

*Most Holy Trinity*

*Christmas 2018*



*Christ is born!*  
*Let us Adore Him!*



On behalf of our parish staff I want to wish  
all of you a Holy and Joyful  
Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

**Fr. Dennis Howard**

I have asked **Jenna Epkey** to share her story with us.

God bless, Fr. Dennis



Hi, I'm Jenna Epkey and I am a new parishioner to MHT over the past summer. My husband, Matt, was born and raised here, but moved to the Grand Rapids area for college. After college graduation we stayed where the jobs were and developed our occupational therapy careers. Even though we really liked our jobs, we began to have an unsettled feeling as we tried to discern where we should raise our family. Last spring, we had the opportunity for different careers and made the decision to move to the

Fowler area. We feel blessed to be surrounded by family and reside in a community full of wonderful people.

In efforts to grow in faith and learn more about our parish community, I decided to attend the Adult Retreat this past fall. I had considered other retreats in the past. Yet, every time there would be a retreat, it would not be the "right" time for me. It "wouldn't work in my schedule, I was "too busy." After signing up, I felt a sense of peace knowing even though I would be away from my husband, children, and missing the soccer games, amongst the other list of items that needed to be completed, I needed a spiritual refresher that would help me be a better wife, mother, and person.

Going into the retreat weekend, I had an intention to develop

my prayer life. Prayer at times can be difficult for me. I will have good intentions to wake up early and then a child wakes up in the middle of the night, or we say a quick prayer on the way to school, or countless other life interruptions. The point is: I can struggle to find a routine. Through each retreat talk I was able to glean some helpful hint or deeper thought that allowed me to reflect on my prayer life further.

During one evening in Adoration, Adam asked us to imagine Jesus in our mind. The vision I saw was an image of Jesus holding a child. Along with that vision was the words: "Faith like a child." Years ago, my mom gave me a framed series of 3 images of Jesus holding children and playing with them. Jesus was smiling and had an expression of love upon his face typical of a mother or father. The images struck me at that time because I had not really thought of Jesus in this way. He had a kindness and gentleness upon his face as he stared at the child.

Prayer time was another part of the weekend that I really appreciated. I was able to delve more into a prayer routine that works for me. During this time, I was able to pray in the chapel, pray with others, or comb through one of the many books available. As I began reading a book, it quoted Pope Francis: "Perseverance in prayer keeps our faith alive and strong. For in that prayer, we experience the compassion of God, who like a Father filled with love and mercy is ever ready to come to the aid of his children." What struck me during this reading is that he said "children." He did not say come to the aid of his followers, the members of the church, but his children. The imagery from adoration came back to my mind. Also, the words "perseverance in prayer" hit home. In order to keep our faith strong, we must persevere. Suddenly, I felt a little less embarrassed of my unorganized prayer life because I am continuing to persevere in prayer. God was revealing to me that "trying" is a very important key to continue to grow in faith.

Another prayer concept I was curious about was journaling, so I began to read a book on journaling called *Praying with a Pen*. As I went through this book, so many things resonated with me, but specifically when I got to the page that read Luke 18:17; "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." Again, there was another connection to what I heard in adoration! The author went on to say "When we become like children, we become teachable, moldable empty vessels." When I think about my own children, they are little sponges- picking up on our mannerisms, sayings, and behaviors. I began to reflect on when my children are hurt or frustrated and how they seek out comfort from my husband and me. I was beginning to better understand what it meant to have "faith like a child". I was understanding that I should go to our Father with my concerns, my sadness, my questions. I should not have too much pride to think I can tackle life's challenges on my own. Just like a good parent, Jesus is there to wrap his arms around me and comfort me.

Throughout the Adult Retreat weekend, I was able to develop a plan to better commit to my prayer life. Not only did I grow spiritually, but I was also about to develop relationships within my new parish community. I could have made a million excuses not to attend, but I was very happy that I went and felt I was given a spiritual refresher to continue to persevere in many areas of my faith life. Slowly, this empty vessel is taking small steps in the direction of holiness.

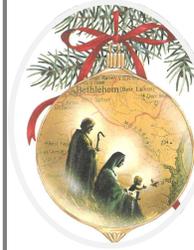
As we begin the Christmas season, I encourage each of you to pray with perseverance and have faith like a child, after all the real reason of the season is the CHILD in the manger.

God Bless,  
Jenna



### No Holy Hour for January

A reminder that there will be no Holy Hour on Thursday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>. There will be confessions after the morning Mass that day.



### Parish Office Hours

In observance of Christmas, the parish office will be closed December 26 - 28. We will also close December 31 & January 1. Email and voicemail will be checked periodically.

## Upcoming Mass Times

### **Feast of the Holy Family**

Saturday, December 29<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm.  
Sunday, December 30<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 and 10:30 am.

### **Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God**

*\*holy day of obligation*  
Monday, December 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 pm.  
Tuesday, January 1<sup>st</sup> at 8:15 am.

### **Solemnity of the Epiphany**

Saturday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm.  
Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 and 10:30 am.  
*\*blessed chalk will be given out for the blessing of homes*

### **Feast of the Baptism of the Lord**

Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm.  
Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 and 10:30 am.  
*\*water will be blessed at the liturgies for the faithful to use for devotional purposes – bring a container*

### Christmas Décor Clean Up

Taking down of Christmas decorations will occur on **Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m.** If you can help with take down, please contact Susie at 593-2490.



BE TRANSFORMED

"BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW"

REV 21:5

adult  
retreat

FEBRUARY 22-24, 2019

7 PM Friday - Noon Sunday  
Bethany House, Dewitt

\$150 per person

Register online or call the parish  
office