

Good morning, I am Dick Anthony chairperson of the Sacred Heart finance council. Our parish has two trustees and eight finance council members selected from our parish to work with our parish staff and pastor to oversee church finances. We are business owners, accountants, engineers, lawyer, and generally care a great deal about this church. On behalf of the trustees and council members I thank you. Because of your generosity we have our new Church boiler. We began our repair and renovation collection four years ago and it needs to continue so we can properly maintain and upgrade our facilities. There are projects looking ahead over the next ten to fifteen years that total about eight hundred thousand dollars.

Our weekly collection is supposed to take care of the actual running of the Church. Salaries, employees benefits , utilities small repairs and so on. It is not enough. We are at the point that we fix only what breaks, and even then probably not completely. We are a church, but it doesn't mean we get special treatment when it comes to paying our bills. There are no discounts because we are a nonprofit. Our household bills aren't much different than yours, except larger.

Our Church is the only building on the Sacred Heart campus that is even remotely handicap accessible, and even that is limited. There is a ramp from the parking lot to the front doors. The South Plainfield ave sidewalk will bring you to the side doors, but there is no handicap parking on the street, and none of these doors are mechanically operated. These same people don't get to the school cafeteria for Lenten fish dinners with their friends or any other activities that take place in the school cafeteria.

Most of us know someone or have a family member who would like to be able to take advantage of what Sacred Heart Church has to offer if they could only get to where they want to go.

About a year ago I made a statement that we are falling behind almost ten thousand dollars per month of where we should be with our collections. Fortunately someone thought of their Church when they wrote their will, and that has been a greatly appreciated sum. As nice as that was, it will only help for a short while. If more of us remembered our parish in our wills it would help so much.

We continue to need your help on a weekly basis. Please consider giving a little more if you are able. Remember we are a tithing parish, which means ten percent of your gross income is to go to charity. Half of that amount to your Church and the other half to other charities. For those who don't have much to share, consider writing your Church into your will or estate plan. You may not be able to give today but Sacred Heart would love to be remembered by you. If you have any questions on how to go about giving to Sacred Heart in your will or through a beneficiary form, call the parish center and speak with Marilyn. She will be able to help you.

As little as about twelve years ago our church census showed approximately twenty three hundred families as registered parishioners. Our latest census is almost complete, and shows that we now have only thirteen hundred registered families. We've lost a thousand families in just a few years. Attendance at Mass shows an average number of people, who actually show up for Mass is approximately seven hundred individuals. Local demographics are changing. Cost of living is high and families are moving out of state. Add to that the church scandal, and of course we do move on to meet our maker. We somehow need to get those who went through the trouble to register, to show up. There is an advertisement in the South Plainfield Observer that you should have received this weekend, and included in it is a full page advertisement asking everyone to come home for Christmas. Maybe you could show it around, leave it where people can see.

This parish has been here in South Plainfield for one hundred and thirteen years. All that time made up of strong hard working families like yours. Think of how much this parish has meant to this community for all those years, and what we can do to build on what we have, and help it grow.

Before I wrap this up, I give you a to do list:

Think about how much this Church means to you.

Check your finances.

Can you give more

And last, don't forget Advent begins in two weeks. Can you get a friend or relative back home to Sacred Heart Church for Christmas, and maybe more Sundays after that.

Thank you