

STEWARDSHIP

Our Way of Life



Living
a Life
of
Stewardship



The Church of
St. Mary

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STMARYALEXANDRIA.ORG

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A NOTE FROM FATHER MATTHEW

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus,

One of my great joys in opening Christmas cards is reading your family Christmas letters. One trend I have noticed is a tendency to put news about children and grandchildren above that of the parents and grandparents who are writing the letter. Why are we prouder of what our progeny have done than what we have done personally? I believe the reason behind this is a very healthy sense of *legacy*. Their successes are our successes by extension, and we take joy in their joys and commiserate with their sorrows out of love for them. We want the best for them, and our efforts become focused on doing the most good for them that we can with the time we have left.

The older I get the more I get bored with myself. I already know me; my stories are old news. Now, I would much rather hear about what my friends and their family are up to, even the stories of strangers. As much as I

enjoy telling a good story in a homily or over dinner, it is the stories of my nieces, cousins, and friends that are most fun to recount. I have had “my day”, and now I want to see what the next generation will get up to and how I can support them in their efforts. I want to contribute to something bigger than myself and, having no children of my own, I have to get creative with my generosity. Perhaps it is just a matter of perspective, as I can now see how small my one note is in the great symphony of God’s plan. I want to leave something behind that will outlast me; I want the song to go on forever!

This, I believe, is one of the least recognized gifts of the Church: She endures long after we have passed to our eternal reward. We can look forward with hope to enjoying the Beatific Vision in heaven, but do we want this only for ourselves? We are part of something that transcends space and time—the saving work of God, as we express in each Mass at the Nicene Creed. We work, in the name of Jesus, for the salvation of souls and the glory of God. We are part of something wonderful that began long before us and will continue long after us here on earth; we are made for the eternal

joys of heaven that began at the moment of creation and will endure forever in God Himself. The good we do here and now will bear fruit in heaven; what greater legacy could we ask for than that?

I am so grateful to all of you for your generosity to our parish and our school; you are a great blessing to me and to this community. I am overwhelmed by the blessing that is being part of such a giving community. As you prayerfully consider your own legacy and that of your household, please consider the needs of the Church in your plans. Your time, talent, and treasure are important to all that we do as parishes and as a larger Church. We are stewards of the blessings we have received, including the blessing of belonging to the Body of Christ here on earth; may our charitable giving reflect our gratitude for the gifts we have received, and our desire to build a legacy of grace for the generations that will follow us.

Peace in Christ,

Father Matthew Kuhn, Pastor

A Lenten Mission
with
VALLIMAR JANSEN

March 15 | 7:00-7:45 pm

"Jesus Loves the Little Children"

MINI CONCERT

March 16-18 | 6:30-8:00 pm

Join us for a Lenten Mission that will inspire a renewed, passionate love of our faith through Scripture, song, story and movement led by Vallimar Jansen!

Vallimar will speak at all weekend Masses on March 16 & 17.

All are welcome!

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The Church of
St. Mary



LIVE



**HARVEST PACK
FOOD PACKING EVENT**

Hosted by
The Church of St. Mary

**APRIL 19, 2024
10:00 AM - 8:00 PM**

The opportunity to provide food to those in need is within our reach. Get involved in a fun event with the whole family!

To donate and register for the event, scan the QR code or go to:

stmaryalexandria.org



NCYC - NATIONAL CATHOLIC YOUTH CONFERENCE

Last November, 13 high schoolers from our parish traveled to Indianapolis to attend the National Catholic Youth Conference. Below are quotes from the students and pictures highlighting the experience.

“

My takeaways were that you aren't a problem to be solved and just being at adoration. I also LOVED literally everything especially the MOVIEEEE and the concert which were my favorites from day 1. I also loved the last song when everyone was just screaming and it was such a good way to end. I also loved all the inside jokes and **becoming closer to everyone.**



“

Here are my takeaways from the weekend - You are not a problem, **you are a beautiful mystery to be encountered!** Why should we wait to pray over people when we have the time now? If we don't want to be loved only by the things we do, we shouldn't expect that from God and only ask him for things. What you hold in your hands says a lot about you! If you implement time to pray in your daily life, your life should change!

“

My takeaways from NCYC are that **we are fully alive, in him and in his presence.** I really liked how much prayer affects everyone in every way. I really loved adoration and just feeling him in us. Finally my biggest takeaway is how much he loves us, you and me.



“

My biggest takeaway is that I am not a problem to be solved but a joyous mystery. Another big thing that I took away from this trip is that Jesus didn't come to make bad people good but to save the people that died. I never really thought of it that way and it gave me a new perspective. Overall, **I loved this trip and am excited to hopefully go next year!**



“

My favorite moment from NCYC this year was **Adoration in the stadium.**



“

As a leader, the beauty of the weekend is to see the **youth connect with each other, their faith, and with Jesus.** Adoration is always a highlight and it is awesome to see the youth deep in prayer and the emotions that surface. It is also a highlight to have the majority of our youth and adults wait in line on the first day of the event to attend Reconciliation – and almost all of them by the end of the weekend.



MID-YEAR FINANCIAL UPDATE

St. Mary's has completed the first half of our fiscal year. Our fiscal year runs from July 1 – June 30. Here are some highlights from the past 6 months:

Our **regular sacrificial offerings** are our primary source of revenue and support for our parish. After 6 months our offerings are \$627 ahead of our detailed budget. Remember, what you see in the bulletin is a simplified view of the entire year budget spread equally over 52 weeks. For the financials reviewed by the finance council, we break down our budget for each month based on historical trends, etc. While \$627 is positive, it will not help build any cash reserves for unexpected repairs or support any extraordinary efforts.

Your regular sacrificial giving allows our parish community to help those in need, enrich the formation of our faith, take care of our employees with just wages and benefits, and care for our facilities. We have **benevolently shared over \$35,000** with local agencies to support individuals; various organizations, such as Life Connections, Garfield Elementary School playground, MN Adult & Teen Challenge, Alexandria Senior Center, TEC, REC; and global efforts like the Holy Land Relief and Lay Mission Helpers. We hosted the Messy Family Project and Men on Fire Retreat. Major **facility updates** include,

installation of fiber internet for improved reliability, our church roof was re-shingled at a cost of \$161,000 (insurance did NOT cover the storm damage), we installed security cameras throughout campus, and replaced spotlights in the church with new energy efficient bulbs.

We continue to make monthly payments on our **debt**. Our debt balance is down to \$1,018,676.

LOOKING AHEAD...Lots of excitement and momentum as we move into 2024. **Mass attendance** continues to increase closer to 90% of pre-pandemic numbers. We have begun planning to implement Pathways Family Formation for this fall, Vallimar is returning in March, and we are looking to hire a Director of Faith Formation; we have been without one for the past 10+ years. As the largest parish in the diocese, this has been an unmet need for too long. In July, we will be sending a bus load to Indianapolis for the 1st National Eucharistic Congress in 80+ years!

Facility Priorities – We continue to work for a new parish house, in Alexandria, for both of our priests. The finance council is working to finalize a recommendation. After some creative thinking, we are approaching the school kitchen remodel/expansion with a more simplified, practical concept. While our church roof is in great shape with

some high-quality shingles, our church windows are not. You may have noticed some buckets catching a little water after the December rains. We have been battling the windows since they were installed, in part because some of the windows were an incorrect design by the architect. We have a team together reviewing notes to determine a game plan.

At St. Mary's we believe that, as followers of Jesus Christ, we must also then be Christian stewards. This is not optional. All we are and all we have is a gift from God that He has entrusted to us. May you discern how God wants you to use your gifts in this new year of 2024. We look forward to an exciting year as we parishioners continue to increase engagement and the vibrancy of OUR parish community.

I am grateful for all of you and am blessed to be a part of this parish community. May God continue to abundantly bless you and your family!

Todd Wentworth

Todd Wentworth,
Parish Business Administrator

LENT & HOLY WEEK AT ST. MARY'S

Individual Confessions

SATURDAYS
3:00 - 4:30 PM
 Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Reconciliation Service

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18
5:00 - 7:00 PM
 (This is a brief service followed by individual confessions. Several priests will be available.)

Stations of the Cross

Every Friday during Lent at 5:15 PM in the Great Hall






Friday Fish Fry Schedule

February 16 | March 1 | March 15
 4:30-7:00 PM, St. Mary's School Gym



Living Stations of the Cross

FEBRUARY 29
7:00 PM
MARCH 2
7:00 PM

				
Palm Sunday	Holy Thursday	Good Friday	Holy Saturday	Easter Sunday
SATURDAY MARCH 23 5:00 PM	THURSDAY MARCH 28 7:00 PM Mass of the Lord's Supper <i>*Incense used</i>	FRIDAY MARCH 29 9:00 AM Morning Prayer	SATURDAY MARCH 30 9:00 AM Morning Prayer	SUNDAY MARCH 31 8:00 AM Easter Mass
SUNDAY MARCH 24 8:00 AM 10:30 AM <i>(note time change)</i>	(Eucharist will be reposed after Mass)	12:00 PM The Lord's Passion 8:30 PM Tenebrae Service	8:30 PM Easter Vigil <i>*Incense used</i>	10:00 AM Easter Mass

ASH WEDNESDAY

BEGINS THE SEASON OF LENT

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14
8:30 AM & 5:30 PM

*Remember, that you are dust,
and unto dust you shall return*

THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY
ALEXANDRIA, MN

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Ash Wednesday Mass will be live streamed on Facebook

Alexandria, MN 56308
420 Irving Street

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