

St. John the Baptist Church
Leadership Team Report to Commissions

March 21, 2023

Fr. Paul Shovelain, Pastor

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- **Capital Campaign.** In consultation with our trustees, Director of Business Operations, Development Associate and member of our Parish Development Commission, I have chosen to partner with the [Steier Group](#) to do a feasibility study and capital campaign to fund our church interior project and school bathroom upgrades. In the coming weeks, I will be putting together a campaign team and working with Steier to complete the pre-study phase. Please pray for the success of this endeavor as this will not only fund needed improvements; it will also allow us to bring the love and truth of Jesus to people in the Twin Cities for many years to come!
- **Men's Ministry.** I am grateful to God for the 48 men from SJB who participated in the Awaken Retreat, March 3-5. The Holy Spirit moved powerfully throughout the weekend and it was beautiful to see the healing and love of the Lord being poured forth. We have 36 men signed up for Monday evening small groups and 31 men signed up for Saturday morning small groups, both at the rectory. It has been wonderful to see these men build relationships with each other and grow in their faith.
- **Lent.** In this penitential season it is important to take extra time to pray. I was blessed to take my canonical retreat this past week and spend some much needed time with the Lord. We also just had our Lenten Staff Retreat and reflected upon Archbishop Hebda's Pastoral Letter, "[You Will Be My Witnesses](#)." I encourage you to read the letter during Lent and read the bulletin articles which provide a summary as well as Fr. Joseph and my thoughts on it.

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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- **Lent Small Groups.** Our Lenten 2023 Season of [Small Groups](#) has begun! This season 29 groups are meeting on various days and times every day of the week. There are 240 parishioners involved in small groups this season. We offered leaders two options for Lenten reflection: the first is *With Jesus to the Cross*, a deeper look at the Sunday readings for Cycle A, and the second option is *No Greater Love*, a deeper look at Christ's Passion. Some groups opted to use other materials as well.
- **Easter Egg Hunt.** This year we are planning for over 300 children to attend our annual [Easter Egg Hunt](#). As always it takes many hands to make this event happen. Contact Jen Livermont if you want to help. The event begins at 10:00 am on Holy Saturday, April 8 with a blessing from Fr. Paul in the west parking lot. The Little and Big Kid Egg Hunts are outside and all other activities will be in St. Paul Plaza and St. Joseph's Hall. It's a great outreach event to bring your children, grandchildren and your neighbors to!

Mark Dittman, Director of Business Operations

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- **Year-to-Date Sunday Giving.** Our mission is enabled by so many of our parishioners who live out of a generous spirit by supporting the parish financially. As of Week 37 (March 12) in our fiscal year (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023) we are \$46,117, or 2.8%, below our year-to-date

projected budget in Sunday Giving. Looking at year-to-date actuals, we are \$40,324, or 2.5%, below our year-to-date total through the same weekend a year ago. As you all know, Lent is a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and Easter is a time that many people are very generous to the parish. I have seen so much generosity at St. John's, and I am hopeful that we will catch up to our projections through Lent and Easter. Thank you all for your generosity!

- **2023/24 Budget Planning Process.** At tonight's Finance Commission meeting I plan to present the next version of the 2023/24 church and school budget. Please pray for the staff and volunteer leaders who apply their expertise to sound financial planning and decision making for our church and school as we plan our future together.
- **Catholic Services Appeal.** We are now well into this year's Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) at St. John's. Our parish goal for 2023 is \$113,996. As of today we are at 22% of our goal pledged and 18% received. Ninety-four parish families have responded thus far. Please respond generously if you have not already done so. St. John's benefits from your generosity to the Appeal because when we meet our goal, as we have consistently done for many years, we earn a parish rebate check. The formula for the rebate has two parts: 50% above our goal is returned to the parish and 25% above the prior year's results is also returned to the parish. Last year we raised over \$172,055 and our goal was \$109,052, so we were \$63,003 over goal. Our rebates from the 2022 Appeal totaled \$32,312. Please be generous to the Appeal this year, as you always have been! Thank you.

Ann Laird, St. John the Baptist School Principal

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- **Wines to Wishes 2023 Update.** We are excited to announce that we made over \$120,000, including \$30,000 for our Fund-A-Need. We are grateful to all those who helped with and supported the event, especially Michelle Barsness. Thank you all for your generous spirit!
- **2023-2024 Enrollment.** Our enrollment for 2023-2024 continues to look strong with a number of grades either at capacity or nearing capacity. It is a wonderful testament to the great work being done by our school and parish staff!
- **Maronite Divine Liturgy.** We were honored to have Chorbishop Sharbel Maroun from St. Maron's join us for Mass on Wednesday, March 8. It was a beautiful celebration of the Mass and a wonderful opportunity to teach our students about the larger Catholic Church. We are so grateful for his presence, saying Mass for us according to the Maronite Rite, and for all our Lebanese students who celebrate in this tradition.

Jill Fink, Director of Catechesis

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- **Staff Retreat, March 9:** Staff gathered at St. Vincent de Paul for a day of prayer, reflection and working through the Pastoral Letter "[You Will Be My Witnesses](#)." Staff heard from Fr. Spencer Howe, Vicar for Evangelization for Deaneries 12 & 13 (St. John's is in Deanery 12), on the history and overview of the document. Staff gathered in small groups and discussed sections three (The Upper Room) and four (Going Forth), presenting their insights to the large group.
- **Youth Ministry Updates.** [Youth 365](#) is currently underway, inviting parishioners to invest in our youth through prayer, volunteering and financial contribution. The Youth 365 fund goes toward replenishing scholarship funds so that all youth can attend programming. Donations are also used to aid the expansion of our youth ministry program with great resources, training for our parish teams, and updates in the Youth Room. Summer program registrations are all available with many more opportunities. This year youth can attend CYSC (Catholic Youth Summer Camp) for middle school students and high school students ministering to them. This camp is currently full, and a waitlist has begun. Teens can also attend the Totus Tuus evening program. Senior High

youth can attend Steubenville weekend and a Mission Trip. Information on these programs can be found [here](#).

- **Youth Room Renovation.** This summer will start Phase I of a two-phase process to upgrade the Youth Room. Starting May 10 the Youth Room will be closed for the renovations of new flooring, painting, a snack bar area and new furniture. Phase II is slotted for the following summer with a kitchenette addition. Youth 365 funds and parish capital reserves will be used for this renovation.
- **Sacramental Celebrations in Easter.** Our sacramental classes for Becoming Catholic this year have doubled in size! The Easter Vigil will welcome 2 adults and 2 teens for baptism, confirmation and Eucharist, and 11 candidates will be confirmed and receive Eucharist. On April 16 we will celebrate with 11 older children receiving their First Eucharist. On the weekend of May 6-7 our 53 second grade children will receive their First Eucharist. Our confirmation class will celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation on Tuesday, May 23 at 7:00 pm at the Cathedral. The Holy Spirit is moving at St. John the Baptist!

A blessed and joyous Lent, Holy Week and—soon—Easter 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.**