



Church of St. Joseph

Know, Love and Share Jesus

DECEMBER 2011 GOOD NEWS GOOD NEWS GOOD NEWS GOOD NEWS

John the Baptist has two feast days associated with him, the feast of his birth in June and the feast of his death in August. But really, this is his time, the season of Advent is his season. As the beginning of Mark's gospel says, he is the voice crying out to prepare a way for the Lord that is prophesied by Isaiah. His presence is the sign that the Lord is coming. In truth, he and Mary are the two figures that show us what Advent is about, what it means to be ready to welcome the Lord into our lives.

And what does John the Baptist teach us to do? Repent. If we wish to prepare for our Lord, we must repent of our sins in order to make our hearts ready to welcome him. For John the Baptist, this meant being baptized in the Jordan river and declaring their sorrow for their sins. But imagine that for a moment. Put yourself in the place of those who were baptized by John. They repented of their sins, but their sins were not forgiven. Only the Lord can forgive sins, and the Lord had not yet begun his ministry. They were left there in their sorrow, still bearing the weight of their sins, waiting for the day when the Lord would come and free them.

We prepare during this season of Advent in the same way, we repent of our sins, but praise God, we live on this side of our redemption. When we go to confession, we know that when we leave, we will have been washed clean of our sins.

God tells us through the prophet Isaiah, "Comfort, speak comfort to my people, speak to them the words that they long to hear, that their guilt is expiated," their sins are forgiven. One of the many privileges of being a priest is being the messenger of that good news. I get to say with complete confidence to the person sitting across from me that God forgives them. He wants our sins wiped away even more than we do, so when we give Him that chance by confessing, He does it without delay.

And then they are no more. It's not that they are covered over, it's that they no longer exist. There's a story of a person who was having trouble discerning whether or not the spirit that was talking with him was from God or from the enemy. He approached his spiritual director, who told him to ask the spirit what the man had confessed at his last confession. If the spirit was from God, he would say, "I don't know what you confessed." That is because God does not hold onto what He has already forgiven. He does not set our sins to the side or place them on a balance with the penance we've done; He wipes them away forever. That is what our Lord's sacrifice has accomplished, that is what John the Baptist and all the others hoped for against hope: that they could finally be set free from their sins.

Now some argue that that's great, but why do we have to confess to the priest? God can hear me, He knows I'm sorry, so why not cut out the middleman and go straight to Him? The reason is because in those terms, it is Jesus Christ who is the middleman that we're omitting. The priest is the representative of Christ on earth, he stands in the person of Christ. You never hear someone say they cut out the middleman and consecrate the bread and wine themselves, or anoint the sick, or confirm their children. It is generally recognized that these things must be done by one who is ordained.

But why is it different with confession? I will sometimes hear a person say that the priest is unnecessary because he isn't the one who forgives the sins, it is God who does that. And that's completely true, just as the priest is not the one who makes the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ, or who wipes away original sin when he baptizes, or sends the Holy Spirit down in confirmation. It is Christ who does all these things through the priest, just as he forgives sins through the priest.



By Fr. Liehkus

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S SCHEDULE ON BACK COVER

Church of St. Joseph ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011

Parish Operating Totals

Income	ACTUAL 2008-2009	ACTUAL 2009-2010	ACTUAL 2010-2011
Offertory-Envelopes/Holy Days	\$ 545,307	\$ 535,557	\$ 509,897
Loose Plate	\$ 24,635	\$ 27,695	\$ 20,473
Mass Offerings	\$ 2,201	\$ 2,787	\$ 3,415
Baptism, Weddings, Funerals	\$ 2,600	\$ 3,900	\$ 4,475
Other Income	\$ 18,990	\$ 37,649	\$ 36,939
Bequests, Memorials, Special Gifts	\$ 15,025	\$ 33,595	\$ 500
Catholic Appeal Rebate	\$ 8,865	\$ 11,453	\$ 9,361
Religious Education	\$ 5,229	\$ 6,810	\$ 4,720
Fall Festival-NET	\$ 16,601	\$ 17,032	\$ 18,303
Votive Offering-NET	\$ 1,294	\$ 2,114	\$ 1,203
Endowment Disbursements	<u>\$ 121,000</u>	<u>\$ 77,000</u>	<u>\$ 67,000</u>
Total Income	\$ 761,747	\$ 755,592	\$ 676,286

Expenses

Salary & Benefits-Church	\$ 452,857	\$ 381,216	\$ 370,922
Rectory & Housing	\$ 20,676	\$ 7,908	\$ 9,393
Maintenance	\$ 36,206	\$ 40,830	\$ 67,407
Utilities & Municipal Assessments	\$ 92,520	\$ 60,118	\$ 52,456
Insurance	\$ 35,817	\$ 33,682	\$ 26,441
Archdiocese Assessment	\$ 84,817	\$ 94,719	\$ 74,323
Operational Expenses	\$ 75,068	\$ 53,775	\$ 41,355
Religious Education	\$ 22,132	\$ 14,974	\$ 2,735
Total Expenses	\$ 820,093	\$ 687,222	\$ 645,032

Net Operating Income	\$ (58,346)	\$ 68,370	\$ 31,254
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Other Income/Exp

MSSPA Rental Revenue-NET	\$ 340,126	\$ 333,353	\$ 399,980
Loan Interest Expense	\$ 108,705	\$ 94,047	\$ 78,473
Loan Principal Expense	\$ 234,741	\$ 249,400	\$ 264,974

Total Other Income less Expenses	\$ (3,320)	\$ (10,094)	\$ 56,533
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ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Parishioners,

Many of you have been members of St. Joseph's for decades. Some of you have been members all of your life. A few of you have been members for all of the *parish's* life. Pastors come and go, but you are members of St. Joseph's for as long as you choose to be. This is your spiritual home.

That is why we publish this annual report – so that you can keep informed of the financial health of your home. You trust your pastor and the staff to use your gift of treasure prudently, and this is one way that we stay accountable to you.

As you can see from the report, our operating income continues to decline. However, Fr. Dvorak made the difficult but necessary decision to reduce the staff so that the parish lived within its means, and because of those hard decisions, we are in the black. This, despite relying less and less on our endowment, so that that money can grow (hopefully!) and be there to support our ministries when we need it. Now that we share the salaries of the pastor and the director of religious education with St. John the Evangelist, the salary expense will go down further, although the cost of providing benefits continues to rise sharply.

You can also see that our tenant, the Main Street School of Performing Arts, is thriving. The boost in revenue last year allowed us to pay back a "loan" we made to ourselves from the endowment to cover deficits from earlier years.



Looking ahead, there is a lot of deferred maintenance on both our interior and exterior that will start to cause problems if it is not addressed soon. We are presently making repairs to our roof over the back confessional and by the rectory chimney, places where water has leaked in. We are also making masonry repairs to the exterior baptistry wall on the northeast corner of the building. These were considered the most urgent of the repairs needed, repairs that it would have been risky to wait even until spring to fix. These relatively minor repairs alone cost \$30,000. We will continue to monitor our buildings and make repairs as necessary as we wait for the decision as to the future site of our merged parish.

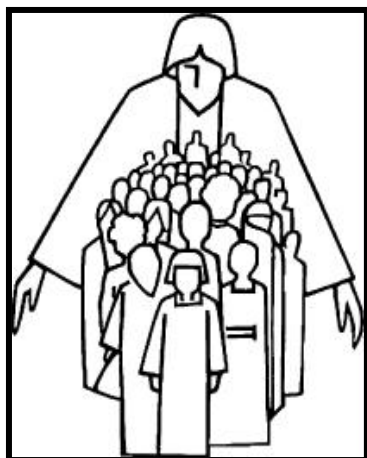
I commend you for your support of your parish, and encourage you to continue to give as you believe God is calling you to give.

In Christ,
Rev. Jim Liekhus
Pastor



MUSIC AND WORSHIP MINISTRY

PAST EVENTS:



St. Joseph and St. John's First Joint Liturgy

The **All Souls / Memorial Mass** was held on Wednesday, November 2, 2011 at 7:00pm at St. John's Church. This was our first joint liturgy and approximately 250 people were in attendance as we remembered all those from our two parishes who died over the past year. Choirs from both parishes joined together to form a mixed choral ensemble of nearly 50 singers. Each choir sang a special music offering, one massed choir anthem and added choral support to the assembly's song. Jim Keane and Jerry Salitros provided duo-keyboard accompaniment and small instrumental ensemble added additional color to our community singing. Afterward the St. Joseph BeFriender Ministry hosted a wonderful reception in the St. John's Community Room. This was a marvelous joint experience and the first of many such joint celebrations to come!

St. Joseph Bell Ensemble Play for the Golden Ages Christmas Party

For the past couple of years various members of our music ministry have come together to provide entertainment for the Annual Golden Ages Christmas Party. This year, on Saturday, December 3, 2011 at 12:30pm, our wonderful St. Joseph Bell Ensemble offered a 40 minute program of solo bell music and led party-goers in a Carol Sing-a-Long.

We are indeed blest by the many talented parish members and are grateful for all their contributions.



OPPORTUNITIES:

Christmas Pageant 2011



Time again for our inspiring Christmas Pageant! The Christmas Pageant will be on December 24 at 4:00pm, followed immediately by our Christmas Mass.

All children in grades 1 through 7 are welcome to participate. Practices will be held on Saturday, December 10, from 9:30 - 11:00am and Saturday, December 17 from 10:00 - 11:30am. We will meet in the social hall. Please consider this fun and meaningful event for your family.

Assistance from parents is needed for our rehearsals and day-of the pageant.

Direct any questions to Margaret Daly at (952) 938-8905

MUSIC AND WORSHIP MINISTRY



**Come and join the
St. Joseph Christmas Choir
as we prepare for our
Christmas celebrations.**

All voices are welcome!

The time commitment is three Thursday evening rehearsals (Dec 8, 15 & 22)
from 7:15 - 8:45 in the balcony of the church.

We will sing for Christmas Eve (4:00pm), Christmas Day (8:30am)
and on Epiphany Sunday (Jan 8 at 8:30am).

Come be part of the Christmas music at St. Joseph!

To sign up, contact Jerry Salitros at jerry@stjosephhopkins.org and/or call 952-935-9347.

STEWARDSHIP

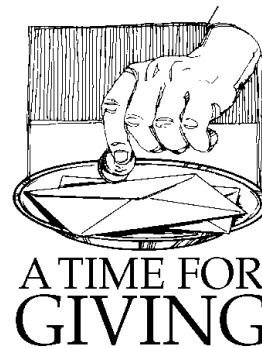
Dear Parishioners,

Let me tell you about a certain diocese in the U.S. In this diocese, 85% of Catholics go to Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation; the average in the U.S. is 33%. They have two dozen perpetual adoration chapels that have somebody praying before the Blessed Sacrament 24 hours a day, many more than the average diocese their size. There is no vocation crisis in this diocese; they are sending priests to other dioceses that need help, and have many candidates in seminary. The average age of their active priest is 44.5; our average age for an active priest is 55. Their Sunday collections are so full, that they never need to take a second collection or have a capital campaign. They don't even charge tuition at any of the schools in the diocese, because the parishes can fully support them.

Sound too good to be true? It's not. This diocese is the Diocese of Wichita, Kansas. What's in the water in Wichita? Good question. Over the last few decades, they have come to understand what it means to be a good steward of the gifts that God has given us, and how to return those gifts to the Lord with increase. Imagine what our archdiocese would be like if we had such a situation. Imagine our parishes with 85% of Catholics at Mass every Sunday and holy day! They no doubt have problems just like everyone else, but the Spirit is very clearly alive in Wichita.

This transformation took decades, but it was done one person at a time. When we are open to the Spirit, there is no limit to what He can do in our lives, our archdiocese, our world. What gifts has He given to you? More importantly, *why* did He give them to *you*? Put your gifts at the service of the gospel, and be amazed at the fruit He is able to produce with them.

By Fr. Liehkus



FAITH FORMATION



GRADE 3 - Making Rosaries



GRADE 1

Listening, Caring, Working and Enjoying!



**THE EDGE
PROGRAM
INTEGRATES
GRADES
6, 7 & 8**



FAITH FORMATION



PARENTS AND STUDENTS SHARING FIRST RECONCILIATION PREPARATION



Know

Love



Share

Senior Masses

Senior Masses are held six times per year: March, April, May, October, November, and December. **Our next gathering will be on December 13 at 10:00am for Reconciliation.** All Senior Masses are held at St. Joseph Church followed by refreshments in the social hall. About 60 seniors attended our Fall Anointing Mass on Tuesday, November 8. The Mass was followed by a very interesting presentation on fall prevention called "A Matter of Balance."



↓ MASS SCHEDULES FOR CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR ↓

Christmas Eve Saturday, December 24

- 3:30pm Prelude of Christmas Carols at St. John's
- 4:00pm Christmas Eve Family Mass at St. John's
- 3:30pm Prelude of Christmas music followed by the Children's Christmas pageant at St. Joseph's
- 4:00pm Christmas Eve Mass at St. Joseph's
- 9:30pm Prelude of Christmas Carols at St. John's
- 10:00pm Christmas Eve Mass at St. John's

Christmas Day Sunday, December 25

- 8:10 am Prelude of Christmas music for bells and choir
- 8:30am Christmas Day Mass at St. Joseph's
- 10:30am Christmas Day Mass at St. John's
- 3:00pm Hispanic Christmas Mass at St. John's

Reconciliation

- Tuesday, December 13
- 10:00am Senior Penance at St. Joseph's
- Sunday, December 18
- 7:00pm at St. John's
- Tuesday, December 20
- 7:00pm at St. Joseph's

New Year's - January 1

- Saturday, December 31
- 4:30pm at St. Joseph's
- Sunday, January 1
- 8:30am at St. Joseph's
- 10:30am at St. John's
- 3:00pm at St. John's (Spanish Mass)