



Our Lady of Perpetual Help
CHURCH AND SCHOOL

10 December 2019

Our Lady of Perpetual Help School one of two closures set for June.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Maple Shade, which has served the needs of Catholic school children since 1928, will close its doors permanently this June due to declining enrollment and financial challenges. The announcement was made with great sadness Dec. 10 by Father Joel Wilson, pastor of OLPH Parish, which sponsors the school.

The kindergarten through eighth-grade school has experienced a steady decline in enrollment over the past five years and all indications are that this decline will continue. There are currently 125 students, well below the 220 benchmark required for financial sustainability, according to school planning experts. Since the late 1990s, the parish and school together have accumulated a \$4.8 million debt to the Diocese of Trenton and the parish is no longer able to cover the financial shortfall caused by the low enrollment numbers.

In making the announcement to parents, teachers and staff, Father Wilson said, "Our school has brought so much life into our community throughout its long and faithful legacy. Our hearts are heavy as we acknowledge these financial difficulties and the inevitability of this decision."

Father Wilson continued, "We are deeply grateful for the countless people who have supported the school over the decades, and we give thanks to God for the privilege of forming so many Catholic students in the faith."

OLPH is one of two schools slated for closing this year. The other closure, Pope John Paul II Regional School in Willingboro, was also announced Dec. 10.

The Diocese's Department of Catholic Schools will be working with the administration of OLPH School to assist families in transitioning to another Catholic school in the area. The 11 full-time and 11 part-time faculty and staff members will be given support as they prepare to search for future employment.