



NATIVITY OF OUR LORD  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

July 31, 2025

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am writing to share the long-awaited conclusion to the liturgical listening sessions we held last fall. I do apologize for the long delay. A number of time-sensitive issues arose in the meantime, and I wanted to make sure the proper time and discernment was allotted to ensure I could offer a prudent response with all voices considered.

I want to let you know that you have been heard, and that I have decided to introduce some changes this fall for the 9am Sunday Mass, beginning on Sunday, September 21 (one week after the Nativity County Fair). Please note that no substantial changes are planned for any of our other Lord's Day Masses, which are those which feature the Sunday Mass readings and prayers and which count towards the weekly Mass obligation.

Before I detail the new changes, I would like to briefly review the current, differing styles of each of those other Lord's Day Masses:

- Our **5pm Saturday evening** (or "anticipated" Sunday Mass) will remain the same.
  - The Parish Youth Choir will continue to occasionally sing at this Mass.
- Our **7:30am Sunday** Mass will continue to be a spoken, quiet, and short Mass, without music.
- Our **11am Sunday** Mass will continue to be offered with full solemnity and ceremony. It's perhaps best described as our "Sung High Mass." The celebrant will chant most of the Mass (as the rubrics of the Church prefer), incense will always be used, and the Nativity Choir will sing when in season (from October until Corpus Christi). There will always be traditional hymn-singing in English.
  - We will introduce a little more Gregorian chant, but there are no plans to bring back the pre-Vatican II Mass, also known as the Tridentine or Extraordinary Form.
- Finally, our **5pm Sunday** Mass will continue to feature music offered by Spiritu.

I would now like to detail the changes we will make to our Sunday 9am Mass, which we have done in the interest of appealing more to families with young children. To that end, we will call it the "Family Mass" in shorthand. But I would like to make it clear that *all individuals are always welcome* to this Mass and all of our Masses. We would just like to make sure we welcome children to this Mass in a special way.

- The Family Mass will be celebrated upstairs in the main upper church.
  - I have also set a goal of having doughnut Sunday *every Sunday* in Steiner Hall this year — utilizing other parish groups' help to supplement the fine work of the Men's Club.
  - We are also exploring the possibility of utilizing part of Steiner Hall as an overflow area for those with young children, perhaps with a screen featuring live video and audio.
- The Children's Liturgy of the Word will return, provided there are enough volunteers to run this program.
  - Parents who prefer to keep their children in church for the entire Mass are, of course, still most welcome to do so.

- The music of this Mass will be approximately half of the familiar contemporary style of music played by Spiritu and half traditional hymns played by Brian Carson on the organ.
  - Yes, many of the lovely hymns that Brian has been introducing may sound unfamiliar now, but I am confident that since they were written by world-renowned composers, they will be like old familiar friends in a few years or less.
- Children from both the School and Faith Formation program will be encouraged to serve, read, greet, and if Confirmed, help distribute the Eucharist.
- Holy Communion will be offered under both species (Body and Blood of Christ) at all Masses, provided we have enough extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

I understand that it's likely that not everyone will be perfectly pleased with the decisions I have made on these changes. Some may think that I have not gone far enough to "bring back" the 9:30am Mass. Others who have gotten used to the current 9am Mass in the last five years may think that I've gone too far.

Please know that I have agonized over finding a solution to this rather logistically complex challenge, in the interest of finding a sense of unity even among our differences.

No, not every detail has been ironed out yet for the "new" 9am Mass, in large part because it will take a sufficient number of volunteers to implement the proposed changes. That said, we can and will make necessary adjustments along the way in order to achieve our goals.

In the process of discerning these changes, we now have reached a new sense of clarity about the purpose of Steiner Hall as a dedicated social hall and meeting space for parish groups and events. Considering that the first two priorities of the Centennial capital campaign have been completed or are near completion (the repair and restoration of the church structure and stained glass windows and the retiring of the School's debt), we can now focus on the third priority, which is to refresh and renovate Steiner Hall.

We again will rely heavily on the input of you, our parishioners, and especially that of those groups that use Steiner Hall and its kitchen the most frequently. To that end, we will share a survey with the entire parish community to get your input on what the renovation should look like, from new restrooms and chairs to a new and improved sound system, and so on.

Finally, I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to all who shared their feedback on this project, from those who participated in the listening sessions, to Fr. John Paul Erickson for moderating the sessions, to those who shared input privately, and to those who have helped discern a way forward together, namely our parish council, hospitality committee, and parish staff leadership.

May our Almighty God and Father continue to bless this parish abundantly as we seek to discern and follow his will ever more closely.

Sincerely in Jesus Christ, Our Lord,



Father Rolf Tollefson, Pastor