



# Sacred Heart Parish

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November 13, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We hope this letter finds you doing well as the leaves have fallen off the trees and the snow has started to make everything look new and pure. Since the beginning of Pope Francis' pontificate, he has challenged us to be 'missionary disciples' -- collaborating to bring about God's kingdom. He describes the mission of a parish to be like a field hospital during battle where the wounded and dazed come to find healing and solace. Our task as disciples is to bring our neighbors to an encounter with the Risen One. We do this in so many ordinary ways – ministering to families at the time of death, meeting new parents at the baptism of their first child, visiting the homebound and sick, teaching and passing on our faith to adults and children alike in faith formation programs, helping our brothers and sisters in need through our parish tithe support of St. Vincent's DePaul Society – these and so many more.

Our Parish Finance Council recently met, and we studied together the recent year-end financial report in detail which you received in September. The first thing that we discussed as a council is how awesome we as a parish have responded to the unforeseen and special projects these past few years. For example, we managed to install new carpeting in the church and tile the sanctuary. Just this past summer we raised the necessary funds to replace the outdated air conditioning units and repair the heating system in the sacristy. Recently, we have been working to replace and upgrade our sound system. We met our ambitious goals for all these planned and unplanned projects! As your priests and Finance Council, we want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for supporting your parish and helping us make these vital capital improvements.

That all being said, in our day-to-day income and expenses for the parish we have been operating in a deficit for the past few years. Our regular expenses such as salaries, supplies, utilities, religious education, liturgical items, and Christian works have exceeded our regular income, which is our weekly offertory collections, donations such as flowers, candles, coffee & doughnuts, memorials, and Mass intentions. As you know from your own personal budgets, we cannot continue to spend more than we bring in as income. The finance council sharpened their pencils and went through our regular expenses and have already reduced everything that could be reduced or cut. The proposal from the finance council to Fr. Tyler and I is that we should be as transparent and honest with you all about our current situation and ask for your assistance so together we can continue to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ in the world today.

Here are the actual deficits from the past few years:

July 2014 – June 2015	=	<b>-\$12,365.56</b>
July 2015 – July 2016	=	<b>\$12,883.30</b>
July 2016 – June 2017	=	<b>-\$3,296.64</b>
July 2017 – June 2018	=	<b>-\$50,324.60</b> (including the new parish truck)
July 2018 – June 2019	=	<b>-\$14,630.82</b>

And our anticipated deficit for this year:

July 2019 – June 2020	=	<b>-\$23,657.00</b>
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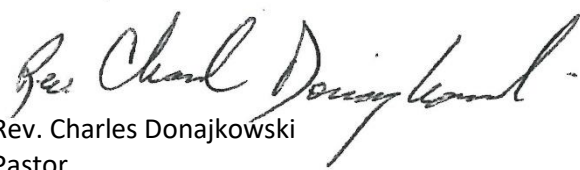
When you add up the previous few years' deficits, we have been behind in our normal operations by about \$47,000, which we covered from parish savings accounts. Let us begin by praying for each other and for our parish. We say it again because it cannot be said often enough: THANK YOU for all the ways you have supported the life of the parish not only with your treasure, but also your time and talent. We have an amazing parish that fulfills Jesus' call to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). In order to continue operating at the same levels we are asking everyone to consider a 5% increase in your weekly contribution. Five percent increase in your offering to our parish would cover the anticipated deficit for this year and it would help us to continue to have a balanced budget in the future. The ways that you can give include, using your envelope during the offertory collection or going to our parish website and signing up for Online Giving. Included with this letter is a copy of your giving history as we have recorded from October 2018 through October 2019.

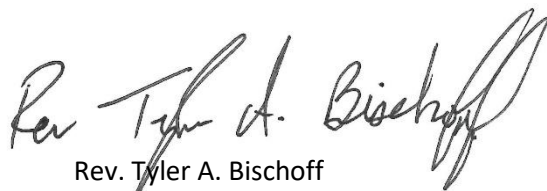
Here are some examples of what 5% would look like based on four levels of giving:

<b>Weekly</b>	<b>5% increase</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>5% increase</b>	<b>Annually</b>	<b>5% increase</b>
\$20	\$21	\$80	\$84	\$1,040	\$1,092
\$50	\$52.50	\$200	\$210	\$2,600	\$2,730
\$100	\$105	\$400	\$420	\$5,200	\$5,460
\$150	\$157.50	\$600	\$630	\$7,800	\$8,190

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and learn where we stand as a parish financially. We are not the only parish in northern Michigan in this situation. The fact of the matter is that our expenses increase every year just as yours do, but the number of people in our parish has declined in recent years. We all are invited to share in Jesus' mandate to spread the news of His Resurrection and the promise of eternal life. Perhaps for us we can use this as an opportunity to invite others to share in the Joy of the Gospel. Please remember Fr. Tyler and I in your prayers and please know of our prayers for each one of you as we turn to the Lord and lay at His feet all of our joys and sorrows, hopes and fears.

Yours in Christ,

  
 Rev. Charles Donajkowski  
 Pastor

  
 Rev. Tyler A. Bischoff  
 Associate Pastor