

Since my last report to you in May, 2004, we have completed a handful of capital projects, with little still pending. Some of the final items in our Church renovation project of 2002-03 were completed this fall, including the installation of a new video system in the Church to facilitate viewing of Baptisms, and the revision of overhead lighting above the Baptismal Font, the Holy Family Shrine, and the Prayer Wall. In addition, a problematic overhead fixture above the rear stairs down to the Lower Level of the Church has been replaced with a small track-light fixture. Aside from the occasional item that may pop up needing attention, the renovation project is now complete. For one last time, many thanks to all of you for your financial and spiritual support of this project.

The Choir Room (on the lower level of the Church) renovation was also completed, to include built-in bookshelves, new carpeting and paint, and new file cabinets for sheet music. In the PAC, overhead track lights have been added to provide improved lighting for special Masses celebrated there, and for other functions, such as school plays and concerts. A new storage area was also constructed in the PAC and a large, roll-up rug also added, both for the use of our Youth Group.

Improvements completed in the School include the installation of a new roof over classrooms 2B and 3B, new air conditioning in the remaining Middle School classrooms and computer lab, and new ceiling fans in all classrooms which did not already have them. Our environment for learning continues to improve, and students and faculty of both the School and the Religious Education program have expressed enthusiasm



## Business Manager's Report to the Parish November 2004



at all the improvements of recent years!

Unfortunately, changes outside the school have not been as "positive". What I am referring to is the removal of a number of ash trees which fell victim to the emerald ash borer; the sad news is that there will be more over the next year or two. There is also a large, dead elm tree in front of the Church, between the stormwater detention pond and East Stadium Boulevard, but it is located within the street's right-of-way, making it the responsibility of the City of Ann Arbor; the City Forestry Department has confirmed to us that it is on their list of trees to be removed but, since that list is quite long with all the dying ash trees, it may be a while before it is finally taken down.

Additional work which remains pending includes the replacement of our back-up hot water boiler (servicing the Church and the 4/8 School building), and upgrades to valves and steam traps on the steam heat system (servicing the K/3 School building). The former we were able to postpone replacing during last year's heating system, but there is comfort in having that back-up and we hope to be able to afford such a system before we have a need for it.

As I have noted in the past, what we have been able to accomplish in recent years is directly the result of your generous support of the Parish.

For that, all of us, parishioners and staff, are most appreciative. However, as you heard recently at Mass on Stewardship Sunday, and as we have written on several previous occasions, Sunday collections have trended down since last spring, and are now at virtually the same level as last year's. Most significantly, they are even less than what they were three years ago. Unfortunately, many of our operating expenses (in particular, health insurance and utility bills) have continued to escalate, putting added stress on our ability to finance necessary maintenance and facility improvements.

At this point, we have stopped virtually all discretionary capital expenditures, pending improvement in the Parish financial condition. Emergencies will be dealt with, but, unfortunately, we may be unable to stay ahead of potential problems. In order to continue the momentum we have established in improving our Worship, Educational, and Recreational environments, we again appeal to you to prayerfully consider increasing your support of the Parish in 2005. We hope that you agree that we have been good stewards of your financial resources in the past, and that the facility improvements, whether visible or behind-the-scenes, have been justified, and handled in an appropriate, cost-effective manner. As always, please feel free to call or e-mail me should you have any questions or comments.

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