



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

817 Sable Street Alpena, MI 49707  
989.354.3019  
www.alpenacatholics.org

## **NEWS RELEASE**

For immediate release  
August 8, 2023

**Contact:** Fr. Tyler Bischoff  
Pastor  
989.354.3019  
fr.tyler@alpenacatholics.org

### **Grant awarded to start Emergency Warming Shelter**

ALPENA, MI – The Michigan Health Endowment Fund recently released a round of grant funding. All Saints Parish in Alpena was awarded a Community Health Impact grant of \$140,000 to fund the beginning of a new emergency warming shelter program at the Center of Charity located at the former St. Bernard School (322 W. Chisholm Street). The Center of Charity is home to the All Saints Friendship Room where a free community meal is served six days a week. The Center is also home to other local ministries such as the Alpena Baby Pantry, Children’s Closet, and AA and Al-Anon.

The grant will fund the emergency warming center program for two years. The goal of the program is to establish a daytime warming center (with plans for an overnight facility) for unhoused individuals, offering shelter, meals, and access to various support services. During daytime hours, local agencies will provide case management and other outreach services on-site to help individuals address barriers to housing, apply for additional benefits and resources, gain access to substance abuse counseling and mental health services, and access other health services.

“This grant will help us launch this community-wide ministry in the heart of our town,” said Fr. Tyler Bischoff, pastor of All Saints parish. “Part of our strategic plan is to expand the ministry of the Friendship Room to welcome those who find themselves experiencing homelessness suddenly during the cold winter months. It is the mission of the Church to continue the work of Christ who teaches us to walk with those most in need.”

The City of Alpena, NEMSCA, Catholic Human Services, Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, Alpena Ministerial Association, and many other community partners wrote letters of support for this new initiative in Alpena. It was the Alpena Housing Task Force who first put together an ad hoc committee in December of 2022 to address the increase in persons needing emergency shelter.

“We are grateful to All Saints Parish for stepping forward to make their vision a reality for the community,” said Alpena City Manager Rachel Smolinski. “The new emergency warming shelter program will help protect some of our most vulnerable citizens and will help strengthen some of the services that are already available in the community for those in need.”

All Saints Parish is currently raising funds from the community and other grant opportunities for capital improvements to the Center of Charity to make the building safe and secure to serve

generations to come. In the coming weeks a new roof system will be installed keeping everyone inside safe, dry, and warm. A \$125,000 grant from the Friendship Room Endowment Fund at the Community Foundation of Northeast Michigan and \$175,000 in private donations will fund the roof repair.

“Our goal is to raise over a half-million for capital improvements for the Center of Charity,” says Fr. Bischoff. “Donations to the new shelter, Friendship Room ministry, capital improvements of the building, are always welcome – contact the parish office for more information.”

**More about the Michigan Health Endowment Fund:** The Michigan Health Endowment Fund works to improve the health and wellness of Michigan residents and reduce the cost of healthcare, with a special focus on children and seniors. You can find more information about the Health Fund at [mihealthfund.org](https://mihealthfund.org). “The second cycle of grants through our Community Health Impact and Capacity Building programs build on the impressive group of grantees we shared in May,” said Program Director Megan Murphy. “We’re extremely pleased to support another round of thoughtful and impactful projects and invest in the leadership and knowledge present in Michigan communities to achieve their own health goals.”

“The grant to All Saints of Alpena through the Community Health Impact program will support delivery of integrated physical and behavioral health services to residents using the region’s first emergency warming shelter. In addition to leveraging a significant capital investment to build the shelter, the project will help those facing housing insecurity access the health support they need alongside a wide range of other supportive services.” (<https://mihealthfund.org/2023-behavioral-health-nhl-chi-grants>).

###