

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST PARISH



711 N. FRANCIS ST. • JACKSON, MICHIGAN 49201
(517) 784-0553

MISSION STATEMENT

We are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ, responsive to the Spirit within ourselves and others; and, seeking to live out our salvation communally, we commit ourselves:

- to accept and live the teachings of Christ;
- to share the good news of God's Life and Love;
- to pass on our Catholic Heritage;
- to follow Jesus' example of service by caring for the human needs of others and to actively pursue justice and peace for all;
- to be a holy people, nourished and enriched through prayer, word and sacrament.

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST PARISH

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

FORWARD

Stewardship is what we do once we say we believe. We want to be believers that walk the talk, don't we? And more than that, we want to experience our faith as a community. What better way to share the talents God has gifted us with, and to draw upon the talents of others, than through this parish family. Our talents are so diverse, and since we usually enjoy doing things that we do well, each of us can find a ministry where the burden is light. A task that might weary one parishioner is a snap to another – and vice versa. Hopefully you will find a ministry or two that will not only utilize your talents but bring you great joy as well.

If you would like more information about any of these groups or activities or would like to become personally involved, please call the Parish Office at 784-0553.

Fr Jim

ADULT FORMATION

The Adult Formation Committee strives to provide opportunities for growth and learning at all stages of adult life. The members of this group believe that people respond to God within the experiences of their daily lives.

Therefore, the committee attempts:

- a. to aid individuals to discover and to develop their potential as persons;
- b. to recognize the meaning of life and to respect it in all its dimensions;
- c. to incorporate the message of Jesus into our personal lives;
- d. to express and share the teachings of Jesus with others by sharing our faith experience.

We believe that growth is an increasing capacity to care for others and ourselves as God's image and to reflect God's love at all times.

ALTAR SERVERS

Boys and girls, fifth grade and above, are eligible for this ministry. Training sessions are held periodically throughout the year. Mass servers are scheduled for all weekend and Holy Day Masses, at school liturgies, and at times are called upon for funerals and/or weddings. They are required to arrive sufficiently ahead of time so they can assist the presider with setting up for the liturgy.

ART AND ENVIRONMENT

Before the first door opens in welcome at our Sunday and Holy Day Masses, those who serve God behind the scenes have prepared an already beautiful church with the proper setting for the season or feast. The poinsettias of Christmas, the lilies of Easter, the wreaths of Advent or the simplicity of Lent all create an important spiritual mood. The ministries of art and environment combine an instinct for beauty and decoration and an awareness of the sacred flow in our Church Year, so that when the doors open and parishioners are welcomed warmly by our ushers and greeters, the mood for worship is set.

BAPTISM PREPARATION- INFANTS

Baptisms are administered twice a month. Parents and sponsors must attend a class prior to the Baptism. Attending an earlier meeting, even before the child is born, is an option. Please call the Parish Office to make arrangements for the class and the Sacrament.

BINGO

A group of volunteers staffs bingo games on Monday and Thursday of each week, with separate teams and chairs for Mondays and Thursdays. Volunteers generally work once a month, or as they can, on either a Monday or a Thursday team. New volunteers are always needed. Income from bingo helps to finance general parish operations, helping support all programs and activities of the Parish and the school.

BLOOD DRIVE

St John Parish hosts a blood collection clinic in the Parish Center in cooperation with the American Red Cross at least once a year. Parishioners assist with set-up and tear down of the equipment and assist the nurses with the processing of blood donors, by escorting donors through the clinic and serving in the beverage and snack area.

BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

This is a sub-committee of the Finance Committee. Its members are advisory to the building manager in planning for the care, maintenance and upkeep of the physical plant of the parish. They develop a long-range plan for the Finance Committee and oversee all of the capital improvements and major repairs. Small projects and repairs are coordinated with the St Joseph the Worker Group, which is a subgroup of this committee. The membership of this committee is composed of people with various skills ranging from engineers, skilled tradesmen and contractors to home repair people. The group meets as needs dictate.

CAMPOUT

Each year the Parish Campout Ministry organizes a group campout at a campground near Jackson. This is a weekend of socializing with other parish families which includes games for all ages, swimming, campfires, cookouts, a Saturday evening potluck, a Saturday evening Mass presided over by one of the parish priests, and even relaxation for those who prefer the quieter time.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE COMMITTEE

This group coordinates a mix of outreach activities that aid the “least of our brothers and sisters”. They seek the most effective use of the part of our stewardship of time, talent and treasure that is earmarked for those in need. They are likewise the conduits to the pastor on issues of social justice. They continually challenge their fellow parishioners to be the hands, feet and voice of Christ for those in need of food, clothing, shelter and various services throughout the year.

CHRISTMAS COOKIE WALK

Each year just prior to Christmas, the Christian Service Committee coordinates the solicitation of cookie donations from parishioners which in turn are sold “by the bucket” after weekend liturgies as a fund raiser for outreach activities. This provides an opportunity to purchase a wide variety of cookies for the Christmas season and provides funds for the many outreach activities of Christian Service.

COFFEE AND DOUGHNUTS

Coffee and doughnuts are available in the Parish Center after the 7:30 AM, 9 AM, and 10:30 AM Sunday Masses from September through May. These are prepared by volunteers of the Parish.

COMMUNION TO THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND VISITATION

Members of the Pastoral Staff and volunteers bring the Eucharist to those in the hospital Monday through Friday. Please call the Parish Office when a family member is admitted to the hospital.

Communion is taken to those confined to their homes or nursing facilities on a regular basis. If you wish to have Communion brought to a person who is ill or homebound, please call the Parish Office.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Working with the Pastor, the principal of our parish K-6 school and the religious education program director, the Education Committee is responsible for developing and guiding the moral, religious, academic and physical well being of our youth. They advise on how best to balance school tuition vs. parish subsidy, single child vs. multi-child tuition rates, in-parish vs. out-of-parish costs. They review the curriculum for school and religious education. A subcommittee of Education determines scholarship allocations for families in need of tuition assistance.

Meetings are generally held monthly and are open to visitors except for closed sessions which may be required to review proposed budgets, salaries or personnel administrative matters.

Any parishioner may be considered for selection to this committee.

ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Endowment Scholarship Fund provides supplemental funding for all religious education programs of the Parish. It is governed by a Trust Agreement, approved by the Bishop, and administered by up to seven people elected by the Fund Board of Trustees, which includes the Pastor, and the Principal of the elementary school. Funding is primarily from parishioners, from memorials for deceased relatives and friends, and from others interested in providing continuing funding for religious programs and equipment which may not be included in the regular operating budget. Contributions may be placed in the regular Sunday collections or delivered to the Parish Office.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Adoration is an opportunity for individuals to spend personal time in silence and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. In cooperation with St Joseph Parish, St John Parishioners are invited to spend time in adoration at their Adoration Chapel. For information on the hours of adoration and to sign up for a specific hour please call the St John Parish office.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Eucharistic Ministers are trained members of the parish who assist in the distribution of the Eucharist to the assembly of believers at weekend and special feast day liturgies throughout the year. Assignments are scheduled approximately three times per year and are coordinated to suit personal calendars.

FAMILY LIFE

Family Life provides support for families at all stages of life, including marriage enrichment, parenting classes and a singles group. This group meets monthly or more for social functions, as well as support for families undergoing financial difficulties through involvement with local food pantries, kid's backpack program, community weatherization day and other community wide efforts.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee is advisory to the pastor to provide for the good stewardship of our parish resources. Their efforts are coordinated with the Pastoral Council to assure that the financial and physical resources are provided to carry out our parish's mission. Its concerns are threefold - Stewardship & Budgeting, Development & Financial Planning, and Administration of the Physical Plant.

The Finance Committee is made up of nine members appointed by the pastor. The task of this committee includes the preparation and monitoring of the annual budget and the promotion of good stewardship among our parishioners. The Finance Committee receives and considers the recommendations of the Buildings & Grounds Committee in the management of the physical plant. Skills in budgeting, accounting, personnel, investing, business law and others are valued on this committee.

FUNERAL DINNER COMMITTEE

This group prepares a meal in the Parish Center after a funeral for parish families who request it. Arrangements for the meal are made through the funeral director or by contacting the parish office. Parishioners provide donations of food dishes for the meal.

FUNERAL GREETERS

Members of this ministry act as greeters/ushers in the church for funeral Masses. They serve to welcome visitors to St John on behalf of the family of the deceased and St John Parish.

GIVING TREES

Each year around the beginning of Advent a barren tree is placed in the parish center with tags attached listing Christmas “wish list” items from needy families. The Christian Service Committee selects the families. Parishioners take the tags, purchase the items and return the gifts to the parish center. On a selected day prior to Christmas, the gifts are wrapped and delivered to the specified families.

In the summer a similar process is used to provide needed school supplies and clothing prior to the start of the school year for families in need.

Assistance is solicited to provide gifts, wrapping paper, help with wrapping and delivery of the gifts.

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Each summer, usually during August, a “casual” meal is served at the parish center, which includes picnic foods, beverages, baked desserts and, of course, ice cream. A canopy is set up in the parking lot to enhance a picnic environment and to provide overflow-eating space.

Assistance is solicited to help set up for the event, provide baked desserts, grill hot dogs, clean up after the event and other activities involved in serving the meal to a large number of people.

JACKSON CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL (JCMS)

JCMS is the middle school that serves seventh and eighth grade students from all of the Jackson area parishes, and is available to non-Catholic families as well. Tuition is assessed on a per student basis directly to the participating parishes, or directly to the families for those not affiliated with one of the Jackson area Catholic parishes.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic Fraternal Organization of men who are eighteen years of age and older. The St John Council is a service organization, which helps various causes. They support the Pro-Life movement, they are involved in helping the mentally challenged, and they are active with the youth of the parish. They frequently provide Sunday breakfasts and other meals in the Parish Center as a social gathering for the parishioners. They make themselves available to the Pastor to provide assistance in whatever way he needs help.

LENTEN SOUP AND SALAD

During the Friday nights of Lent, soup and salad are prepared and offered in the Parish Center prior to the Stations of the Cross in the Church.

LIFE ISSUES

St. John parishioners active in the Pro-Life movement are led by a representative of Jackson Citizens for Life, Inc., which is affiliated with Right to Life of Michigan. Taking a stand against abortion, assisted suicide and embryonic stem cell research, they are non-partisan, striving to protect human life from conception to natural death by means of education through schools, health fairs and hosting events such as Life Chain.

LUMEN CHRISTI HIGH SCHOOL

Lumen Christi is the regional Catholic high school that serves and is available to high school age students in the greater Jackson area. The respective parishes subsidize the cost of attendance for students whose families are participating in one of the greater Jackson area Catholic parishes.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage begins at least nine months prior to the proposed wedding date. The couple first schedules an appointment with a parish priest or deacon who will preside at the wedding ceremony.

After this meeting the engaged couple is contacted by a sponsor couple from the parish to schedule the first in a series of meetings. Parish sponsor couples who minister in the area of marriage preparation receive training and support from a coordinating couple as well as the parish staff. The engaged couples usually meet in the home of the sponsor couple. The purpose of these sessions is to help the engaged couple take an honest look at their relationship and to facilitate and encourage sharing of their thoughts and feelings about marriage.

When the engaged couple has completed this part of their preparation, they are required to attend a communication workshop or an engaged encounter weekend.

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

The proclamation of the Sacred Scriptures is an essential part of our Sunday worship. Men and women who are entrusted with the awesome and challenging responsibility of proclaiming the Scriptures to the assembly become communicators of God's very self. They bring the Word to life for God's people. Just as God blesses men and women with wonderful singing voices, He also gifts many with the ability to make their proclamation of the Word clear and expressive.

Training and formation are a crucial part of preparing for this ministry. Lectors prepare for their ministry by praying that the Holy Spirit will open their hearts to what they proclaim. They practice by reading the assigned text aloud and reflecting on its meaning.

Lectors are scheduled in four-month increments to serve approximately once a month. A commitment of one year is requested.

MUSIC MINISTRY

The St John choir is a group of parishioners who enjoy singing classical to contemporary music and using their talents to enhance the liturgies on Sundays and special Holy Days. The choir generally sings at the 10:30 a.m. Sunday liturgies every other week and practices weekly.

The music ensemble provides music for the 9:00 a.m. Sunday liturgies. They also practice weekly.

The Jackson Catholic Youth ensemble provides music for a Sunday liturgy once a month. It is comprised of students from Kindergarten through 12th grade.

These groups also provide music for other special liturgies throughout the year. Opportunities are always available for interested musicians and cantors.

PARISH NURSES

The mission of the parish nurses is to foster the health of the parish community through educational offerings and preventive health screening. They utilize their God-given skills within the parish to provide these services. Parish nurses and other health care professionals volunteer their time and talents to serve in this health care ministry.

PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Church has a threefold mission or purpose: to spread the Gospel of Christ (evangelize), to celebrate our salvation in Christ (worship), and to give witness to our faith through positive action (service).

The Pastoral Council is a body composed of members who represent all of our confirmed parishioners. It works closely with the pastor and staff to provide pastoral leadership within our community and acts as a unifying structure seeking to coordinate the efforts and activities of our parish toward the fulfillment of our threefold mission. Based on this mission, the Pastoral Council sets parish goals, develops and implements programs and evaluates the effectiveness of its efforts. It also aids in establishing policies for the well-being of the community. The pastor depends on this *council* for *counsel*.

The responsibilities of the Pastoral Council are shared with the Education and Adult Formation Committees (evangelization), the Worship Committee, and the Christian Service Committee, all coordinated with the Finance Committee.

PRAYER CHAIN

This ministry consists of parishioners who pray, on their own, for the intentions of others. A “chain” is set up whereby prayer requests are relayed through the entire group so that each member is notified to pray for the specific intentions.

PRISON MINISTRY

This ministry consists of a group of men (laymen, deacons and priests) who visit the inmates at the State Prison on a regular basis. The laymen and deacons lead the inmate groups in the Liturgy of the Word, Communion, Novena Services, Bible Study and celebration in song. The priests offer the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

RELAY FOR LIFE

Each year St John provides a team of volunteers who solicit sponsors to support the American Cancer Society Relay for Life, a Jackson community-wide effort to provide funds for cancer research. In addition, many parishioners spend some time walking in the 24 hour walk at Cascades Park, a combination social and civic event to help raise awareness of cancer and to raise funds for a cancer cure.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Classes for pre-school age children and students not regularly attending Catholic schools are held Sunday mornings at St Joseph Elementary School from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m.

Students are expected to begin classes at the first grade level and continue regular attendance of classes to be considered for sacramental preparation.

Those students who are not baptized or have not received the sacraments in the customary grades will be instructed in separate meetings.

First Communion is generally received in the second grade on the first Saturday in May. Confirmation is received in the ninth grade and is usually administered by the Bishop in the fall. First Penance, which is received by second graders, is celebrated in late March or early April.

RCIA (Faith Inquiry)

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a journey of faith that begins each fall for those who are interested in learning more about our Catholic Faith. Inquirers are invited to meet weekly to ask questions and share experiences of faith with members of our community.

During this time we listen and reflect on God's Word, pray together, pass on our beliefs and traditions and share experiences of God in our daily lives.

Those who choose to join our Catholic community are welcomed at the Easter Vigil as we celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation - Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

SCOUTING

Cub Scout Pack 309 provides, for boys ages 7 through 10, a year-round family program with parents and volunteer leaders working together to achieve the following:

1. Influencing character development and encouraging spiritual growth;
2. Developing habits and attitudes of good citizenship;
3. Encouraging good sportsmanship and pride in growing strong in mind and body;
4. Strengthening the ability to get along with others;
5. Fostering a sense of personal achievement by developing new skills and interests;
6. Preparing to be Boy Scouts.

The Pack is run under guidelines set forth by Boy Scouts of America.

Boy Scout Troop 309 is available to any boy 11 years old (or one that has completed 5th grade) and not yet 18 years of age. It is a boy led troop that plans camping, hiking, swimming, summer camp, cooking and leadership skill development in a spiritual setting. Meetings are weekly during school months and camping is monthly.

SCOUTING (continued)

The Girl Scouts at St John School are members of the Irish Hills Girl Scout Council. The purpose of the program is to offer girls of all ages the opportunity for personal growth with the assistance of many dedicated adult volunteers. The girls learn while having fun, performing service, and learning to make responsible decisions that will guide them in the future. The goal is to train the girls to become leaders of tomorrow through service to God, their community, and the world around them.

SCRIPTURE GROUPS

Scripture Groups, or Faith Sharing Groups, meet at parishioners' homes on a schedule set by the respective groups. It is through the study of the Word that we can deepen our knowledge and love of the Lord and each other. Participation in a group is a commitment to gain a fuller understanding of the Bible and the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church, as well as perspectives on linking personal faith with daily family life.

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

The local Fraternity of the Third Order of St Francis meets at the Parish Center on the fourth Sunday of the month at 1:00 p.m. Its members come from all parishes in the area. Now known as the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO), St Francis of Assisi founded it more than eight hundred years ago. He founded the Friars Minor for men, then the Poor Clares for women, and finally for lay men and women who were called to a religious life but not to a vowed one, a lay organization which he called the Third Order of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance. Thus they too could live the Way of Francis. The SFO now includes more than three quarter of a million living members, who follow the rule of the Gospel in a lifetime commitment.

As Francis did, Secular Franciscans try to live a Christ-centered life. They wear a medal or scapular and cord as their habit and recite a Daily Office of twelve Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory Be's. Their goal is to become one with Jesus by humbly serving others with joy. Their apostolate focuses on promoting peace and justice, prayer and penance and charitable works. Secular Franciscans derive peace and joy from the vocation.

SEDER MEAL

Each year on the Wednesday of Holy Week, a Seder Meal is provided in the parish center. This is a ritual meal we celebrate just before Easter (around the time of the Jewish Passover) when we, as a Catholic Christian Community pay honor to and "touch" our Jewish Roots. We believe that it was during a Seder Meal that Jesus gave us His Body and Blood.

Some assistance is needed in the preparation of "ritual" foods and a regular "hot" meal. All are invited to the celebration and the meal.

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Jackson Area Catholic Special Religious Education Program provides sacramental preparation and opportunities for spiritual development for persons with developmental disabilities. The eight area Catholic parishes and eight area Knights of Columbus Councils sponsor the program. The program meets on Monday evening from October to the end of April, at Queen of the Miraculous Medal Church. A weekend retreat is one of the annual events along with the yearly Mass with the Bishop in Lansing.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Throughout its history, St John Parish has been renowned for its volunteer spirit. Hence, it was well prepared to embrace Vatican II Guidelines on shared ministry – collaboration between the pastor and the parishioner. Many parish committees have been in existence for nearly 40 years and offer opportunities to plan, to guide and to counsel. The newest committee, the Stewardship Committee, seeks to develop that comprehensive sense of the “good and faithful steward” who sees everything – time, talent and treasure – not as his own, but entrusted to him by God for this lifetime. This committee guides the ministry fair, which spotlights the parish ministries that are listed in these pages. It offers biblical encouragement toward an attitude of stewardship. It presents, with the pastor, the State of the Parish review as well.

ST JOHN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - Grades K-6

St John Parish offers a kindergarten through sixth grade school program. Since its inception in 1873, the school has emphasized the religious, academic, moral, physical and social development of its students. Students not only receive a strong, well-defined program in all the basic areas, but also have the exposure to programs in the areas of music, drama, physical education and computers. A technical laboratory and a school social worker are also available.

Transportation is provided through the Jackson Public Schools for those students living within the Jackson Public School area.

Tuition rates vary from year to year with separate rates for participating parishioners and those not participating in the parish. The number of children in the school also has a bearing on the tuition rate.

Questions regarding the school may be answered during the week between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. by calling the school office at 784-1714.

ST JOHN FAMILY ORGANIZATION

This group provides family-based activities to promote a sense of community among the parents, children, staff and faculty of both the school and religious education families. It also works to enhance the image of St John Parish and its educational programs within the community.

ST VINCENT dePAUL SOCIETY - ST JOHN CONFERENCE

The St Vincent dePaul Society's efforts are directed toward combining works and faith to bring the Church and what the Gospel teaches to all persons regardless of their social status. There is hardly a work of charity that is foreign to it. The list would include food, transportation, shelter, medical assistance, medicine, medical equipment, employment, home visits, hospital visits, help in obtaining social service aid, uniting members of families and many other acts. The Society tries to help persons in any kind of trouble. When it is beyond its ability, it tries to find someone who may be able to help.

Through operation of the St Vincent dePaul Store it is able to sell clothing and items for the home at a reasonable price. It also will give these items at no charge to those unable to pay.

Funds are donated and a food pantry is kept stocked in our parish center by the generosity of the parishioners of St John. Non-perishable food can be placed in food baskets at the entrances to the church, which is then given to the food pantry for distribution to the needy.

USHERS/GREETERS

Our Ministers of Hospitality (ushers/greeters) provide a necessary and important service to the Parish. They exercise a liturgical ministry by greeting, seating and making everyone feel welcome and at home at our liturgical celebrations. At the weekend assembly they collect the gifts of the participants and prepare for their presentation at the Offertory, and assure that the funds are secured after the liturgy. They are also available to assist in handling emergencies or other situations that may arise during the liturgies.

WALKWAY

The Walkway is built of sturdy, durable red paving bricks, like those that our ancestors used to pave Jackson streets, and are engraved with names specified by the donors. The Walkway is a memorial to those who have made the sacrifices that have meant so much to the parish and to those who still work to build a community of faith and love. People do not "buy" a brick, but make an investment in order to lead St. John Parish to a more secure financial future.

WEDDING REHEARSALS

A wedding coordinator conducts a wedding rehearsal for each marriage that takes place at St John Church. This service is provided to the participating families to help alleviate normal anxiety associated with this happy occasion by familiarizing the participants with the facilities, advising them of the expectations of the celebrant, and taking care of numerous small tasks associated with the ceremony, all in an effort to maintain the dignity of this sacred ceremony.

