

# SAINT JUDE CHURCH

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Dear Parishioners of Saint Jude,

As Summer comes to an end, we as a parish open the new Pastoral Year 2017-2018. I am very excited about new spiritual offerings we have in works for the parish these coming months. You will hear about them in the church these coming weeks. However, the purpose of this letter is to present you with the update about our parish.

## *The Chapel.*

During this past Lent, the daily Mass goers asked me to move the daily Mass to the main church because the attendance was too large for the chapel. Some were uncomfortable due to the closeness to each other, especially during flu season; others wanted to be in the space with the Blessed Sacrament. By popular demand, when the Lent and Easter seasons ended, we continued to celebrate the daily Masses in the church, and I have to say that the number of participants of the daily Mass has increased. Thank you, Parishioners – it was a great idea! The chapel itself serves on the weekend as an overflow or a “quiet” room for the families with little children. Unfortunately, the altar and the covers would get stains and tears over the weekend from the crowds in the chapel. Therefore, to preserve the altar and the covers they are currently stored away. We will use them during the Holy Week, Corpus Christi and other occasions. Other than the altar, the chapel space is exactly the same. Hence, it can be reassembled very quickly, if needed.

## *The School, now Parish Center.*

Saying “good-bye” to our Saint Jude School was not easy and we all still feel sadness because of that. My consolation is the fact that the new academy is off to a good start under the leadership of Laura Varrone, the new principal, and our own parishioner. *Congratulations to Laura!* The school building has reverted now completely to parish use, but at a price. While the Diocese used our building for the school, they paid most of the bills for the usage, including a \$24k bill/year for insurance, but also utilities, maintenance services, etc., amounting to over \$100 thousand a year. Now, these bills are handled by the parish. One option would be to close the building and let it go into disrepair. However, it would not solve the issue of some 700 religious education students who need space for their classes Monday thru Thursday. Hence, we need the building and the option of closing the school building is not a vital one. Therefore, since we need to use the school, we decided to move our offices there as well. Here are some reasons why this seems to be the best option in the current situation: 1. We still need to pay for up keeping of the school building. 2. We can shut down HVAC and keep it to minimum in the rectory office area, thus preserving the space should we need it in the future, but saving some money as well. 3. Having parish offices close to the property entry, close to the major parking lot, and on the ground level seems to be

a welcome solution for many senior parishioners. 4. Bringing all of our parish and religious education offices together allows us for better fiscal and logistical management.

Moving offices is always a challenge, but I would like to thank Donna Bria and the Parish Staff, as well as some volunteers, for doing a great job! Most of the offices are relocated and almost completely functional. We have also carved out some meeting spaces on the main floor for parish activities and hopefully some rental opportunities. The school gym and the kitchen have been cleaned and are ready to welcome parish-wide events like Sunday Hospitality, Bingo, VBS, fairs and rental events. The parish religious gift shop will be moving soon from the social hall to the main floor of the school building where it will be available to parishioners during regular office hours and limited hours on the weekends.

#### *Religious Education.*

I am very grateful to Deacon John Tuccio, DRE, and the Lynch Family for their tremendous help during the transition period. As of this month, all religious education offices and classrooms are located on the second floor of the school building. It was already communicated to the parents of our children, but is imperative for all of us to remember, that the drop off and pick-up for all religious education students is the *second floor* of the building. Parents of the smaller children are requested to bring their children directly to the appropriate classrooms. On the other hand, those who are not participating in religious education programs (children and adults) *are not allowed* on the second floor of the building during the program hours. Observing these simple rules will help us to facilitate a safe environment for the students.

#### *Rental Opportunities.*

Supplementing our parish income with some rental opportunities is a good thing. Therefore, I would like to announce that beginning this month spaces like meeting rooms of the Parish Center (school building), the gym with the kitchen, and the social hall are available for rent. Though we have had already some interest, I wish to extend this offer first to our parishioners, especially, if you have some church event and wish to have a reception or a meeting afterwards. Certain rules and restrictions apply. If you are interested, please contact Donna Bria, the Parish Business Manager at 203-261-6404 or [donna.bria@stjuderc.com](mailto:donna.bria@stjuderc.com).

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for your kindness and support shown to all of us in the offices during these transitional weeks. Since it is our own people who work hard on these moves and changes, and we limit outside services to bare minimum, the transition might not be as fast as we all would like to have, but it is more economical. I am very grateful for your understanding. And if you have a couple of hours that you would like to volunteer in our parish, please call Donna. Your help is always most welcome. Thank you again and God bless you!



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Pastor