

2019 Annual Report

On the weekend of January 18 & 19, I presented the 2019 Annual Report at all Masses. It was tied to the Gospel passage of the day in which John the Baptist was able to recognize Jesus, his cousin, as our Messiah.

It is quite remarkable to reflect on how far we have come, and all the things we have accomplished as the Parish of Christ the King – in a relatively short amount of time. We truly have so much to be grateful for. God is truly at work in our midst, and His Spirit is indeed alive and working through each and every one of you for the good of us all. We are so very blessed!

Several months back, when we asked you for one word to describe our Christ the King Parish, so many words came up repeatedly, and we made a banner with them that is in our sanctuary. The larger words were submitted more frequently, yet each word describes the beautiful reality that we are creating here.

A lot has happened over the past year. We began the year having three beautiful murals hand-painted to adorn our sanctuary – one depicting Christ the King (our patron) ascending to heaven, one highlighting the Blessed Sacrament in our Tabernacle, and one highlighting the baptistery.

Our consolidation of churches continued throughout the year, culminating with the sale of St. Luke property just over a week ago. While it is a sad day for those who were such a part of that parish for so many years, it is edifying to know that all the ‘Catholic goods’ including the altar, the altar of repose, the baptismal font, the ambo, the Stations of the Cross, and the few remaining statues were shipped to Haiti to be used in the rebuilding of a church devastated by the earthquake 10 years ago. A letter and pictures from their community are posted on the back bulletin board. They are most grateful for our donation, and the legacy of St. Luke carries on. Even the statue of St. Luke from the front of the church will hang on the front of St. Luke Hospital in Haiti. Meanwhile, the facilities on Bolton and Eaton Streets in Hartford will house The Pentecostals for their worship, services, and programs.

The Korean Catholic Parish continues to lease Sacred Heart Church from us for their worship space, and we continue to use it as well for some services and programs like Deacon Michael’s Beyond Bible Study, Lessons and Carols and seasonal community meals.

Our Social Action Committee has worked harder than ever with a major project each month of the year. I join them in thanking you for your generous support as together we assist those in need right here in our own community. Of all the parishes in which I have served, we have by far the most extensive outreach ministry, and it is yet another sign that we, like John the Baptist, see the deeper Jesus as he dwells within all our brothers and sisters in the world around us.

As in past years, there is an insert in the January 26 bulletin with an overview of our fiscal picture. You will notice that our income was down in 2019, and we ended the year in the red. In my experience, most parishes find they cannot rely on weekly collections to balance their budget, and so most parishes conduct an Annual Collection to make ends meet.

When our Finance Council met, we gave serious thought to doing so here as well. After all, we have already cut expenses considerably. Payroll salaries and taxes, for instance, were down \$61K, and office expenses and utilities were down over \$34K. And while the expertise of our Finance Council has helped us realize more investment income than previous years, we still needed to dip into savings significantly to pay all our bills.

However, we decided to forego an Annual Collection this year because the Archdiocese, over a three year period, is mandating all parishes participate in a Capital Campaign for the Hartford Bishops Foundation. We are part of the 2020 phase. Our goal will be to raise \$464K, half of which will be able to be used for our parish, and half for the Archdiocese.

We would like to build vestibules, one to both the north and south entrances to our church. As you know, they both open directly to the outside, resulting in the elements blowing right into church. On the south side, the plan is to add an elevator which will allow for easier access of our church hall, as well as a larger gathering space so we won't be as crowded in the back of church. So, we will be hearing more about this campaign entitled 'Forward with Faith' in the very near future, and you will be asked to make a generous contribution, as both the Archdiocese and our parish looks to continue the work of Jesus for many years to come.

Another major undertaking for our Pastoral Council this year will be to take an accurate census. Merging the records from three churches is next to impossible, and much of the data we have for you is outdated or incomplete. So we are planning, in the next couple of months to have every family in Christ the King Parish register with our new census forms. This will then give us a true picture of who is a member, and up-to-date contact information for everyone.

On January 12th, 34 of you gathered to discuss two of the videos of the recent Archdiocesan Synod. One of those videos was a talk given by Jack Beers entitled 'Sent on Mission'. He spoke about how evangelization – a fancy word for bringing people to Jesus – is the responsibility of all of us.

He spoke about what he called 'The Andrew Principle'. When the apostle Andrew met Jesus, he went off and told his brother Peter and brought him to meet Jesus, too. If he had not done that, Peter would never have been the first pope of our church!

John the Baptist saw this as his mission too – to bring people to meet and get to know Jesus, and not just the person 'Jesus', but who Jesus really is and what he is able to do in and through us.

My hope and prayer for us as Christ the King Parish in the coming year is that each one of us will take to heart the fact that **we** have been 'sent on mission' on the day **we** were baptized, and that we will work together to bring people **we** know – people in our families, people in our workplaces, people in our community, people in our schools – bring people here to get to know Jesus as **their** Lord and Savior too. For it will only be in so doing that we can then continue to build the Father's Kingdom of true and lasting peace.