



# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

## Catholic Church & School

July 19, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

As we move deeper into the Summer months, we know that July runs into August, and August runs into the School Year. Just as the final quarter of the last School Year presented many challenges to our schools, faculty, students and parents, so will attempts to re-boot our educational activities in September.

Our deepest hope is to be able to resume full in-classroom schooling for all of our students as we “come out of the gate” on September 1st, provided we can do so safely. If that proves to be un-doable for whatever reason, we would attempt a hybrid process combining in-classroom and remote techniques. And if a significant local surge in COVID-19 infection rates should dictate that school building not re-open, or that we shut down again at some point after re-opening, we would go back to the virtual/remote model with which we’d ended the last School Year.

While “one size fits all” doesn’t necessarily apply to every school across the board – private and public schools do have separate hierarchies, and Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah and Plymouth are two distinct school districts – the State of Wisconsin’s Department of Public Instruction [DPI] does, indeed, set certain policies and guidelines that apply to all school districts and systems, public and private. To date, DPI has provided what seems to be very sound information, options, recommendations and instructions to public and private schools and their administrations; even if we could, I think it would be foolhardy for any of us to thumb our noses at it in the name of any value other than the safety of our children.

Similarly, The Catholic Comeback Matrix is providing us with helpful information and clear guidance, augmented by additional counsel from both the archdiocesan Schools Office and the Office for Catechesis and Youth Ministry, with regard to our school and our faith formation programs. Amy Nelson, (SJB School Principal) and Amy Albers and Lynnette Jochmann (SJB’s and STA’s Director of Faith Formation, respectively) are quite busy, diligently designing the programs and procedures that will provide our children with the content and quality of education and faith formation to which they are entitled and to which they have become accustomed.

So, I am confident that we are on the right track, and I am guardedly optimistic that come the start of the new School Year we will be well-prepared to hit the ground running, able to respond quickly and competently to the various “speed bumps” we might encounter along the road.

I am also confident that, after having experienced all these months of quasi-isolation and deprivation of contact with their classmates and friends, our students – from the youngest to the oldest – will be eager and ready to return to the classroom setting, even though the experience there will be different from what it was when they were last together because of pandemic-driven protocols like social distancing. My most heart-felt prayer is that our children will pleasantly surprise the Archbishop by resuming “a pre-COVID-19 life” – life of faith, that is! – in our two parishes with hardly skipping a beat! I pray this way because I see – and I trust you do, too – this generation (as, indeed, we see every “next generation”) as embodying the future of the Church. And as we won’t let them down, we trust God to make sure they don’t let us down, in turn.

Fr. Philip D. Reifenberg, Pastor