



From the Pastor's Desk Wednesday, October 7th, 2020

The Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

It is time to update you on several matters. Even though the pandemic has slowed things down considerably the parish is moving along, masks and all!

Parish Grounds



Over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic we have continued to maintain our property. We removed a few diseased trees and replanted. We also refurbished the Prayer Garden. The large tent on the rectory lawn was rented for use primarily by the school but during the evening and on weekends anyone is free to use it. In fact, I am inviting the parish to make use of our entire property. It's large and open and beautiful and it lends itself to social distancing. We also purchased eight picnic tables that our Boy Scouts assembled, stained, and finished. The tables are positioned in the wooded area of our property adjacent to the playground. They are available for use (by reservation). Please call the parish office or email Stephanie Casey stephanie.casey@smmchurch.org to reserve a table.

**Our entire property has been treated for mosquito and pesky bug suppression since late spring. If you choose to use the property you can expect to have a mosquito and bug free experience.

Church and Worship

We reopened our church roughly three months ago – with Covid-19 restrictions - and slowly people are coming back to Mass. We also changed the Mass schedule: Daily Mass is at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and First Fridays. Weekend Masses are celebrated at 4:30 on Saturday (Live Streamed) and at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. on Sunday. Currently at daily Mass we have approximately 19 people, a few more attend on First Friday and First Saturday. Attendance for Sunday Masses is hovering right below 300 between all three Masses. People have been cooperative and patient which is very helpful. We also have another 300+ households who tune in to our Live Stream on Saturday afternoon. We have spent a considerable amount of time fine-tuning our stream. The quality is quite good for those watching from home. I invite you to subscribe to our YouTube channel.

Two weekends ago we once again revised our pattern for reception of holy communion. As more evidence suggests that the virus *can* be aerosolized, we have decided to restrict movement as much as possible. Rather than move people, we are moving the Eucharistic ministers. We have also installed an air filtration system and are leaving the windows open in the church to facilitate air exchange and flow. I encourage you to return to church as you feel comfortable but keep in mind our current maximum capacity is 175 people. The church is sanitized and disinfected daily.



Parish Survey

The Parish Advisory Council has prepared a brief survey that will be sent at the end of the month (Snail Mail) to all parishioners. The objective is to update our files; get up-to-date and current email addresses; and contact information. Also, we want to hear your opinion on a few matters. Please do not ignore this mailing. Once you receive it, kindly take a few moments to fill it out and return it to SMM Parish as indicated. It is preferable that you fill out the survey on-line but if not please mail it back to the Parish Office.

The School

Our school reopened smoothly and without incident. All seems to be going well. I would like to commend our Principal, Patrick Tiernan and all of the school administration, faculty, and staff for the great job they are doing. Our teachers are performing excellently even in an atmosphere of uncertainty and stress. Our school children of course are wonderful. They go about their day with joy and excitement! God bless them.

Additionally, our school enrollment is up to 560 students. We are not quite at capacity, but we are maintaining waiting lists for several grades. This is an enviable position for us. My personal opinion is that the sustained interest in Saint Mary Magdalen School is fueled by our impeccable reputation.



The 2020 Holiday Season

Fall has arrived and the Holiday Season is rapidly approaching. Thus, the Parish Staff in conjunction with the Parish Advisory Council have approved the following:

Thanksgiving Day Mass - 10:00 a.m.

Reservations will be required prior to attending Mass.

*See parish website for signup information-
www.smmchurch.org*





Christmas Eve Masses - 4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., and 8:00 p.m. (This will be our “Midnight Mass” this year. A Schola will sing beginning at 7:45 p.m. and Mass will have all of the liturgical richness that would be expected.)

Reservations will be required prior to attending for ALL Christmas Eve Masses.



Christmas Day Mass - 10:30 a.m.

Reservations will be required prior to attending Mass.

Details regarding how and when to reserve pew space for Christmas Eve and Christmas will be forthcoming.

Please be patient.

Capital Projects – Recently Past and Current



Since the beginning of the pandemic which began to impact us on March 13th, we have continued to address capital projects that can’t be ignored. In these uncertain financial times, we have only been addressing capital repairs that require immediate attention. In conjunction with the Parish Finance Council, the School Board, and our Parish Facilities Committee we have made the following repairs and improvements:

Church Water Cooling Tower

\$8,265.00 (*Install new water treatment equipment*)

\$7,575.00 (*Install new cooling equipment*)



Covid-19 Related Expenses

PPE - Masks/Cleaners/Gowns/Face Shields/Wipes

Hand Sanitizer/Disinfectant Sprays - \$22,077

Church Roof Leaks (Two separate locations) - \$16,750.00

Rectory Roof Leak - \$4,755.00

Inside Restoration & Repair - \$1,400

Live Steam - \$2,887

Cameras, Equipment, Microphones, etc.

School HVAC \$17,731.00 (*Install new Bi-Polar Air Filtration System*)

School Copier Room AC Replacement - \$8,775.00

School Virtual Learning (Classroom Cameras and Wiring) - \$2,135

Gym Roof Leak - \$987.00

School Concrete Restoration and Repair - \$27,000.00

This project has not yet commenced but it soon will. It is very important, and it is urgent as it addresses the concrete window encasements and sills in the school building. The stucco/concrete horizontal bands around the main school building are deteriorating, including windowsills and accent bands. This presents a safety issue as well. The diocese has approved our proposal and we will be moving forward ASAP.

Offertory



As the reality of the coronavirus pandemic descended upon us in early March, we were very successful at maintaining our income levels. The PPP loan/grant (Payroll Protection Program) combined with your amazing generosity kept us in good shape. At the current moment however our offertory income is down by 21%. This was not completely unexpected, but the reality is that that translates into a weekly deficit of \$3,430. Annualized that amount becomes \$178,360. Frankly, that figure scares me.

In consultation with the Parish Finance Council and the Parish Advisory Council, I have already made staff reductions and instituted spending restrictions. If the trend continues, I will be forced to consider more drastic measures. A parish, just like any family or household, bases its budget on expected or projected income. As you well know, it is imprudent and dangerous to deficit spend.

Once again, I find myself in the uncomfortable position of asking you for help. While I am very grateful to all of you for everything you do and have done to keep our parish ministerially and financially healthy, I feel compelled to ask you to please consider increasing your offertory commitment at this time if you are in a position to do so. If you are able and would like to contribute directly to one of the capital projects, I would be very appreciative of that as well. I assure you of my continued daily prayers for your health and safety during these unusual and uncertain days. Thank you in advance!

On A More Personal Note

It is a great privilege for me to be the pastor and chief shepherd of Saint Mary Magdalen Parish. Your loyalty and support are beyond measure. The enthusiasm and energy of our school children gives me hope.

May Our Lady of the Rosary pray for us and intercede for us.

In the unity of prayer,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Father Kirk". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Very Rev. James T. Kirk, Jr., V.F
Pastor
Saint Mary Magdalen Parish
302.652.6800 Extension 112
smmkirk@smmchurch.org