

THE STATE OF OUR UNION—REV. MATTHEW MANKOWSKI, D. MIN.

2017 The End of the Year Summary and the Vision for the Future of our Parish in 2018

My fellow parishioners,

Now and then it is very important and at times even cathartic to look back and reflect on the accomplishments and the challenges which we faced as a parish community and as individuals. This State of Our Union Address will serve precisely such a purpose. I intend to summarize what had taken place at St. Joseph Parish during the last year and also share with you some plans and ideas for the future of our faith community.

The state of our union is strong. We have made our presence known in the City of Alliance by feeding the hungry, clothing the poor and reaching out to those who have fallen on difficult times. We visit our sick in various hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes. We established a new parish ministry called the Guardian Angels. This ministry aims to assist our parishioners who may need help with grocery shopping, getting a ride to the doctor's office and other appointments, watching an infirmed loved one while the care giver takes care of other pressing issues and many other life situations that require help and assistance. Feel free to call the parish office regarding this new ministry and see if we can be of help to you or your loved ones.

As your pastor and spiritual leader, I dare to say that God has greatly blessed us during this past year. We have added many new and wonderful members to our parish family this past year. Some of our new members came to us because they longed to find a loving and welcoming church community. Others decided to go through our RCIA program, and they became Catholic because here at St. Joseph in Alliance they found their one and true spiritual home. We have been adding new families and new members ever since I came here in 2011. As your pastor, nothing could make me happier than to see our parish grow in numbers and our love for God and His Church.

St. Joseph Parish in Alliance, Ohio is a beacon of hope for many people who live below the poverty level and who very often have been forgotten by our society. We extend our help and assistance through St. Vincent DePaul Society which operates on our parish premises and reaches out to all people in the Alliance community. Catholic or not, single or family members we wish to help all people who are struggling during these difficult times. We do not wish to leave anyone behind. In any given year our parishioners give \$24,000 to St. Vincent DePaul Society and I wish to thank all of you who support this just cause from the bottom of my heart. Just like many of you I also make a monthly contribution to St. Vincent DePaul because I know that the needs of the poor and the hungry are numerous. We must never remain indifferent to the cries and pleas of those who struggle to make ends meet and suffer greatly in this life.

This past Christmas we delivered 65 Christmas baskets, and I personally visited several families and individuals in need of help who are not Catholic. True Christian love must be color blind, and it must be given freely and openly without any strings attached. Our God gives us His love and support simply



because He loves us. As followers of Christ Jesus, we must do the same for others. Through your generosity we purchased a new (slightly used) St. Joseph Bus. I am very grateful to all people who made a donation towards this noble project. I also thank the Gatts and the King family members for driving the bus and bringing our parishioners to St. Joseph Church for our weekend Masses and other parish functions. This is a very important ministry of our parish and I thank God, each day that we are able to provide it to our parishioners.

With God's help and hard work of our parish bookkeeper Cathy Sanor, we launched St. Joseph Parish App for smart phones and introduced E-giving as an additional way of providing financial support for our

church community. I use both on regular basis and I absolutely love it. Our parish app has a lot of interesting features; daily readings, parish alert messages, my Sunday homilies, a videotaped Mass and other valuable Catholic resources. Please, consider downloading our parish app. (go to myparishapp.com and click on the Apple or Android App store button) and sign up for E-giving using the link on our website. Whether you travel or go down south for the winter, E-giving will help St. Joseph Church to receive your financial support all year round. Many of you have made serious sacrifices just as I did when we made our pledges towards our Parish Capital Campaign aimed at the debt reduction and setting some money aside for unexpected repairs. Please, continue paying off your pledges and know that 50% of our debt has been paid off. Check out our financial report in this newsletter to get more details.

THE STATE OF OUR UNION—CONTINUED



chapel because our old pipes collapsed and created a serious problem. We also opened a new section in our cemetery which was quite an ordeal since we had to pin all the new graves and mark them on our cemetery grounds and the cemetery map. We also purchased a new zero turn mower for the cemetery and a tractor with the snow removal and dirt removal attachment units. We would like to sell our old parish truck with the snow plow unit since we are no longer using it. If you know people, who might be interested in buying it, please, call our parish office and let us know.

We have been fixing the broken concrete on the side walks around the church and inside the courtyard. We also have been fixing the masonry walls around the church. It has not been an easy task but our head of maintenance, Dave Skolosh has been bound and determined to address these serious issues. It is because of his dedication and initiative that so many projects got accomplished and our cemetery always looks so beautiful. All of our maintenance guys are very dedicated individuals, and I applaud their hard work and commitment towards St. Joseph Parish. This past year I had an exchange of words with the Pokémon people who used to congregate at our cemetery and used it for playing games even when funerals were taking place. In no uncertain words, I expressed my disgust for disrespecting the resting place of our loved ones and for using our cemetery to play Pokémon games. Needless to say, the Pokémon people used all kinds of harsh and hateful words towards my person. May God forgive them for their arrogance and insults and have mercy on their souls. Remember that I am here to serve and to protect and I take my ministry of service with the utmost care and dedication.



One of the projects that has been in the making for the last two years is to build a larger garage/shed across from the Schwartz Center on Linden Street, so that we can store our tractor and other maintenance appliances. Mr. Dennis Clunk offered us a metal building structure free of charge as long as we can clear the existing space and make it ready for the new construction. It is my hope that we can make this improvement during this new 2018 year. Regarding our spiritual growth, we are looking at different programs trying to find one that will fit the needs of our adult parishioners to enhance their Catholic faith. Please, keep in mind that we are always in need of new Eucharis-

This past year we put a new roof on our cemetery chapel and the cemetery maintenance building. We also placed new pipes and a new catch base around the

tic Ministers, Ushers, Lectors, Cantors, Altar Servers, Greeters, people who clean the church, PSR teachers and the folks who open the church and set up for Mass. Your willingness to help in any of these capacities is always greatly appreciated.

I wish to say a word of Thank You to our Music Director, Mr. John Zamarelli for his excellent choice of music and a beautiful Christmas Concert. It has been such a blessing to have at our church a very talented musician who works so efficiently and professionally with the parish pastor.



All in all, St. Joseph Catholic Church in Alliance, OH thrives and excels among many other churches – Catholic and non-Catholic. We are the face of Christ who came not to be served but to serve and die for all. We feed the hungry, we clothe the poor, we defend the unborn and those who have been used and abused by our society. We are the face of God who lives among us. With God at our side and people of good will who love and support our parish, the sky is the limit – and we must dream big.

God has set us apart from other churches for a reason, and we must live in faithfulness to our calling. We are not afraid of challenges that may come our way. Nor should we ever give any heed to the naysayers. We will dream big and reach for the stars. When we put our strength and resources together, we will be able to accomplish whatever goal we set for ourselves. United we shall stand and persevere through thick and thin.

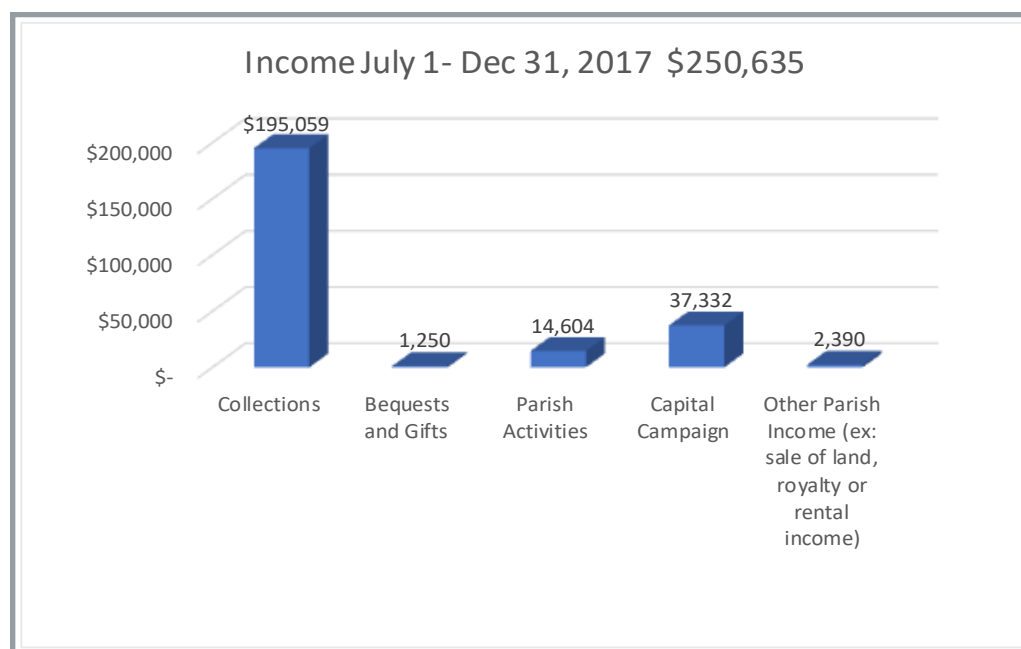
We are humble members of the Body of Christ, and we will continue to expand that Body of Christ by our love, compassion, empathy, and outreach. We will continue to reach out to those who are most vulnerable in our society and specifically those in the Alliance community. Nothing and no one can stop us because we do the work of God and we put a smile on God's face when we defend the rights of those who have been neglected and forgotten. We shall persevere against any and all trials and tribulations because with God at our side we shall fear nothing and we will overcome all and any adversity.

We are here, and we intend to stay here for many centuries to come. One for all and all for one. We carry each other's burdens, and we help one another along this journey of life and faith. We shall not leave anyone behind because we are the Community of St. Joseph Parish in Alliance, Ohio who cares about all people. All of our members matter, and we love and respect anyone who comes to our church to find a spiritual home and to listen to the voice of God that is very much present and alive in our community. May God bless our parish. May He bless our Alliance Community. May God Bless the United States of America our Home and the Country we love and appreciate so much!

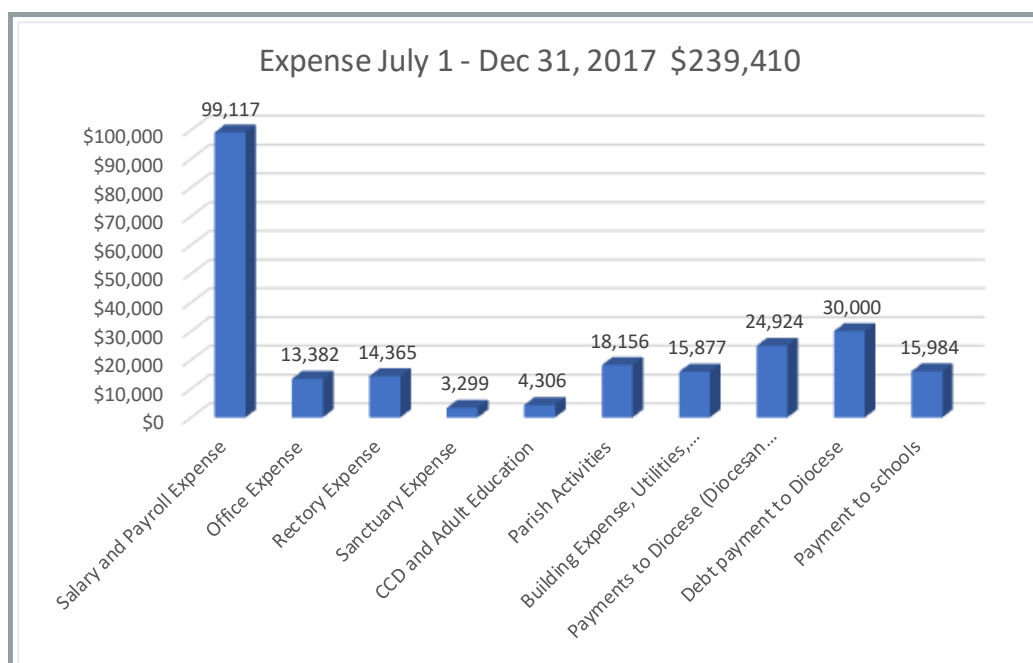
With all my love and prayers,

Fr. Matthew

INCOME



EXPENSE

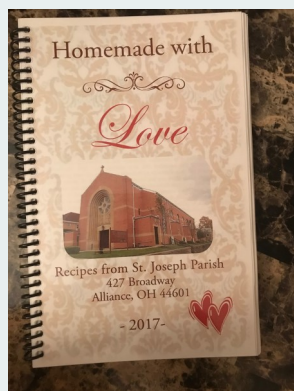


CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Original debt	\$201,076
Amount Pledged	\$348,567
Pledges Paid	\$220,136
Remaining Debt	\$102,344
Debt Paid (inc. forgiveness)	\$98,732

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH COOKBOOKS

A limited number of our parish cookbooks are still available. Please stop in the church office to purchase yours before supplies run out. Cost is \$15.00 each—they make beautiful gifts. Thank you to Angela Zumbar for coordinating this project—and thank you to all our great cooks who contributed recipes!



MEET MR. MATT ZENI—DIRECTOR OF PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION AND ADULT EDUCATION

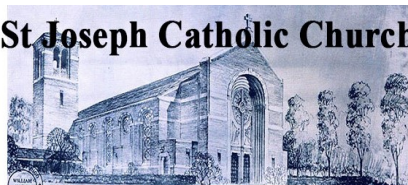
This past summer, Matt Zeni joined our parish staff and is directly responsible for our Parish School of Religion and RCIA and other adult education opportunities. He is not new to the Alliance area, having grown up in Alliance and is a graduate of St. Thomas Aquinas and Kent State University.

He has previously served for 11 years coordinating religious education and other duties at Nativity of the Lord Parish in Pensacola, Florida.



Matt Zeni (center) assisting Fr. Matthew with the Blessing of Pets.

St Joseph Catholic Church



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