



September 6, 2016

Dear Residents:

Westphalia was founded over 180 years ago by German-Catholic immigrants and although our community is a bit more diverse today than it was back then, we still maintain a very strong connection to our early roots. With due respect to everyone's individual beliefs, acknowledging the impact St. Marys Parish and School have on our community is very important. I have often had people who are not familiar with Westphalia say, "Oh, that's the town with the big beautiful church" and I couldn't agree more.

Our Village government continues to enjoy a very positive and valued relationship with St. Marys. We appreciate the parish sharing their ball fields for local youth baseball/softball programs and parking lots for the annual car show. The Village DPW closes streets for the annual parish festival and works hard to ensure snow is cleared away in time for church services. We would also like to thank Father Eric for leading the Marian Procession through town on August 22nd in dedication to the Village and the start of the new school year.

The parish grounds make up a large part of our downtown area and what beautiful grounds they are! With this in mind, I would like to thank Vern Pung for all he has done to keep the parish grounds looking so good. I would also like to congratulate Vern on his recent retirement after 15 years of service to the parish. I would also like to acknowledge and congratulate LuAnn Bodarko and Eileen Hattis on their retirements after nearly 70 combined years of teaching at St. Marys. Their impact on so many of our children, many of whom are now adults living in our community, cannot be overstated. Last but certainly not least, I would like to wish Brian Flynn the best in his new position with the Diocese of Lansing as Youth Ministry and Adolescent Catechesis. Brian wore so many hats at St. Marys and his influence on our youth has been simply amazing over the past 15 years. And of course, Brian's talents as a musician and singer are extraordinary and inspirational. Fortunately, Brian has agreed to continue to bless the parish with his musical talents.

Mark your calendars, the Westphalia Historical Society will be sponsoring the 3rd annual Cemetery Walk on September 18th beginning at 2:00 p.m. at the St. Mary's Cemetery. Local citizens in vintage clothing will represent some of our most memorable ancestors. Admission is free (donations are accepted) and refreshments will be served. As always, this will be an interesting, informative and fun event. The WHS is also gearing up for the second annual Oktoberfest. The event will be held on October 1st and promises once again to be a great time. Volunteers are needed, please call Jane Bierstetel (989-587-4491 / 517-242-3921) if you can help out.

Labor Day having come and gone means summer is winding down. It also means school is back in session and children will be crossing the streets more often. With this in mind, please drive with extra caution, especially during the times when the children are most present.

Sincerely,

Dean Kohagen, President
Village of Westphalia