

In this Jubilee Year 2025, as Pilgrims of Hope, Holy Family Parish celebrates 10 years as the Roman Catholic Parish in Portage, PA. We are made up of the former Saint Joseph, The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sacred Heart of Jesus, and Saint John the Baptist parishes. The Saint Joseph church building was renovated, and the parish was renamed Holy Family. The re-dedication of the church and re-consecration of the altar was celebrated on June 19, 2016. The Pastor at the time, along with a committee of parishioners comprised of the merging parishes did their best to incorporate sacred items from all parishes into the Holy Family site. Included were the Baptismal Font, Stations of the Cross, statues, the pipe organ and the marble Altar of Sacrifice.

This year, our goal for the fundraising is to complete the first phase of a major flooring project in our Church building. Before the merger happened, the project was discussed but put on the back burner. With funds already saved up and committing this year's Giving Tuesday's pledges, we hope to pay for the \$125,000 replacement of asbestos flooring in the main body of the Church. Our Sacred Heart Ushers Club pledged to match all donations this year up to and including a total of \$15,000! When they made a pledge to match donations to \$10,000 two years ago, we raised \$22,955. The total raised in four years is \$38,143! I am so grateful for the generosity of parishioners and our "friends" who make completion of projects possible.

The parish continues to both maintain our facilities and to make improvements. Decisions of what to do are guided by priority of our mission to form Disciples who will share the Gospel, improved accessibility to our buildings and responding to safety issues. To keep you informed, we are now gathering all potential projects into a spreadsheet with estimates of costs and will then prioritize all those projects so that we can plan. The unprioritized list includes roofing replacement, concrete replacement, upgrade of lighting, renovation and painting of stairwell walls, repointing of bricks where needed and renovations to the Rectory.

Projects are not just about the physical plant. Youth Ministry for our youth is crucial for us to have a vibrant parish now and into the future. Simply stated, Youth Ministry is about helping our youth experience the joy of seeing their faith put into action and themselves as Disciples of the Lord. In this past year, we hosted six events geared to children and youth and expect to expand upon those in the year ahead. Still not quite a Youth Ministry program, but we are working our way toward it. We are also making progress in establishing grief ministry and spiritual renewal programs open to all parishioners.

The parish serves 593 families and educates 92 students in the religious education program. There are 8 students in nearby Catholic schools. Father Tom Stabile, TOR, is the pastor; on loan to us from the Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Franciscan Friars, Loretto, PA. The parish financial report is available on the parish website www.holyfamilyportage.org. You may also find us on Facebook and YouTube by searching Holy Family Parish, Portage, PA.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Family Parish Community is called to serve God and one another in love. We are challenged to hear and live the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. We invite and welcome all people to join us in this journey of faith.

Fr. Tom Stabile, T.O.R.