

Sunday, March 22, 2026 – Jn 11:1-45 – 5th Sunday of Lent – “State of the Parish”

Saint Paul says, “Brothers and sisters: Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you.” I ask you today: How does the Spirit of God dwell in you? How does the Spirit of God manifest itself in you at this time in your journey of life – in your journey of faith?

The Spirit of God is the “tangible manifestation of Christ living in the community.” That is our mission statement to be that manifestation of Christ. We do that when the Spirit of God is alive in this church and alive in you and me. Today I come to you to take time to celebrate who we are as Saint Peter’s and to present the State of the Parish.

We can be thankful for who we are as Saint Peter’s. From witnessing our growth with people joining our church and seeing our families grow. To having our Saint Peter School and our Sunday religious education

program thriving with a combined 510 students. To having a twinning parish and school in Haiti. To helping over 20 community outreach services every year in our area showing how we love our neighbor, especially our neighbors in time of need. To being a place of worship and refuge every day, whether it is coming to Mass offered 15 times every week, or people coming to receive God's mercy and love in the 12 times every week when we hear confessions, or come for prayer at our Holy Hours or to just sit in the quiet beautiful church during the day to be with God.

We are blessed with Father Nicholas and parish staff that work so hard because they believe in our mission. This is their vocation. We are blessed with so many of you that volunteer your time and talents helping in our mission, for which I am so grateful. We are so blessed. And praise God for our blessings.

But our financial State of the Parish is struggling. Our school is on solid financial ground, and they have been able to keep up with the needs of

their school facilities. Our church and rectory have not been able. I know some of you in the fall of 2024, the time of our last State of the Parish report, increased your giving, for which I am so grateful. But we continue to run an operating budget deficit, which we have for well over a decade. It is time we must address it and our needs.

So, this past year we had to start taking a deep dive looking at our parish financial and facility and ministry needs. To help, this year I established a Building Committee and Parish Council. And we also have our Finance Council that has assisted me over these past four years. All of these groups review our needs in their respective roles. The Building Committee is specifically helping us get a grasp on the needs of our parish facilities, prioritizing the needs, getting cost estimates, and working towards a multi-year plan to address our needs. There are many needs. Some small. Some big. To name a few: The gas boiler that heats this church is past its expected useful life and each winter it breaks down and costs a lot to repair and maintain. The air conditioning to the church is also past its expected useful life and has always been

inadequate to cool this space in hot summer heat. Our beautiful stained glass windows that surround us in this sacred space need restoration as many have cracks, loose glass, and some leak when it rains. We have a large part of our church and rectory that has not been repointed in many decades and is prone to water infiltration. Our church lighting is in need of repairs. We have a piano that is past due in need of restoration. And the list goes on. At this time our initial list of needs is over 40 items to address and growing.

You will see on one of the poster boards in the back of the church with quotes from three parishioners on why they give financially to support Saint Peter's Church. I encourage you to read them. One of our parishioners calls this his spiritual home. He says just as he needs to take care of his family's physical home, he needs to take care of his spiritual home of Saint Peter's church.

Now, I know everyone here faces financial obligations. I know living on Capitol Hill is expensive. And like you, our utility costs over the past

year have gone up significantly. To be honest, I hate asking for money.

It is not exactly what a priest thinks about as his ministry until he becomes a pastor.

But the bottom line is, I need your help. I love this parish and I love you and our community. I love seeing the Spirit of God alive and well here in this place. Now I'm asking for your help to help our parish mission to continue to thrive. We are, through our mission, the manifestation of Christ living in the community.

I appreciate you listening. When you exit church today, please take one of these State of the Parish reports from our ushers. Take time to read it, feel free to contact me to discuss, and I appreciate it if you can discern if you can help by increasing your financial support of our church – our mission.

When Martha reacted to Jesus saying, “Take away the stone,” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of

God?” We are blessed because every day we can experience and see the glory of God right here in our church. We are soon entering the most sacred time of our church year beginning with Palm Sunday next weekend, entering Holy Week, and then the Triduum and Easter. It is the most powerful days of the year because we see and experience how much God loves you and me. He sacrificed his son for you and me. And the resurrected Jesus Christ accompanies you and me today, especially in this beautiful holy place we call our spiritual home. May God always bless you, bless your family, and bless Saint Peter’s on Capitol Hill. Amen.