



## Church of Saint John the Evangelist of Little Canada

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[www.sjlc.org](http://www.sjlc.org) | [www.school.sjlc.org](http://www.school.sjlc.org) | Facebook: SaintJohnChurchofLittleCanada

August 20, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have had a very busy spring and summer here at Saint John's, and it's been a while since my last update. Rest assured that we continue to be hard at work in our pastoral planning goals of Welcoming, Stewardship, Finances, and Church and School Unity. What follows is a very brief summary of the past six months.

I'm excited to report that we have an optimistic outlook on the balancing of our 2021/2022 budget, one of the last remaining top goals of our pastoral planning process from 2017. A full report of our parish finances will come out along with a letter from me, as it always does, in October. Sunday giving is steady. Covid-related relief money has helped us tremendously. The Capital Campaign is just shy of \$1 million pledged, and more than 70 percent is already paid, just a year and a half into a three-year pledge. We've saved a lot of money thanks to the more than generous efforts of a strong and committed crew of facilities and lawncare volunteers. You know who you are: Thank you for all that you do!

In the realms of Welcoming and Stewardship, it's relevant to mention the significant increase in the number of donated food bags and hygiene items that Christian Services Committee has coordinated throughout the entirety of this pandemic year. Despite the pandemic, not only is this service to Franciscan Brothers up, but our Discipleship Sunday attendance continues to grow as well. I'd like to take this opportunity to share and encourage that you save the dates of **September 25 and 26** this year: That Saturday is the Fall Festival and annual School Marathon, and Sunday is our first Discipleship Sunday of the season, which features an incredibly powerful, first-class **Padre Pio Relic** display in our Gathering Space, along with a Care Packages for Veterans service project for the youth. More details can be found about the full schedule of these events on our website, [www.sjlc.org/discipleship-sunday](http://www.sjlc.org/discipleship-sunday) and [www.sjlc.org/fall-festival](http://www.sjlc.org/fall-festival).

This is a great transition into continued school and church unity. This past year, our school auction raised more than \$130,000, with parish groups in wide attendance at the "socially safe and in person" event in the school gym and a vigorous online auction opened the fun to everyone. Our \$10,000 match was a huge success, and as such, the school hosted a small performance from the youth outdoors on the ball field in May—a "thank you BBQ"—that was so well attended you wouldn't have even thought there was a rain shower preceding the event. No fewer than 450 people enjoyed free food from Green Mill and entertainment from the kids.

As the pandemic continues, the school is preparing for yet another safe and somewhat more open in-person experience. Classes are again nearing capacity in many grades, there are again two kindergartens (and two first grades, as last year's kindergarten classes continue on), and we've added a section of preschool that goes year-round. To date we have a total of 218 students enrolled, PreK-8. (For reference, we had 191 enrolled in October of last year.) Please continue to spread the good word about our school, and encourage anyone you know with young people to tour with principal Dan Hurley ([dhurley@sjlc.org](mailto:dhurley@sjlc.org)).

As all churches in Minnesota returned to Mass in July, we, too, have seen a steady up-tick in our weekly mass attendance.

I'm left with just an overwhelming sense of gratitude to you, our parishioners and, of course, our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Our shepherd, Archbishop Hebda, is encouraging each and every one of you to join one of our Synod Small Groups this fall. Open sessions are available after each of our weekend Masses beginning in October, as well as on Tuesday evenings. I encourage you to visit [www.sjolc.org/synod-small-groups](http://www.sjolc.org/synod-small-groups) to register for free today! Come alone or with a friend, and we'll build your small group for you.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Fr. Tom Balluff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "B" at the end.

Father Tom Balluff, pastor