Merry Christmas everyone!!! Last week we published our financial report from our last fiscal year and Father’s overview of the parish. Just as Father spent time examining various parts of the parish I thought it might be helpful to share some of my thoughts as well.

The area that I want focus on is the roles of volunteers at the parish and staff members and share about our vision using those positions moving forward. This past year we have asked for a lot of volunteers for various positions and I’ve had a few people ask why we don’t just hire people to do those jobs. Which was interesting to me because it wasn’t long ago that I had people asking me why we were hiring so many people to work here!

I’m going to go out on a limb and say that today we have invested more money in our parish staff than ever before. I would argue that this has been a good thing for us because it’s allowed us to offer more ministries at the parish and has also taken some of the pressure off of the priest so that hopefully he doesn’t have as much on his plate as he might have 20-30 years ago...although as Father Dennis always says one of the so called challenges of ministry is that the more work you do evangelizing people, the more things start to grow and you end up creating more work for yourself because now there’s more to do! So maybe he would disagree with that point.

Anyway, part of that growth of our parish staff came through a process where we would justify expanding a person’s job by combining various ministries together for them. Probably the best example of this was a few years ago when we hired Andrea Gleason. Andrea was young and talented and we thought the parish would really benefit from having her on staff. But we had to ask ourselves how we could afford to pay her something significant enough to make it worth her time. We decided, as a lot of parishes do, to combine a bunch of smaller jobs together and make her responsible for all of them. This allowed us to bring someone on board that would expand the ministry that we offered at the parish, while also saving us from having to ask for volunteers for those areas that we combined, all while offering her a salary that would allow her to stay here for a longer amount of time (or at least longer than the average volunteer is able to stay).

What seemed like a win, win situation ultimately didn’t work very well in the sense that Andrea ended up wearing so many hats that she never felt like she was able to excel in the areas that she was most talented. Which in reality is probably the case for all of us that work here at the parish to some degree. But that situation also didn’t work well because in replacing volunteers with staff, we kind of said that we didn’t need volunteers anymore, which sounded good since people are getting more and more busy which makes it more difficult to find volunteers. In addition though, while we thought having a paid person would allow them to stay in the position longer, we really weren’t offering them a salary where they could afford to do that job for long. Today it seems like people are looking for full time jobs with benefits and we’re going to have a hard time keeping a person around for more than a couple of years unless we’re able to offer those things.

So what does this all mean for us as we move forward? I think we have learned that we have to find a better way to utilize the three roles of our workforce, full time, part time and volunteers so that we can work efficiently and reduce turnover which creates confusion and chaos. Part of doing that is by continuing to invest in our staff without trying to give them more responsibilities so that they can work out of the areas that they can be most successful. This means that for example, we’re moving away from having staff teach religious education classes. Instead we want our staff to be there to work with volunteers more as opposed to asking for volunteers and just dumping responsibilities on them, which has sadly been the practice in some areas in the past. This approach will allow volunteers to feel more a part of the ministry, working side by side with the staff instead of feeling like they are a last resort filling a void because no one else would do it.

Overall I can’t say enough good things about our staff and I am really grateful for all of the volunteers that we have at our parish. There are so many things that get done behind the scenes by people that quietly go about their work (How many of you knew that we had someone who washed the altar linens each week until a couple of weeks ago when we announced that Diane Kohagen was retiring??) As we move on to this new year I pray that the Lord will continue to provide us with great people to volunteer and work at this parish!

God Bless, Adam
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

December 31, 2017

Announcements

The Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God

A reminder that the solemnity of Mary the Mother of God is abrogated this year and is not a holy day of obligation. The Mass for the feast day is Monday, January 1st at 8:15 am.
A blessed New Year!

Baby Bottle Campaign

Every year in January, the month that we recall the U.S. Supreme Court's disastrous decision to legalize abortion in our country we work together with all Pro-Life organizations to support life. As part of our campaign, we will be providing “baby bottles” which you can take home and fill with loose change, bills and checks. We will be collecting them back at the end of January and delivering them to Pregnancy Services of Greater Lansing. This year there are also offer “baby bottle six-packs” (a gift bag filled with six bottles. These can be used by small groups in the parish; schools classes, Bibles study groups, prayer groups, etc.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you”
Jeremiah 1:5

Religious Education

Most Holy Trinity Education Trust Fund

Thanks to all of those who have donated to the Educational Trust Fund this past year. Your continued support of our ETF is greatly appreciated as it ensures that we will have funds for our educational efforts through our school, religious ed. and adult faith programs in the future!

Adult Retreat

February 23-25, 2018
Bethany House in DeWitt
Friday, 7:00 pm until Sunday at Noon
$150.00 per person

Thank You

I want to thank everyone who sent Christmas cards, gifts and prayers. I appreciate your generosity and your thoughtfulness.

Fr. Dennis
Frequently Asked Questions

This is our FAQ Bulletin Section about our upcoming MHT weekend retreat. We hope this is helpful as you prayerfully consider attending this event.

When/where is the retreat?

It is February 23-25, 2018 at the Bethany House in Dewitt.

What if I don’t know my faith well?

Don’t let the idea of a retreat intimidate you. We purposely plan this time to have something for people of all levels of faith. We try to keep things at a level that no one will feel overwhelmed. We often have people share with us that they had fears of feeling judged or not being smart enough to attend, but quickly realized once the retreat started that there was nothing to worry about.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

We have a number of people who have been on the retreat before and would love to answer any questions that you have or share about their experience of what it meant to them. Andrea Schneider (adultfaithmht@gmail.com) oversees the retreat and can answer any questions that you have. Otherwise you could also contact any of the following: Cindy Braun, Jerry and Mary Lee Klein, Linda Luna, Sue Thelen, or Vern and Bonnie Thelen.

No Holy Hour for January

A reminder that there will be no Holy Hour on Thursday, January 4th.

There will be confessions after the morning Mass that day.

Volunteer Opportunity

The St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store in St. Johns 1009 S. US-27 in the Southpoint Mall is looking for additional volunteers (men and women). The ideal candidates must enjoy working with others.

We have over 140 awesome volunteers who do a variety of functions to help us in our ministry. Our volunteers: accept donations, sort/price items, cashier, move merchandise/inventory, recycle items, pick-up furniture, clean/vacuum/dust, etc. Each volunteer chooses what part is of most interest to them. We sometimes need volunteers who have light construction type experience for little projects.

If you are interested in finding out how you might be able to help, please call John Thelen at 989 292-7057.
MHT School – Connecting Faith to Life

By connecting our Catholic faith to life, we at Most Holy Trinity School seek to fulfill Christ's mandate to proclaim the Gospel, restore all things in Him, strive to lead our students to the Truth for the betterment of this world and prepare them for the age to come.

Important Upcoming Dates:
- Tuesday, January 2: School Resumes
- Friday, January 5: Mass @ 8:15 a.m./First Friday
- Monday, January 8: Mass @ 8:15 a.m.

Merry Christmas: On a cold winter's night full of darkness our King was born. Songs of celebration were sung in heaven, warmth visited the earth and darkness was turned to light. I wish you a season full of joy and light. Merry Christmas! ~Anne

Knights of Columbus Christmas Party
The Knights of Columbus will be having their Christmas Party on Saturday, January 6th at 6:00 pm at the Fowler Hall on Main Street. All members and their families are invited to attend. The council will provide meat, potatoes, drinks and place settings. We ask everyone to bring a dish to pass. Please contact Paul Horak if you are able to attend with a count for your family – pvhorak@hotmail.com, 517-281-8838.

Holiday “Returns” for Vocations: Most Holy Trinity is blessed to have so many of our young men and women pursuing religious vocations and we are always looking for ways to continue to show our support for them. If anyone wishes to donate returnables from holiday celebrations or Christmas parties we will arrange to pick them up. Please call Kurt Koenigsknecht 224-4058 or Agnes Koenigsknecht 593-2614 to arrange for pickup.

Men's Retreat Weekend
St. Francis Retreat Center -- January 19-21, 2018. The theme for this directed retreat is “Entering the Heart of God: Praying the Lord’s Prayer in Our Day” based on the book by Fr. Charlie Irvin. We will be delving into the richness that lies within the Our Father prayer. For more information or to register, visit www.stfrancis.ws, or call (517) 669-8321, Neil Feldpausch at 593-3543 or Dean Schrauben at 989-640-0341. The suggested donation for the weekend is $175. Please prayerfully consider if God is calling you to set aside time for this encounter opportunity!

Blood Drive in Westphalia

There will be a Red Cross Blood drive at St. Mary Parish Hall in Westphalia on Wednesday, January 3, 2018, from 1:00 – 6:45. One of your New Year’s resolutions could be saving a life by donating blood. We hope to see you there! Bring along a friend!

Many Hands for Christ
Help is needed after Hurricane Irma hit Mary Help of Christian Center in Tampa, Florida. We are organizing a trip to help with several DIY and construction projects. Volunteers (including a cook!) are still needed to help February 11 - February 15. Please contact Gudrun Cruz at 517-886-4998 for more info.

Please contact the parish office to inform us when we can add or remove a person’s name from the list. Thank you.

Let us also keep in our prayers all those from the Parish Community who are in the Armed Services.

The Most Holy Trinity Educational Trust Fund would like to thank everyone who donated to the Trust Fund in the memory of Marian Hoffman, Dorothy Bradley, & Jim Koenigsknecht. Your generous donations make it possible for future generations of children, young people, and adults to benefit from a Catholic education here at Most Holy Trinity School, the Religious Education Program, Youth Ministry, and Adult Education for numerous years to come.

Readings for the Week of December 31, 2017

Monday  Numbers 6:22-27; Psalms 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21
Tuesday  1 John 2:22-28; Psalms 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4; John 1:19-28
Wednesday 1 John 2:29-3:6; Psalms 98:1, 3cd-4, 5-6; John 1:29-34
Thursday 1 John 3:7-10; Psalms 98:1, 7-8, 9; John 1:35-42
Friday 1 John 3:11-21; Psalms 100:1b-2, 3, 4, 5; John 1:43-51
Saturday 1 John 5:5-13; Psalms 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20; Mark 1:7-11 or Luke 3:23-38 or 3:23, 31-34, 36, 38

The Rosary is prayed before the 8:15 a.m. weekday Mass. The intention for this week is to pray the families of our parish, may the intercessions of the Holy Family bring them many blessings.

Sponsor of the Week

Our thanks to the many businesses that make it possible for the bulletin to be cost-free to our parish.

Greenstone Farm Credit Services

**MASSES FOR THE WEEK**

**Monday - January 1**
8:15 a.m. + Adam Schaefer

**Tuesday - January 2**
8:15 a.m. + Frieda Bauer

**Wednesday - January 3**
6:00 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration for Vocations
7:00 p.m. + Angela Thelen, Including Julius & Living & Deceased Members of the Family

**Thursday - January 4**
8:15 a.m. + Fr. Elmer Wieber, Including Eugene

**Friday - January 5 - First Friday**
8:15 a.m. + Louis Schneider & Living & Deceased Members of the Family

**Saturday - January 6 - First Saturday**
8:15 a.m. + Ignatz & Therese Koenigsknecht & Living & Deceased Members of the Family
4:30 p.m. + MaryAnn Esch

**Sunday - January 7**
8:30 a.m. People of the Parish
10:30 a.m. + Kerri (Thelen) Tipps, Including Ken

**Ushers for Saturday & Sunday, January 6 & 7**
4:30 p.m. - Larry Jandernoa, Gerry Arens, Craig Arens, Luke Thelen
8:30 a.m. - Dean Platte, Gregg Platte, Nick Platte, Adam Platte
10:30 a.m. - Stan Weber, Gene Messer, Leon Schneider, Brian Thelen

**Mass Servers for Saturday & Sunday, January 6 & 7**
4:30 p.m. - Brooke & Emily Epkey, Chloe Hyland, Volunteer
8:30 a.m. - Jena, Nick, Grace & Rachel Epkey
10:30 a.m. - McKenzie, Josie, & Cooper Koenigsknecht, Tony Piggott

**Mass Servers During This Week**
Mon., 8:15 a.m. - Rebecca & Nicholas Smith
Tues., 8:15 a.m. - Adult Volunteer
Wed., 7:00 p.m. - Aaron & Josie Simon
Thurs., 8:15 a.m. - Andrew & John Irrer
Fri., 8:15 a.m. - MHT School Volunteers
Sat., 8:15 a.m. - Liam & Grace O’Hare, Karstyn Lackscheid

A special thank to all of the Fowler people who remembered me at Christmas!

It was very greatly appreciated.

Margaret Thelen

December 31, 2017
Pastor - Fr. Dennis Howard
Parish Office Hours 8am-12pm & 1pm-3pm
To Contact Us:
Parish Office: 593-2162
Fax: 593-2171
E-Mail: office@mhtparish.com
Website: mhtparish.com
MHT School - 593-2616