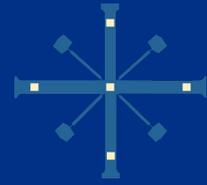


*“Our Catholic faith proclaims that all life is sacred, and the dignity of the human person is the foundation of the moral vision of our society. Human dignity is something that cannot be taken away.”*



## THE CULTURE OF RESPECT VALUES



320-763-5781 | [stmaryalexandria.org](http://stmaryalexandria.org)

### PARISH LEADERSHIP

Father Steve Binsfeld, Pastor  
Todd Wentworth, Parish Business Administrator  
Francie Peterson & Elmer Kobbermann, Trustees  
Mike Sponsler, Parish Pastoral Council Chair  
Mike Dolan, Finance Committee Chair

### STAFF LEADERSHIP

Laurie Youngers, Director of Music and Liturgy  
Kathy Fischer, Parish Nurse  
Troy Sladek, Principal  
Laurie Bienias, Logistics Coordinator  
Tammy Huss, Coordinator of Youth Ministries  
Kathy Ballou, Communications and Ministry Coordinator

Alexandria, MN 56308  
420 Irving Street

The Church of  
St. Mary





The Church of  
St. Mary

# STEWARDSHIP OUR WAY OF LIFE



## A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Friends in Christ who ARE the Church of St. Mary,

These past two years we have been exploring how we live the Beatitudes in various ways through our “*Inspired to Be*” series. During this time, news of abuse by clergy in Pennsylvania broke. News of our own Diocese undergoing bankruptcy reorganization was announced. It is understandable to become weary, despairing, angry over the crimes themselves and the failures in high leadership to be forthcoming about the sins that have been hidden there for such a long time. I believe that this calls for a fundamental reordering of how the church’s “business” is carried on. Here is where it is necessary to recall just what it is that we hold to be true about the **church of Jesus Christ**, namely, **that we are exactly that — His church** and not narrowly “ours.” We can allow its public structures to become decrepit, but no human authority of any rank has the capacity to extinguish the church that Jesus himself willed into being and empowered with the Holy Spirit until the end of time. **The vitality and life source of the church is not ultimately safeguarded by any efforts of ours.** This IS good news, because it means that we can’t ruin it either (nor can our ordained leaders). I believe that amid all the chaos of these times, something new and better and holier — and probably a lot more modest — is poised to be born. **We cannot give up on the Holy Spirit at work among us.**

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin preached a homily in Dublin’s Cathedral. He said: “*We need a church of light, a light that exposes darkness for what it is, and a light that is such that the mechanisms of cover-up and self-justification cannot extinguish or tone down.*”

Sometimes we can feel like a little fish in a large pond—small and insignificant. But I know that there is power here in the people of this parish community. We may not be able to influence the larger church in a huge way, but we certainly can influence how well we live out the Beatitudes here in *this* community. **HOW** we do that together proclaims the presence of Christ and how we value the dignity of every person as God’s creation (as damaged as we can sometimes be).

To this effect, our parish staff brainstormed on how we might effectively work on this together. There are policies created for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults as well as Ethical Guidelines for parishes in place. But even more basic than that is **how EACH of us work daily to create a culture of respect right here and in this community of Alexandria.** We do this by examining the challenges the Beatitudes bring us, and choosing to live those Beatitude values in action and speech.

Beginning the First Sunday of Lent, we will explore what this means for us. Each committee and each ministry will be asked to examine how their group/ministry can better work to create a **culture of respect** that draws people to Christ through us, his living body.

I invite you to read this newsletter and, during Lent, examine how we—individually and together—can better build a **culture of respect** that helps people and leaders together build up the Body of Christ.

*Fr. Steven M. Binsfeld*

# CLOW

## CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

by *Michaela Niblett*

If you have been paying attention at the 10:00 AM Mass lately, you may have noticed the pitter patter of little children following the leader “just like mice to the Pied Piper” as it was lovingly suggested recently to one of our amazing leaders.

After nearly 3 years of prayer about the subject and an amazing group of mama volunteers known as Momnipotent, here we are! This newly restarted ministry isn't really new at all, it was just in need of some new dedication at The Church of St. Mary. Often referred to as CLOW within our parish, the ministry is Children's Liturgy of the Word. It follows the Mass order almost exactly, except the language and expression is designed to reach kids ages 4 to 9 years old. The readings are the same, though wording is kid friendly, there are songs, a homily, the creed, prayers of the faithful and an offering. We really strive to connect to people at all ages at St. Mary's and this is just one way to bring Jesus to the hearts of the younger ones while still having them belong to the “adult” parish.

The liturgy follows the same order as Mass and the leaders prepare ahead of time to ensure a meaningful experience for the kids.

There is a lot of teaching and explaining that happens for the kids in this time frame about things like colors of the liturgical year, symbols we see at Mass, things we do with our body at Mass and responses we say during Mass. The hope is that they will feel comfortable participating with us so when the time comes they are able to fully participate in Mass by reading, singing and learning.

I have received feedback from families that the kids really enjoy it and that is evident by the number of children who keep returning to children's liturgy. Recently we had a visitor from another parish who runs children's liturgy and stopped in to check out how we do things. She was over all very impressed and especially noted appreciation for the way our celebration was so reverent and prayerful. That was a huge win in my book since our goal was kid friendly reverent worship.

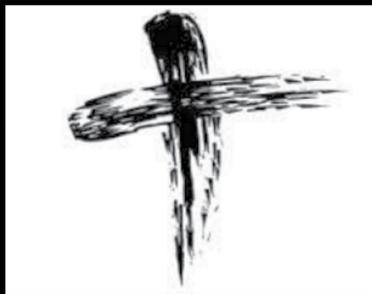
I invite you to stop in to see us anytime! It's not just for the kids. Also, if your calling is to help kids connect with the church, and if you desire to learn more yourself each week about the liturgy, call the parish office and join our team. All are welcome!



We mark our foreheads with ashes to remind ourselves that **we are not of this world** and are made for **eternity with God.**

**LENT** begins on **ASH WEDNESDAY** and continues until the afternoon of Holy Thursday.

**Ash Wednesday Masses at St. Mary's**  
**March 6 at 8:30 AM & 7:00 PM**



## WHY THE ASHES?

As our foreheads are marked with ashes, these words are said:  
**“Remember, that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return.”**

“For you have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless in You.”

- St. Augustine of Hippo

Ashes are a public sign of our intent to

**die to our wordly desires**  
and  
**live in Christ.**

**Ashes were used as a sign of repentance in the Old Testament:**

*“Then I turned to the Lord God, to seek an answer by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and **ashes**. I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession.*

- Daniel 9:3-4

# HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Holy Thursday, April 18	7:00 PM - Mass of the Lord's Supper <i>*Incense used, Adoration follows in the Great Hall</i>
Good Friday, April 19	9:00 AM - Morning Prayer <i>*Incense used</i> 12:00 PM - Liturgy of the Lord's Passion <i>*Incense used, with Veneration of the Cross and Communion</i> 8:30 PM Tenebrae Service <i>*A contemporary Tenebrae Service with Veneration of the Cross</i>
Holy Saturday, April 20	9:00 AM - Morning Prayer 8:30 PM - Easter Vigil (no 5:00 PM Mass) <i>*Incense used</i>
Easter Sunday, April 21	8:00 AM & 10:00 AM Mass

## PENITENTIAL SERVICES

Sunday, March 31 at 2:00 PM  
Wednesday, April 10 at 7:00 PM

## INDIVIDUAL CONFESSIONS

Saturday, April 13 at 3:00 PM  
Tuesday, April 16 at 3:00 PM  
Wednesday, April 17 at 10:00 AM

*Stations of the Cross every Friday during Lent at 5:15 PM*



# WINE WOMEN IN THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

*by Deb Hadley*



March 24, 2019, is the second WINE (Women in the New Evangelization) event to be held at St. Mary's. Our first event, on September 9, 2018, was a sold-out crowd with over 250 women in attendance.

Capacity of this event is 250 and we currently have 207 registered with 43 spaces available. This event is sponsored by The Church of St. Mary and open to all women and is a night of faith, fellowship and fun! You won't want to miss it!

So, what is WINE and why is it so important? Several years ago, I was invited to a WINE event and it changed my life. I could not believe how "on fire" these women were in their Catholic Faith, and I wanted what they had. Barbara Heil, who is the Keynote speaker for the March 24 event, was the speaker at my first WINE event. She was a Protestant Minister who converted to Catholicism and her story of what she discovered about the Catholic Faith was amazing. She is funny, honest, charismatic, and will help light the fire of the Lord within all who attend!

## ANGEL TREE HAPPY HEARTS

### A MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM KNUTE NELSON:



Yesterday, several of our residents received gifts from St. Mary's. Those residents were thrilled with the gifts and also enjoyed a visit from the ladies who were delivering the gifts.

One resident, a retired farmer, a bachelor, and a shy fellow was beyond thrilled with his gifts. He kept telling people walking by to stop in his room and see the gifts he had gotten. He actually had tears rolling down his cheeks because he was so happy. We are thinking he probably has never gotten many gifts because of never being married and not having children. He was as excited as a child about getting the gifts from St. Mary's.

I just want to thank you for doing what you do. What a wonderful thing for these residents to get such amazing gifts. Thank you for brightening their lives during the holidays.



# Lent.formed.org

Lent is a season of reflection, fasting, and prayer. Enjoy this collection of tools and resources to help you prepare for Christ's Resurrection!

If you have not yet taken advantage of formed.org, now is the time to do it! It is a free resource provided to you by The Church of St. Mary.

To register, go to stmaryalexandria.formed.org, and create a new account. Check out lent.formed.org for a collection of resources available for Lent including: daily reflections, book studies, bible studies, and a multitude of opportunities to deepen your faith.

## Please pray for Our Candidates Preparing for Full Communion with the Catholic Church



Sponsor: Savannah Altman. Candidate: Emma Marin



Candidate: Kendra Martin. Sponsor: Ann Craigmile



Candidate: Heather Schneider. Sponsor: Rita Kostreba



Sponsor: Cathleen Nordling. Candidate: Trista Berglund



Candidate: Elizabeth Radil. Sponsor: Therese Peck



# SACRISTANS

## SERVING TOGETHER TO BUILD COMMUNITY IN CHRIST

by Heide Egge

*“There is a feeling of peace and solitude as I prepare for Mass”*

**M**y name is Heidi Egge and I am a sacristan here at St. Mary’s. My role as a sacristan has given me the opportunity to become involved in my parish, and it has been a wonderful way also to become richer in my faith. In the beginning, I thought I was helping the church, but to my surprise, this position has helped and fulfilled me in so many ways. There is a feeling of peace and solitude as I prepare for Mass, and also after Mass as I stand alone on the altar. It is a peaceful and safe feeling. I know I am not alone. I look forward to contributing more and learning more each day. I also want to thank the fellow sacristans that have trained me, Linda and Jan, and of course Marlys Weber who is such a valuable asset to our parish.

## WHAT DOES A SACRISTAN DO?

A sacristan is a “behind the scenes” minister for the Liturgy.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>PREPARE FOR MASS –</b>                    | Ready the wine, water, and bread, and put them in place before Mass begins.  |
| <b>SET UP THE CHURCH –</b>                   | Arrive before everyone else (even the priest!)<br>Set up for Baptisms, arrange the books, perform basic housekeeping duties. |
| <b>ASSIST THE ALTAR SERVERS –</b>            | Sacristans prepare and help the Altar Servers perform their basic duties before and during Mass.                             |
| <b>CLEAN THE HOLY MATERIALS AFTER MASS –</b> | Everything is set back in its place in the Sacristy before the sacristans leave the church.                                  |

If you are interested in becoming a sacristan, email [loyoungers@gmail.com](mailto:loyoungers@gmail.com), or call the parish office at 320-763-5781. Initial training and formation are provided.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

by Todd Wentworth, Parish Business Administrator

Here is the financial update for the first six months of our fiscal year, July – December 2018.

Here are some of our “challenges”:

- Offerings are **down \$36,000 or 3.7%** compared with last year, yet we planned for a 1.9% increase. Offerings (Sunday, Christmas & other holy days) represent 61% of our TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT BUDGET.
- Our facilities are no longer new. Past repairs included, replacement of our: chiller, baseboards in the school, cleaning equipment, repaired baptismal font, gutters over doors of school, & more. Examples of future work include, replace roof on the church within 10 years, new faith formation curriculum, replace wi-fi on campus, handicap accessibility to the church bathrooms, repair door in Great Hall, replace round tables in Great Hall, concrete work outside of church entrance, etc.
- Payroll and benefits, while improving, are still notably below area employers such as District 206.
- Our hot & humid summer led to our cooling costs to be \$11,000 over budget.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 significantly changed the tax benefit of itemized deductions for many people. It has changed how people donate to non-profits such as our parish. Instead of regular, sacrificial offerings, the following methods may be used to make donations to minimize tax liabilities:

1. **Qualified Charitable Distributions** - Direct transfers out of a retirement account. Normally such distributions would be taxable, but if they go straight to a charity such as St. Mary's, the amount avoids taxation. These are more likely to come in annual distributions.
2. **Charitable stacking or lumping** – For example, instead of giving \$5,000 a year for 3 years, you would give \$15,000 in year 1 and \$0 in years 2 & 3 to take advantage of itemizing deductions.
3. **Donor-advised funds** – This method can benefit from the charitable stacking method. Instead of giving directly to a non-profit such as St. Mary's, money is run through a donor-advised fund.

These are brief examples of three common approaches to minimizing tax liabilities. Although beneficial from a personal financial management perspective, the reality is they cause an unevenness to our offerings. Please consult with your professional tax and estate advisors for more information.

There have been many bright spots that show our vibrancy:

- We have paid down our debt to a balance of \$1,995,158. We are now under \$2 million!
- Our payroll, payroll taxes, & benefits are on budget and we budgeted an increase that made some progress toward paying St. Mary's employees just wages and benefits.
- Our first **WINE (Women In the New Evangelization)** in September drew a capacity crowd of 250 women along with the support of several men to create a faith-enriching evening.
- Our faith formation programs have met our annual budget and with a change to more typical tuition payment expectations, have improved the timing of our cash flows.
- Through our own parish tithing we have contributed \$27,000 to various organizations and individuals in need. For individuals we work through local social service agencies and Kathy, our Parish Nurse.

We, the 5,500+ parishioners of St. Mary's, each have a financial obligation to take care of our parish. The continued vibrancy and growth of our parish is dependent upon our continued, sacrificial giving.

If you ever have any administrative questions about your parish, please feel free to reach me at the parish office.



CULTIVATE THE HABIT OF BEING GRATEFUL FOR EVERY GOOD THING THAT COMES TO YOU,  
AND TO GIVE THANKS CONTINUOUSLY. AND BECAUSE ALL THINGS HAVE CONTRIBUTED  
TO YOUR ADVANCEMENT, YOU SHOULD INCLUDE ALL THINGS IN YOUR GRATITUDE.

-RALPH WALDO EMERSON

