



ST JOHN PAUL THE GREAT

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

TORRINGTON, CONNECTICUT



2021 Parish Life Report



Parish Life Report

from your Pastor



Father Emmanuel



Thank you from VBS students



First Communion students, staff and volunteers

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Though we would be justified to speak to the hardships the global pandemic and its aftermath have wreaked upon our Church and Parish, I would be remiss not to see the blessings we've inherited too. Through our hardship, we came to understand how connected we are to the rest of the world; we learned not how we differ from one another, but how similar we are to one another; and we learned how unshakable is our faith. In these things I see God's perpetual blessings.

Many of you have suffered great losses over these past two years, on all fronts. Yet, through your steadfast generosity that carried us through the most challenging of times, we're still standing. Today we are emerging together, bound in and with and through the unstoppable, unbreakable love of God.

This Parish Life Report is a testament to our community, our parish families, and the grace of

God. Thank you, Church, for saying "Yes" to God and allowing Him, through you, to make the difference in our Parish when we needed it most.

Social Justice & Community Outreach

Drive-through food drives were held every month, collecting approximately 425 bags of food and monetary donations for distribution to FISH, Friendly Hands and The Gathering Place.

In May, a drive-through diaper drive was held, collecting diapers, baby wipes and baby food to benefit Two Hearts Pregnancy Center.

Kevin's Place suspended food service in St. Peter Hall due to COVID-19 restrictions, but instead brought meals and food to FISH and Friendly Hands throughout the year. Kevin's Place also gave out 60 "blessings bags" to individuals for Christmas, to The Gathering Place and to the overflow shelter. These bags also included shawls from our Prayer Shawl Ministry.

Our parish hosted two Red Cross community blood drives at St. Peter Hall.

The Holy Rosary Society collected an abundance of hats, gloves, mittens, scarves and socks at their drive-through collection in December for distribution to local agencies.

Homebound & Bereavement

Visits and calls were provided regularly over the course of the year to 22 homebound. Sympathy cards and correspondence and were sent to all homebound, and bereavement support was given to the families of deceased parishioners.

A combined 128 funerals/graveside services and funeral home services were held.

Sacraments

46 baptisms
41 first holy Communion candidates
34 confirmation students
8 marriages/convalidations



New lockers at the Academy



May Crowning



Monthly food drive



Holy Name Society livestream meeting on Facebook



Welcome reception

St. John Paul the Great Academy

During 2021, the Academy worked to keep students and teachers safe and healthy while continuing in-person instruction by adhering to pandemic protocols from the Archdiocese and local health officials. Staff and students accepted the challenges of living and working through a global pandemic. Students learned and grew academically, and also with integrity and honesty. Support of the School Board and Academy Parent Association who gave generously of their time and expertise was essential. We also welcomed several new faculty members.

Some Academy highlights:

COVID-19 precautions included using tables with clear dividers and new chairs to replace the lower grade desks.

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair visited the Academy in May.

80 new lockers for our students were installed.

First Alumni of the Month, Monsignor Robert F. Tucker, was honored in May. Bishop Peter A. Rosazza, D.D. was honored as Alumni of the Month in June.

The 2nd Annual FORE the Children Golf Tournament at The Torrington Country Club for the benefit of the Academy was finally held in October after several weather-related postponements.

The second annual "Christmas is A-Glow," drive-through light display, hosted by Action Wildlife in Goshen for the benefit of the Academy, was very successful.

Religious Education

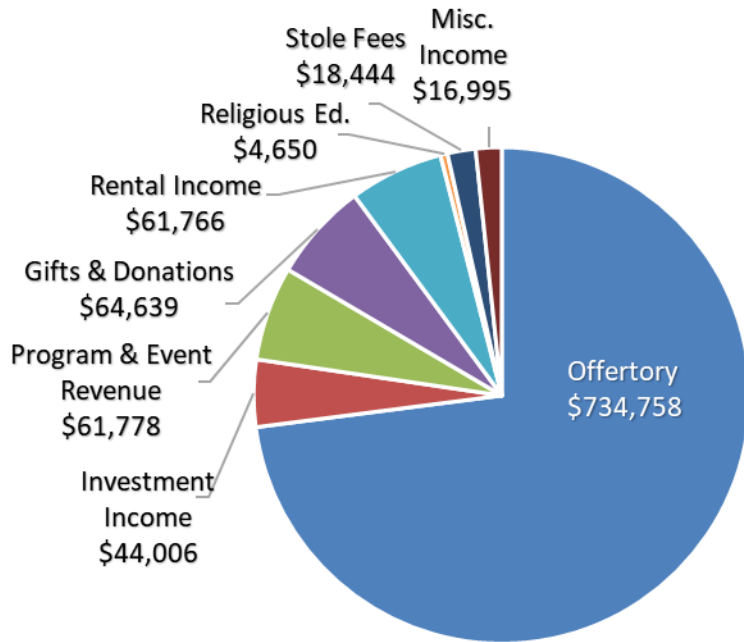
During 2021, many classes and activities were held via ZOOM due to ongoing pandemic restrictions. Religious Education Director Jen Owens created a monthly newsletter to provide parents with supplemental information and

educational resources for use at home in addition to the weekly classes, to encourage and support parents' mission of handing down the faith to their children. Students were invited to learn about healthy and respectful social relationships through the Child Lures Prevention and Teen Lures Prevention programs offered by the archdiocese.

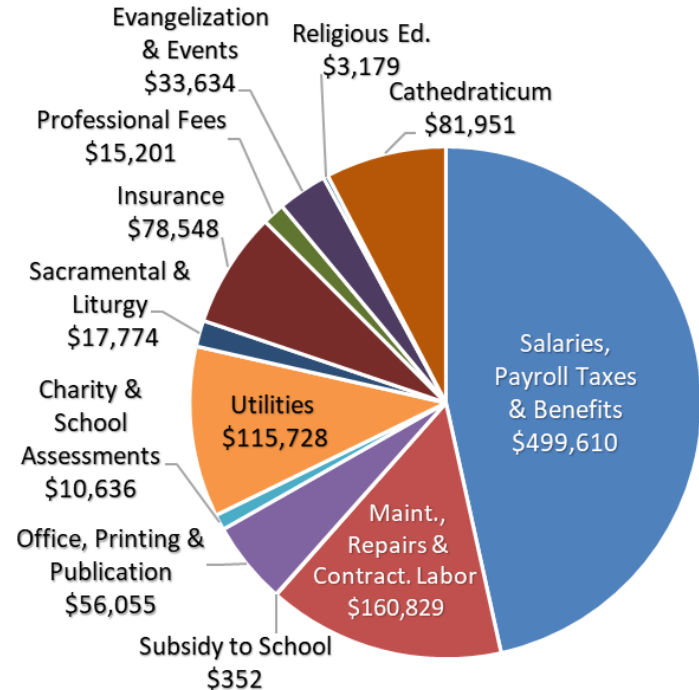
Students learned about community and social justice by participating monthly in various parish ministry collections, donating over 3,000 items for our local charities, food banks and family centers. Children participated in the monthly Family Mass as lectors, gift bearers and ushers. The annual Vacation Bible School saw 35 of our young parishioners participate in August. Youngsters and teens took part in the annual tradition of Lighting up Main Street and Living Nativity in front of St. Francis Church, dressing as Mary, Joseph, Gabriel and shepherds and singing along to Christmas carols in five different languages: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Indonesian and Bamba.

2021 Financial Report

Total Income \$1,007,036



Total Expenses \$1,073,497





RCIA Rite of Sending



Mass in the Neighborhood



Abp. Blair visits the Academy



State of the Parish Town Hall Meeting

Other Activities Snapshot

“**State of the Parish Town Hall Meeting**,” held in July, was well attended.

Forward with Faith kicked off in our parish. The archdiocesan campaign strives to build the strong financial foundation necessary to address our future needs.

A new initiative – outdoor evening gatherings called “**Mass in the Neighborhood**” – were well received. Mass was celebrated in September at three locations: Cole Park, Inn at Mt. Pleasant and Elks Pond. Coffee, refreshments and fellowship followed each Mass. More evenings are in the plans for the future.

Mary Ann Seiser, volunteer director of Pastoral Ministry, was the 2021 Archdiocesan St. Joseph **Medal of Appreciation** recipient from St. John Paul the Great Parish.

Action Wildlife Foundation in Goshen was the setting for a community celebration in May of Father Emmanuel’s **15th Anniversary** of Priestly Ordination.

Welcome receptions for new parishioners were held at the rectory. It was a wonderful way for one-on-one conversations with Father Emmanuel and Father Carlos.

In October, parishioners were invited to bring their pets for a traditional **blessing of the animals** for the Feast of St. Francis.

Upgrades to St. Peter Hall kitchen were completed in October and included new cabinets, plumbing upgrades, a custom-made stainless-steel countertop, and heating element for the food warmer.

Thankfully, pandemic restrictions were gradually lifted throughout the year, enabling most ministries to slowly return to regular activities.

It is only through the sharing of your resources, your time, talent and treasure, and your loyalty to the teachings of Christ that we are able to fulfill our mission. Without you and your support, these accomplishments would not be possible. I am grateful for all that you do as members of Saint John Paul the Great Parish family.

On behalf of our entire staff and parish family, I thank you for your kind, unselfish support.

Your Servant in Christ,

Rev. Emmanuel Ihemedu, PHD, NCC, LPCA
Pastor



Holy Name Society donation



Groundskeeping



Msgr. Tucker gala



Vacation Bible School



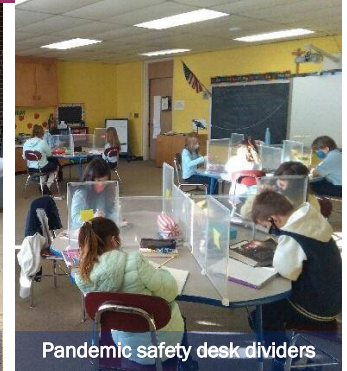
Academy students with Father Emmanuel



St. Peter Hall kitchen upgrades



Academy campus spring cleaning



Pandemic safety desk dividers

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