

## From Fr. Fleming's Desk

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I'm grateful to so many who helped make our Advent and Christmas celebrations so beautiful:

- Our music ministry: director, keyboardists, cantors, choristers young and older and bell ringers offered their musical gifts as always but at this time of year they come wrapped in Christmas finery that helps make the season even more beautiful. -Our sacristans and flower folks who kept our sanctuary lean and purple in Advent and lush and red and green for Christmas. The garlands of greens at the ambo and across the choir loft were perfect and the "splashes" of poinsettias at the foot of the altar and in the windows – just perfect! - As at Thanksgiving, our outreach to those in need through the Giving Trees was very generous. Thanks to our Service and Justice Commission and St. Vincent de Paul Society and other volunteers who work so faithfully year 'round to coordinate our outreach to those in need. - Our ministers of Word (lectors) and Sacrament (altar servers and Ministers of the Eucharist at Mass and to the homebound) proclaimed the scriptures and helped us share in Communion - a special blessing to those who are homebound and unable to join us for prayer at church. - The men and women who faithfully take up the collection each week - their work is vital to the maintenance of our parish life!

- And the group I've sometimes referred to as "the stable men" in the parish, the crew who put up our nativity scene every year in the Gathering Space. When I was pastor of Our Lady Help of Christians in West Concord the parish received a bequest from Fr. Edward King who was my predecessor there. With that bequest we bought a whole new set of Nativity figures and established the Fr. King Scholarship Fund. A group of men in the parish built the stable and the background scene was painted by John Langan - and some of them are still at this task! At Our Lady's this nativity scene was positioned outdoors on the front lawn of the church. When Our Lady and St. Bernard Parishes came together, there was already an outdoor crèche at Monument Hall so the OLHC scene came indoors. The stable is 20 years old this year and the stable men have told me that the years of assembling and dismantling the structure have taken their toll and it's time to think of building a new one. The stable crew, pictured below (L to R: [Dick Loynd](#), [Tom Duggan](#), [Frank Meiner](#), [Dick Sur](#), [Jim Hackett](#), [Bill Dale](#)) have also told me that this 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary will mark their retirement from this task. I'm very grateful for their two decades of service to Concord's Catholic community - loyalty and devotion! So I'll be looking to enlist a new crew for Christmas 2018!

Sincerely,  
Fr. Fleming

