

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is so lovely to speak with you on the Nativity of our Lord. We are fortunate to have such a loving and supportive parish. Though we have suffered with losses this past year, in an excellent example of Christian fellowship, we have borne each other through our communal sadness.

And through this, we continue to support our parish community and the world around us. We help dozens of families each month with our food pantry. Through your support and the support of the Shepherd community, including; Shepherd United Methodist Church, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8215, the Shepherd Rotary, and many others, we have a well-stocked pantry. Our pantry volunteers can be the hands of Christ, feeding those in need.



Working with partners like Rise Against Hunger and the Greater Lansing Food Bank, we were able to extend our reach even further. We packaged food for overseas to bring support and stability to impoverished communities. We also handed out food in the pouring rain, bitter cold, and blazing heat. All this support in the joy of the community working together.

We have also worked on supporting our parish in outstanding projects and communal gatherings: a fabulous outdoor picnic and a fun golf outing with parishioner young and old. Our Knight of Columbus refinished the pew tops and sides, bringing life to the original woodwork.



We thank Fox Sealcoating for caring for the parking lots with seal-coating and striping at St. Patrick and St. Vincent de Paul. Also, thanks go out to Nathan and Cody Gruss, who have helped improve our energy efficiency by replacing all the old fluorescent lights in the social hall with L.E.D. lighting. This ongoing project will eventually extend to every building, so we are a wise steward of our resources.

Speaking of wise use of resources, our parish has almost completed our replacement of the old inefficient boiler in the school building. Wise stewardship of resources ensures that more of the Sunday Offertory can go to the work of the parish.



Palm Sunday Procession 2022



Ultimately dear friends, all the work comes down to the core issue, making disciples. Do we proclaim the Gospel in our daily lives, living as we await the blessed hope and coming of our Savior Jesus Christ?

We don't have to do it all, but we need to do our part, living as disciples of Christ. We are reminded of the word of Bishop Ken Untener that we all play a role.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

Peace, blessings, and a very Merry Christmas,

- Deacon Todd