: **"CSA 2021."** If you want your donation to be anonymous, let us know. The CSA unites all the Catholics in our diocese to support the work of the Church in our area. I ask that you be generous with your pledge. If you have any questions, please call the parish office. If we don't make our target, we will have to make it up from our savings, so please help us make our target.

New Faces

As we wish the best to Kris Beers, who is retiring from parish ministry and Kathleen Lally, who has accepted a position at the Churches in Greenville and Belding, our Parish Secretary Mary, will also be leaving. We will soon be welcoming new people to the staff. We have hired Elyse Leach to fill the music ministry and she will also be responsible for our Faith Formation Programs. The question those helping in the hiring process ask, is Elyse able do both the necessary and important ministries within the parish. Given her unique skills and energy, the only thing she will need is **OUR** help and cooperation; we can make it work. She will begin her ministry here at St. Michael's beginning the 2nd week of August. Soon we will be meeting with perspective candidates for the parish secretary position. I hope to have a report on that position soon.

Also, we have three parishioners who will be stepping into parish leadership roles: Kris Maurer and Nick Harrington will serve on the Pastoral Council. We thank Dave Miller for his work on the Finance Council- Dave is retiring after several years. We welcome Ryan Wernette who will serve on the Finance Council.

School News

As we approach a new School Year, we have been recognized by the diocese in two areas of school life. First, is that we were the only school in the diocese **not** to be closed during this past year. Although, we had to shut down a classroom due to Covid-19, the school remained open throughout the year. The second recognition bestowed on the school was that we led the other Catholic Schools in the diocese in student increase for the past 5 years. Each year, we continue to increase student population- beginning with our Pre-school.

These recognitions are a tribute to our principal, Mr. Ward, the teachers and staff of St. Michael's, our parents and students themselves. Congratulations and thank you for all your work for our school.

The school has currently concluded a three-week reading program to help prepare students for the coming year. It was good to see the students; and when I asked them if they were ready to return to school, they were excited to be back. That's music to my ears! We continue to enroll new students, please call the school office for more information.

We received from the government money during this pandemic and as a result purchased cleaning supplies, chrome books, improved the internet system throughout the school, provided classroom hand-washing centers and portable air conditioners. We will continue to use government money, as mandated, for the purpose of health, safety and education of our students. There is a specific list of how the money must be spent and Mr. Ward is reviewing this list to make sure we meet the guidelines.

The School Foundation Board recently reported a balance of \$2.3 million in the foundation. As a result, the school will receive \$88,000 which will be used for the operation of the school. The purpose of the foundation is: keep tuition affordable for school families.

The School Foundation was established in 1986 when the parish received a \$200,000 donation and over the years between the stock market and donations from parishioners and alumni, we are where we are today. And since 1986, the fund has generated \$1.6 million to the support of the school.

The Foundation is locally controlled. The Foundation Board is made up of financial investors and parishioners. They decide how to dispense the money according to the by-laws of the foundation with Marv Baumann serving as board president. I am grateful to those serving on the board who make this fund work for our school and parish.

If you would like to make a donation to the Foundation, please send your donation to the parish office payable to: **St. Michael's School Foundation**. It will be passed on to the foundation treasurer and deposited into the Foundation.

If you are looking for a good place to leave some of your money in your will, please consider the School Foundation. Consult your attorney and your family to see how you might make this happen. This is a wonderful gift to the future of our children.

A Word from our Finance Council

Thank you for your support of St. Michael's. Fiscal Year '21, which ended on June 30, 2021 certainly had its share of challenges. All things considered, from a parish financial results standpoint, Fiscal Year '21 was not too bad. Overall, income came in at 99% of budget and our expenses were at 101% of budget resulting in an operating deficit. We had some extraordinary expenses in the areas of cleaning and sanitizing supplies and, particularly, in necessary

technology-related purchases. We expect those expenses to be recovered this fiscal year through Covid-related reimbursement programs available to non-public schools. Based on current trends, we will break even in Fiscal Year '22. Our cash position remains strong. We will continue to manage parish finances in a fiscally prudent way.

This should be an exciting year as we rebuild, guided by the Holy Spirit, from the virus-related interruptions to our Church with new faces, renewed programs and enthusiasm.

Online Giving: St. Michael's Parish has an online giving program, which you may access through our website: www.stmichaelsremus.com. There is a "button" on the home page (lower left hand) entitled "Give to St. Michael". If you are not using this option, we encourage you to weigh doing so. It can be used for regular offertory, as well as Holy Days, Haiti, Tuition Assistance and Memorials. It's an easy-to-use option employing both checking accounts and credit cards, plus you can support your parish from any location.

Alleluia Auction Update

Plans are being made for our annual auction on October 16. Please mark your calendars and plan to come- it's always good time and the proceeds will go to the school. For more information on the Auction, please call the school office.

Raffle tickets for the Polaris Ranger may be purchased at Gingrich's or at the school office. The tickets cost \$25 each and the drawing will take place on the evening of the Auction. On the first weekends of September and October, tickets may be purchased after the Masses.

Tickets for the regular raffle auction and admission tickets will be handed out to parishioners after the Masses to help save on postage. You are asked to either buy or sell these tickets. Please help us support St. Michael's School.

Upcoming Dates

August 15- Feast of the Assumption- plan to come and celebrate our Lady's assumption into Heaven. Why is this important? This Holy Day not only commemorates Mary entering Heaven, but also that God shares Heaven with all of us!

August 15- Welcoming of our new Musician with Coffee and Doughnuts outside of Church after the Masses

August 24- Opening Day of St. Michael's School

September 6- Labor Day- Mass at 9:00am in Church- please come and pray for the needs of our Country.

October 16- Alleluia Auction

I hope you have a safe and blessed summer. Peace, Fr. Tom