Week #197: Is your congregation having to raise fees or cut programs in order to balance your budget? (Due 8 a.m. Monday, Oct. 10. Prints Oct. 15.)

Our parish, like many others, is struggling to stay economically stable. Recently we had to announce that we would be closing our Catholic school after nearly 50 years of operation. We also had to borrow from our diocese to fund some badly needed repairs that had been put off from prior years. Like many congregations, we are seeing fewer and fewer young families. Many have left the area for better opportunities elsewhere. We have lost the construction and lumber industry employees who enjoyed good wages and benefits and were the backbone of our community in the past. And even our retirees are stressed by the cost of living and the demands to assist their children and grandchildren during this current recession/depression. We of all faiths need to work together to support our struggling people with our prayers and moral support. Let us pray for solutions and not further divisions.

Deacon Mike Evans

Sacred Heart Church, Anderson