

ROBERT E. MESSINA

Good morning. I'm Bob Messina; my wife Ann and I have worshipped at St. Joseph since 1997. During those years, our church has become our second home, an important part of our social life and a support in time of trouble. It has been a healthy, happy environment, whose doors were open to all worshippers.

When this awful virus invaded our community, it changed our lives – we reduced our social contacts, changed the way we shopped, we postponed and even cancelled important family events. We couldn't even volunteer at the hospital. But worst of all, it closed the doors of our church. Just when we should be bonding with our new Rector and welcoming new friends, we were forced into isolation.

So we sat at home and the church closed its doors; sitting here unused. However, just because we weren't in the pews on Sunday and attending the other events that make this church the focus of our spiritual lives, it doesn't mean it stopped operating,

The building has to be maintained, we still have to insure it, heat it and cool it and we have to pay salaries. The Vestry still has a job to do. Our worship life was on hold, but the bills still had to be paid and there was work to be done. I don't doubt we have lost some of our parishioners during this hiatus. It seems we are almost back to where we were many years ago, when a handful of dedicated people, who, against all odds, founded this Parish. So, it is up to us to be just as dedicated to keeping St. Joseph alive and well. We have work to do.

That work is called Stewardship. Stewardship has always meant total support – time, talent and treasure. For now, there aren't as many opportunities to give of our time. But, there is one very important need ...and that is, service on the Vestry. Many of us here have served. I know we don't regret a minute of the time we gave. So we urge you to step up and offer your time and talent. If not the Vestry, then volunteer for whatever needs to be done.

If you can't give that much of your time, you can still continue your financial support. We must maintain the pledges we made last year. And, we must pledge again for the coming year. Pledging allows our Treasurer to budget with a predictable income.

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Currently, we are running a deficit. That cannot continue. This Parish has been blessed over the years with generosity. We don't even have a mortgage. We are debt free, but we need to keep it that way. Please think long and hard about your contribution of time and treasure. That amount you give isn't as important as the regularity of your contribution. That's why we ask for a pledge promise.

Have faith. This time will pass. These doors will open again and we will be together again. Let's make sure we will still have a financially sound, debt free church to return to. It is up to us.