



SACRED HEART
PARISH & ACADEMY



Renewal of Fidelity 2021

Dear Parishioner,

Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish has been promoting faith, bringing hope, fostering charity on the West side of Grand Rapids since 1904. In my time as pastor, I've seen new life breathed into this community through your commitment to the hard work of forming **an intentional, Christ-centered community**, devoted to the sacraments and works of charity.

This past year has been particularly transformative. Last November the characteristic intentionality of this parish led us to inaugurate a program of renewal. At that time, I asked you to reflect on your own commitments to Christ and to each other so that we might reconsider what it means to live our Catholic faith “with one accord” (Acts 2:1).

From where I stand today last year's inaugural Parish Renewal seems providential, even prophetic, in its timing and execution. As if answering a call to build the ark which would bear us through, we set out to create an “antifragile” parish—one that thrives in the face of opposition—all while the coming crisis was not yet apparent. **And thrive we have.** Here is a sampling of the fruit the renewal has borne:

- An increase in opportunities for Adoration, including our **First Friday Devotions**
- The **restructuring of lay leadership** organizations including the Finance Council and School Board, with work on the Pastoral Council presently in progress
- The formation of new apostolates dedicated to **prayer for the dead and dying** (Apostles of Mercy) and **mentorship to job seekers** and those seeking their professional vocation (Cajetani)
- An exemplary response in the parish and academy to the needs of families during the COVID lockdown, including phone calls, pastoral visits, and frequent online video conference updates.
- A **beautifully revised bulletin** (always available online) and a strengthening of both parish and school communications
- The stability of our finances continued **year-over-year growth in giving** in spite of all obstacles

- Our academy's most successful fundraiser ever: Our 2020 Web-a-thon
- The planning and financing of a **new communion rail - Coming December 2020!**

I am *honored* to have witnessed all that has transpired these past months. Sacred Heart has been an island of sanity and goodwill, where the essentials of Christian community have not changed and have not faltered. While we are still in the midst of pervasive anxiety, tension, and uncertainty, it is vital to reflect with joy on God's provision. **You are an irreplaceable part of that strength.**

Now it is time to look forward. Last year's parish renewal began what I deeply hope will become a tradition of annual reflection as the old liturgical year comes to a close and the new one begins.

As your pastor, I want to call each of you on to the great task of becoming a saint in this time and place that God has given to us. To do so means recommitting to your own interior life. It means dedicating your family to the service of Christ and the Church. Finally, it means cultivating a radical dependence on Christ as a community.

To facilitate this, a **Personal and Family Inventory** follows this letter. Please invest at least one hour in praying through this document. Or consider devoting one evening of family discussion to each of the three sections. Also included is a report from the leadership of the parish and a **commitment form** can be found linked below or at sacredheartgr.org/renewal.

Please keep your personal examination and return the commitment form to the parish in person or [online on or before November 15th](#).

Finally, I want to remind you that vibrant, faith-filled parishes are never an accident, but always the result of intentionality, love, and prayer. This is your opportunity to strengthen and enrich this beautiful parish community that God has given us.

In His Most Sacred Heart,



Reverend Robert Sirico, Pastor

P.S. It is very important that we have timely feedback on this examination. To expedite that process, please complete your commitment form [online](#). If you have questions throughout this process, please don't hesitate to reach out to the parish office for assistance.

Spiritual Inventory - 2021

“Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.” - Phil. 2:1-2

Opening prayer:

After making the Sign of the Cross, take a few moments to enter into silence, then read the verse above. Spend a few minutes in silence, brushing away preoccupations and anxieties as they arise. Pray together the Our Father three times, pausing after each for a few moments before praying: *“Jesus meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto thine.”*

Questions for prayer and discussion:

How does our home, our domestic Church, embrace a family culture that helps us to live out our faith? ✠
How do we live joyfully out of Christ’s abundant life? ✠ How does my household observe the Lord’s Day?
✠ Are we faithful in attending Mass? ✠ How do we mark Sundays as set apart for prayer and rest? ✠ Are we careful to prepare for the liturgy by prayer and observation of the Eucharistic fast? ✠ Are we consistently well-disposed to receive the Eucharist? ✠ How has our hunger for the Eucharist increased in the past year? ✠ Do we pray for the needs of our parish, diocese, bishop, and nation? ✠ Are our words and actions reverent? ✠ How do we ensure that we are devoting time daily to personal prayer? ✠ Do we regularly spend time reading scripture? ✠ Are there ways in which we can more actively engage in the liturgical life of the parish? ✠ How does my family pray with the Church outside of Mass? ✠ Do we celebrate solemnities and the patronal feasts of our family members? ✠ How can we make loving sacrifices or offer up our personal sufferings in a more intentional way? ✠ Do we frequently access the grace of the sacrament of Reconciliation? ✠ How are we challenging ourselves to grow in faith? ✠ Is there a particular habit of virtue or sacrifice that would challenge us to more fully rely on Christ’s grace and provision?

What steps will we take to more fully conform our hearts to Christ’s Sacred Heart?:

Appraisal of Gifts - 2021

*“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and
humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” - Matt 11:29*

Opening prayer:

After making the Sign of the Cross, take a few moments to enter into silence, then read the verse above. Then spend a few minutes praying exclusively in gratitude for God's providential love and care for you. When you begin to pause and search for what to add to the list, wait in silence for the Spirit to bring you the greater depth of insight that flows from earnest gratitude. End your time in prayer with a family litany to your personal patrons and namesakes.

Questions for prayer and discussion:

How has God blessed our family? ✠ What makes each of us unique in our personality, gifts, and perspective? ✠ How have we built on these natural gifts by good stewardship and growth in virtue? ✠ What activities excite us and bring us energy? ✠ What activities tend to drain and discourage us? ✠ Are we most joyful when working with people, ideas, or physical things? ✠ How have we been uniquely situated to love specific people? ✠ How have we been prepared by God's providence to serve Him and the Church? ✠ In what ways do our gifts and contributions complement those of our neighbors? ✠ What are each of our roles in the body of Christ? ✠ When have we witnessed our gifts coming together in a way that they are greater than the sum of their parts? ✠ How can we continue to grow in knowledge of ourselves and God's will for us? ✠ What is one concrete way we can use our gifts to more fully serve our God and neighbor?

What gifts have we been given that we feel God calling us to return to him?:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Examination of Fidelity - 2021

*"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for
a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart..." - 1 Peter 1:22*

Opening prayer:

Making the Sign of the Cross, enter into silence. **L:** Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful. **R:** And kindle in them the fire of your love. **L:** Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. **R:** And you will renew the face of the earth. **A:** O God, who instructed the hearts of your faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit. In the same Spirit help us to be truly wise and to ever rejoice in His consolation. We ask this through Christ our Lord."

Questions for prayer and discussion:

Is our faith animated by acts of love for our neighbors? ✠ Do we advance the mission of the parish to bring Christ and His Mercy to others? ✠ Do we feel equipped to do so? ✠ Does our family serve the Body of Christ through the seven corporal works of mercy (feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned/ransom the captive, or bury the dead)? ✠ How do we currently serve in our parish? ✠ Do we take advantage of opportunities to grow in and share our faith beyond satisfying the precepts of the Church? ✠ Does our family serve the Body of Christ through the seven spiritual works of mercy (instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish the sinner, bear wrongs patiently, forgive offenses willingly, comfort the afflicted, or pray for the living and the dead)? ✠ Does our family provide financial support for the material needs of the Church? ✠ Does the support for the parish we provide come from our firstfruits? Is it dependable in frequency and amount? ✠ Do we give of our time and resources in a way that is generous, sacrificial, and proportionate? ✠ Do we intentionally pray for our bishop, pastor, and the work of our parish apostolates?

How can we sustain or deepen our practice of the Works of Mercy in our parish?:

Parish & Academy Financial Projections (Fall 2020)

Total Budgeted Responsibilities

| | <u>19-20</u> | <u>20-21</u> | <u>21-22</u> |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Parish Budgeted Expenses | \$864,200 | \$1,028,915 | \$1,049,493 |
| Academy Budgeted Expenses | \$1,764,500 | \$1,678,403 | \$1,642,230 |
| Playground | \$65,000 | \$65,000 | \$65,000 |
| DOGR Capital | \$0 | \$250,000 | \$168,403 |
| CSA | \$81,000 | \$90,000 | \$100,000 |
| Sanctuary Remodel | \$0 | \$100,000 | \$1,000,000 |
| Total Responsibility | \$2,774,700 | \$3,212,318 | \$4,025,126 |

Total Budgeted Income

| | <u>19-20</u> | <u>20-21</u> | <u>21-22</u> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Projected Offertory | \$688,700 | \$918,000 | \$945,540 |
| Academy Tuition & Fees | \$1,003,600 | \$773,000 | \$1,116,239 |
| Academy Auction | \$300,000 | \$150,000 | \$275,000 |
| Grants | \$150,000 | \$157,500 | \$165,400 |
| Total Income | \$2,142,300 | \$1,998,500 | \$2,502,179 |

Calculation of Three-Year Outstanding Need

| | <u>19-20</u> | <u>20-21</u> | <u>21-22</u> |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total Responsibility | \$2,774,700 | \$3,212,138 | \$4,025,126 |
| Total Income | \$2,142,300 | \$1,998,500 | \$2,502,179 |
| Annual Outstanding Need | \$632,400* | \$1,213,638 | \$1,522,947 |
| Total Outstanding Need | \$2,736,585 | | |

* Not included in total need as last year's needs were met through donations, increased tithes, and grant income.



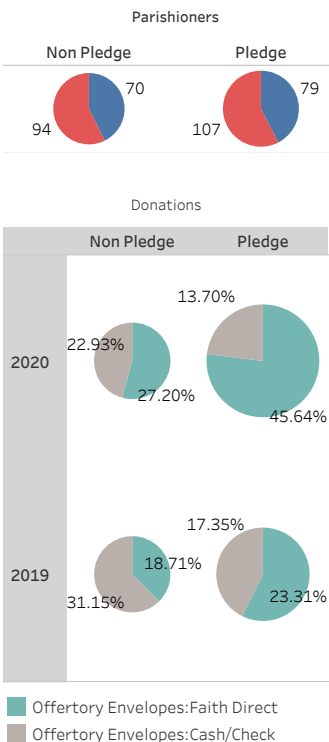
Townhall Meeting October 2020

Pledge Metrics

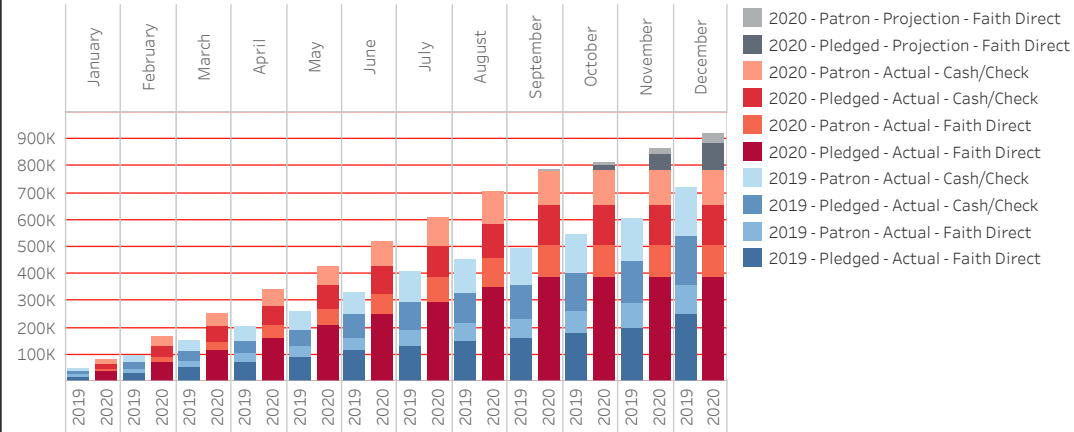
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| Parishioners (Active) | 668 |
| Parishioners (Pledged) | 177 |
| Median Household Members | 3 |
| Median Number of Children | 4 |
| Median Annual Tithe % (Pledged) | 5.54% |
| Annual Tithe (Pledged) | \$835K |
| Parishioners (Donors-Rolling 12) | 397 |
| Tithe Rolling 12 Months (Pledged) | \$651K |
| Tithe Rolling 12 Months (Non-Pledged) | \$302K |
| Tithe Rolling 12 Months | \$953K |
| Parishioners (Prior Year Tithe Donors) | 382 |
| Prior Year Tithe Parish (Actual) | \$704K |
| National Income (Median) | \$61K |
| Annual Income (Parishioner) | \$37,450K |
| Renewal Pledge Goal (Adjusted) | \$631K |
| Target Tithe | 8.00% |
| Renewal Pledge Goal (National) | \$3,276K |
| Pledge Target: Tithe 3% | \$745K |
| Pledge Target: Tithe 5% | \$1,241K |
| Pledge Target: Tithe 7% | \$1,738K |
| Pledge Target: Tithe 8% | \$1,986K |

Faith Direct

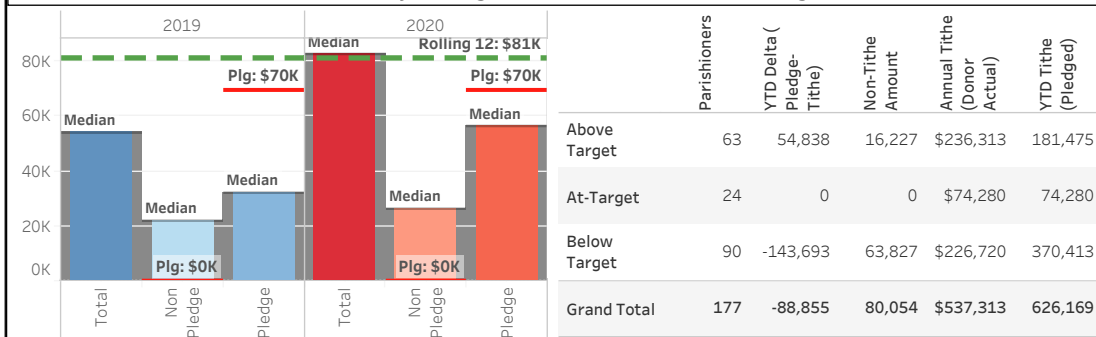
2020 vs. 2019



Donations Year-Over-Year



Monthly Pledge Commitment & Tracking





Meet the Finance Council



The Finance Council assists and advises the Pastor on the oversight of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish & Academy finances. The refounding of the Finance Council was one of the fruits of last year's Parish Renewal.



Dale Bryant, Chair, is the CFO for Lumbermen's, a wholesale building materials distributor. In his 19 years with the company, he has contributed to growth and sustainability and also managed HR before building an HR department. He received his accounting degree from GVSU and previously worked for Arthur Andersen for five years where he became a CPA. Dale was born and raised in West Michigan, is married and has six children.



Brenda Bargaquast and her husband have been married for over 25 years and have four children. A lifelong Catholic, Brenda has served the Church through various parish ministries. At her former parish Brenda served on the Administration Commission for seven years, the Finance Council for four years, and the Pastoral Council for three years. Brenda has also served in youth ministry programs for nine years. Brenda has a degree in accounting, and has worked as a controller in the manufacturing industry for 25 years. She and her family have been members of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish since 2017, and she is grateful for the opportunity to use her professional and parochial experience in service to the parish.



Scott Blouw and his wife Elly have been a part of the Sacred Heart community since 2014. They have three boys in the Academy and their family is very actively involved. Scott coaches the boys middle school and high school basketball teams, as well as the high school baseball team. In addition to the finance council Scott is on the organizing committee for the Men's Wild Game Night. Scott has a Civil Engineering degree as well as a MBA, and is the general manager and operations director of Scott Christopher Homes.



Mike Staskiewicz is an experienced information management professional working in global industry across consumer product goods, finance and publishing. Mike is a West Michigan native with roots to West Catholic HS, St. Anthony of Padua parish where he was married. He has seven children. He also has roots to Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary where he joined the Knights of Columbus and served as Grand Knight. He joined Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish 14 years ago and started the boys outdoor activity group here, affiliated with the Troops of Saint George.



J.T. Weis lives with his wife, Christine and four daughters in East Grand Rapids. He is the CEO and co-owner of Abcor Industries, which was named a Top 50 company to watch in Michigan. Prior to owning Abcor Industries, he has served as Group President in Berkshire Hathaway, successfully run a global French company while based in Paris, and has prior Fortune 100 leadership experience. He has an MBA from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University and a BS in Business Administration from Winona State University.



Sean Maltbie, SHA Headmaster,
Academy Representative



Amber Hiske, Parish Business
Manager, Parish Representative



Eric Kovalak, School Board President,
Academy Representative



Samantha Surrell, Director of Advancement,
Parish & Academy Representative

Nienhuis Financial Group LLC





Meet the School Board



The Sacred Heart Academy Board of Directors assists and advises our Pastor with his canonical responsibilities to ensure the Academy accomplishes its mission to assist families, form Catholics, and cultivate culture. The board assists in the areas of strategic planning, financial oversight, policy development, institutional advancement, and mission effectiveness. All board meetings are open to parishioners and school families, unless closed business sessions are called for deliberation on sensitive matters. All board members are appointed by the Pastor.



Eric Kovalak, President, is a derivatives trader and asset manager, currently President of Entramarket Capital Management, an early-stage partner for emerging funds. His areas of interest include complexity theory, general systems theory, strategy, emergence, multi-scale structures, Christian ethics, philosophy, music, and design. Eric joined the Sacred Heart Academy board in August 2020 and is thankful to be able to serve this beautiful apostolate of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish.



Steve Ayers worked in scholarly religious publishing for 30 years, having retired in March 2020. Before that he sold rare and antiquarian books in Chicago and NYC. He's a graduate of St. Martin's College, Regent College (British Columbia), and attended Columbia University in New York where he studied the history of the book, the book arts, historical bibliography, and rare book librarianship. An avid book collector himself (Chesterton, C. S. Lewis, Dorothy L. Sayers, Samuel Johnson, Evelyn Waugh, Gerard Manley Hopkins, World War I poets, and several other poets and Catholic novelists are some of his enthusiasms), he has had to atone for his greed by packing and moving 5000 books to his current home with his wife, Judy Forslund Ayers. Together they have 21 grandchildren. So far.



Elly Blouw earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from GVSU and upon graduation worked at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. While at Mayo, Elly earned her master's degree as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. She returned to West Michigan where she, her husband Scott, and their boys joined SHoJ parish in 2016. Three of her children attend SHA where she currently serves as president of the PTC.



Patrick Kilchermann is a Catholic convert of the Benedict era, first having attended a Mass at Sacred Heart of Jesus in 2005. He is married with three children and his family lives in Grand Haven. In 2013 he founded Concealed Carry University to help further cultivate a nation of empowered and confident protectors.



Maura Kopulos, her husband Bill, and their four kids (FT at SHA) moved to Grand Rapids in 2019. Maura has her BA in Psychology and Employee Assistance Programs/Fitness and a degree in Dietetics. She has homeschooled her kids classically for 10 years, and has been employed since 2018 as a Classical Curriculum Specialist with her employer, Compass Classroom. She's worked closely with classical elementary and high schools in the Denver area to help the community live the True, Good and Beautiful. Maura loves a good joke, the sun, board games, baseball, sand dunes, cards, mountains, hikes, and hanging out with friends and family.



Meet the School Board



Ian Northon is a trial lawyer from Evart, Michigan. He married his law school sweetheart, Cindy, who is from Northern Minnesota. They have five kids and lived in Ann Arbor, Pittsburgh, and Ave Maria, Florida before making Sacred Heart Academy their home. Ian focuses his practice on defending businesses and the personal and professional needs of their owners. As an advocate, he has tried more than a dozen cases and has broad experience in labor and employment disputes, including internal investigations and bet-the-company risk avoidance, and defending pension and healthcare plans, executives, and governing boards on compensation matters, non-compete, trade secrets, and sensitive termination issues.



Michael Miller is the Director of Acton Media and a Research Fellow at the Acton Institute. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame, an M.A. from both Nagoya University's Graduate School of International Development (Japan) and Franciscan University, and an M.B.A. in International Management from Thunderbird Graduate School of Global Business.



Mike Moose holds a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from GVSU, and a MSIT with emphasis in Information Assurance and Security from Carnegie Mellon University. Prior to his current role in cybersecurity, Mr. Moose worked as a Cyberspace Operations officer in the Michigan Air National Guard. He still serves in the MI ANG on a part-time basis. Prior to that, he worked in various other roles in the IT field, as well as served in the Marine Corps. Mike grew up in the Grand Rapids area. He currently lives near Grand Rapids, and his children attend SHA. He is eager to serve our Apostolate.



Angela Van Haitsma and her husband Phil, have 6 children and have attended SHoJ for 7 years. She has a BA in Social Studies with Secondary Education certification from GVSU and attended the Kino Institute in Phoenix, AZ for catechist leadership preparation. Angela taught for 7 years before staying home with her children, all of whom attend SHA. She has also served the parish as a catechist for preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation.



Christine Weis is a wife and mother of four daughters residing in East Grand Rapids since 2006. Christine has served on various School Boards, Committees and Catechesis at numerous schools both in Michigan and France. She earned a B.S. in Finance from Winona State University. She holds certification in CPCU & ARE and GE's Six Sigma black belt courses. Prior to raising her family, Christine pursued a corporate finance career with GE Capital, Assistant Vice President Chicago, IL; CNA Reinsurance, Underwriting Director, Chicago, IL; and Kemper Financial Companies, Commercial Casualty Underwriter, Minneapolis, MN/ Chicago, IL. Currently, Christine works in Finance and Human Resources for Abcor Industries.



Our Parish Apostolates



One of the many fruits of the 2019 Parish Renewal of Fidelity was the creation of an official list of our apostolates and reorganizing them into larger groups called "Munera."

Administration

- Apostolate Working Group
 - Collection Counters
- Communications Group
 - Development
- Finance Council
- New Member Welcome
 - Pastoral Council
- Security Committee

Fellowship

- Apostles of Mercy
 - Athletics
 - Authenticum
 - Bible Studies
 - Book Studies
 - Cajetani

Employment Resources Group

- Family First Saturdays
- Homebound Visitation
- Knights of Columbus
 - Meals for Moms
 - Moms Mornings
- Pillar Men's Group
- St. Ignatius Prayer Group
 - Sunday Hospitality
- Theatre Arts Program
 - Youth Ministry

Liturgy

- Altar Servers
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
 - Lectors
- Men's Schola Cantorum
 - Parish Choir
- Sacred Space and Decor
 - Sacristans
 - Ushers
- Women's Schola Cantorum

Spiritual Formation

- Academy: Montessori - 12th Grade
 - Catechism Study
- Family Days of Recollection
- Funeral Hospitality
 - Little Flowers
- Sacramental Prep
- Troops of St. George

Community

- St. Vincent Neighborhood Mission
 - WestFest

Building and Grounds

- Church Cleaning
- Monthly Parish Work Days