Good morning. My name is Allen Leech and I have been a parishioner here at St. Ignatius since 2016.

I'd like to begin with the beautiful words of St. Maria de Jesus, "Charity enters heaven when humility opens the door."
What I believe she is saying is when we think of ourselves less and serve others, love is manifested through action. And this love is received by God. I, myself, did not start out like this. My early life, was not a Christian life. I went through struggles of addictive behaviors which ultimately led to divorce. I was selfish. I was in desperate need of thinking of myself less. This need came in the form of an invitation. An invitation to enter through the doors of this church and become one with this parish community. What did that look like? It was a gentle nudge, a calling, to use what God has made me for, and present that gift to someone else. He made me for love. That is His gift. His direction, hospitality. I greet and welcome those who want to pray for themselves and/or others, celebrate God's graces, receive His mercy, thank Him or all of the above. God's plan for me didn't stop there. Further purification came as another nudge, another gift. After a 35 year absence, I went to confession and felt a renewal of spirit unlike anything I could place into words. And then, one more nudge. At a time of loneliness, God led me to a group of men who not only embody, but who's sole purpose is community, family, faith, and charity. The Knights of Columbus. Council 4970 which serves St. John the Evangelist, Our Lady of Assumption, and our parish, St. Ignatius of Loyola. Their mission is service. Our parish's mission is service. Service comes in different forms. Our physical presence to move for others, our mental and spiritual presence to help guide others, and our financial presence to help support others. All acts of service. All with one thing in common, help by being present.
So why am I here? To answer that, I am reminded of the words of St. Paul from 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. For when I am weak, then I am strong." Through my times of doubt and unbelief I am weak but am made strong through God's unconditional love and unwavering faithfulness. His faithfulness is my second chance. My second chance to strive to show faithfulness to Him by hopefully allowing humbleness of my heart to open the door to others so love may enter. This is why I am here. This is why I care so deeply about this church, about its mission of service and the needs of others less fortunate that we are all trying to help. It's a dedication and drive of a group of people that share the same goal. Loving others. What God has called us to do. Even St. Ignatius reminds us that love is shown in deeds and not words.

The Lord has been merciful to me and His grace has placed into my life Father Tom Lucas, with many other loving, faithful, serving members of this parish that have helped, and continue to help, make me a better person. If I can do the same to even one person, then hopefully love has been felt. I am so grateful for the rollercoaster that is my life as this ride has led me here, to this church and this giving parish community. If I am to understand anything, it is that I am deserving of nothing from God, but I owe Him everything! I ask that my life may be a blessing to someone else.