

From the St. Matt's Parish Council

July 22-23 is Listening Weekend – We Want to Hear from You!

The weekend prior to the monthly Parish Council meeting is Listening Weekend. After each Mass on Saturday and Sunday, a council member is available to receive your comments and questions about parish life. These get shared with the rest of the council at the upcoming meeting. Listening Weekend is a good way for the parish council to find out what's on the minds of parishioners.

Here are responses to recent Listening Weekend inquiries:

Question: *Can the statue of the Blessed Virgin be moved to a more prominent place in church, or can we do a better job of making Mary more visible with different lighting or through other means?*

Response: Mary has a devoted following which we want to honor. This is a worthy topic for the Liturgy Committee whose members also address the environment of our worship space. The Liturgy Committee is off for the summer, but this topic will be on their agenda when they meet in September.

Comment: *It seems like the parish is taking on too many large and expensive facility projects by replacing the roofs, the e-box, and installing solar panels at the same time.*

Response: This is an understandable concern. We want to assure parishioners that the decision to move forward with any big project involves many people, including the facilities committee, the finance committee, parish council members, St. Matthew's administrator and its trustees. We also seek input from the Catholic Finance Corporation to confirm the fiscal

prudence of our actions and, for large expenditures, we need approval from the Archdiocese.

The reason we're doing several big projects at once is because everything will be cheaper. We had to replace the e-box and roof, and by adding solar panels we qualify for sizeable rebates from the federal government:

- 30% rebate on the electric panel
- 30% rebate on solar panels
- 15% rebate on roof repair

Once the work is done, the savings will be immediate. The solar panels will cover about 90% of the electric costs for the entire campus. Given what we'll save on electricity (around \$2K per month) we estimate the project will pay for itself in 10-12 years. After that, we expect the solar panels will generate a profit for another 10 years.

We have to maintain our buildings, and with the guidance of many knowledgeable, dedicated people who care deeply about St. Matthew's, we are moving forward in a way that is financially sustainable.

Comment: *A parishioner expressed surprise and disappointment that they were not allowed to record or take photos during one of the First Communion Masses last May.*

Response: It's an Archdiocesan policy to not allow picture-taking during Mass. This is in keeping with privacy rules and policies designed for the protection of youth. St. Matthew's gets permission to take photos of all children who receive the sacrament, and the photos are posted on St. Matthew's website site. Each family receives a digital version of their photo.

*Maggie Lee & Kathy Goldenstein
Co-Chairs, Parish Council*