

# *Holy Cross Parish*

2021

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**YEAR ENDING June 01, 2021**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

***“The people of Holy Cross Parish are a community of clergy, religious and laity who, strengthened in Christ, and thankful for our blessings, seek to root ourselves in an authentic Christian community which is called to serve God in praise, each other in sharing, caring and healing, and our brothers and sisters, near and far, in prayer, peace and justice.”***

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Pastor's Report

## Parish Pastoral Council's Report

## Committee Reports

### Parish and Community Life

- Finance
- Building
- Knights of Columbus
- Senior's Ministry

### Social Justice

- Debra-Dynes Family House
- Development & Peace
- Elimu
- Food Drive
- St. Vincent de Paul
- Senior's Ministry

# Pastor's Report

Dear Parishioners,

Covid 19 has taught us many new lessons. Like any other institutions, the negative impact of the pandemic has put a tremendous challenge on churches. One thing we learnt is that things cannot be planned as we used to do it for the future.

Every year Holy Cross used to conduct an AGM to review together the activities of our parish and plan for the year ahead. Due to Covid, we were not able to come together in the year 2020. After much discernment, the PPC decided to have shorter report of the functioning ministries and send it electronically to our parishioners.

My sincere thanks to all those who made Holy Cross Parish active, vibrant, and creative at this challenging time. I would like to mention a few of my observations.

## **SUNDAY AND WEEKDAY MASSES**

I am happy to mention that Holy Cross Parish has been an example of exploring various opportunities to reach out to our parishioners. We made use of the provincial health guidelines by planning for people to gather in the hall and updated our audio and video system. We were pioneers in recording and live streaming our Sunday Masses. My sincere thanks to St. Francis Studio for the hard work as well as our family music teams. The role of greeters as well as the cleaning crew members were exceptional. Sadly, we were not able to have the Sacramental preparation for the First Communion and Confirmation students. We look forward to having a BIG group when opportunity arrives.

We tried to make a spiritual journey with our parishioners at home by offering a series of reflections based on the book of Peter Kreeft animated by Deacon John Kennedy. Another Alpha course is progressing well. Thanks to all the participants. I hope to see the results when we come back to church as a congregation.

## **RETIREMENT OF DEACON JOHN KENNEDY**

After so many years of service to our parish, Deacon John Kennedy is officially retired from his assignment as Deacon at Holy Cross parish. However, Deacon John expressed his wish to continue to render liturgical service to our parish. I am so grateful to Deacon John and Sue Kennedy for playing a major role in leading and shaping the parish. May God continue to bless your family and your intentions. In fact, we never retire from serving others!

## **PARISH FINANCE**

Even though there is a separate report regarding the finance, I like to thank all of you for your sense of belonging by contributing financially even by making a trip to the office to drop your envelopes. As expected, our regular revenue had been dropped to a certain extent. But we were also blessed with some generous donations from the Estate Wills of those who cherished the memories of Holy Cross Parish which covered our major project expenses. If we must move from maintenance of the church building to an evangelizing community, parishioners need to be aware of the increasing cost of the ordinary as well as the extra ordinary expenses. After all, registering with a parish implies sharing of the responsibilities with your treasure, time, and talent.

## **BUILDING COMMITTEE**

As you may be aware, Holy Cross Church is a 53-year-old building which needs upgrading, repairs, and maintenance at regular periods. I am so grateful to our building committee team who has taken up so many initiatives to address these issues even at this challenging time.

Special thanks to Armando and Jane Prini for renovating the staff kitchen which needed much attention. They volunteered their skills and time. We finished the project just with the purchase of materials. Special thanks also to Tony Labadie for taking care of our parking lot repair issues.

We will greatly appreciate if you give your skills and expertise at the service of the church.

## **COMMUNICATION MEDIA**

One of the blessing of the pandemic is the use of social media and other means of communications. We joined the Flocknote mailing system to register for the Masses and to alert the parishioners about the last-minute changes. Some ministries are making use of this tool for the internal communications between the members. Fortunately, so many free resources are available on social media for your spiritual nourishment. Thanks for the appreciation of our recorded Masses and Funeral services, phone calls etc.

I am happy to announce that the Parish has renewed the subscription for FORMED website for another year. Your feedback will be appreciated for an evaluation in the future.

### **VOLUNTEERS IN MINISTRIES**

Holy Cross Parish had been an active parish on different creative ministries. The Knights of Columbus, Hospitality team, Pastoral Care team, the Music Ministry and so on have played a major role in shaping our parish. The dynamism of and life of the parish depends on the volunteers in different ministries. There is a growing tendency to be satisfied with sacramental participation and financial contribution. Many feel inadequacy and imperfection to step forward to join with ministries. By building up the parish, you are building up the Body of Christ. I hope and pray that you will seriously consider your Baptismal call to nourish the church with your spiritual gifts. It is not a place for competition or performance but a common home for everyone to find spiritual nourishment and rest. Jesus said *"I am vine and you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him, will bear much fruit"* (Jn 15:5).

I am eagerly looking forward to meeting and greeting you in the church to celebrate the joy of coming back to home after a long isolation.

God bless you all.

Fr. Lukose Kochupurackal CMF

Pastor

## **PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

**Chair:** Fran Hadley

**This is a time of change and challenge, and Holy Cross intends to adapt and grow stronger by benefiting by you offering the gifts and talents you have received.**

### **PPC MEMBERS**

The PPC welcomed four new members and looked forward to their input over the two years of their Terms of Office. Thank you to the outgoing members, Louis Leduc, Sarah Alkashat and Mina Hadad, Sisters Arlene Van Zyl and Annette John.

PPC members for 2021: President: Father Lukose; Chair: Fran Hadley; Secretary: Sheba Jeyaraj Member: Gilles Leo. We are pleased to announce the new candidates who have come forward to let their names stand for election; Pauline Houlihan, Trish Brighton, Rose O'Neil, and Marcus Cole.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

- The Council has been busy adjusting to the many changes dictated by the Covid Pandemic and responding to the Diocese's directions. The year following the June 2020 AGM started out as usual with a celebration of our Parish Feast Day on September 13.
- The importance of communicating with our parishioners was addressed and a Communications Ministry was established with Armando Prini as Communications Director. It was decided that this was a good time to reach out to parishioners and update our database. This decision gave rise to the Telephone Tree project. This effort supported the next and sustained Caring Calls initiative where the focus is to reach out to the Parish's aging population. Flocknote was introduced as registration to attend Mass. This became necessary to monitor the attendance limited to 30% with plans to accommodate the overflow in the hall with screen, audio, and Holy Communion available. To ensure registered parishioners names were tracked, spread sheets and the Greeter Ministry was established.
- Additional Communication activities were put in place to reach out to parishioners especially over the Christmas and Easter seasons with Father completing over 1100 Robo-calls.

- The Decor Team did a wonderful job of making the Church beautiful for the Christmas and Easter seasons. The beauty of the Holy Cross church was enjoyed by many attending in-person as well as those viewing from home.
- Volunteer Appreciation dinner was deferred and celebrated following the Saturday January 18, 5 p.m. Mass.

#### **JANUARY 2021**

- Started with the Renewal Initiative and the results of the 115 completed Flourishing Congregation Surveys and establishing an assigned Core Renewal Team. Four focus areas were identified, and the next steps were to develop strategies to address them.
- A very welcoming and informative weekly Parish Newsletter via Flocknote was started.
- Father John Paul was welcomed, and his creative skills were soon put to good use.
- Lenten Season began with Stations of the Cross recorded and available through our parish website, with 'Mary's Way' version was selected.
- Additional Flocknote Communications effort is made through daily Good Morning messages to Club 55 members with rotating themes of Inspirational, Educational, and just Funny.

#### **FEBRUARY**

- Triduum services went well with adaptations made to conform with the Public Health Regulations.
- Parish Centre Modernization project approved with further details provided by the Building Committee.

#### **MARCH**

- Decision to conform with the Parish Constitution, PPC plans for a virtual AGM in June and a possible in-person AGM in September depending on the Public Health regulations at that time. Plans started for "Welcoming Back Parishioners". The September 14 celebrations could include Parish Feast Day, the Archbishop 's visit, Grandparents' Day, AGM in-person meeting, etc.

#### **APRIL**

- Holy Week celebrations went well, and parishioners were welcomed to receive Holy Communion on Sundays from 11 to 12 noon.
- Our Masses were recorded and put on our website.
- Following the special Novena to Saint Joseph, planning was underway for a special celebration of Saint Joseph, Patron of Canada.

#### **ADDITIONAL REPORTS**

- In response to restrictions imposed, the AGM this year, has selected ministries to provide a brief Reports focusing on new initiatives planned for 2020/2021.

Special Thanks go out to the PPC members who dutifully attend and contribute to PPC discussion and to the Parish Staff who help in many ways to make this Council succeed.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

## **PARISH & COMMUNITY LIFE**

## **FINANCE**

Dear Parishioners,

The year 2020 challenged the parish pastorally and financially. The parish was closed from mid-March until the beginning of July. When we were allowed to celebrate public Masses again, attendance was severely limited. The restrictions caused a reduction in contributions from envelope holders and cut deeply into the loose collections. Total revenues declined by 12%.

The parish cut all avoidable expenses in 2020. Ordinary expenses were reduced by 11% and extraordinary expenses (major repairs) were reduced by 74%. While our pastor's pay was reduced for several months, we chose to keep the office open throughout the year to serve parishioners. We also made urgent repairs to the rectory basement to fix a leak.

To provide spiritual support to members of the parish, we invested in software and communications hardware. A subscription to *Flocknote* gave us a platform for producing regular emails, registering Mass attendees, and sharing spiritual resources. We purchased new audio and video equipment for recording and live-streaming Masses.

As a result of our cost-cutting and delay of major repairs, we finished the financial year with a healthy surplus. A stay-at-home order closed the parish for the first six weeks of 2021, again eating into our surplus. Our budget for the coming year predicts a small deficit, based on continuing restrictions on attendance and the need to make several urgent repairs.

In last year's report, we noted that our collections have not been covering our ordinary expenses; we have depended on other, unpredictable sources of revenue, such as weddings and funerals, bequests, or special donations, to cover the remainder of our ordinary costs and extraordinary expenses for repairs. The restrictions we experienced in 2020 made clear how unpredictable those other sources of income are.

Many parishioners make charitable contributions through the parish. In 2020, those funds were directed to the following charities:

Miriam Centre	Banff Community House	Claretian Fathers of Quebec
Catholic Christian Outreach	Chalice	Debra-Dynes Family House
St Joe's Supper Table	Shepherds of Good Hope	St Vincent de Paul Society
Queenship of Mary Community	Heron Emergency Food Centre	Elimu

In 2021, we plan to address a number of items that cannot be delayed, including:

- Urgent repairs to drains in the parking lot;
- Remediation of trees along the property line between our parking lot and the neighbouring condo;
- Renovation of the office area to repair degraded walls and flooring.

Thank you to everyone who supported the parish in this trying time. The Lord's work takes many forms; your material support to our parish community is an important sign of discipleship.

Father Lukose Kochupurackal, Pastor  
Joe Goski, Finance Committee Chair

**Holy Cross Parish Balance Sheet, December 31,2020**

<b>ASSETS</b>	<b><u>2020</u></b>
Petty Cash Fund	250
Bank - Operations Account	49,942
Bank - Mass Account ( <b>Note 2</b> )	1,536
Accounts Receivable ( <b>Note 3</b> )	3,701
Investment at Archdiocese ( <b>Note 4</b> )	846,336
Capital - 2872 Otterson Dr. ( <b>Note 5</b> )	163,143
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1,064,908</b>

<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Accounts Payable	1,434
Special Collections	155
Miscellaneous Liabilities	3,642
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>5,231</b>

#### **PARISH EQUITY**

##### **Unrestricted**

Opening Equity Balance	144,332
Current Year Surplus (Deficit)	52,202
Closing Equity Balance	196,534
Restricted – no change ( <b>Note 4</b> )	700,000
Capital Assets – no change	163,143
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>1,059,677</b>

<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>1,064,908</b>
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#### **Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2020.**

- The people of Holy Cross Parish are a community of clergy, religious and laity who, strengthened in Christ, and thankful for our blessings, seek to root ourselves in an authentic Christian community which is called to serve God in praise, each other in sharing, caring, and healing, and our brothers and sisters, near and far, in prayer, peace and justice.
- Mass Account**  
There is a requirement that the money collected for Masses to be celebrated be kept in its own bank account. A register is maintained to record the details of the Mass intention as well as the date the Mass took place. Once celebrated, funds are transferred to the general bank account on a regular

basis and disbursements for the priest's and Archdiocesan share of the Masses are issued.



**Statement of Revenue and Expenditures for the Year Ended on December 31, 2020**

	<b>Actuals 2020</b>	<b>Budget 2021</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Collections	297,129	305,000
Weddings, Masses, Funerals	6,988	6,000
Other Taxable Revenue	22,874	6,000
Bequests and Special Donations	1,870	13,250
<b>Total Taxable Revenue (Note 6)</b>	<b>328,861</b>	<b>330,250</b>
Interest	28,477	28,500
Sales	5,552	5,000
General	20,453	15,500
<b>Total Non-taxable Revenue (Note 7)</b>	<b>54,482</b>	<b>49,000</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>383,343</b>	<b>379,250</b>
<b>ORDINARY EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries (Note 8)	88,610	94,500
Employee Benefits and Expenses	7,985	8,500
Pastoral Work (Note 9)	32,566	44,000
Office Requirements, Telephone	33,559	38,000
Heating, Electricity	23,867	25,000
Taxes, Insurance, Water	13,371	14,000
Diocesan Administration Tax (Note 10)	44,095	46,000
Parochial Organizations	18,258	20,000
Miscellaneous	-	1,250
Maintenance & supplies	50,075	55,000
<b>TOTAL ORDINARY EXPENSES</b>	<b>312,386</b>	<b>346,250</b>
<b>EXTRAORDINARY EXPENSES</b>		
Major Repairs or Replacements	17,577	35,000
Furniture, equipment	1,178	0
<b>TOTAL EXTRAORDINARY EXPENSES</b>	<b>18,755</b>	<b>35,000</b>

**SURPLUS (DEFICIT) ON  
OPERATIONS**

**52,202**

**-2,000**

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3. **Accounts Receivable**

This is reimbursements to be received from CRA for HST credits.

4. **Investment at Archdiocese**

The investment of parish funds in the Loan Fund for Parishes at the Archdiocese. These funds have been gradually accumulated over a number of years and are invested with the Archdiocese. The funds are available to us to cover planned and emergency requirements. The investments earn 3.5% interest yearly. Our policy is to maintain one and a half years of gross income as a cushion against unforeseen eventualities. This is shown as restricted on the balance sheet.

5. **Capital**

The pastor's residence is at cost. Depreciation is not recorded. There is an inventory of all equipment. They are written off as an expense as incurred. Expenses must be approved in advance by the Archdiocese.

6. **Taxable Revenue**

The revenue section of the statement separates revenue between taxable and non-taxable revenue based on the direction received from the Archdiocese. Taxable income is derived from revenue to the parish to support operations either through direct collections or charges for rental, weddings and funerals.

7. **Non-taxable Revenue**

The section includes the revenue received for specific purposes and approved by the Archdiocese as being exempt from the Archdiocesan tax. Currently this category includes sales of objects such as vigil candles, marriage courses, and advertising in the bulletin.

The revenue from special collections envelopes, such as Evangelization of the Nations and Works of the Canadian Church, are deposited to the Parish operating bank account and recognized as a liability owed to the Archdiocese. A cheque is sent to the Archdiocese after the final offerings are received. The Archdiocese forwards the funds from all parishes to the correct charitable organizations. There are nine special collections per year.

8. **Salaries and Benefits**

Expenditures for the priests assigned to the parish, the office staff, and rectory are summarized in these two lines. Included are the related employer contributions for CPP, EI, and Group Medical Plan.

9. **Pastoral Work**

Sacramental and Pastoral work represents expenditures incurred for the various Sacramental ministries such as First Communion, Baptism, Confirmation, music and decorating the church.

10. **Diocesan Administration Tax**

The Diocesan Administration Tax is our parish's contribution to the administration of the Archdiocese. This tax rate is set by the Archdiocese and applied against the taxable revenues defined above. The rate is currently 13% and the parish is required to pay it quarterly. An adjustment is made once the parish's annual financial reports are completed.

11. **Accounting policies and procedures**

Accounting policies and procedures are in accordance with guidelines set by the Archdiocese of Ottawa. The financial statements are audited by auditors determined by the Archdiocese.

## BUILDING COMMITTEE

**Committee Members:** Peter Kvas, Mike Lowe, Tom Flynn, Armando Prini complemented by Father Lukose Kochupurackal C.M.F. and Joe Goski.

The Building Committee holds the responsibility for coordinating repairs and improvements to the Church, Rectory and Parish Office. This report covers the time period between June 2020 and April 2021.

### COMPLETED PROJECTS:

- **Upstairs Kitchen Renovated**
  - Jane and Armando Prini took it upon themselves to completely renovate and redesign the upstairs kitchen and associated alcove to be more functional and efficient. This was a significant undertaking, and their efforts must be recognized individually. Sincere thanks for their many hours dedicated to this work.
- **Office Blinds Replaced**
  - Replaced blinds in Barbara's office due to old ones having become inoperable.
- **Refurbished Pews**
  - Sanded surfaces and refinished.
- **Covid Preparations**
  - Completed requirements for distancing in church for Mass attendance.
  - A few of the toilets were changed.
- **Tool Room Cleared and Moved**
  - Tool room cleared and non-essential items discarded.
  - Moved location and shelves built and brackets installed to hold tools etc.
- **Walkley Road Sign**
  - Built a new roof cover to protect the sign from rainwater damage.
  - Painted the frame.
  - Footings to protect the wood posts which are rotting and secured the sign.
- **Church Video Camera installed**
  - Camera installed at entrance to film online Masses.
- **Wiring of basement video**
  - Wiring run to basement to allow for synchronous presentations with upstairs activity.
- **Reconciliation Room Refurbished**
  - New partitions built.
  - Repainted room
- **Tree Maintenance**
  - Received arborist report on all trees from IFS (Andrew Boyd).
  - Solicited quotations for recommended tree maintenance that led to further assessment of all trees and further exploration of insurance liability. Manotick Tree Movers was the preferred supplier.
  - Responsibilities of the City of Ottawa and plans of Ottawa Hydro (who hold an easement on church property) were clarified.
  - Entered into negotiations with adjacent condominium (CCC585) to share costs to trim trees along parking lot.
- **Modernization Centre Process**
  - Developed process to assess opportunities to enhance functionality of our facility and assess ways to make it more welcoming.
- **Snow Removal Contract Negotiated**
- **Miscellaneous Repairs:**

- Garage door replaced.
- Expired fire extinguishers replaced.
- Boiler combustion chamber replaced.
- Bathroom at entrance and downstairs bathrooms – various items replaced and upgraded.
- Security mail slot added to outside office entrance door.
- Electrical room cleared of many old lights and properly recycled.
- Several other ongoing maintenance items completed.

➤ **Rectory**

- Further interior and in addition exterior repair work on two basement walls completed.
- Repaired portion of fence which had been vandalized.
- Notified City of Ottawa about unsafe tree in front of 2872 Otterson.
- Solicited quote from Manotick Tree Movers to prune branches overhanging house. Received unsolicited quote from Capital Timber too. Manotick Tree Movers were more competitively priced.

**CURRENT PROJECTS**

- Continue developing Modernization program guidelines and issues.
- Continue project to repair/replace front and side steps to the church.
- Replace office bathroom fan and two other fans.
- Look at replacing chairs in hall. This will entail significant cleanup of storage space under the stage.
- Fire alarm system report to be reviewed and action taken to bring facilities up to code and to meet insurance requirements.
- Address outstanding fence issues at the rectory.
- Two permanent drain sewage repairs in our parking lot, as well as repair work of the damaged asphalt were done.

**FUTURE PROJECTS**

➤ **Diocesan “Preventative Maintenance Guidelines”**

- Assign a prime to complete Diocesan documentation requirement.

➤ **Re-Paving/Re-Surfacing/Permanent Drain Repairs of Parking Lot**

- Scope to be determined after assessment of needs study.

➤ **Update to basement kitchen to be assessed**

- Consideration of kitchen counters/cupboards etc. upgrade

➤ **All cement walkways to be assessed for repair or replacement**

- This will include assessing repair/replacement of retaining walls.

➤ **Lighting**

- Consideration of moving away from fluorescent lighting throughout the church and basement.

➤ **Basement Bathrooms**

- Replacement of toilets
- Consideration to also replace sinks, light fixtures, stalls.
- Totally renovate / redesign?
- Consideration to replace plumbing in walls to main sewer.
- Consideration to add railing so that parishioners can use both hands for stability.

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**

**Grand Knight:** Greg Yost

Holy Cross Council #10617 Activities in the Faith in Action service program categories of the K of C.

Almost all of the Council’s activities which had been planned in anticipation of COVID restrictions beings

eased never took place. The Executive had to make use of Zoom for its meetings and used email to stay in touch with the Membership.

We are looking forward to the restrictions being lifted so we can see one another again and resume our programs in service of the parish and the community.

These are the programs we were able to carry out in the Faith in Action service program categories:

#### **FAITH**

- Processing collections at each Sunday Mass
- Ushers at Christmas and Easter Masses
- Ushers at Sunday Masses

#### **FAMILY**

- Mother's Day Greetings on Flocknote.

#### **COMMUNITY**

- Airport Parkway Cleanup in October
- Annual crèche statues were distributed to the parish youth.
- Basketball Free Throw contest at Schools

#### **LIFE**

- Sold Christmas cakes with proceeds to Campaign Life.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

SJC is an umbrella coordinating and supporting the activities of several groups engaged in charitable works locally and internationally. Members of each group support where necessary the others and share their plans for action within the parish. We are in need of members to assist in the specific activities of these groups or to serve as members at large helping the other groups as needed or taking up new challenges. In the past few years, we have had to abandon our Care for Creation activities due to the loss of members and feel a sense of urgency to restart a program to make our parish more sensitive to the theological foundation (Papal Encyclical Laudato Si) for curing the practices which are making our planet inhabitable for all life forms.

Please consider reaching out to us, attend a meeting when they are again allowed and journey with us in pursuit of a better more just world. We meet in Committee two or three times a year but participation in the work of the Food Drive, St Vincent de Paul. Development and Peace for example, occurs throughout the year under the direction of the head of these groups. Contact Mike Brady through the parish office 613-731-7834 at any time to explore opportunities.

### **DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE (D&P)**

Much of the expected activities were curtailed with the onset of the virus restrictions on activities. The major fundraiser for the Canadian Bishops founded charity, which works in developing countries and addresses emergencies through its partner Caritas Canada, is the Share Lent program. This year the campaign was postponed from March during Lent to November. Materials about the 'Recovering Together' theme were available online at a resource filled web site devp.org and envelopes were distributed outside the church for donations. Parishioners were generous in their contributions and which was much appreciated and will be well used.

Brigitta Fernandez long associated with D&P who has acted as parish coordinator and animator has had to step back from this role for personal reasons. We wish to acknowledge her valuable contribution and service over many years and thank her profusely and wish her well.

### **FOOD DRIVES**

During 2020, three Food Drives were undertaken, one on the First Sunday of Lent (February 29 and March 01), one on September 19/20, and one on the First Sunday of Advent (November 28/29). Reverse Offerings were conducted the weeks before and donations were collected outside the church.

The Pentecost Food Drive was cancelled due to the closure of churches, but a Pandemic Food Drive was held in September 2020 to replace it. To prevent the practice of parishioners sorting through suggested donation items, the Reverse Offerings given them are now a list of all items most needed by the Food Banks. The list includes the Food Banks' online donation links as well as grocery store gift cards. Gift cards were a blessing to one of the Banks, when they once ran out of food for their clients.

The three Food Drives resulted in donations of 430 bags of non-perishable food and personal care items and 5 grocery store gift cards. This was of great help to the Food Banks, who are all struggling and increased demand due to the pandemic.

Weekly food donations that are not part of the Food Drives have been suspended during the pandemic, but a couple of parishioners regularly drop their donations off to the Food Drive Coordinator, who divvies them up and delivers them to the Banks.

We are very thankful for the generosity of parishioners and welcome any suggestions on how to improve our parish food drives.

Joanne Lynn, Coordinator, Parish Food Drives

### **DEBRA DYNES FAMILY HOUSE (DDFH)**

Together during this pandemic year, both our Holy Cross and Debra Dynes communities experienced increased isolation, unemployment, poverty, and fear, but our decade-long bond of support and care held strong. The staff at DDFH, while following all the health protocols, actually ran small day camps for children last summer, operated their Food Bank through appointments and queueing, again distributed school supplies for students in September, and food baskets and gifts to families for Christmas, and by this March resumed some regular programmes such as the Sewing Group, After 4 Study, Tax Clinics, and community garden planning.

Holy Cross parishioners made much of this possible by enthusiastically answering the call for group donations of new school supplies in the fall, of groceries in September and November, and winter wear (hats, mitts, socks etc.) in November and December, along with many other individual acts of generosity. We heard and felt the cry of the poor.

### **ELIMU**

Despite the devastating impacts of COVID-19 in 2020, the blessings of kindness from many quarters not only kept us going but helped us to find new solutions. Most impacted was Elimu Resource Centre (ERC) which was forced to close in March. Not being able to open to children who needed solutions for continuing their learning while schools were closed caused us to seriously reassess our relevance to the community. We began by providing food assistance to the parents of our sponsored children and kept the Savings & Loan group for parents going via telephone. We used our registration as an official Cisco Networking Academy to gain permission to re-open the Centre in September when the government opened vocational institutions. This brought back our Cisco students who were then able to complete their courses. We used face mask production as a reason to return our sewing students to their college in June. This led to the development of a wonderful Kenyan-styled ragdoll which is now selling in the USA as a fundraiser and will soon be available in Canada. The sewing college was also able to re-open in September and learning continued.

Most significantly, we developed an exciting innovation that boosts our Kolibri edtech server out to the community. The goal is children accessing the digital educational resources on the server from Smartphones and tablets at their homes and schools. The system is offline so protects children from the malicious activity they too often encounter with online internet solutions. By October, we had set up a pilot test at a local primary school. Children are now accessing content on our Kolibri server from a distance of 3 km away from the Center.

In November, we hosted our Annual BBQ Fundraiser online for the first time with over 40 participants, many of whom are Holy Cross Parishioners. We also had guests from across Canada and the USA and raised \$8,000 towards getting kids back to school. After gaining permission to re-open Elimu Resource Centre under strict protocols, we were able to end the year hosting a meeting with our sponsored students. It was an opportunity to give some much-needed motivation and to launch a new approach to our student mentorship program. In January, all Elimu sponsored students returned to their schools and Elimu Resource Centre opened again to the public.

Nina Chung, Founder and President, Elimu

## **SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL (SSVP) – OTTAWA SOUTH CONFERENCE**

The Ottawa South Conference has been in operation since November 20, 2014. During 2020 it completed 151 home visits representing 559 hours of service. Financial assistance was provided totaling \$9,214 in food and \$4,615 in clothing and household goods to 333 needy people, including 190 adults and 143 children living in our neighbourhoods. The conference supported initiatives at Banff St. and Heron Rd through visits in those areas, and funding was provided by parish donations from Holy Cross, St. Bernard and St. Peter churches, and private donations.

As part of SSVP Ontario's North of 60 Initiative, food items were collected and more than \$1,500 in cash. It was shipped to Rankin Inlet to help the needy there.

The Conference informs their families of the local services available such as food banks, community support centres and other services available at the helpline #211. Information is provided on federal and provincial government programs financially supporting RESP's to fund education for low income youth as a part of SSVP's Seeds of Hope initiative.

There are 21 members of the conference, of whom 7 are active, and 14 have made home visits. Thank you for your support of those in need. At Holy Cross Church, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Conference delivers services as part of the parish's Social Justice Initiatives.

Serving Christ through the poor with love, respect, justice, and joy

## **SENIOR'S MINISTRY**

### **CLUB 55+**

**Chair:** Fran Hadley

#### **JULY AND AUGUST 2019 "WE MEET AGAIN."**

- Garden Patio gatherings all summer, every second Thursday continued and were successful. Members gathered at 10:00 AM to avoid the extreme summer heat and attended 12:15 mass followed with a return to the Patio to share snacks and more social mingling and conversation.

#### **SEPTEMBER**

- Planning meetings occurred one-week prior to the regular twice monthly full membership meetings in the hall. *The Warm Clothing and Sock-it-to-Me* drives were deferred this year.
- Plans, to conform with Public Health Regulations, were made to ensure safe personal distancing with tables and chairs set at a distance and menu items changed to "Bring Your Own Lunch" and disposable cups used for beverages. etc.
- To support implementing the proposed electronic on-line masses, Club members volunteered for workshops to assist seniors in using their iPads and computers so they could access parish news, event dates, etc.

#### **OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER**

- Included trips to Morrisburg for lunch and Upper Canada Playhouse Plays. In November, we were busy collecting lightly used shoes and boots for "Soles for Souls", and 635 pairs were gathered in one weekend for distribution to those less fortunate. Second collection involved "Mitts and Scarves." Eight full bags of new and home-made knitted items were delivered to three

neighbourhood schools and DDFH. Holy Cross parishioners never fail to show their immediate and overwhelming generosity!!

## **DECEMBER**

- Christmas party with Anne Hurley and Jim Vetto. Foyer Partage residents were again special guests, and all had a grand time with sing alongs, word games and prizes.
- Jewelry and religious article are sold at all Club 55+ gatherings and at other parish events including the Knights of Columbus Breakfasts etc. These items are also gathered, repaired where needed and sorted for distribution to DDFH for Mother's and Father's Day gifts that the children give to their parents.

## **JANUARY 2020, "A NEW YEAR."**

- Club members were treated to a visit of representatives from other parishes to observe how Club 55 functioned. A special Commissioning Ceremony of Club 55 volunteers took place in January.
- To assist in updating of the Parish Database, ten Club volunteers, worked reviewing the current database and identifying those still active and those who had moved out of the Neighbourhood, those moved to Long-Term Care or Retirement facilities. The Team also noted those parishioners who were deceased.

## **CARING CALLS (A SUB-GROUP OF CLUB 55+ MEMBERS)**

- The aim of this Ministry is to reach out to the isolated and aging parishioners to let them know we are thinking and praying for them during these difficult times. Over the past 5 months, using Flocknote, this initiative sent out 6 daily, Monday through Saturday, Good Morning messages numbering more than 9 thousand messages to Holy Cross senior parishioners. An incredible core of Holy Cross volunteers regularly forward examples of the three themes including Spiritual, Educational, and just Funny messages to share on Good Morning messages. These examples are reviewed, edited for distribution, and scheduled for posting.

## **GREETERS (A SUB-GROUP OF FAITHFUL HOLY CROSS PARISHIONERS)**

- These volunteers stepped up without any coaxing to volunteer for the 5 positions for every mass since the Covid pandemic started. These loyal volunteers attend to the registration sheets to monitor parishioners' attendance, one volunteer provides the sanitizing-spray and all of us extend a Welcoming Greeting!

## **SUPPORT GROUP (A SUB-GROUP OF CLUB 55+)**

- There are 11 active members who initially attended the Self Managing of Chronic Conditions. This group meets every second Thursday over the past 4 years. The membership has been involved in many revenue generating projects including the Christmas Craft and Bake sale where their income went to the Youth and Young Family Ministry. Many are involved in the Phone Tree and Caring Calls initiatives.
- Club 55+ members are looking forward to coming together again soon as they miss meeting their friends, going to Mass and enjoying a nutritious lunch! We are already making plans for more Lunch and Learn sessions with the Council on Aging providing a wonderful series on "Smart Aging" a combination of key topics by expert presenters and followed by small group discussions. Have a great coming year with much health, love, and holiness.