



## Church of Saint John the Evangelist of Little Canada

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380 Little Canada Road East ♦ Little Canada, MN 55117 ♦ (651) 484-2708

[www.sjolc.org](http://www.sjolc.org) ♦ [www.school.sjolc.org](http://www.school.sjolc.org)

April 29, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

How quickly this Easter Season is slipping by, even in times of social separation. While I've been able to write more frequently during these Coronavirus times, I have yet to offer my quarterly update to the Pastoral Planning Process, which we started in fall 2017 with a parish-wide survey that resulted in focused initiatives of Welcoming, Church/School Unity, Finances and Stewardship.

In my last update, we were in the throes of Advent and Capital Campaign season. I'm so pleased to report that our Capital Campaign was a resounding success. Through March 31, we have \$964,336 pledged, which exceeds our start goal of \$500,000 and nears our stretch goal of \$1 million. To date, we have \$254,180.92 cash in the bank; with this, we plan to pay off our mortgage sometime this summer. Stay tuned for more exciting news on that front. Additional monies received, then, will go toward building up our school reserves, addressing our rooftop needs, HVAC and boiler needs, and some of our stained glass (not necessarily in that order).

We have good news from the school: This past winter's enrollment initiatives were largely successful, particularly in our kindergarten class, for which we are starting a waiting list for the first time in more than a decade. Currently, we have 25 kindergarteners enrolled for next fall. Total enrollment is at 145 for next school year. Additionally, we had an amazing kick-off to the school auction with a raffle that sold more than 200 tickets! We had a generous donation of full tuition for a year, so those ticket sales go directly to the auction's fundraising goals. Thank you to all who supported, and please don't stop! This year's Fund-A-Need for the auction, which is completely virtual this year, is Tuition Assistance. Please give to this worthy cause if you are able. If we can raise \$30,000 by May 10, we will receive a match of \$30,000 from a very generous donor. Donations are secure and simple online: Follow the links from our church and school websites. Or consider dropping cash or check off in between the Parish Office doors, where a secure lock box has been set up. Mother's Day (May 10) also marks the start of online bidding for the auction, so please consider participating. Even with all this good news and truly positive momentum, we still have major work to do to balance the budget within the coming years; expect more news on that front as we enter the 2020-2021 school year.

The social distancing we've been asked to practice these past weeks has certainly caused us to re-think how we act in the ministries of Stewardship and Welcoming. I am filled with hope by the creativity and ingenuity of many of our committee members and parish staff, and I truly believe that God has set the table for us to serve in these areas in an even deeper capacity as we move through these uncertain times. The absence of group gatherings and sacraments like the Eucharist are creating a deep longing in the hearts and souls of many of us, some who didn't even know they were missing these prior to Stay in Place measures required by COVID-19.



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To this end, I'm very excited to announce we will be kicking off a brand-new initiative this coming fall that we're calling Discipleship Sunday. Once monthly starting in September, a collaboration of parish committees, ministries and staff will come together to offer all parishioners and guests to Saint John's the opportunity to share in food, fun and, most important, our Faith. A small group of parishioners has been meeting for a year already planning these activities—and are also preparing what these activities might look like in times of increased health awareness or reduced access to our building. The goals of these gatherings are simple: To help grow disciples in our Faith, at whatever place you might be at along your faith journey, and to welcome more people in—not only to Saint John's, but to a better understanding of our Catholic beliefs. Watch for more information about these activities—which include everything from traveling displays to renowned speakers to seasonal activities for the kids—throughout the coming months.

In closing, please know that I continue to pray for each and every one of you, along with the general needs of the parish, at private Mass daily. Even as I write this, our parish staff is connecting to put forth a plan for when we are next able to congregate together. Let us enter into Pentecost and a splendid Minnesota summer with renewed hope for the graces to come.

Peace,

Father Tom Balluff  
Pastor