

Dear Parishioners of NW8 Family of Parishes,

As we approach one year since the implementation of our Northwest 8 Family of Parishes, the general consensus seems to be that things are going well. Parishioners have opportunities for attending Mass and receiving the sacraments, faith formation is being offered for children, youth and adults and many feel that the parish is helping them grow in their lives of faith and as disciples of the Lord Jesus. Many of the familiar things continue to happen, as well as new and exciting opportunities across the family of parishes and we seem to be responding to most of the pastoral needs and requests that come each day.

The challenge is trying to get a handle on the enormity and complexity of working with 8 parishes and trying to do so in a way that is spiritual, pastoral and personal. We are gradually trying to figure out how to minister to the needs of the people which includes staffing that can help manage and respond to the spiritual, pastoral and administrative needs of our family in a collaborative and efficient way. There are three new Northwest 8 positions that will begin this summer and other staff changes underway.

One is a Pastoral Associate/Director of Worship & Sacraments for the Northwest 8 family of parishes. Initially, this position will help respond to the many needs and requests that come to the pastor each day. This position will also help manage staff and other things that need pastoral guidance. We will be hiring Nick Wilker as full-time Pastoral Associate/Director of Worship & Sacraments for the Northwest 8 Family of parishes beginning August 1, 2023, but with the plan that he will transition into the role over the summer. Nick is currently the Director of Liturgy and Music for Holy Redeemer Parish and coming to the end of his tenure as Elementary Principal at Marion Local Schools. Having given 10 years of service to Marion Local Schools, Nick has been committed to finishing the 2022-23 school year and assisting with the principal transition at Marion Local Schools. He will serve as Pastoral Associate/Director of Worship & Sacraments with the Northwest 8 family of parishes and continue his part-time role at Holy Redeemer. Anyone who has known Nick as an educator and principal at Marion Local Schools, knows that his commitment and dedication has been exemplary, but just as strong and now deepening is his commitment and dedication to our Catholic faith and our local church.

Another position is a Northwest 8 Business Manger to help oversee the financial matters of our family of parishes. With our Northwest 8 budgets near \$3 million in total, approximately \$1.3 million in maintenance projects currently underway, 30+ staff members and all the other attention necessary for budgeting, fiscal planning, management and internal controls to assure the security and wise use of the treasures entrusted to our parishes, the need for a family wide Business Manager is critical. Leslie Tyler has been serving as the St. Augustine Business Manager for 10+ years. She has a strong financial background in large and small businesses with experience in taxes, retail and manufacturing, budgeting, cost reduction, purchasing and management and has worn many hats throughout the years. Her diverse background makes her well suited for the variety of responsibilities in a parish setting. She has been a good fiscal manager for St. Augustine, a gifted administrator and communicator and has a lot of experience with Archdiocesan staff and resources. Leslie will begin July 1st as part-time NW8 Business Manager and continue to work part time at St. Augustine. Leslie will be a helpful resource person as we continue to rely upon financial staff in each of our parishes and engaged Finance Councils to help

oversee local finances. We are looking to hire a part-time Parish Accountant at St. Augustine.

Communications is another need in our family of parishes. We have very talented and dedicated staff already doing great work and ministry getting the word out in our parishes, but there are many opportunities for a more unified message and delivery system that will help all of our parishioners grow in faith. Chris Wibbenmeyer has been serving as CRE for St. John's and Youth Minister for the Marion Cluster as well as providing website and social media services. He will continue as CRE for St. John's and part time as a communications administrator for Northwest 8. He will collaborate with all our staff developing a unified communications plan that will include website, social media and other digital communications. We are looking to hire a part time Youth Minister for the Marion Cluster.

There are several other key positions being filled in our Northwest 8 family of parishes. Paul Gagel retired as St. John's Business Manager May 5th after 50 years of service and Joan Heitkamp recently announced her resignation as Marion Cluster Parish Secretary to work full-time in a family business. Along with the realignment in Chris Wibbenmeyer's roles mentioned above and the need for a Marion Cluster Youth Minister, we have been reviewing staffing needs and possibilities in the Marion Cluster, beginning with current staff. We are now in a hiring process for two part time positions including a St. John's Business Manager and a Marion Cluster Youth Minister. We will assess the need for a Parish Secretary position going forward. You can find more information about each of these positions in the bulletin and social media. Kathy Pape has retired after 19 years as Coordinator of Elementary Education at Holy Redeemer. We are in the process of hiring a part-time Coordinator of Religious Education for Pre-school through 6th grade. As noted above, we are also in the process of hiring a part-time Parish Accountant at St. Augustine. Please encourage talented, dedicated and faith filled people who may be good for these roles to consider applying and pray that God will help us find the person called to each.

Stewardship is the realization that all that we are and all that we have are gifts from God and we say thanks to God by sharing a portion of our time, talents and treasures with others. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 says "Consider this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work." We are in the process of developing a Northwest 8 Stewardship Commission to help us all be cheerful givers, blessing our family of parishes and many others with our time, talents and treasure.

Please be assured that our current Northwest 8 staff are faith filled, dedicated and skilled as they continue handling many of the day to day requests and needs that come into our parish offices, scheduling and coordinating many things, but the complexity and enormity of all the working parts of Northwest 8 requires additional help beyond the pastor and current staff. Utilizing qualified in-house resources for these new Northwest 8 roles will facilitate transitions and is economically prudent. We also trust that God will send new staff to us. We are grateful for our staff commitment and yes to the Northwest 8 Family of Parishes and will continue our efforts to build a team that will help us serve the needs of Northwest 8 into the future. Blessings and prayers, Fr. Ken Schnipke, C.P.P.S., Pastor