

St. John the Baptist Church
Leadership Team Report to Commissions

December 13, 2022

Fr. Paul Shovelain, Pastor

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- **Called Forth into Christ through the Mass.** The Advent Series is off to a good start as the bulletin articles, videos, and homilies about the celebration of the Mass have been well received. We will continue to focus on our current seasonal theme, *Called Forth into Deeper Communion with Christ* until Lent. I plan to focus on the Pastoral Letter, “[You Will Be My Witnesses](#)” during the next seasonal them, *Called Forth into Mission through the Holy Spirit*, which will begin Ash Wednesday and finish out our program year.
- **Pastoral Letter and Looking Forward.** The Synod Evangelization Team is coming together, and plans are being finalized for our winter and spring schedule. The team will be made up of staff and parishioners and help further Archbishop Hebda’s priorities laid out in his [pastoral letter](#). For 2023-2024, the priority is Small Groups. For 2024-2025 the priority is Education on the Mass and for 2025-2026 the priority is Parents as Primary Educators of Their Children.

Please let me or one of our team members know if you have questions or input in any area of our church and school life together. Thank you!

Jessica Balzarini, Director of Parish Life

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- **Journey to the Inn.** Journey with the Wise Men to the live nativity! Our Knights of Columbus will be serving a pasta dinner following the 4:30 pm Mass on Saturday, January 7. Our journey will start in church with a scripture reading and singing, and proceed with a candlelit procession to the Holy Family outside. Jesus awaits us there!
- **Compassion Clinic.** St. John’s has been partnering with New Brighton churches to host the Compassion Clinic locally. It provides free dental, medical, and vision checks, community resources, prayer, food, and follow up from our local churches. Initially, the clinic was unable to be scheduled for summer 2023 due to a lack of leadership. However, two parishioners from St. John’s have been called forth to lead this wonderful work, and the clinic will happen next year! The dates are yet to be determined.
- **Boxes of Joy.** A great addition to Family Formation this year is Boxes of Joy, in support of Cross Catholic Outreach! Our families had the opportunity to bless children in developing countries with their very own Christmas gifts. Boxes are filled with toys, clothing, school supplies, rosary and a story Jesus. We sent 70 boxes this year and hope to do more next year.
- **Sunday School Advent Program** will be during hospitality on Sunday, December 18 after the 10:30 am Mass. Come and see our littlest disciples sing for Jesus!

Mark Dittman, Director of Business Operations

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- **Core Commitment 2023.** As you know, this year our Core Commitment campaign has focused on our core values of Willingness to Grow, Reliance on Prayer, and Generous Spirit. Three videos, each featuring a parish family, illustrated these core values, showing how St. John the Baptist has made a difference in their lives. Links to the videos can be found on our [Core Commitment 2023](#) webpage. A letter and pledge forms went out to parishioner homes and our Commitment weekend was Christ the King Sunday, November 19/20. As of this writing we have

326 financial pledges returned, totalling \$854,459. Parishioners also made commitments to pray, to grow, and to live generously through volunteer service and participation in our ministries. Parish staff will be contacting all those who marked a new area of involvement. If you need the form please pick up a copy at the Welcome Desk or go online to our [Core Commitment webpage](#).

- **Sunday Giving.** Thus far in the fiscal year (July – November) we are about 3.5% under budget. In our Core Commitment campaign this fall we asked our parishioners to commit again to a generous spirit to continue to support our ministries. We are grateful to all of our generous parishioners who have sustained us and helped us to grow these past years!
- **Church Interior Project Update.** For tonight's commission meetings, the Administrative Services & Worship Commissions will be meeting jointly with Josh Egner of Egner Construction to review the components of our church interior renovations. There are five main categories of improvements we are considering: exterior improvements (masonry & windows), the ceiling (scraping & painting, replacing diffusers around skylights), upgrades to our existing HVAC systems, a new sound system, and pew refinishing. We will have cost estimates but the focus at this meeting will be evaluating the priority of these improvements. Cost considerations and how to address project finances will be the work of additional commissions and parish leaders. Watch parish publications as our plans develop and more information becomes available.
- **Chapel Renovation.** We are close to a final list of project components and costs and will provide more information soon. We are planning for a January start to the project. Gifts continue to come in, with funds for the project currently exceeding \$150,000! Thank you all for your prayers and generosity!
- **Cemetery Report to the Pastoral Leadership Council.** At tonight's PLC meeting Cemetery Committee member Judy Harris will be presenting the Committee's annual report. The report is a financial summary of the past fiscal year, burial numbers and sales for full body graves, cremation graves and columbarium niches. The report will be included in the PLC meeting minutes when they are posted on our website.
- **Christmas is on a Sunday.** Please note that Christmas Day is on a Sunday this year. Please consider offering your regular Sunday gift and an additional Christmas gift to the parish. Thank you!
- **Year End Giving.** Please remember St. John the Baptist in your year end giving plans! There are a variety of ways you can support the church and school with a financial gift. Please see our [Year End Giving page](#) for more information. Thank you!

Ann Laird, St. John the Baptist School Principal

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- **Advent/Christmas Concerts.** The school will have three concerts this year to get us in the Christmas spirit! We begin with a band concert on Thursday, December 15 at 6:00 pm in the church. Our Preschool-2nd students will perform on Friday, December 16 at 1:15 pm in the church. We will end with our 3rd-8th grade Advent Lessons and Carols concert on Tuesday, December 20 at 7:00 pm in the church. We will be streaming the two vocal concerts.
- **Preparing for Christ's Coming.** We are in our final days of our school Advent Challenge and we are excited about what our students did over the first three weeks of Advent to prepare themselves for the coming of Christ! Our 3rd-8th graders will have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Wednesday, December 14.
- **Wines to Wishes 2023.** Wines to Wishes planning is already in full swing. The event is Saturday, February 4. Please check out our website for more information: www.winestowishes.com.

Jill Fink, Director of Catechesis

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- **RCIC First Reconciliation Celebration.** Six families are preparing their older, baptized children to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation at the parish Advent Reconciliation on Sunday, December 18 at 3:30 pm.

A blessed and joyous Advent and Christmas to all of you and your families!
Thank you all for your reliance on prayer, your willingness to grow, and your generous spirit!

The St. John the Baptist Leadership Team
Fr. Paul Shovelain, Jessica Balzarini, Mark Dittman, Jill Fink, Ann Laird

**Bearing witness to Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life:
GO. MAKE. TEACH.**