

St. Anne, St. Bernard, St. John the Baptist and St. Mary Churches, All Saints Catholic School, Holy Cross Cemetery, and the Friendship Room

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September 10, 2021

Dear All Saints Family,

Since first hearing from Bishop Hurley that I would be coming to Alpena as the parish priest I have been praying for you all. Fr. Michael and I have received a very warm welcome. We are looking forward to serving as your priests and walking together towards the Kingdom of God. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has touched all our lives. It disturbed the status quo of our parish life. Like any tragedy we need to mourn our losses – the loss of life, the loss of community, the loss of the practice of our faith. At the same time, we must look to the hope of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus always transforms our human suffering into redemption and salvation. Let us be people of hope!

Enclosed you will find the financial report for last fiscal year (July 2020 – June 2021) in a new format that we hope you find helpful. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

There are three matters I want to explain in more detail for transparency and financial oversight:

1. **Parish Debt** – At the time of the parish merger in 2015 all the outstanding liabilities were consolidated into one loan which at the time was over \$1.6 million. Thanks to your outstanding generosity and the sale of several buildings and assets the loan is now under \$700,000. In November 2019, before the onset of the pandemic, due to cash flow issues, our parish began making interest only payments on the loan. Consequently, the principal amount owed did not reduce throughout that period. With the influx of assistance from the Covid relief funds, we have been able to begin making our monthly loan payments of \$11,100 once again. However, projecting into the future we will run into the same issue we had before the pandemic – lack of funds available to cover monthly payments. We have started putting monthly reports in the bulletin reporting the loan payments. The 'needed each week' you see is for a balanced operational budget [that the annual income is equal to the annual expense] which does not include the loan payments. The parish debt is like a giant anchor weighing us down. The only way to cut it loose is to pay it off – the sooner the better. Debt reduction is not very glamorous, but what we are asking for is a small gift each month to help reduce the debt. Focusing our efforts together we can accomplish this goal: Let's be debt free by 2023 (and it rhymes!).
2. **Covid-19 Relief** – The Finance Council and I thought a full accounting of the different kinds of Covid-19 relief that we received from the various relief bills from Congress would be very helpful to you. The relief came to us primarily in two ways:
 - a. Payroll Protection Program (PPP) – which allowed businesses effected by the lockdown to apply for a forgivable loan to cover payroll expenses. We qualified for two rounds of this program. For the second round we had to show we had a certain percentage drop in our income (offertory collections) during a period while still employing our employees, which we did. From two rounds of PPP we received \$361,504 which was spent in its entirety on payroll expenses during

the qualified time. Both loans have been forgiven. Because we qualified for and received the second round of PPP, we did not qualify for relief for our school under the Emergency Assistance for Non-public Schools (EANS) program.

- b. Employee Retention Credit – a payroll tax credit to businesses who showed a significant drop in income due to the pandemic, but also retained their workers on payroll. We qualified for this credit in several quarters of 2020 and 2021 due to the decline in offertory and other sources of income. To date, we have received two payments for a total of \$170,516. The first payment was applied to the loan.

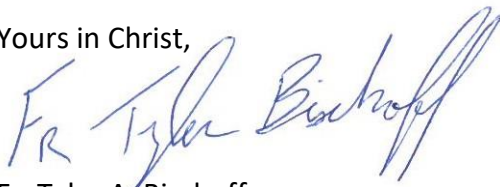
We have received just a little over half a million dollars in federal aid since March 2020. Without that funding we would have had to lay off many of our employees. However, we cannot come to rely on federal relief monies to operate the ministries of our parish, school, cemetery, and Friendship Room.

3. **Capital Improvements & Major Building Repairs** – One of the blessings of our parish is the beautiful churches and buildings that have been entrusted to our care from our ancestors who gave so generously that put stone upon stone so that we may have fitting places to worship God and to receive his grace. The great gift of our parish merger in 2015 was to bring us together to be disciples of Jesus spreading the Good News – now all heading in one direction with a shared vision. We have a shared responsibility and stewardship of all the buildings. As St. Peter reminds us “you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pt 2:5). Let me reiterate that I do not have a personal agenda here, nor do I have all the answers. What I do know is that only when we are united together for the mission of building up the Kingdom of God – then and only then can we discern the path forward that God is leading us towards. What a blessing that we have all the space needed in our buildings for great growth to continue the saving mission of Jesus. If we stay focused on the mission, everything else will fall into place.

Without a doubt, there are some major repairs and capital improvements that are needed now at all four campuses. That’s why we are beginning the process for an in-depth study of all our buildings. The most immediate need are some major repairs and restoration of the stained-glass windows of St. Anne Church. The scope of the project will be announced in the coming weeks, but our first goal is to repair the rotting windowsill and save the large window featuring St. Anne just above the organ. The repairs to that window alone will cost over \$27,000. Once we raise the money for that window, we will continue to raise money for each window until they are all repaired. Just a few weeks ago during the bad storms, several of the outer storm windows were broken and fell off exposing the stained-glass to the elements.

In conclusion, Fr. Michael and I want to reiterate how thankful we are to be called to serve as your priests. It is such a joy to share our journey towards heaven. I am so thankful for your continued support of our parish ministry. God is doing amazing things in our lives as we strive to be ALL SAINTS.

Yours in Christ,



Fr. Tyler A. Bischoff

Parochial Administrator, All Saints of Alpena