

The words of the prophet Isaiah are familiar to us—we have been praying them each Sunday of lent for the past nineteen years, as we have found ourselves being sent forth to love and serve...sent forth from this place, this house, this holy Table. We have acted on those words as a community of faith, as persons deeply committed to Isaiah's vision and promise.

As a founding parish of Family Promise, we have helped give homes to those who had none and, with our neighboring partners at Grace Methodist Church, we have welcomed, served, listened and fed families with no place to go, helping them to start anew with renewed skills. We serve them again next week at Grace.

Our parishioners are visible active leaders in Habitat for Humanity. Many here in this place have built homes for those who had none. Our annual *No Room at the Inn* helps fund Family Promise, Habitat for Humanity and the Missoula Interfaith Collaborative.

Blessed Trinity is visible throughout the Missoula community at the Food Bank, Poverello, and in every Missoula community concern for the many in need—but not just present, we have exerted leadership and provided support for continuing development.

We are present among the emerging Latino community seeking to listen, serve, support and gather in the safe place around the Lord's Table. We have initiated new ministry among and with that community as we welcome Sister Maria Orozco to serve all the parishes of the Missoula Deanery in the ministry among and with this community. With the financial support we sought through the Catholic Extension Society, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth and the Diocese of Helena, Blessed Trinity has initiated this vital ministry, the first of its kind in the Diocese of Helena. We anticipate additional grants later this year.

For over ten years we have provided space for one of Missoula's many community gardens, both land and water. The Garden of Eaton has served many in both the neighborhood and wider community. Blessed Trinity has been and is a leader in the

initiation, development, financing and now the construction of the Meadowlark center—a joint project of YWCA and the Missoula Interfaith Collaborative, of which Blessed Trinity is an active participant. Parishioners here have contributed substantial financial support for this project during the "See them Home Campaign." This center, now under construction, will serve those currently part of Family Promise helping them and many more to build a better future. It will also serve as Missoula's domestic violence shelter. We have been and continue to be a significant partner in this project.

The list could go on, especially noting the many cared for who call or come to the door of Blessed Trinity for help and support.

In this house, the words of Isaiah ring true: *"Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and homeless....then your light will break forth like the dawn..."* In many ways this is what it means to be the *"Salt of the earth and the light of the world..."*

Because of what we do here and who we become around this table in this House for the Church; because of the words we hear, the songs we sing, the sacrifice we make, the thanksgiving we offer, the memory we bear and the many with whom we gather: because of all that we care deeply, act justly and love tenderly. Here we become "sacred and precious." It is this house, this place, that then



becomes the light in the darkness—a house to hold and embrace the sacred people who in this place “call upon the Lord;” and are nourished for loving service in the neighborhood and city.

So, we look at the house and remember that the place itself is a home which must honor the sacred and precious people who gather in it. A home made ready for the many in need, the many with gifts to offer and the many who seek to *“Lift up their hearts to the Lord!”* The house, the place, the home must inspire, welcome, transform and renew all who enter it and all who see it. This we have discovered, this we now know and feel.

The road has been long, the needs have been determined and the vision has been discerned. We have taken our time, considered the potential and have been enthusiastic in our determination to build on what has been handed on to us, to affirm the gifts of those still among us and to move forward to honor this house for the church with loving care, attention to the holiness of the Gospel and the beauty of our living faith.

As we move forward we will, like a living tree planted by God, HONOR THE PAST, SERVE THE PRESENT and PROVIDE FOR THE FUTURE.

WE WILL DO THIS because we are a people of faith whose worship is true, whose song is strong and whose caring service is real. **WE WILL DO THIS** because we are filled with hope and we are not afraid to “love and serve the Lord.”

WE WILL DO THIS because the many must be welcomed into a home filled with the beauty of God’s love, the heart of hospitality and the wonder of a genuine and believing people.

WE WILL DO THIS because we care, because we are here and because in some fashion each of us and all of us have heard and are hearing the loving and hope-filled invitation of God as we gather at the Holy Table with the Blessed Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

WE WILL DO THIS because this house must be a welcoming home, a place of awe and mystery, beauty and wonder, reverence and thanksgiving—a house for the worship of God and the loving care of the living, hopeful and struggling Body of Christ.

WE WILL DO THIS because this house must itself proclaim the Gospel of Christ and be a beacon of hope and promise of mercy to neighbors close and far away. **WE WILL DO THIS** because we feel, see and hear Christ among us and in the many all around us.

We will do this because we must make ready until he returns in glory! We will do this because we and the many who will gather here must still be inspired to share bread with the hungry and shelter the homeless.

We will do this because we will not turn our back on our own. We will do this because we are “the salt of the earth and the light of the world” in this time and in this place.

