



PICK UP YOUR ST. MARY'S CAR RAFFLE TICKETS

Due to COVID-19, we will be adjusting our raffle ticket distribution to maintain health and safety protocols for all parishioners. Starting June 1, raffle tickets will be available for curbside pickup, similar to the curbside services offered by local restaurants and retailers.

WHEN: Every Monday through Thursday from 7:00 AM – 3:00 PM
(other times will be communicated)

WHERE: Outside of the Parish Office (near flag poles), 420 Irving Street
(Courtyard/South side of Church)

HOW: Call 320-760-1558 shortly **BEFORE** coming to pick up your tickets; **OR** once you **ARRIVE**
Stay in your car and someone will hand-deliver your ticket envelope

**THIS IS OUR ONLY PARISH-WIDE FUNDRAISING EVENT.
YOUR HELP IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!**

SAVE THE DATE!

Community Block Party - September 13, 2020



STEWARDSHIP Our Way of Life



The Church of
St. Mary



ADJUSTING TO LIFE DURING COVID-19

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Alexandria, MN 56308
420 Irving Street



STAYING CONNECTED DURING COVID-19



We've seen a lot of changes in the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At St. Mary's we've had to quickly make adjustments to our normal parish life. Online Masses, school at home, meeting via video conferencing, and countless other ways that have helped us to remain connected even while physically distanced. These changes have been disappointing – church doors are locked, funerals aren't allowed, weddings have been postponed, hospital visits have stopped, and on and on and on.

"What a gift of different things, candy, hot cocoa, morning prayers, and the Holy Water like my mom had when I was a kid. I get up in the morning, make the sign of the cross, and I feel like I'm walking into church!"
 - St. Mary's Delivery Recipient

However, through all of these disappointments and frustrations, we have learned to be innovative and creative in how we connect with each other. For example, a group of staff and volunteers have undergone a campaign to call every parishioner family – checking in with them and letting them know we are thinking about them; but also see if help is needed. Another group of volunteers, led by our Faith Community Nurse, Kathy Fischer, is dropping off groceries, prescriptions, and other supplies to those who cannot leave their home. Every week, Daily and Sunday Masses are recorded and available online (stmaryalexandria.org). So, even while in-person contact is suspended, positive and life-giving connections are being made.

Be assured that the Reopening Task Force is diligently preparing for us to come back together as safely as possible. Additional information on the Re-Opening can be found in this newsletter. Please check out our website (stmaryalexandria.org), our Facebook page, and/or sign up for our email blasts to stay connected, check for updates, and learn more about safety protocols.

We miss you! You are not alone! We are the Church together!

STATE OF THE SCHOOL REPORT 2019 - 2020

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Identified in our Strategic Plan was the need to continue establishing a positive school climate built on culture, safety, respect, trust and emotional support. We have made great improvements this year in various areas.

Common teaching and talking points related to classroom discipline and social emotional learning was a big area of growth. St. Mary's school staff implemented the "Teaching of Conscious Discipline." The Conscious Discipline model is evidence-based and research-backed SEL (Social Emotional Learning) best practices. Those practices include:

Brain State Model - A multi-disciplinary model that provides a framework for us to understand how internal emotional states create certain behaviors in children and adults.

Seven Powers of Conscious Adults - The biggest threat to a child's sense of safety is an out of control adult. The key to safety is conscious, mindful adults. The Seven Powers for Conscious Adults are: Perception, Unity, Attention, Free Will, Acceptance, Love and Intention.

Creating of a School Family - The school family is built on a healthy family model - the goal of which is the optimal development of all its members. Providing a connection between school and family, teachers and students, teachers and teachers, and students and students.

Seven Skills of Discipline - The seven skills of discipline are techniques to transform everyday discipline issues into teaching moments. The Seven Skills of Discipline are: Composure, Assertiveness, Encouragement, Choices, Empathy, Positive Intent, and Consequences.



St. Mary's Core Value of Compassion and Kindness

Along with the Conscious Discipline model, St. Mary's School staff also introduced, taught, and integrated the Church of St. Mary "Core Values and Culture of Respect" into daily teaching. Each month, classroom teachers focused on teaching two "Core Values," which were then integrated into the all-school assemblies and prayer services.

To better assist classroom teachers, parents, and students with our SEL programs, St. Mary's used a portion of its Title Funding to collaborate with District 206 on hiring a school social worker. Linnea Ingebrigtsen was hired to serve our school in this role and has been a valuable asset to our entire school family.

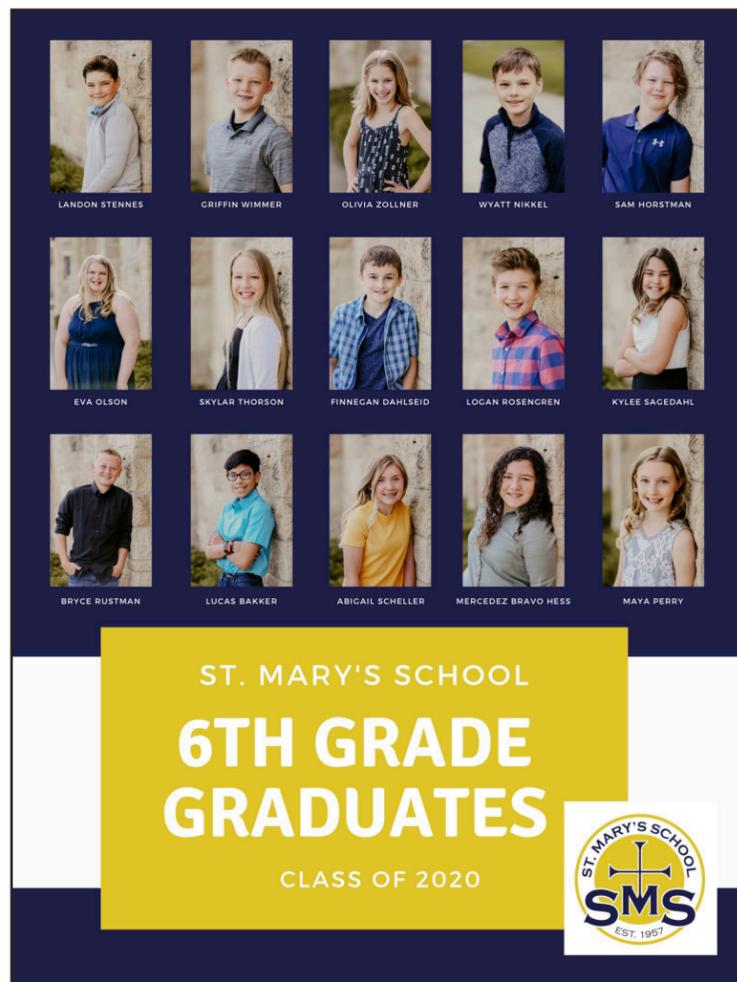
STATE OF THE SCHOOL REPORT

2019 - 2020

CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD LUCK TO OUR 2020 GRADUATES!

This year, fifteen talented, respected and compassionate young leaders graduated from St. Mary's school. Due to physical distancing guidelines, the students were unable to have a traditional class night and Graduation Mass. However, they will be honored and given the Graduation recognition they have earned. 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 in whatever goals they have. They are young people who live their faith and inspire others to do the same. I thank them all for their hard work, leadership and service to our school, our parish, and our community. I am confident that they are fully prepared for middle school, and I know that they will have the same influence at the next school they attend, as they had here at St. Mary's.

-Troy Sladek, Principal



SCHOOL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

In our school strategic plan, we identified the need to establish an on-line presence to help market the school and stay better connected to parents, alumni, parishioners and community. The Board of Education spent considerable time and effort this past year working on a plan, and have made significant progress with our marketing campaign.

To date, we have evolved and created the following:

St. Mary's School Instagram Page



Facebook Page with an Alumni Facebook Group



Alumni Contact Information and T-Shirt Campaign Promotional Video



LITTLE SAINTS

by Julie Desautels, Little Saints Coordinator

St. Mary's is excited to introduce "Little Saints," a children's ministry club formerly known as Sunday School!

Little Saints is designed for preschool and kindergarten-aged children. We come together on Sunday mornings in the kindergarten rooms at the Education Center. Parents attend the 10:00 AM Mass while their children explore and discover their Catholic faith in an age-appropriate setting. Our program is structured to meet the needs of the whole child; spiritually, physically, socially and creatively.

ABC'S OF FAITH FORMATION



ACTIVE

Children learn by participation. Little Saints will offer time for play, singing and creative experiences while partnering with parents to support and offer ways to help develop their child's faith.

BELONGING

Four and five-year-olds become aware that they have a church home and family. Little Saints teaches children how to belong to a church, and more importantly, how they belong to God's family!

CHRIST-CENTERED, CATHOLIC CATECHESIS

Little Saints kids LOVE Jesus. We learn he loves us and is our Best Friend Forever, no matter what! We will discover the saints, explore sacraments, experience liturgical seasons and much, much more.

"After a lesson on the Mass, my children received a Mass kit. They came home and practiced Mass, talked about the adoration chapel and loved the little projects. Helping kids understand that Jesus loves them as well as teaching them about our Catholic faith must be done at every opportunity." - Michaela Niblett



"The bible stories they heard were the same as what we heard during Mass but in an understandable way for them. They always did fun activities that went along with the stories. Both of my boys loved going and doing music. It was so fun listening to them sing those songs at home."

- Sandy Koetter

How do I register? – Look for more information as fall approaches. We will have sign-up weekends and online registration. This is a **FREE** program!

How can I help? – We need adult leaders and a song leader. We supply you with support materials. All you need to do is be a loving role-model for little ones.

Little Saints gives children a firm, Catholic foundation so they can continue to grow and develop their spiritual lives. It is a great way for families to learn together, pray together, and grow together. Do not miss out on this wonderful opportunity for you and your child. Join us!

GATHERING TOGETHER AGAIN A PHASED APPROACH

The inability to safely gather for Mass these past months has helped me realize several things: I miss the very act of coming together for worship and communion with you. I miss our sung prayer. I miss Holy Week and Easter. I miss First Communions and Confirmation (although they will still happen). I miss initiating new members at the Easter Vigil. I miss visiting freely with you at coffee and rolls and informally after Mass in the Commons Area.

The experience of Covid-19 has deprived us of something very dear to us, but it has not beaten us. We are learning to be respectful of the devastation the virus can bring physically, emotionally and spiritually. As more is discovered about the virus itself, we realize that we may be living with this for some time.

We have heard time and again that the Eucharist “is the source and the summit of the Christian life.” The Eucharist makes us “the Church” through communion with Christ and with each other. It saves us from being a collection of individuals with selfish interests. In our vocation as Church, we are to care for each other, especially the vulnerable. We are to be a people created in the image and likeness of God. In other words, we go to the Eucharist to receive strength and sustenance, to lay our own lives on the altar of sacrifice and to give thanks; we leave the Eucharist strengthened to become what we have received—the Body of Christ.

The current state of the pandemic is such **that the faithful are still dispensed from the obligation to attend and to participate in Sunday Mass.** There are still legitimate threats to our health from this highly contagious virus. These risks are especially critical for people over 65 years of age and for those people who have underlying health conditions. It is highly recommended that they not attend Mass. It is also recommended that those in that age group or with health conditions suspend any public ministry during this time. **The bottom line is this: if you choose to not come to Mass because you feel it is not safe, that is what you choose. That is OK. Anytime we go out into the public, we put ourselves at risk, as well as those with whom we come in contact.** Sunday Mass will still be available through our website www.stmaryalexandria.org.

The Bishops of Minnesota have given permission for our churches to be opened May 26 if it can be done in a safe manner, and in line with the Governor’s most recent order. Bishop Kettler asked us to form a plan to be approved by him that will allow us to gather together again as safely as possible. Our plan has been approved.

We are planning a three-phased opening for St Mary’s, shown in this document. These phases will depend on our ability to have enough trained volunteers. (Opening will be announced through our website.) Mindful of the obligation of charity to our neighbor, HOW we gather will look different and be experienced differently. Our phased plan for gathering again follows requirements and recommendations from our Diocese, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Minnesota Public Health, as well as guidelines from other Dioceses around the country. Our plan will be different from other parishes because we need to do what works for our community. This phased approach will be fluid and change as needed. But in all phases, **sanitizing, masking up** with masks from home, and **physical distancing** is emphasized.

We know that someday we will be able to visit with each other freely and enjoy full-voiced worship with one another. Until that time, let us work together to be respectful members of the Body of Christ, looking toward the good of all.

Fr. Steven M. Binsfeld

STATE OF THE SCHOOL REPORT 2019 - 2020

MNSAA ACCREDITATION

As a part of our accreditation with the Minnesota Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (MNSAA), St. Mary’s School hosted a Site Visit from October 22-24. During the Site Visit, a team of four members from MNSAA reviewed all our policies and procedures and visited with many parents and stakeholders. Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance with an aim towards evaluating, validating, and improving our school’s programming.

I am excited to report that based on the Site Visit, MNSAA has accredited St. Mary’s School for the eligibility period of 2020-2027!

St. Mary’s School is committed to helping all students reach their full potential in a safe and nurturing Catholic Christian environment. We put that commitment into practice by earning accreditation from MNSAA. What does this mean for our parish and families?

It means quality education for our students:

- Superior teachers
- Rigorous curriculum
- Integrated professional practices
- Compliance with the State of Minnesota guidelines for safety and well-being
- Governing body made up of parents and parishioners providing oversight
- Nationally recognized education programs

NEW WRITING CURRICULUM



New to this year’s English Language Arts academic programming was the implementation of a curriculum called, “Units of Study: the Writing Workshop.” The units of study helped teachers provide opportunities for students to learn higher standards of writing. St. Mary’s teachers completed twelve hours of professional development.

STATE OF THE SCHOOL REPORT

2019 - 2020



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

Every school year has unique and memorable moments for students, staff, and families. However, the 2019-2020 school year was like no other and will never be forgotten. On March 15, we received the Governor's Executive Order that schools would be closing because of COVID-19. With one day to prepare, the St. Mary's School staff developed a distance learning plan that went into effect on the very first day students were at home. I am so proud of the teaching staff, students, and parents for coming together to make the very best of the difficult situation that was presented to all of us.



PHASED COVID-19 REOPENING

The Church of St. Mary

COMMON TO ALL PHASES
DISTANCE • SANITIZE • MASKS • HEALTHY AT HOME
 (65+/Underlying health conditions)

PHASE 1

CHURCH OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER/ADORATION

- Monday & Wednesday, 12:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- Tuesday & Thursday, 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- Friday, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 10 person limit

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

- Please enter through door A1 (Courtyard Door)
- Health and Safety instructions will be posted
 - * Wednesday at 11:00 AM
 - * Saturday at 11:00 AM



PHASE 2

CHURCH OPEN FOR WEEKDAY MASS

- Tuesday & Thursday, 5:30 PM
- Wednesday & Friday, 8:30 AM
- 50 person maximum
- Please enter through door A1 (Courtyard Door)

WEDDINGS/FUNERALS

- COVID-19 guidelines will be provided to families
- 50 person maximum



PHASE 3

CHURCH OPEN FOR WEEKEND MASS

- Revised Mass Schedule
 - * Sunday at 8:30 AM
 - * Sunday at 11:00 AM
- Reopening date will be determined by:
 - * Status of COVID-19
 - * Availability of Volunteers
 - * Training of Volunteers



*All dates are subject to change

MASS WILL CONTINUE TO BE RECORDED
WWW.STMARYALEXANDRIA.ORG

COVID-19 HEALTHY AT HOME

The Church of St. Mary

INDIVIDUALS AT HIGH RISK FOR SEVERE ILLNESS FROM COVID-19 INCLUDE:

HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS

- Age 65 and older
- All ages with underlying conditions, particularly if not well controlled.
 - * Chronic lung disease
 - * Moderate to severe asthma
 - * Serious heart conditions
 - * Immunocompromised Conditions
 - » Cancer treatment
 - » Immune deficiencies
 - » Smoking
 - » Poorly controlled HIV or AIDS
 - » Bone marrow or organ transplantation
 - » Prolonged use of corticosteroids
 - » Other immune weakening medications
 - * Severe obesity (Body Mass Index > 40)
 - * Diabetics
 - * Chronic kidney disease and undergoing dialysis
 - * Liver disease

NO SUNDAY OR HOLY DAY OBLIGATION

The faithful have been dispensed from their Sunday and Holy Day obligation to participate in the Mass until further notice.

ST. MARY'S RE-OPENING SAFETY INFORMATION

St. Mary's Hospitality ministers will provide instructions to you when we re-open for weekend Mass.

Look for additional signage information when you enter the campus.

MASK UP

Masks will be required at St. Mary's.

Masks help slow the spread of COVID-19.



When in public, wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth.

SANITIZE

Sanitize your hands as you enter and exit.

Sanitizing stations will be provided at each entry and exit point.



SOCIAL DISTANCE

Stay at least six-feet from other households.

Follow the signs located on the floor to help you maintain this distance.



Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.