



Dear Notre Dame Parishioners,

It's hard to believe that a full month has already passed since I was officially named pastor of Notre Dame! I've truly enjoyed my first month with you, and I feel we are off to a great start. I'd like to share a few updates on what's been happening around the parish.

Finances

I would like to be transparent about our financial position here at Notre Dame Parish. It is important that we are all aware of how much money we have on hand, as well as any liabilities. We currently have about \$407,000 in our parish accounts—not to be confused with school funds, which are managed separately. (More information about parish finances will be included in the 2024 Financial Report, to be published in the bulletin in September.) Although it may seem like this is a lot of money, when we consider some of the deferred maintenance issues that will need to be addressed, it is not as robust as it may initially appear. I absolutely want to keep as much of these funds in savings as possible, as it is good to have a contingency plan for any emergencies that may arise in the parish.

School and Maintenance

We are preparing for another exciting school year. The principal, faculty, and staff are working hard to ensure a wonderful and faith-filled academic experience for our students.

Last month, I hired a new part-time maintenance supervisor for the Notre Dame campus. Please join me in joyfully welcoming Gary Rusboldt! One of my priorities is to see our buildings consistently maintained and enhanced in both cleanliness and general upkeep. The new supervisor will report directly to me and oversee other maintenance staff. He will also manage all bidding processes and coordinate with outside contractors when specialized work is needed. Some of his immediate tasks include cleaning the church carpets and walls and updating the cloth covering our organ speakers. I'm confident he will be kept busy, as our campus is large and, like any home, requires ongoing care and attention.

Parish Office

As many of you know, Julie Wadle—who previously managed the parish office—has accepted a full-time position in our school. Congratulations, Julie! She continues to be a great blessing to our community. To fill the vacancy, I've hired a new secretary/parish manager for the parish office. I'm thrilled to welcome Brandi Lee Hoffman to this important role. Her professionalism, warmth, and love for Notre Dame are already evident. Many of you may already know Brandi, and I'm sure you'll join me in welcoming her. She will be working closely with me, especially as we move toward a single-parish model with three campuses.

Day Chapel Repurposing

One exciting recommendation that came from the combined Pastoral and Finance Council was to repurpose the daily Mass chapel—which is not currently used for weekday liturgies—into a much-needed space for adult education. Currently, there is no dedicated space for adult faith formation on the Notre Dame campus. Nearly all available rooms are used by the school (which is a blessing!), but parish life would benefit greatly from a dedicated adult education area. This renovated space could also be used by the school, when scheduling permits.

An added benefit of this change is the opportunity to relocate the Blessed Sacrament into the main worship space. This would allow us to return the church to the original architectural vision. The altar from the day chapel would be placed along the back wall of the main church, directly beneath our beautiful mosaic of the Blessed Mother, and the tabernacle would be centered on that altar. This change has deep theological meaning: since we believe Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist, placing the tabernacle at the center of the worship space helps draw our attention and devotion to his real presence. While I don't yet have cost estimates, I will keep you informed as details emerge.

Rectory Renovation

In consultation with the Pastoral and Finance Council, we also plan to begin renovations on the rectory over the next year. This building is an important part of the parish's history and should be kept in good condition. It is clearly a part of our parochial heritage and patrimony.

The rectory has not been significantly renovated since it was built in the 1970s. In some areas, there is damage due to mildew and excessive moisture to the floors and walls, as well as everyday wear and tear. Some areas of the rectory will need to be completely gutted to remediate the mold and odor. The prospect of refurbishing the rectory—even without high-end accoutrements—could involve a substantial investment from the parish. The Finance and Pastoral Councils will be fully involved in reviewing the costs and scope of the renovation, as their approval is required for any major capital expenditures. As the cost of the rectory renovations becomes clearer, I hope to seek sponsorship for some of the updates that need to occur.

Moving Toward One Parish

Finally, as we continue working toward a unified parish with three campuses, I have restructured the Parish Leadership Team to assist me in this transition. I have invited members from Notre Dame's Pastoral Council to join the leadership teams from Queen of All Saints and St. Mary. This new team includes two or three members from each campus, along with clergy and select staff. Together, we are charting the path forward. One of our goals is to propose a new Mass schedule by January 1, 2026, that better reflects our shared reality as a united community. After that, we will move toward officially becoming one parish with three worship sites.

I will keep you informed throughout this process. I am confident that this next chapter will not diminish our ministry but will strengthen our collective mission of mercy and discipleship here in Michigan City.

Please keep me, our leadership teams, and these unfolding plans in your prayers. Notre Dame is a truly special parish, full of life and potential. Together, let's continue to grow as a beacon of faith, hope, and service to our community.

In Christ,
Fr. David Kime
Pastor