

2022 Parish Life Report



ST JOHN PAUL THE GREAT
ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH
TORRINGTON, CONNECTICUT

Message From Your Pastor

Dear brothers and sisters,

I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the past year and express my gratitude to all of you for your continued support and dedication to our parish family.

Despite our parish's many challenges last year, we overcame them all with faith and perseverance. We maintained a sense of togetherness and continued our mission of spreading God's love and compassion to those in need.

One of last year's highlights was our outreach programs' success. Nearly 225 visits and over 400 phone calls were made to the sick and homebound. Also, we provided food, support, and assistance to those struggling within our congregation and the broader community through both Kevin's Place and the Social Justice Ministry (see the breakdown of our outreach below). Through food drives, financial assistance and emotional support, we were able to make a positive impact on the lives of many people.

Our church family also grew back to our pre-Covid pandemic size, with many people returning to church and new members joining our church family. It is beautiful to see the love and support that our community offers to those who are seeking a deeper connection with God.

Notable also is enrollment at our academy. In 2018 when I arrived in Torrington as the pastor of St. John Paul the Great Parish, our school had only 81 children. At the time of writing this report, it is heartwarming to report that we have 196 kids at St. John Paul the Great Academy. The academy that was on subsidy and was literally gasping for last breaths has been off

the parish subsidy for the past two years. Now, it has a waiting list for some grades for this school year since many are already full. I am excited about possibilities that lie ahead.

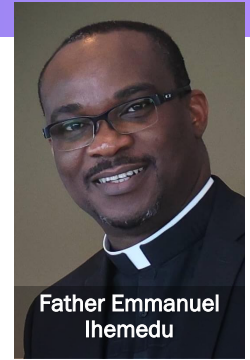
With your continued support of the Parish Annual Collection, Forward with Faith Campaign through the Hartford Bishop Foundation, and dedication, we addressed some pressing capital improvements in our parish, including the steps of St. Peter Church and a new sound system in both churches. And by the grace of God and with your support, we will repave the church parking lots and install air conditioning in the St. Francis Church building this spring of 2023.

Gertrude Stein once said that silent gratitude is of no use to anyone. And I agree. In this period of Lent that our parish is practicing 40 days of gratitude, I would like to end this report by expressing my deepest gratitude to all of you. Your love, support and dedication make our community so special. It gets things done! Even in matters bystanders told us were impossible! It will forever stand tall in my heart. I am truly honored to be your pastor.

May the reward God promised for good deeds and generosity descend upon you and remain with you forever, amen.

Your Servant in Christ,

Rev. Emmanuel Ihemedu, PHD, NCC, LPCA
Pastor



Father Emmanuel
Ihemedu



Mass in the Neighborhood



FORE the Children



St. Peter steps repair



Medal of St. Joseph

OUR PARISH LIFE IN ACTION

Masks and other covid mandates were finally lifted in early winter, allowing our parish ministries to begin to resume former activities with more freedom. Three Sunday Masses and other services continued to be **livestreamed** for most of the year. The parish continues to provide livestream options for our homebound.

Several capital projects, including the repair of St. Peter Church front steps and speaker upgrades for both churches, were made possible in part by the generosity of many parish families to our 2022 Parish Annual Collection, Forward with Faith Campaign, and a heartfelt donation from an anonymous parishioner.

Sacramental statistics for 2022 include baptism - 44, first Holy Communion - 26, confirmation - 20, and marriages - 5. Also through the faith formation program, 14 teens attended the 2022 Steubenville East conference retreat and RCIA welcomed two new candidates into the Faith.

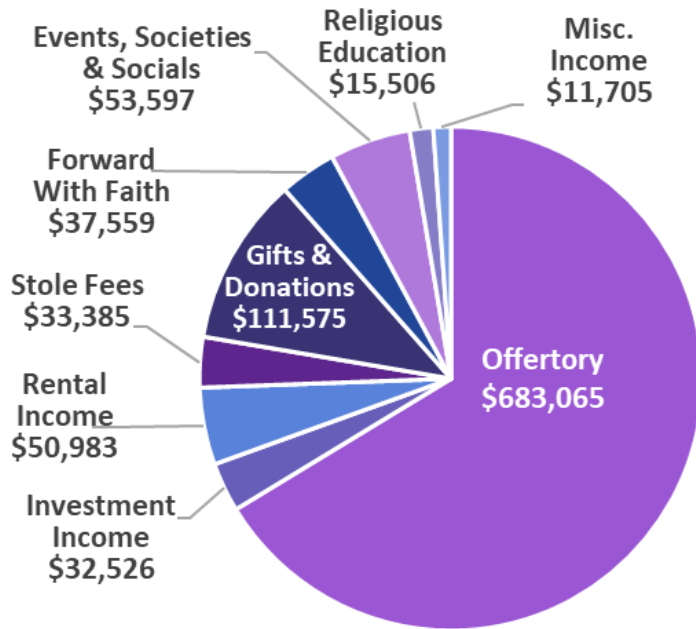
Throughout the year, our **Pastoral Ministry** and the **Legion of Mary** called, visited, distributed holy Communion and prayed with the homebound and those in nursing homes. In 2022, nearly 225 visits and over 400 phone calls were made. There were 114 deaths within our parish requiring funeral Masses or services.

St. John Paul the Great Academy served **135 families** and **196 students in Pre-K through 8th Grade**. The Academy is a dynamic multi-age **STREAM** school rooted in faith, service and academic excellence where Pre-K to Middle School students are challenged and inspired to become critical thinkers, future leaders and global citizens. **The third annual FORE the Children golf tournament** held in August was a great success, raising \$50,000 for the Academy.

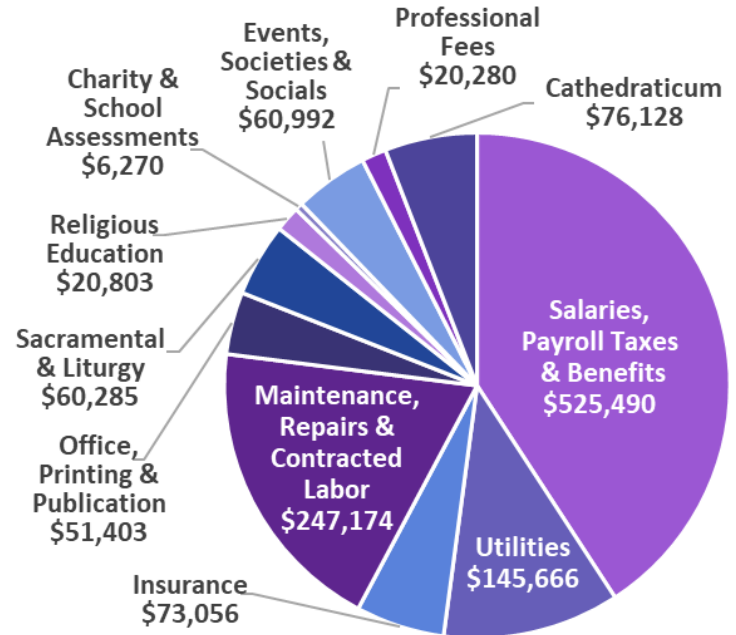
In January, we welcomed our **music director and organist**, Dr. Konstantza Chernov. New missals were ordered, organs were repaired and choir at Masses resumed in early winter 2022. **In March**, Ken Galitello was honored for his many years of volunteer service to our parish by receiving the **Medal of St. Joseph** from Abp. Leonard Blair at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford.

2022 Financial Report

Total Income \$1,029,901



Total Expenses \$1,287,547





Christmas Procession



Msgr. Tucker / Fr. Emmanuel



Good Friday Procession



Vacation Bible Camp



Advent wreath making



Prayer Boards

OUR PARISH LIFE IN ACTION (continued)

The **Social Justice Ministry** made strides to return to pre-pandemic service. Monthly food drives were held every month, collecting and distributing approximately 1,500 lbs. of food to **Stock the Shelves**. Monetary donations and gift cards benefited FISH and Friendly Hands. A drive-thru “**Christmas in July**” **Toy Drive** collected approximately 150 toys for FISH and Friendly Hands. The ministry also collected baby supplies in October for Two Hearts Pregnancy Care Center.

During Lent 2022, we showed and shared our faith at events throughout the weeks. Father Emmanuel invited parishioners to commit to **40 Days of Love** by showing the love of God to others every day by actions and words. “**Life is Messy**” by Matthew Kelly was distributed free to parishioners thanks to an anonymous donor and was the topic of a popular **5-week Lenten book discussion**. World-renowned musician and speaker **Tony Melendez** presented an inspiring evening in April. Stations of the Cross were held every Friday and our parish led a **Good Friday procession** through town.

Kevin’s Place reopened in June 2022 after being shut down during COVID. It served **508 meals** in the hall from June through December 2022. Meals were sent to FISH monthly, and it served **300 bagged lunches** at FISH’S community coat drive in St. Peter Hall in November 2022. A **Christmas Eve** meal was provided to the community as well, and meals were sent to FISH for their Christmas dinner. Our **Knights of Columbus** held **Fried Dough Friday** in April, a **Pancake breakfast** in June, and the annual **Luminaria for All Souls’** in November with proceeds benefiting the parish. The **Holy Name Society Macaroni Supper** fundraiser was successfully held in April, enabling the Society to give our parish \$4000 for repairs. In addition, it assisted Two Hearts, Friendly Hands, Kevin’s Place, FISH and enabled our teens to attend the summer Steubenville Youth Conference.

Legion of Mary encouraged us to pray for our ministries with the **2-22-22 Two by Two** day of prayer, led **holy hours for world peace** in March, recitation of the **rosary** before weekend Masses during month of May and the **patriotic rosary** July 4. A new



First Holy Communion



Teens at Youth Conference

OUR WORSHIP SITES:

St. Francis of Assisi

160 Main Street

St. Peter

107 East Main Street

OFFICE: Pope St. John Paul II Pastoral Center

160 Main Street, Torrington, CT 06790

Phone: 860-482-4433 **Fax:** 860-489-4070

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OUR PARISH LIFE IN ACTION (continued)

ministry, **Protect the Flock**, was launched in the fall with the aim of preparing parishioners to handle emergencies during services or events in our church facilities.

In September we welcomed our **new youth minister Lina Calabrese**. Our **high school youth ministry** is embedded in a two-year theology-based **confirmation program**. Our **81** students completed 30 hours of community service, allowing them to give back to our parish and to the community. During 2022, our youth assisted with ushering and greeting at all Masses. They also helped with the first ever **Christmas Eve dinner** to our homeless population. The annual **Vacation Bible Camp** was a memorable experience for campers, parents and volunteers, and made possible with help from Kevin's Place, Holy Name Society, Legion of Mary, Holy Rosary and parishioners.

In September, **Mass in the Neighborhood** was again held at three locations around town, bringing our Catholic faith to the public. The opportunity for **eucharistic adoration resumed** at St. Francis three days a week with addition of a protective grill around the tabernacle. **Prayer boards were introduced** in both churches in November. Parishioners were encouraged to place their prayer intentions on the boards during the week and to attend **Friday evening prayer services** to pray for all intentions.

In December, a chapter of parish history closed as Archbishop Leonard P. Blair issued a decree effecting the relegation that **Sacred Heart Church** is no longer a sacred place for divine worship.

The well-attended Advent retreat in December included breakfast provided by the parish and prepared by Holy Name Society and Knights of Columbus, followed by an uplifting talk by Father James Sullivan, rector of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Waterbury. Father Emmanuel presided over a time of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, music was provided by our music director Konstantza and choir members, and confession was available in St. Peter Church.

Father Emmanuel and Father Carlos welcomed parishioners to the rectory with a **Parish Open House Christmas Party** in December where all enjoyed the time together.