



PICK UP YOUR ST. MARY'S CAR RAFFLE TICKETS

St. Mary's Parish Car Raffle ticket sales have begun. For each of our 2,100 registered parish families, there is an envelope with your name on it to be picked up in the Commons Area.

In the envelope you will find a letter and 5 raffle tickets. We ask that each family sell or purchase the raffle tickets. The ticket price of \$20 remains the same as last year. Grand Prize is \$20,000 Juettner Bucks to be used towards the purchase of a new car at Juettner Motors or \$15,000 cash.

We appreciate your ongoing support of the raffle, the one and only fundraiser for our parish!

SAVE THE DATE!

Community Block Party - September 8, 2019



320-763-5781 | 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, Faith Community Nurse
 Troy Sladek, Principal
 Laurie Bienias, Logistics Coordinator
 Tammy Huss, Coordinator of Youth Ministries
 Kathy Ballou, Communications Coordinator

stmaryalexandria.org

STEWARDSHIP

Our Way of Life



The Church of
St. Mary

A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

This year I am celebrating my 40th ordination anniversary. Upon reflection, I think the greatest challenge was to make myself present to God in each situation.

St. Augustine searched for love and God and eventually found them in the most unexpected place - inside of himself. God and love had been there all along, but he hadn't been inside of himself. The lesson: We don't pray to make God present to us. God is already present, always present everywhere. We pray to make ourselves present to God.

This is also true for how we are present to the richness of our own lives. Often, we aren't present to the beauty, love, and grace that overflows within ordinary moments of life. Bounty is there, but we aren't. Because of restlessness, tiredness, distraction, anger, obsession, wound, haste, we are often not enough inside of our ourselves to appreciate these moments. We think of our lives as dull, small, not worth putting our full hearts into; but, as with prayer, the fault of non-presence is on our side.

Over these 40 years I found that life comes laden with richness, but we often aren't present enough to what is there. Sometimes we aren't as lucky as our health and our lives must be radically threatened or taken from us before we realize how rich these, in fact, already are, if only we made ourselves more present to them. The challenge is being present enough to the moment---and sensitive enough to the richness that is already present in our lives. God and the moment don't have to be searched out and found; they're already here. So, we need to be here.

As we look to working with Osakis and Belle River to create an Area Catholic Community, we all need to be present to the richness that is in each community and to what each can bring to the whole. Is this being done because of a 'shortage of priests'? No, not really. It is being done because we do need to be aware of the gifts that each can bring. At the same time, I also want to continue to encourage young men to think about ordained ministry. I particularly encourage those who have a "twinkle of mischief" in their eyes, who love their lives and what God has placed in them, and who want to share that with others. God will provide.... but we have to be present to the need and the moment.

Fr. Steven M. Binsfeld

420 Irving Street
 Alexandria, MN 56308



In this Issue

Guatemala Community Partnership Trip.....	2
Building a Culture of Respect.....	3
Visiting the Sick	3
State of the School Report.....	4-7



GUATEMALA COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP TRIP

by Lee Ann Sticha, Liz Staples, Brian Hoffman, Sandi Hoffman, Jim Almich and JoAnn Almich

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

It was a transformational experience for us to live among and work with Guatemalan people near the San Lucas Mission from April 29 to May 7. What a blessing it was to listen to their stories and learn about their community and culture as we visited the women's center, hospital, school, and coffee production facility. We developed relationships as we worked together on concrete block stoves, wooden houses, and a drainage project. Although we were not fluent in Spanish, we communicated with gestures, smiles, and a few Spanish words and phrases, along with the help of our interpreter.

HISTORY

In 1963, Fr. Greg Schaffer of the New Ulm Diocese came to San Lucas Toliman as a parish priest. He discovered that Guatemala was a country of scenic beauty, friendly people, and extreme poverty. Working with the community, he started programs in education, healthcare, housing construction, coffee production, and a visitors' program.

Brian Hoffman and Jim Almich admired Fr. Schaffer when he was their high school religion teacher in Marshall, Minnesota. Liz Staples met Fr. Schaffer when she first visited San Lucas Mission as a teenager. They all described him as charismatic and compassionate. Since Fr. Schaffer's death in 2012, the Friends of San Lucas continue to carry on his legacy. The Guatemalan people we met expressed their great gratitude for the work of Fr. Schaffer and the San Lucas Mission.

MAYAN CULTURE

We learned about Mayan culture as we watched demonstrations and participated in making tortillas, carrying firewood, balancing tubs on our heads, and washing clothes by hand in a communal outdoor laundry. These are important daily living skills in Guatemala. We were impressed by the colorful, traditional patterns of clothing which are hand woven and worn by Mayan people. Vendors sell beautiful cloth items in the markets.

GRATITUDE

Many Guatemalans have very little, but are grateful for so much. We came home with a greater appreciation of what we often take for granted – safe drinking water, secure homes, and appliances that make life easier.

NEEDS

Our experiences increased our awareness of the continued needs of the Guatemalan people who have no governmental social services. They desperately need the help of the San Lucas Mission, which is funded through donations to the Friends of San Lucas. Our hope is that The Church of St. Mary will develop a partnership with Guatemalan communities by encouraging others to visit the Mission, buying Juan Ana coffee, and praying for all involved. Please see the web site www.sanlucasmission.org for more information.

STATE OF THE SCHOOL REPORT 2018-2019



STUDENT THEATRE PROJECT

WINNIE THE POOH

One of the highlights of this school year was the first-time collaboration between St. Mary's School and the Andria Theatre. All of the students in K-6 had an opportunity to learn and experience theatre from Dave Christman, the Andria Theatre's Artistic

Director. The culmination of the theatre unit was the 5th and 6th grade Student Theatre Production of *Winnie the Pooh*. Having our students perform a play at the Andria Theatre, under the direction of Dave Christman was a great experience for all.

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL TRUST FUND

Teachers apply and earn over \$20,000 in Innovative Grants from the St. Mary's School Trust Fund

The St. Mary's School Trust Fund was established in 1991 with the mission to provide tuition assistance to families in need of financial support, strengthen and enhance the academic programs, and ensure the continued excellence of St. Mary's School. Over the past 28 years, the Fund has contributed over \$600,000 in student scholarships. During this school year, over \$33,000 was provided to 28 students and their families for tuition assistance!

Thanks to the generosity of so many people over the years, and the strategic investments of those donations, the St. Mary's School Trust Fund is now in the position to not only provide yearly scholarships, but to also fulfill the mission of strengthening and enhancing the academic programs at St. Mary's School.

During the 2019-20 school year, the St. Mary's School Trust Fund will be providing over \$20,000 in Innovative Educational Grants to St. Mary's School. Teaching staff had the opportunity to apply for innovative learning or development opportunities that would be above and beyond the annual budgeted instructional supply and curriculum allocations. Next year's Innovative Grants will help fund the following:

1. School Social Worker
2. 5th-6th grade theatre collaboration with the Andria Theatre
3. Variety of flexible classroom seating options
4. K-6 Mystery Science license
5. 75" interactive flat panel display for the Media Center

STATE OF THE SCHOOL REPORT 2018-2019

CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD LUCK TO OUR 2018-19 GRADUATES!

This year 22 talented, respectful and compassionate young leaders graduated from St. Mary's School. This group of students is a true reflection of God's blessings. The diversity of talents and special gifts has been easily noticeable throughout the course of the year. Our graduates possess a variety of skills that will allow them to achieve excellence. They live their faith and inspire others to do the same. I thank them for all of their hard work, leadership, and service to our school, parish, and community. I am confident they are fully prepared for junior high and know they will have the same influence on the next school they attend as they had here at St. Mary's.



St. Mary's School 2018-19 Graduates

John Botzet
Grace Bugher
Julia Doherty
Andrew Fleming
Zachary Hammer
Aubrie Johnson
Christian Lopez
Heather Marquardt
Alexa Rohloff
Hunter Sellnow
Ashton Sladek

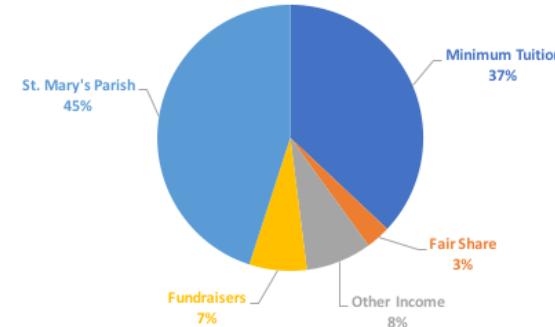
Anna Boushek
Timothy Classen
Kaitlyn Evjen
Mason Gorghuber
McKayla Hendricks
Carver Larson
Brannaugh Magallanes
Ryan Pesta
Logan Schmitt
Grace Shurson
Jacob Wales

FINANCIAL REVIEW

A fact of life with all schools, including St. Mary's, is that fundraising income is relied upon to off-set educational expenses. Without the fundraising income at St. Mary's School, the tuition costs per pupil would increase by \$480 per student! As we reflect on this school year, we are excited to report that thanks to the efforts of the Parent Advisory Council, The Gathering Committee, our generous parents, and parishioners; we met our fundraising goal for the 2018-19 school year. Listed below is the breakdown of the fundraising projects and profits for the year.

Calendar Raffle	\$25,374
Magazine Sales	\$ 3,267
Box Tops	\$ 857
The Gathering	\$61,069

2019-20 Budgeted Cost Of Educating A Student Is \$7405.00



We are very grateful for everyone's support and participation in this year's fundraising projects. We could not have reached our goal without your help. We look forward to another successful fundraising campaign next year!

The St. Mary's School annual budget is developed in collaboration with the Board of Education, Finance Council, the Parish Administrator and the School Principal. St. Mary's School is blessed to have strong parish support and an annual parish subsidy of approximately \$734,000.

BUILDING A CULTURE OF RESPECT

St. Mary's Core Values



At St. Mary's we believe that our Catholic faith proclaims that all life is sacred, and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of the moral vision for our society. Human dignity is something that cannot be taken away.

The culture we all build at St. Mary's is essential to carrying out our mission:

"To Know, Love and Serve God, by Living the Eucharist."

The Parish Staff Leadership has identified what we believe to be the five core values of our parish. Although there are certainly many more great and important values, we chose these core values to be lived by in order to build a culture where all are respected.

Look for ongoing communication that will help us shape the culture, and create an environment where all are valued and respected. All parishioners are expected to live out these values as together we build a Culture of Respect.

VISITING THE SICK

by Keri Wimmer, MSN, RN,
Core Charge Nurse, CentraCare Kidney Program-Alexandria

The dialysis unit is like a family. Patients need to come three times per week. Without dialysis these patients would not be able to sustain life. When St. Mary's Faith Community Nurse, Kathy Fischer, arrives for her weekly visit, the patients' eyes light up. The patients are so thankful to have a blessing and Holy Communion brought to them. Many times, patients have tears in their eyes because they are too weak and unable to get to church on Sundays. The patients and staff at CentraCare Kidney Program-Alexandria thank Kathy and St. Mary's Catholic Church for taking the time to recognize the importance of a gentle touch, kind word and blessing.



ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

STATE OF THE SCHOOL REPORT
2018-2019



St. Mary's School educates the whole child within a nurturing Catholic Christian environment.

The 2018-2019 school year included many great things that have set the stage for a bright future for our school. St. Mary's School is accredited by MNSAA (Minnesota Nonpublic School Accreditation Association). The accreditation process enhances the quality of education through self-evaluation and ongoing improvement. This year we are in the Self Study year of the accreditation cycle.

To complete the Self Study, the Accreditation Steering Committee solicited feedback from school and parish stakeholders. By listening and learning from others, the St. Mary's School staff and the Board of Education worked together to create a Self Study and Long-Range Strategic Plan. The plan is thorough, balanced, inclusive and forward thinking and we all are excited to see it being implemented in the coming years.

MNSAA ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

- Mission and Philosophy
- Teaching and Learning
- Quality of Personnel
- Leadership and Governance
- Climate for Learning
- Community Relations
- Strategic Plan for Improvement

On October 22-24, 2019, a MNSSA team will visit our school to offer an outside objective validation that our school has met the high standards of excellence and is actively seeking a quality education program. We have embraced the accreditation process and are looking forward to hosting the team in October.

In addition to our accreditation work, there are constant changes in programming, activities, events, and other initiatives that contribute to the growth and success of our school. This State of the School Report will highlight what took place this year and will give you a look into what is coming up next school year.

St. Mary's School has amazing teachers, supportive parents, and caring students. Together, with the support we receive from our parishioners, parish leadership and community, we can continue to offer a unique school experience while educating the whole child within a nurturing Catholic Christian environment.

Thank you and God Bless,

Troy Sladek, Principal, St. Mary's School

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

STATE OF THE SCHOOL REPORT
2018-2019

2018-19 EDUCATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the construction of the Alexandria Area High School and realignment of grade levels at Discovery Middle School, this year's 6th grade class of 22 students has been the largest we have ever had. Those 22 students represented 64% of the students returning after 5th grade. Next year we already have 15, 58% of the 5th grade students enrolled to remain at St. Mary's School. We are very excited and proud of the increase in these numbers. This validates the academics and leadership experiences offered during the 6th grade year that are valued by the students and parents.

This year all the students in 3rd grade were provided Chromebook laptops to assist in their academic studies. Each K-2 classroom also received a bundle of five Chromebook laptop /tablets to use. The additional devices in these classrooms have completed one of our long-range goals of providing individual devices for all students in grades 3-6 and bundles of devices for grades K-2.

After an intensive review and adoption process, St. Mary's School implemented new Language Arts Curriculums. The teachers in grades K-3 are using *Wonders*, from McMillian Mcgraw Hill and the teachers in grades 4-6 are using *ReadyGen* from Pearson. Both of these programs are valuable tools for the teachers to use to help their students meet the State of Minnesota English and Language Arts grade level standards.

St. Mary's School Staff participated in the Culture of Respect workshop and have now begun the process of sharing the values with all students and parents. Over the summer, teachers will be collaborating with one another on ways to make the St. Mary's Core Values more visible in the school and classroom and integrated into their daily lessons and expectations.

During Lent the students participated in the Penny Challenge. All of the proceeds, \$1,777.77, from the challenge were donated to support Sole Hope.

The 6th grade class had the unique opportunity to participate in an intergenerational painting project with the residents of Nelson Gables. The event was facilitated by Art Bar 39. The experience provided the students and residents a time to develop new relationships, share life stories with one another and create beautiful pieces of art.

