

Senior Warden State of the Parish Address

By Dr. Diane Jacobs

Good morning. We are winding down the liturgical year. Soon Dr. John McCurdy will begin our Stewardship drive, and shortly after its end we will be approaching the Advent season. The Vestry thinks it is a good time to give a State of the Parish Address.

We have many blessings and positive things happening at St. Luke's.

- We are a spiritually healthy parish who pray and sing well together. We have an active prayer chain to ask for God's continued help with all the challenges we face as well as thanking him for all the successes we have had.
- There are several new folks celebrating the Sunday worship service as part of the St. Luke's family.
- The church school has had a good beginning. There are new students, and at least one young person will be preparing to be confirmed in the spring. We anticipate that the youth will continue to serve as acolytes about once a month.
- We presented a lovely outreach opportunity for the wider community during Heritage Festival when we had a historical tour of the church and a quilt show.
- Today we have the Parish Fall Picnic, and there are many other exciting events being planned by the Parish Life committee.
- We have started a music series that was initiated by an outstanding organ concert. Look for other upcoming musical events.
- The average donation from the parishioners has increased over the last three years.

We do have one serious challenge.

- We have been running a deficit budget for quite some time now. The result has been that we have been depleting our operating bank account. There is enough money in the account to make it through the end of this year, but not enough to make it to March of next year. The Vestry has been carefully, prayerfully, and conscientiously working on ideas to overcome this challenge.
- We decided to finish paying our diocesan apportionment for 2017, but to send half the diocesan apportionment in 2018. The statement indicating this would be so has been sent along with a letter indicating our hope that it will only be for next year.
- We have been discussing how to increase the number of parishioners, and welcome any ideas you may have.
- We have voted to not take money from the parish's endowment fund to cover operating expenses the last quarter of this year. We will revisit the question in January when we have expensive heating bills.

- We have had a reduction in the number of pledges over the past three years. There were 55 pledge cards three years ago, 44 the next year, and 35 this year. We ask that you listen carefully to the message Dr. John McCurdy, and other parishioners, will present. We all need to ask ourselves why St. Luke's is here in Ypsilanti, and what we think its core mission should be. If we do that, we will hopefully understand how best to support it. I invite you to consider filling out a pledge card as part of that process.
- Our Junior Warden, Patrick Echlin, has been working with Rev. JoAnn to investigate renting several offices in the 1950's building. The realized income from such a venture could be about \$14 K per year. The tenants would be non-profit groups. One promising tenant has said that full accessibility was a condition of their lease. This requirement can be met with a lift (rather than the more expensive ramp). The lift would be where the chair lift is currently and can accommodate a wheelchair. You should see Patrick for more details. We have \$32K in donations and grants earmarked for the lift; we don't know the actual costs yet, but anticipate they will be in the neighborhood of \$50 - \$60K. It is important that you talk to Rev. JoAnn, Patrick, and/or the other members of Vestry to give us your input as we make decisions about whether renting the 1950's building is a good plan and one that fits the mission of St. Luke's.

So, we are facing some tough financial challenges. St. Luke's has been in this position before and we have successfully met the challenges by working together. Please think about this issue, pray, and most importantly of all, share your input with the members of Vestry. God bless.