

Dear Parishioner,

I write to you today as your new pastor here at St. Michael in Newark. I just arrived on June 28<sup>th</sup> and have felt very welcome by parishioners and staff. Having grown up in rural areas (the Southern Tier of New York), I am very happy to be in Newark as a beautiful and peaceful area.

To share with you a little about myself, I was ordained a priest on June 30, 2007. Before that I worked as an engineer designing and building roads and bridges for our state Department of Transportation. I was raised Catholic but after Confirmation I didn't go to church for sixteen years. There was no particular reason for this. I just didn't go. In my late twenties, I began searching for something. In returning to church, I found God and a faith that I deeply embrace and desire to share with others. I believe if I had known years ago what I now know, I *never* would have stopped going to church. So, it is very important to me to help others learn about our faith.

It is going to take me a while to get to know the parish and to know you. It takes me a while to learn names so please be patient. I look forward to knowing the joys of our parish and to help with its needs. This is the fourth parish I have served in since becoming a priest and the second where I have been the pastor. We are *one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church* that celebrates the same sacraments as every other Roman Catholic Church in the world. The readings and prayers are the same at each Mass but each parish has its own diversity in which the sacraments are celebrated.

I always strive to celebrate Mass with love. I also take very seriously my role in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to help people feel forgiven as they confess their sins.

I also realize that I come following the death of Fr. Felix last Fall and that the parish has been in a time of transition since then with Pat Albrecht serving as Temporary Pastoral Administrator. I thank Pat for her willingness to do this and I look forward to working with her in her role as Pastoral Associate along with the other staff. We can also be grateful to Fr. Anthony for providing the sacraments during this transition.

So, right now, I don't have a long term plan. What I want to begin with is to celebrate the sacraments with God's love, to listen, to get to know our parish and all who belong here, and to trust in God to lead us forward.

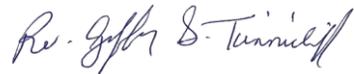
For our regular parishioners, I look forward to praying with you at Mass and working together in the ministries of our parish. For those who are homebound, I hope to visit you. Please be sure and give the office a call to make sure you are on our list of homebound. If you are among those who haven't been to church in a long time, from my own experience away from the church, I offer you a special invitation to come and join us.

I would also like to extend an invitation to all our families with youth and children to sign up for our religion classes for K-7 or youth group (grades 8-12). I also extend an invitation to families with children entering second grade to contact us about sacramental preparation for First Penance and First Communion. For youth entering 8<sup>th</sup> grade and above who haven't been

confirmed, you should do the same. If your child will be celebrating a sacrament this year, they need to be attending religion classes or a Catholic school. To sign up or to find out more you can contact June Sherman at the office.

I look forward to my time as your pastor. Please pray for me to do not my will *or yours* but that God's will be done in all things.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Jeffrey S. Tunnicliff".

Rev. Jeffrey S. Tunnicliff  
Pastor

P.S. If you receive this letter but are no longer a member of St. Michael in Newark, please call Katie at the office (331-6753) so we can update our database.