

**St. Andre Bessette Parish**  
**Pastoral Plan**  
**January 31, 2013**

## Foundation

The Parish of St. Andre Bessette was formed through the consolidation of several existing parishes in the North and East End sections of Wilkes-Barre. Following the Consultative Process of "Called to Holiness and Mission," inaugurated by Bishop Joseph Martino, on June 17, 2011, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera, through a series of Episcopal Decrees, formally suppressed St. Stanislaus Kostka Polish Parish and Sacred Heart of Jesus Slovak parish.

These parishes existed within the boundaries of St. John the Evangelist Parish, a territorial parish established to care for the spiritual needs of Catholics living in the North End of Wilkes-Barre.

Subsequently, Bishop Bambera suppressed the Parish of St. John the Evangelist by means of an extinctive union with Holy Saviour Parish. The territorial boundaries of St. John the Evangelist parish were annexed to the boundaries of Holy Saviour Parish. Holy Saviour Parish remains as the territorial parish for all Catholics living in the Northeast quadrant of the Wilkes-Barre Area.

Furthermore, "in order to promote unity and equality to those parishioners newly incorporated into a parish community due to an extinctive union or suppression and to promote the recognition by all the faithful of the new community," the surviving parish (Holy Saviour) was given a new name—St. Andre Bessette.

## Territory

St. Andre Bessette Parish is a territorial parish situated in Wilkes-Barre Pennsylvania. Beginning at the Susquehanna River at the Pierce St. Bridge, the line of the parish boundary continues eastward up North St to the juncture with N. Pennsylvania Ave.

At the juncture with N. Pennsylvania Ave., the parish line continues diagonally to the southeast until it meets at Wilkes-Barre Blvd. and Coal St.

The boundary follows the line of Coal St. eastward until the junction with Wilkes-Barre Township Blvd. At that juncture, the parish line crosses the boulevard and continues in an easterly direction up the mountain until it intersects the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

The Parish line then follows the turnpike North until it intersects with Jumper Rd. The parish line then follows Jumper Rd west to its juncture with SR 315.

At the juncture of SR 315 with Jumper Rd., the parish line follows 315 south until the juncture with the Cross Valley expressway. The parish line then follows the Cross Valley Expressway west toward the Susquehanna River.

At the intersection of the Cross Valley expressway and the Susquehanna River, the parish line follows the river south until it returns to the Pierce St. Bridge.

The Parish boundaries include portions of the City of Wilkes-Barre, Wilkes-Barre Township and Bear Creek Township.

## Neighboring Parishes

On the West—St. Ignatius of Loyola, Kingston;

On the South—Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Wilkes-Barre, Our Lady of Hope Parish, Wilkes-Barre;

On the East—St. Elizabeth Parish, Bear Creek;

On the North—St. Maria Goretti Parish, Laflin, St. Benedict Parish, Wilkes-Barre (Parsons), Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, Plains.

## Institutions within the Parish

**Hospitals:** Wilkes-Barre General; Wilkes-Barre Veterans' Hospital; Geisinger Wyoming Valley Hospital

**Nursing Homes:** Timber Ridge, John Heinz, Riverview Ridge, Riverstreet Manor, North Penn Manor, Golden Living East Mountain, Veteran's Administration

**Low Income Apartments:** St. John's Apartments, East End Towers, Sherman Hills, Sherman Towers.

**Luzerne Co. Correctional Facility**—Water St., Wilkes-Barre

# Parish Administration

## **Pastoral Staff:**

**Rev. Kenneth M. Seegar**, Pastor  
**Rev. Michael Kloton**, Parochial Vicar  
**Mrs. Mary Fiske**, Parish Secretary  
**Ms. Anita Santini**, Parish Financial Secretary  
**Ms. Anna Hudock**, Social Justice Coordinator  
**Dr. Tina Evans**, Parish Life Coordinator  
**Sr. Carol Therese SSCM**, Parish Outreach to Hospitalized and Homebound  
**Mrs. Mary Ann Shades**, Coordinator of Religious Education  
**Mr. James Hinkle**, Coordinator of Maintenance

## **Parish Pastoral Council**

### ***Ex Officio:***

Rev. Kenneth M. Seegar, Pastor  
Rev. Michael Kloton, Parochial Vicar  
Mrs. Mary Fiske, Parish Secretary  
Sr. Kate Morris, SSCM, Sisters of Sts. Cyril and Methodius  
Mr. Joseph Boris, Finance Council Representative

### ***At Large:***

Christian Krupsha, President  
Sandy Snyder, Secretary

Robert Dunsmuir Jr.	Joseph Stone
Karen Hilenski	Marylin Tosh
James Morpeth	Dolores Yesuvida
John Morris III	Adam Zawatsky
Joanne Rushton	Patricia Zurewich

## **Parish Finance Council**

### ***Ex Officio:***

Rev. Kenneth M. Seegar, Pastor  
Rev. Michael Kloton, Parochial Vicar  
Ms. Anita Santini, Parish Finance Secretary  
Sr. Mary Beth Makuch SSCM, Sisters of Sts. Cyril and Methodius

### ***At Large:***

Joseph Boris	James Rakshys
Kevin Kane	Mary Ann Shades
Andrew Katsock	Thomas Zurla

## **Parish Buildings and Grounds Committee**

Rev. Michael Kloton, Parochial Vicar, Moderator  
James Hinkle, Coordinator of Maintenance, Chairperson

Dennis Devine	Ray Fedor
Daniel Evans	Anthony Mulvey
William Harvey	Andrew Shedlock
James Jones	Vincent Szykman
Kevin Kane	Eric Triani

## **Parish Social Justice Committee**

Rev. Kenneth M. Seegar, Pastor, Moderator  
Anna Hudock, Social Justice Coordinator  
Sr. Carol Therese SSCM, Parish Outreach Coordinator

Patricia Baran	Mary Ann Magda	Dolores Yesuvida
Karen Burke	Linda Novak	Barbara Zawatsky
Ken Burke	Rosemary Shedlock	Patricia Zurewich
Carol Kelly	Marylin Tosh	
Florence Krulack	Geraldine Ulichney	

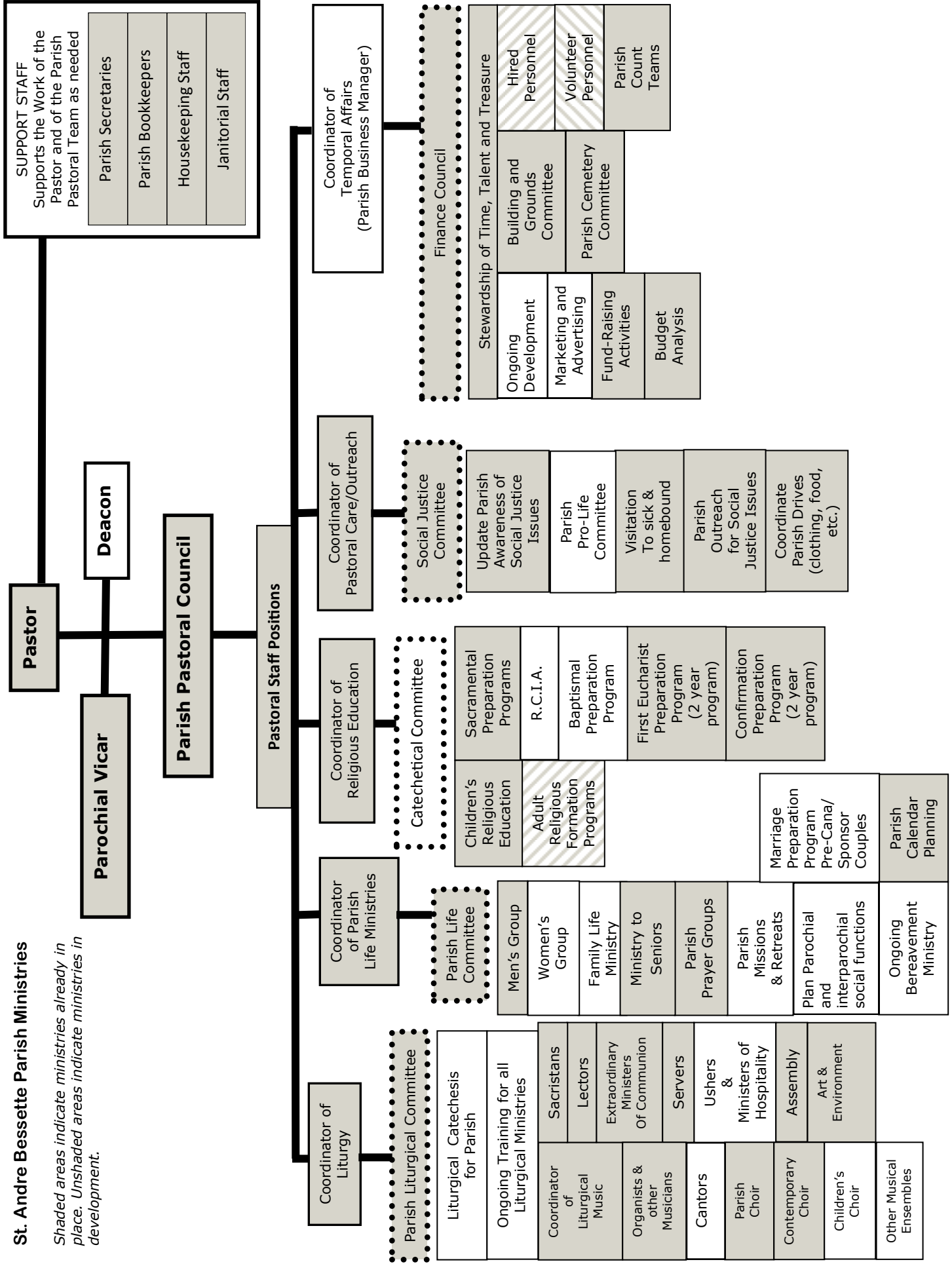
## **Parish Liturgy Committee**

Rev. Kenneth M. Seegar, Pastor  
Rev. Michael Kloton, Parochial Vicar, Moderator  
Eric McKitish, Coordinator of Liturgical Music

Sr. Carol Therese SSCM	Lucille Kaiser
Joseph Boris	Teresa Rakshys
John Domanski	Marylin Tosh
Tina Evans	Geraldine Ulichney
Mary Fiske	Patricia Zurewich

# St. Andre Bessette Parish Ministries

Shaded areas indicate ministries already in place. Unshaded areas indicate ministries in development.



## Parish Vision Statement

The Parish Vision Statement was given by Rev. Thomas Looney CSC on the occasion of the inaugural liturgy, June 21, 2011. He encouraged us to embody the charisms of our Patron, St. Andre Bessette, in setting forth a new community of Faith:

**St. Andre Bessette Parish is a community of Hospitality, Healing and Holiness**

## Parish Mission Statement

Building on our Vision Statement, the Parish is developing a Mission Statement which incarnates the values and charisms of Hospitality, Healing and Holiness.

**The Parish of St. Andre Bessette is a Catholic Christian Community where the Mercy of God is made evident in daily living. We strive to be a community that welcomes the stranger, reconciles the outcast and proclaims the Good News to the Poor. In fulfilling this Gospel Mandate, we give witness to God's unfailing Love for humanity.**

## Introduction to the Pastoral Plan

The Parish Community of St. Andre Bessette was brought to birth amidst much pain and angst. The closing of cherished buildings sent a shock wave through the parish that is not resolved even today. Members of the former parish of Sacred Heart continue to hope for the reopening of their beloved church and a return to the "days of yore" before the "calamity" of "Called to Holiness and Mission." In seeking to right the wrong they felt was inflicted on them, members of the Sacred Heart of Wilkes-Barre Foundation have sought to appeal the decision through various congregations in Rome, all, so far, to no avail. In the meantime, the parish of St. Andre Bessette has had to struggle to support the buildings of the Sacred Heart complex without any significant income from the members of the foundation, who have, by and large, abandoned St. Andre Bessette Parish. In many respects, until a final decision is reached and communicated to the parish, the emotional wounds inflicted on members of the parish will continue to fester. The air of uncertainty surrounding the parish has had a negative effect on the morale of parishioners, who do not want to contribute to a parish that may or may not exist in five years, depending on the outcome of the Sacred Heart appeals in Rome. It is our hope that healing will come once a final decision is communicated and the parish is free to move forward in peace.

Despite these challenges, the parish of St. Andre Bessette has made great strides within the past eighteen months. Among the parishioners who have chosen to stay in the parish there is a renewed spirit, and many are contributing to the building up of the parish community through their financial contributions, their response to volunteer in various areas of parish ministry, and their resolve to make St. Andre Bessette Parish the best parish it can be. We are heartened by Bishop Bambera's words:

How often in the course of our lives have we discovered ourselves confronted by change? How often have we found ourselves in a new and unfamiliar situation or circumstance? How often have we faced a challenging situation and felt lost, abandoned, or hopeless? And yet, for those of us who have come to appreciate God's love in the midst of the brokenness of our lives, there exists that ever-present desire and need to respond. Our response to that love can never remain simply a private or partial acknowledgement. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains: "From this loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim him, to evangelize and lead others to the yes of faith in Jesus Christ." (Catechism of the Catholic Church #429)

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera  
"Wounded and Loved,  
Regathering the Scattered:  
A Pastoral Vision for the Diocese of  
Scranton", 2011 Page 5

The parish community of St. Andre Bessette is committed to facing the challenges before us with the love that God has shown us in Christ Jesus. Our Pastoral Vision and Mission proclaim us to be a parish where that Love is put to action so that the Good News may be proclaimed. In doing so, we follow in the footsteps of our patron, St. Andre Bessette of Montreal, who himself overcame great obstacles to fulfill God's vision for his life.

The following pages hold forth that pastoral vision within the specific ministries of the parish. Taking our inspiration from the Bishop's pastoral letter, we strive to be a community of servant leaders who proclaim the Word of God, who Worship God in reverence, who build a Community where all are welcomed, who reach out in Loving Service to those in need, and who wisely use the resources God has given us to proclaim and build His Kingdom in our midst.

## Parish Leadership

Essential to the development of an evangelizing community is clear leadership. Parish leadership challenges parishioners to recognize and accept responsibility as members of the evangelizing community. This implies not only openness to ongoing conversion and growth in holiness, but also witness within and outside the Church, as stewards of God's Kingdom.

To accomplish the task at hand, pastoral leadership encourages the fullest possible collaboration of clergy, religious, and laity, men and women, in the common mission of the Church. This participation is possible only with the support of appropriate structures which both insure participation in decision making and facilitate involvement in the ministry areas of community, word, worship and service.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera  
"Wounded and Loved,  
Regathering the Scattered:  
A Pastoral Vision  
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## Where we have been

From its inception, the parish of St. Andre Bessette has sought to call forth from the community those who have leadership potential. Fr. Ken Seegar, very early on, began a process to call forth members of the parish to serve on both the Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council, as well as other administrative committees within the parish (Social Justice, Building and Grounds, etc.) Enlisting the aid of both paid staff and volunteers, the Administrative Pastoral Staff was formed to share responsibility for the various aspects of parish life (word, worship, parish life, service and outreach, stewardship, etc.).

The Pastoral Council is charged with assessing and overseeing the various ministries within the parish and to assist those whose primary responsibility is the fulfillment of those ministries. To this end, members of the Parish council have been divided into subcommittees to deal with Evangelization, Worship, Community, Service and Leadership. In the spirit of collaboration, these subcommittees interact with the Pastoral Staff and other Pastoral committees (Parish Life, Social Justice, Liturgy, etc.) in creating projects and events which foster the growth of the parish. Often these subcommittees work together to accomplish a task, for example, the Community subcommittee of the Parish council in collaboration with the Family Life Ministry put together a Halloween party for parish children (Boo Bash). Similarly, members of the Community subcommittee were also influential in formulating the format for the Wine and Spirit seminars. All this serves to build up a spirit of collegiality among the members of the Pastoral Council and other areas of parish leadership, which, ultimately affects the whole parish.

The Finance Council is charged with caring for the temporal aspects of the parish (finances, buildings and grounds, cemeteries, parish resources, etc.) Members of the finance council encourage and support four major fund-raising activities throughout the year. In a spirit of collegiality and an attempt to involve the input of a greater number of parishioners in parish decision making, the Finance Council also shares its ministry through a number of subcommittees: The Building and Grounds Committee was formed to assist the Finance Council in ongoing assessment of all parish properties, making recommendations for upkeep and maintenance as needed. Similarly, the Cemetery Committee was formed to assist the Finance Council in overseeing the three parish cemeteries, their upkeep and maintenance.

The Social Justice Committee was retooled from the St. Vincent de Paul Social Concerns Committee to deal with a broader spectrum of issues which face our parish neighborhoods and the Church.

The Liturgy Committee was formed to help educate parishioners about the Liturgy and provide a framework for discussion about creating more meaningful liturgies through the incorporation of liturgical music, appropriate art and environment, and ongoing formation of our parish liturgical ministers.

## Where we hope to go

- Goal:** To support current ministries and encourage further development of new initiatives to continually reinvigorate the parish.
- Objective 1: To provide opportunities for ongoing education in servant leadership for all members of our Leadership and parish committees through Diocesan and extra diocesan avenues.
- Objective 2: To continue to survey parish membership for the charism of leadership among parishioners
- Objective 3: To develop a program to replace current leaders as terms conclude
- Objective 4: To seek personnel to fill the voids that exist within our parish ministries schematic

## Ministry of the Word

The Parish as the local community of faith constitutes a primary environment in which faith is shared and formation takes place. Educational efforts in the parish are intended to provide formation for Christian life. Before ascending to the Father, Christ gave the apostles a final command — to make disciples of all nations and to teach and observe all that he had commanded (Mt 28: 18-20). The process of forming disciples very soon received the name of catechesis. "Catechesis further specifies evangelization. It is a moment in the evangelization/conversion process. Being a form of the ministry of the Word, catechesis aims at developing understanding of the mystery of Christ in light of God's Word." (The Relationship of Evangelization and Catechesis, NCDD Study Paper, page 2)

Thus, from the earliest days of the Church until now, we find a consistent and continuing call to include the four-fold dimension of parish life: word, worship, community, and service, in all our ongoing faith formation efforts just as in all of evangelization. The challenge for Catholic Formation in our parishes is to make the baptized aware of the universality of Christ's mission. We must educate the faithful to their responsibility for justice and ecumenism, we must facilitate the development of moral judgments and Christian decision-making; and we need to offer opportunities for the study of Scripture, and ways to grow in prayer and service to others.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera  
"Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered:  
A Pastoral Vision for the Diocese of Scranton", 2011, Page 9

## Where we have been

In many respects the Ministry of the Word has been confined to the catechesis of children within the parish of St. Andre Bessette. In order to answer to the broader spectrum of catechesis called for in Bishop Bambera's Pastoral Letter, the Parish Pastoral Council has formed an "Evangelization Subcommittee." While the formation of this subcommittee has assisted in opening our eyes to the many avenues needed for proper evangelization within the parish, it has made modest inroads in broadening the scope of catechesis within the parish.

One of the more successful endeavors we have undertaken is the "Wine and Spirit" seminars. These seminars are geared for adults within the parish and are held at one of the local establishments within the area. In this "relaxed" atmosphere, participants enter into discussion with a guest moderator on a variety of subjects. So far, we have had speakers address the topics of Responsible Citizenship, Death and Dying, End-time Prophecy, and Sex and the City of God. These have all been well-received. Attendance at each has grown exponentially. We hope to continue these as a venue for adult catechesis.

The St. Andre Bessette Parish Religious Education program offers the opportunity for all children who do not attend Catholic School to receive education in their faith. We strive to pass on the Catholic Tradition, build a friendly, faith-based community, and prepare students for the lives and ministry their Baptism affords.

- Currently we are running two tracts—one for Pre K through 5th grade and another tract for 6th thru 8th grades preparing for Confirmation.
- We have designated a "Parents' Corner" as an area for parents to gather as they wait for their children and engage in dialogue about the challenges they face in raising their children in the faith. They are often joined by one of our parish priests.
- Students receive a monthly newsletter to keep them and their parents informed and updated to the events in our program.
- We hold a "Children's Mass" on the third Sunday of each month and strive to involve both the Religious Education students as well as the Catholic School students.

One of the struggles we face is incorporating Catholic School children into the fabric of the parish. Since they do not participate in the catechetical sessions, even for Sacramental preparation, it is easy to forget that they, too, are part of the parish. We try to incorporate them into activities, but often meet resistance from parents. This creates difficulties for encouraging community among the children of the parish.

In other areas, we have formed a men's group, along the lines of "Guardian of the Redeemer." It has had a modest impact on several of the men of the parish, but has not achieved its full potential. We also tried to form a teen/young adult group, but were unsuccessful in garnering the participation of those above Confirmation level. Our efforts to try to form a women's group along the lines of "Women of Grace" have also been unsuccessful.

## Where we hope to go

**Goal:** To strengthen the work of the Evangelization Subcommittee so that it has a broader impact on the parish community.

- Objective 1: Hire a full-time Director of Religious Education who can work at all levels of parish life
- Objective 2: Provide opportunities for education in evangelization for members of the subcommittee as well as the broader parish through workshops, speakers, and bulletin articles.
- Objective 3: Network with neighboring parishes to establish a ministry for youth and provide catechesis for Sacramental preparation (Reconciliation, Communion, Confirmation, Marriage Prep, etc.)
- Objective 4: Reinvigorate the men's group and establish the women's group as viable means of reflection and study on the Sunday Scriptures.
- Objective 5: Form an RCIA Team and begin the RCIA Program within the parish as a way to catechize members, evangelize those who are not members, and incorporate new life into the Body of Christ.

## Ministry of Worship

Basic to the faith life of the local parish community is its great act of worship, the liturgy. It challenges and celebrates our relationship with God, one another, and the world. According to the Second Vatican Council, baptized believers fulfill their liturgical role at worship through "that conscious and active participation...which is demanded by the nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people...have a right and obligation by reason of their Baptism." (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Chapter 1, Paragraph 14a)

Pope Benedict, in his most recent book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, defines Eucharist as a visible process of gathering. He writes: "*In each locality, as well as beyond all localities, it involves entering into communion with the living God, who inwardly draws people together. The Church comes into being from the Eucharist. She receives her unity and her mission from the Eucharist.*" (Jesus of Nazareth, Pope Benedict XVI)

...We must take every advantage to emphasize that at the heart of our mission to be evangelizers is the Paschal Mystery of Christ celebrated in the Eucharistic Liturgy. It is into Christ's dying and rising that we were baptized. And here it is that we faithfully strive to understand and appreciate our own daily dying and rising. This Paschal Mystery lies at the heart of our hope for one another. Meeting this challenge calls for reflection and study...

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## Where we have been

The Eucharist, as the Council teaches, is the source and summit of all life within the Church. It is the fountain from which our life springs, it is the great and unbounded ocean to which our life flows. The Eucharist is the very heart of the Church. Worship at St. Andre Bessette Parish strives to be life-giving and life-affirming.

- Our parish priests deliver homilies that are faithful to the tradition of Scripture and relevant to our lives today. They bring the ideals of the Gospel down to every day terms, leaving parishioners with something to take home and think about.
- Our Liturgical Musicians strive to provide music that enhances the liturgy and corresponds with the overarching Gospel themes.
- We have developed an adult parish choir and a contemporary choir. In the future we hope to form a choir for young adults as well as a choir for children.
- Lectors, Servers, and Extraordinary Ministers of Communion are trained to carry out their functions with the decorum proper to their role in the liturgy.
- The assembly, too, participates well in the responses and the singing (as long as it is a hymn with which they are familiar).

In addition to the Sacramental activities within the parish, our parish also provides Sacramental coverage for Wilkes-Barre General Hospital. Our parish priests are on call 24/7 five days a week, with coverage provided by local clergy on Mondays and Wednesdays. Our parish also has an active hospital ministry. Every Sunday five or six Extraordinary Ministers of Communion service the General Hospital, and others conduct Eucharistic Services at Timber Ridge and John Heinz facilities. In addition, our parish priests provide Mass at both Timber Ridge and North Penn Manor once a month.

The parish also provides a variety of devotional experiences

- Weekly Eucharistic Adoration on Mondays
- Prayer of the Rosary before Mass on weekdays and Sundays
- St. Joseph Novena in March
- Divine Mercy Novena and Feast in Eastertime
- Novena to the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

Sacramental Preparation takes place within the confines of our parish catechetical program and there is no procedure within the parish for preparing couples for marriage, training families for baptism, or celebrating the sacraments of initiation with adults.

## Where we hope to go

**Goal: Enhance our experience of Sunday Worship through greater participation of the community**

- Objective 1: Continue to provide Liturgical Catechesis through the celebration of good liturgy, relevant homilies and appropriate bulletin articles.
- Objective 2: Provide spiritual renewal and educational opportunities for ministers at every level of the parish (both "active ministers" and members of the "assembly").
- Objective 3: To initiate the ministries of Cantor and Hospitality by Advent 2013.
- Objective 4: To form a children's choir and young adult choir by September 2013.
- Objective 5: To recruit and train additional Liturgical ministers by Advent 2013.
- Objective 6: To work with the Director of Religious Education and form an RCIA team by September 2013.



## Parish Life Ministry

Community life is our great strength for the future. *"God has willed to make people holy and save them, not as individuals without any bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness."* (Constitution of the Church, Chapter 2, Paragraph 9)

For the believer, faith is not a private affair acted upon in isolation; it is a call to holiness with a community of people; it means living out a faith commitment with a community of people. The ultimate expression of this community is in its gathering for word, worship and service.

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## Where we have been

The idea of parish life ministry is relatively new to the parishioners of St. Andre Bessette Parish. While it has been implicit in many of the activities of our parishes, it was never as blatantly stated as it is in this context. To form a whole ministry around the day-to-day activities of a parish seems to be an absurdity. Yet, "by joining together in word and worship, evangelization efforts, service to others, stewardship of God's gifts, and shared leadership, members of the parish form a community where life is shared and nurtured. This development is an ongoing process, ever evolving, changing, and responding in new ways to the promptings of the Spirit." (Mary Ann Gubish and Susan Jenny "Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council, p. 76)

Our parish life ministry has provided these initiatives to draw parishioners together:

- Social following the celebration of our Parish Feast Day on January 6th
- "Boo Bash" for children of our parish (Halloween celebration)
- Valentine's Dance, a Harvest Dance and a Big Band Dance
- The "Young at Heart" Club for seniors
- Christmas gathering following celebration of Lessons and Carols for the Christmas Season
- Annual Christian Seder dinner on Palm Sunday

## Where we hope to go

**Goal:** To strengthen the bonds between parishioners and form a single parish from what had been three.

- Objective 1 To plan four social activities this year that will bring parishioners together. (One per season.)
- Objective 2 To continue to invite parishioners into various roles of service
- Objective 3 To form a bereavement ministry to comfort the sorrowing by assisting them through all phases of the funeral process.
- Objective 4 To coordinate with the Director of Religious Education in expanding the men's group and forming a women's group.

## Ministry of Social Justice

As God's people, we participate in the social mission of the Church primarily in the marketplace. It is within the context of everyday life in the home and workplace that men and women of faith live out their call to ministry and work for a just society. We are all challenged to envision a world described in the Sermon on the Mount presented in Matthew's Gospel. This mission is called forth, enlivened, and focused primarily in the parish.

Parish social ministry responds to human needs, whatever and wherever they may be, whether with parishioners or other members of the community, whether the need be hunger, housing, illness, loneliness, employment, fair wages, physical disabilities or ecological sustainability. Parish social ministry must respond to the issues of respect for human life at every stage of existence. We must encourage broad group action on behalf of those who hunger for righteousness and peace. However it is done, parish social ministry needs to be organized and deliberate. It must be communal, planned and directed by a group, and not a simple individual response.

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## Where we have been

The parish of St. Andre Bessette has a long tradition of social concern, rising out of the three parishes that were consolidated to form St. Andre Bessette. Parishioners are very generous in their outpouring of concern to those in need, whether in times of local disaster (the floods of 2011, 2012), or the ongoing needs of the hungry and poor (through association with St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen in Wilkes-Barre). Whenever and wherever there is a need, the people of St. Andre Bessette Parish are only too happy to oblige.

The Social Justice Committee has been involved in the following initiatives:

- An Annual "Giving Tree" during the Advent Season to address the needs of homebound parishioners and those without means.
- Participation in Catholic Social Services Toy Drive and Winter Hat and Mitten Drive
- Monthly Collections of food to assist the St. Vincent de Paul Kitchen in Wilkes-Barre
- Annual "Bereavement Mass" in November to remember those who have died in the past year
- Provides shuttle transportation through LCTA for homebound and elderly to attend Mass each week
- Collected clothing to assist flood victims
- Donated funds to feed flood victims at Corpus Christi Parish in W. Pittston
- Gave financial support to parishioners affected by flooding
- Distributes food vouchers to needy at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter
- Participated in Baby Bottle Project for the Pro-Life Resource Center
- Distributes flowers and gifts to homebound at Christmas and Easter
- Provides baskets of "blessed foods" to homebound parishioners at Easter
- Provides gifts for Bennett Home Boys on their birthdays, at Christmas and Easter
- Participates in Diocesan Regional Social Concerns committee
- Assists Catholic Social Services as needed.
- Coordinates visits of homebound and hospitalized
- Coordinates distribution of Sunday Eucharist to Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, as well as John Heinz Center and Timber Ridge Care Facilities
- Organized sale of carnations on Mother's Day to assist Pro-Life
- Organized Mass and social to honor High School Graduates
- Donates to St. Vincent de Paul Kitchen annually

## Where we hope to go

Goal	To expand the horizons of the Social Justice Committee to embrace broader issues
Objective 1	To continue to coordinate activities with Catholic Social Services and regional social justice committees
Objective 2	To provide continued education on social justice issues beyond the bounds of the parish (Faithful citizenship, Pro-life issues, etc.) through discussions at monthly meetings and bulletin articles
Objective 3	To invite at least one guest speaker this year to address one of the broader issues with the committee and/or parish.

## Ministry of Stewardship

Nothing supports the ... mission of the Church more than a true spirit of stewardship. The U. S. Bishops in their 1992 Pastoral Letter, **Stewardship: a Disciple's Response**, presented an eloquent definition of Christian stewardship. They describe it as "one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord." This vision was and continues to be at the heart of all our reorganizational efforts. It is the very reason why Called to Holiness and Mission leads us now to exciting new beginnings. Together we can dream for the vibrant parish that is prayerful, welcoming, and Eucharist-centered with a common vision.

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### Where we have been

Despite the complexities of the foundation of St. Andre Bessette Parish, there has developed a spirit of camaraderie and a desire for unity among the parishioners who faithfully worship in the parish. All seek the good of the parish and are beginning to work together to achieve that desired end. In his pastoral letter, Bishop Bambera, in quoting from the 1992 Bishops' Pastoral reminds us that a parish must "receive God's gifts gratefully, cherish and tend them in a responsible and accountable manner, share them in justice and love with others, and return them with increase to the Lord." In all aspects of parish life, we try to inculcate these virtues, recognizing that all is gift from God to be used for the building up of His Kingdom in our midst. To this end, the Pastoral leadership of St. Andre Bessette Parish

- formed a parish pastoral council and parish finance council to assist the pastor in administration of the parish.
- Publishes in the weekly bulletin both the income and the expenses of the parish
- encourages parishioners to practice "sacrificial giving" through an honest assessment of the gifts God has given them
- actively engages parishioners to share their gifts and talents in a variety of ministries and initiatives within the parish and beyond
- formed a parish building and grounds committee to assist in ongoing upkeep and maintenance of parish properties
- formed a cemetery committee to assist in the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of the parish cemeteries
- coordinated four major fund raisers in the past year

In terms of finances, our weekly collections are consistent and parishioners are generous when it comes to special needs. We are able to keep our parish financially solvent and are working to keep all bills current as well as pay off the inherited debt.

One of the great issues that faces our parish is the number of buildings we have inherited in the consolidation. This is coupled with the ongoing appeals of the Sacred Heart Foundation to reopen the buildings of the former Sacred Heart Parish. Both the parish council and finance council have decided that no decisions can be made until this particular issue is finally and completely resolved. We look to the Diocese for the final word in this regard.

At the moment, our parish is of a size that needs Holy Saviour as an additional worship site both for Sunday worship as well as the greater feasts (Christmas and Easter). In addition, Monsignor Curran Hall at Holy Saviour serves as the site for our Catechetical Sessions as well as a venue for our fund raising activities. The hall is handicapped accessible via a street level entrance on Hillard St. The rectory at Holy Saviour is the residence for our parish clergy. The school building at Holy Saviour is currently dormant and used for parish storage.

The church building at St. Stanislaus, while more modern, is not large enough to hold the congregation if Holy Saviour were unavailable. This would necessitate a multiplication of Masses, which, in turn, would also impact the other churches in the area who share parking space with St. Stanislaus. Fr. Zolcinski hall, which was the former church building and is considerably older than St. Stan's current church, is adequate for smaller gatherings and has the better kitchen. The back end of the hall, however, is separating from the main body due to the subsidence of the ground around it. It is also inaccessible for handicapped who would have to park on N. Main St. and travel down the long driveway to get to the hall. The Rectory at St. Stanislaus serves as the Parish Offices. It is the hub of parish life and the locus for parish committee meetings.

Parking at both St. Stanislaus and Holy Saviour is at a premium. The parking problem is compounded at St. Stanislaus by restricted parking for the Hospital, shared parking with neighboring churches, and the traffic pattern on North Main St., which often makes crossing the street hazardous. While parking on the streets surrounding the Holy Saviour is possible, this further narrows already narrow thoroughfares.

We maintain the former Sacred Heart Convent as a residence for the Sisters of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. This convent is the only convent of the Sisters of Sts Cyril and Methodius in the Diocese of Scranton, the diocese in which the congregation was first founded. Two of the sisters work in the parish-Sister Carol Therese as the Parish Coordinator for Outreach, and Sr. Tina as a volunteer. Sr. Tina works full-time as an LPN at Mercy Center in Dallas. Sr. Kate Morris works as a guidance counselor at Holy Redeemer High School. Sr. Mary Beth Makuch works in the Diocesan Office of Parish Life as an advocate for the mentally and physically handicapped and also serves as the Diocesan Delegate for Consecrated Life. The sisters also serve in various liturgical capacities within the parish, as Extraordinary ministers of Communion, lectors, and instructors in our parish Religious Education Program. Those sisters whose primary ministry is not in the parish support the parish through a monthly rent which is provided by the Congregation. We consider it an asset to have the Sisters of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in our parish and would like to continue to support them in their ministries for as long as we are able.

The parish maintains three cemeteries, the old Sacred Heart Cemetery in Plains, the new Sacred Heart Cemetery in Dallas, and St. Stanislaus Cemetery in Plains. The cemetery funds are separate from the general parish funds and are used solely for the upkeep and maintenance of the parish cemeteries.

### **Where we hope to go**

There are several major issues which are impeding forward movement and decision making in regards to the buildings of the parish.

- The ongoing appeals to Rome from the Sacred Heart Foundation which limit our ability to make decisions concerning the Sacred Heart structures. Any movement to even discuss possibilities for the buildings is met with threats of lawsuits from members of the foundation.
- The president of our parish pastoral council has asked the diocese to clarify the indemnification of parish pastoral council members and finance council members in the case of a lawsuit. No answer has been given from the diocese in this regard. Members of these vital committees are reluctant to make any decision that would incur a personal suit against them.
- There is an ongoing perception that the facilities at St. Stanislaus are inadequate for a parish that is striving to grow and expand. The facilities at Holy Saviour appear to be more appropriate for this endeavor, yet the church and the school building are in need of much work to address the issues afflicting them (leaking roof, deteriorating plaster, deteriorating stucco, etc.). If we were to maintain St. Stanislaus as the primary worship site for the parish, we would need to construct a larger hall/parish office space and also provide a residence for parish clergy. We would also have to expand the possibilities for parking at St. Stanislaus (this is also true for Holy Saviour). While they have been aware of these issues, the parish pastoral council and finance council have not felt free to fully assess them in the short time the parish has been in existence. Before decisions of such magnitude can be proposed, let alone made, more information is needed. This information is being compiled by the appropriate parish committees.
- And again, the question goes back to the Sacred Heart properties. It would be necessary to liquidate these properties (including the stained glass windows, pipe organ, altar pieces, pews, etc.) to raise capital necessary to pay off inherited parish debts and make the necessary repairs to currently used structures. No such decision, however, can be made by the pastor, parish council or finance council until a definitive word is received from the diocese and the threat of lawsuit from the Sacred Heart Foundation is removed.

Overall, these questions continue to go in a cycle until a final decision is reached about the Sacred Heart Complex. Until that time, our parish leadership feels unable to adequately address or answer questions concerning the future of the buildings of St. Andre Bessette Parish. We await the permission of the Bishop on the future of the Sacred Heart complex before we can proceed further in these matters.

Of the items that we can address:

**GOAL: To establish practices of faithful stewardship in the parish and among parishioners**

- Objective 1: To encourage members of the finance council to speak publicly about the financial needs of the parish at least once this year.
- Objective 2: To establish, by summer 2013, a committee to manage and oversee marketing and advertising for the parish
- Objective 3: Within the next 3 years, to hire a parish business manager to oversee the daily workings of the parish
- Objective 4: To continue to survey parish census lists for capable individuals to fill vacancies in parish administrative committees and to invite such individuals to areas of service
- Objective 5: To conduct an increased offertory campaign beginning in the fall of 2013 which addresses the ongoing daily needs of the parish operating budget
- Objective 6: To continue to pay off the inherited debt through deliberate monthly payments and to strive to curb current debt through timely payment of all financial obligations.

## Conclusion

So often in parish life it seems that so much time and energy is expended on the negatives — on dealing with one crisis after another or trying to soothe over bruised egos — that a vision of the larger picture is often obliterated from view. The exercise of forming a parish pastoral plan takes attention away from the mundane and focuses it on a grander scheme for the future of the parish. It is only by assessing where we have been that we can make movements into the future. This exercise allows us to open our eyes to the movement of God's hand in our lives, molding and shaping us for ministry and service. The vision God has for us is a grand vision of a parish alive in the Spirit, proclaiming Christ through living deeds of love. To accomplish this goal is to grow in holiness before God and others. We have taken the first feeble steps toward realizing that vision.

This pastoral plan is the work of many interested individuals who come from all walks of life. It is a summary of our journey of faith as we look to the past and move forward into the future. We move with the conviction that God journeys with us, leading us through fire and cloud into a world that is yet to unfold. We are encouraged by so many who walk with us on our way, who support us or guide us—a veritable “cloud of witnesses on every side”— encouraging us to grasp the prize that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Vital to this call for renewal is our appreciation for strategic pastoral planning. We must adopt an effective pastoral planning process that puts evangelization squarely at its heart as the essential mission of the Church. The pastoral plan for each parish...needs to be a prayerful and participative process by which members acknowledge their purpose, their goals and their priorities, then devise accountable ways to ensure the realization of their pastoral plan... The plan must encompass all the important facets of Church life: word, worship, community and service.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera  
“Wounded and Loved,  
Regathering the Scattered:  
A Pastoral Vision  
for the Diocese of Scranton”, 2011  
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## REITERATION OF PARISH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2013-2014

### Parish Leadership

**Goal:** To support current ministries and encourage further development of new initiatives to continually reinvigorate the parish.

- Objective 1: To provide opportunities for ongoing education in servant leadership for all members of our Leadership and parish committees through Diocesan and extra diocesan avenues.
- Objective 2: To continue to survey parish membership for the charism of leadership among parishioners
- Objective 3: To develop a program to replace current leaders as terms conclude
- Objective 4: To seek personnel to fill the voids that exist within our parish ministries schematic

### Ministry of the Word

**Goal:** To strengthen the work of the Evangelization Subcommittee so that it has a broader impact on the parish community.

- Objective 1: Hire a full-time Director of Religious Education by July 2013 who can work at all levels of parish life
- Objective 2: Provide opportunities for education in evangelization for members of the subcommittee as well as the broader parish through workshops, speakers, and bulletin articles
- Objective 3: Network with neighboring parishes to establish a ministry for youth and provide catechesis for Sacramental preparation (Reconciliation, Communion, Confirmation, Marriage Prep, etc.)
- Objective 4: Reinvigorate the men's group and establish the women's group as viable means of reflection and study on the Sunday Scriptures
- Objective 5: Form an RCIA Team and begin the RCIA Program within the parish as a way to catechize those who already are members, evangelize those who are not members, and welcome new members into the Body of Christ

### Ministry of Worship

**Goal:** Enhance our experience of Sunday Worship through greater participation of the community

- Objective 1: Continue to provide Liturgical Catechesis through the celebration of good liturgy, relevant homilies and appropriate bulletin articles.
- Objective 2: Provide spiritual renewal and educational opportunities for ministers at every level of the parish (both "active ministers" and members of the "assembly").
- Objective 3: To initiate the ministries of Cantor and Hospitality by Advent 2013.
- Objective 4: To form a children's choir and young adult choir by September 2013.
- Objective 5: To recruit and train additional Liturgical ministers by Advent 2013.
- Objective 6: To work with the Director of Religious Education and form a RCIA team by September 2013.

### Parish Life Ministry

**Goal:** To strengthen the bonds between parishioners and form a single parish from what had been three.

- Objective 1: To plan four social activities this year that will bring parishioners together. (One per season.)
- Objective 2: To continue to invite parishioners into various roles of service
- Objective 3: To form a bereavement ministry to comfort the sorrowing by assisting them through all phases of the funeral process.
- Objective 4: To coordinate with the Director of Religious Education in expanding the men's group and forming a women's group.

### Social Justice Ministry

**Goal:** To expand the horizons of the Social Justice Committee to embrace broader issues

- Objective 1: To continue to coordinate activities with Catholic Social Services and regional social justice committees
- Objective 2: To provide continued education on social justice issues beyond the bounds of the parish (Faithful citizenship, Pro-life issues, etc.) through discussions at monthly meetings and bulletin articles
- Objective 3: To invite at least one guest speaker this year to address one of the broader issues with the committee and/or parish.

### Ministry of Stewardship

**GOAL:** To establish practices of faithful stewardship in the parish and among parishioners

- Objective 1: To encourage members of the finance council to speak publicly about the financial needs of the parish at least once this year.
- Objective 2: To establish, by summer 2013, a committee to manage and oversee marketing and advertising for the parish
- Objective 3: Within the next 3 years, to hire a parish business manager to oversee the daily workings of the parish
- Objective 4: To continue to survey parish census lists for capable individuals to fill vacancies in parish administrative committees and to invite such individuals to areas of service
- Objective 5: To conduct an increased offertory campaign beginning in the fall of 2013 which addresses the ongoing daily needs of the parish operating budget
- Objective 6: To continue to pay off the inherited debt through deliberate monthly payments and to strive to curb current debt through timely payment of all financial obligations.

**SIGNATORY PAGE**

**We, the undersigned, have participated in the preparation and presentation of this Parish Pastoral Plan.**

**We endorse it as our vision for the parish of St. Andre Bessette for the coming year beginning in July of 2013.**

**We will do all in our power to achieve the goals and objectives herein outlined.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rev. Kenneth M. Seegar, Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rev. Michael Kloton, Parochial Vicar

**Parish Pastoral Council Members**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Christian Krupsha, Council President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandy Snyder, Council Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sr. Catherine Morris, SSCM, representative of the sisters

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Dunsmuir Jr.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Fiske

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Hilenski

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Morpeth

\_\_\_\_\_  
John Morris III

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joanne Rushton

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph Stone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marylin Tosh

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dolores Yesuvida

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adam Zawatsky

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patricia Zurewich

**Parish Finance Council Members**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Anita Santini, Parish Financial Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sr. Mary Beth Makuch, SSCM, local treasurer of SSCM

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph Boris

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Kane

\_\_\_\_\_  
Andrew Katsock

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Rakshys

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Ann Shades

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas Zurla

**Parish Administrative Staff Members**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Fiske, Parish Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Anita Santini, Parish Financial Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Anna Hudock, Social Justice Coordinator

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Tina Evans, Parish Life Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sr. Carol Therese SSCM, Coordinator of Parish Outreach

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Ann Shades, Coordinator of Parish Religious Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Hinkle, Coordinator of Maintenance

