THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY

Ministry Handbook

Living a Life of Stewardship

The Church of St. Mary

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*Please note that contacts and organizations change and develop often over their lifetimes. We attempt to be as accurate as possible with the latest contact person and contact information as well as ministry/organization descriptions.

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Bereavement	Patty Marriot	320-762-2320	pastoralcare@stmaryalexandria.org
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Board of Education	Dan Kirscht	320-491-8850	djkirscht@gmail.com
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Gift Bearers	Parker Olson	320-460-5339	polson@stmaryalexandria.org
Hospitality Desk	Brenda Becker	320-460-5303	bbecker@stmaryalexandria.org
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Liturgy Committee	Parker Olson	320-460-5339	polson@stmaryalexandria.org
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Ministry Contacts (continued)

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Sacristan	Parker Olson	320-460-5339	polson@stmaryalexandria.org
Sanctity of Life Group (SOLG)	Francie Peterson	320-360-0325	francie.peterson1@gmail.com
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Usher	Parker Olson	320-460-5339	polson@stmaryalexandria.org
Vacation Bible School	Julie Desautels	320-846-1842	2plus6@gmail.com
Young Adults/Young Couples	Lizzy Franzese		lizzyfranzese@yahoo.com

Area Catholic Community Council

Pastoral Council

The Pastoral Council is the preeminent advisory body in the Come to the Water Area Catholic Community (ACC). They are tasked with building an identity as the Come to the Water ACC, assisting in establishing and facilitating goals and objectives relating to the pastoral mission, and fostering participation in the total life and mission of the Church within the Diocese of St. Cloud. All other committees, councils, boards, and commissions report and are held accountable to this council. Any person who has been confirmed and is a member may be elected/appointed to the Council.

Parish Committees

Art & Environment Committee

Volunteers who have a gift for artistic arrangements follow the Church's guidelines in preparing the liturgical environment for the various church seasons.

Board of Education

This is an advisory committee for the parish whose task it is to review, monitor and evaluate the educational activities of the entire parish. This includes St. Mary's Elementary School, the Faith Formation programs and Adult Faith Formation programs. Board members serve 1-2 three-year terms.

Cemetery Committee

The Cemetery Committee meets periodically to plan, develop, operate, and maintain St. Mary's Cemetery and Mausoleum.

Evangelization Committee

This committee aims to help welcome new faces, reconnect with old friends, and energize our parish family to live our mission statement: to build God's Church across generations by living the Eucharist.

Finance Council

This is an advisory council for the parish. It meets monthly to assist the pastor and the Parish Business Administrator with the decisions that affect the financial stability of the parish. The council is composed of the pastor, parish administrator, two trustees, one liaison person from the Pastoral Council, and seven members who are appointed.

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

The JPIC (Justice, Peace, and Integrity for Creation) Committee assists our parish in understanding Catholic Social Teaching. JPIC achieves this by supporting, organizing, and training parishioners around the areas of direct service (charity), legislative advocacy, global solidarity, and community organizing.

Parish Festival

This party is a parish fellowship event for the whole community. Food, music, and games provide something for everyone. This occasion offers many opportunities to volunteer. There is an opportunity for creative people to develop "Theme Baskets" to be sold at the Silent Auction on the day of the festival. In addition, volunteers are always welcome to serve on the planning committee for this event. Each year, someone wins $20,000 in Juettner Bucks or $15 K in cash.

Sanctity of Life Group

The Sanctity of Life Committee is focused on the many aspects and concerns regarding the sanctity of life. There are activities planned and information available for all ages and walks of life.

Liturgy Committee

The Liturgy Committee promotes programs of education, liturgy planning, ministry development and evaluation to help develop the liturgical life of the parish. They aid celebrants in enhancing liturgical celebrations of the parish.
Any member of the parish is eligible to serve as a member of this committee. Members of this committee are often nominated by other members in their ministry area.

Parish Life

Parish Life seeks to emphasize the importance of human relationships within our parish community. With this purpose in mind, our Parish Life hopes to promote enrichment for our fellow parishioners and to facilitate social opportunities that will meet the needs of all: the youngest to the eldest, married, widowed, divorced and single.

Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee educates parishioners in various ways throughout the year about how to embrace stewardship as a way of life. The committee encourages parishioners to give freely of their time, talent, and treasure. A Ministry Handbook is maintained on the parish website that offers many ways to become an active and involved member of our faith community. The committee plans the Annual Stewardship Renewal held every fall.

Outdoor Grounds Assistance

The Landscaping/Gardening Team is for anyone who likes to work outside. Volunteers assist our custodial team with care of our outdoor lawn and landscaping during the spring – fall months.

Spiritual Growth Opportunities

Eucharistic Adoration

Being involved with this ministry will help you make prayer and spending time with our Lord a greater priority in your life. Consider being a regular adorer in our Blessed Sacrament Chapel. We try to have two people present for each hour of Adoration. Bibles and other prayer and meditation books are available to enhance your hour of Adoration. Often you will not need them as the hour of silent meditation goes very quickly. If you are not able to commit to a regular time, you are welcome to come to the Chapel at your leisure.

Living Stations of the Cross

Each Lenten season the Living Stations of the Cross bring the death and resurrection of Jesus “to life”. Members of the parish present a still-life portrayal of the stations of the cross. Dressed as people from the first century, this hour-long prayer is a visual reminder of the sacrifice and celebration that comes from Jesus’ dying and conquering death; even death on a cross. The music, scripture and visuals of the Living Stations of the Cross are a way for many to enter into Easter with a fuller appreciation of Christ as both a human being and the Son of God. Whether part of the cast or simply someone watching from the pews, it provides time to reflect on the grace we have and continue to receive.

Prayer Link

St. Mary’s Prayer Link is one way to bring your concerns to God with the support of St. Mary’s community. All prayer requests are confidential. Anyone may be part of this ministry.

Marriage Encounter Community

Worldwide Marriage Encounter (WWME) is the largest faith-based marriage enrichment organization in the world. WWME programs have enriched and transformed the lives of married couples and priests for generations. WWME offers a peer-to-peer experience, typically over a weekend, where married couples and priests can pause and reflect privately on the meaning of their vocations and are given the tools for nurturing their love. WWME Weekends are offered at St. Mary's throughout the year.

Rosary Before Mass

Volunteers lead the rosary 25 minutes before each weekday Mass. People can sign up to lead at the table by the Sacristy.

Sponsor Couple for Engaged Couples

Married couples of St. Mary's are matched with engaged couples. Together, they review the engaged couple's marriage inventory. Training is provided.

Pastoral Care

Bereavement

Grief support and resources available through our Pastoral Care Coordinator. Grief Support Group offered twice a year.

Funeral Lunch Ministry

Nine groups of parishioners from The Church of St. Mary provide cookies or bars and set up and serve funeral lunches. Needs include kitchen help, servers, and volunteer bakers. Volunteers from each group coordinate the funeral lunch.

Lay Pastoral Caregiver

Work with our Pastoral Care Coordinator to visit and bring communion to the homebound.

Nightingale Tribute

The Nightingale Tribute is a brief inserted ceremony performed by nurse colleagues during a deceased licensed nurse's memorial, funeral, or graveside service to honor him or her for selfless service to others. The tribute offers fellow nurses an opportunity to commemorate and recognize their colleague's work while recognizing the nurse's unique contributions and service to saving lives. This program is two-fold: 1) spreading the word to families of deceased nurses of this program offering; and 2) recruiting interested nurses (retired or working) who would like to be a part of the Nightingale team for the Alexandria area.

Pens and Pals

Recognizing the need to offer inclusion in Adult Faith Formation to parishioners with disabilities, Pens and Pals is a ministry intended to love and serve persons in our faith community with disabilities by creating a trusting partnership between all abilities of adult parishioners. God wants our lives to overflow with mercy, love and compassion. The Pens and Pals outreach program will engage parish volunteers in partnering with persons with disabilities in a variety of any-age, any-ability activities. This ministry is intended to provide friendship and inclusion to our parishioners with disabilities; and build a bond between parishioners of all abilities. **"**Whatsoever you do to the least of your brothers and sisters you do unto me" (Matthew 25: 40).

Prayer Shawl

Mission: To convey a tangible expression of God's peace and love through the gift of a shawl, knitted or crocheted with prayer.

Outreach Programs

Angel Tree

The Christmas Angel Tree program is a ministry in which parishioners purchase gifts anonymously for those less fortunate. Names are received from the United Way as well as various human service organizations throughout the community. Many families are blessed through the fellowship of both giving and receiving, as the gifts are delivered in person by parish volunteers in time for Christmas.

Caring & Sharing Room

The Caring & Sharing Room is a volunteer charity organization sponsored by The Church of St. Mary and is supported by other area churches, organizations and individuals. It collects, stores and provides used furniture and basic household items in good condition from community members and shares them with needy families in Douglas County through referrals from approved community service and crisis agencies. Volunteers can participate by being placed on a pick-up and delivery team that serves once every 6 weeks.

Community Thanksgiving Dinner

We strive to offer a complete Thanksgiving dinner with all the fixings for those persons in the community who might not otherwise be able to have a Thanksgiving dinner. Volunteers are needed for the preparation, serving, and delivery of these meals.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Knitters and crocheters pray while creating shawls for parish members needing comfort and healing. Shawls are blessed by the Pastor before being delivered. Knitters and crocheters are always welcome and encouraged to join this outreach ministry.

Serve Coffee & Rolls after Mass

Groups (individuals and families) volunteer to serve coffee and rolls Sunday mornings after 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Masses. Volunteers of all ages and abilities can help serve coffee and rolls. Typically, 3-4 people are called upon for each Mass on Sundays to set up, serve, and clean up (supplies, food and beverages are brought in ready to serve by coordinators). This is great fellowship time for parishioners and visitors within the church. Providing regularly scheduled fellowship on Sundays adds value to us coming together as a community, getting to know the church family.

Liturgical Ministries

Altar Server

Altar servers assist around the altar, adding to the ceremony by carrying candles, incense, or the cross. Servers are to arrive 15 minutes before the liturgy begins. Servers usually begin serving in the middle of the third grade and can serve through adulthood. School-age servers, as well as adults, are needed.

Altar Server for Funeral Mass

Adults who are available and willing to act as an altar server for a funeral Mass are invited to consider joining this ministry.

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion help distribute the Eucharist at daily, funeral and weekend Masses. Help is also needed to distribute communion at the hospital and to the homebound. They serve 1-2 times a month. Ministers must be confirmed, practicing Catholics. Attendance at an annual training is required.

Gift Bearers

Members of the assembly are invited to take part in the Presentation of the Gifts to the priest. They are escorted by the ushers as they bring up the offerings.

Greeter

Greeters are the first reception into the community celebration, particularly for those who are guests and visitors. Greeters are warm, hospitable people with positive attitudes and compassionate expressions. Greeters help people connect to the larger community.

Hospitality Desk

Duties include welcoming visitors to The Church of St. Mary, answering any questions regarding the parish and registering new parishioners. This ministry involves being present at the kiosk 15 minutes before and after your designated weekend Mass.

Usher

Ushers assist at the weekend Masses, welcome and seat people, take up the offering, invite members of the assembly to take part in the Presentation of the Gifts, guide parishioners to Communion, hand out the bulletin after Mass and ready the church for the next Mass. Ushers work in a team environment and serve one to two times a month.

Lector

Lectors primarily proclaim the Word of God at weekend Masses. The ability to be heard and understood is a requirement. The parish provides a resource entitled “Sunday Missal” to help readers familiarize themselves with the Scriptures. Lectors are scheduled in a 3-month cycle at the Mass of their choice. Attendance at an annual training is required. Lectors are also needed for funerals and daily Mass.

Sacristan

Sacristans are responsible for the “set-up” before and after Mass. This includes counting out the number of hosts and pouring out the wine to be used. Sacristans also perform other duties done behind the scenes that are essential to the orderly celebration of Mass. Sacristans are also needed for the school Mass during the week.

Technology/ AV Booth

Volunteers are needed at Mass to assist in the AV Booth. Volunteer positions include:

- Advancing PowerPoint slides
- Operating cameras to record & live stream Mass
- Controlling the sound system

Volunteers can be trained on any or all three positions.

Music Ministries

Adult Choir

The Adult Choir is made up of college-aged adults and older.

Cantor

The Cantor is responsible for greeting the assembly as Mass begins and providing musical leadership that fosters the "full, active and conscious participation" of the assembly. This ministry requires an audition.

Children's Choir

The Children's Choir is for students in grades K-6.

Handbell Choir

The Handbell Choir enhances liturgical music at approximately one Mass per month, September through December, and April through June. Members need not have experience playing bells but should be able to follow tempo beats and read a line of notes.

Instrumentalist

Various instrumental leadership is welcome for enhancing the sung prayer of the community. All types of instruments are welcome, and all ages are invited.

Seasonal Choir (Christmas and Holy Week/Easter)

The Seasonal Choir typically sings at the later Christmas Eve Mass and/or during Holy Week. Rehearsals will be Wednesday nights for 4-5 weeks prior to the Mass date.

Young Adult Choir

The Young Adult Choir is made up of students grades 6-12.

Faith Formation

The Faith Formation Department at St. Mary's is a vital part of parish life. This department has an influence over more than five hundred students and utilizes more than fifty teachers, assistants, and substitute teachers. Some positions may require training, which will be provided.

Baptism

This Baptism class is offered one night every other month. It is required for those parents who, for the first time, are having a child baptized into the Catholic faith. Children who are 7 years old or younger are considered an "infant" regarding baptism within the Catholic Church.

If your child is age 7 or older, we will work with you to find the best pathway that leads your child to the sacrament of Baptism – and the other sacraments.

Rise & Shine with the Little Saints

Families are invited to the Great Hall on the first Sunday of each month after the 8 & 10 am Masses for fellowship and activities geared toward children ages 4-6, siblings welcome.

Elementary Faith Formation

We are currently offering Pathways Family Formation. Parents attend class nights with their grades 1-5 children 1-2 times a month. They are also equipped with materials to lead activities and prayers in their home in the off weeks.

First Reconciliation & First Communion

Instruction for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion are taught to 2nd graders at St. Mary's on Wednesday evenings. Parent and child attend together to participate in guided lessons. Volunteers are needed to help lead the lessons.

Middle School/Senior High Faith Formation

Grades 6-12 meet on Wednesday evenings. Small group leaders, substitute leaders, office help and other volunteers are needed. Other youth ministry activities may include retreats, rallies, mission, and service opportunities.

Vacation Bible School

These sessions run Monday through Thursday the first week after school dismisses for the summer. Classes are open to children ages 4 through Grade 3 from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Volunteers are needed to help with music, snacks, crafts, games, planning and daycare.

Totus Tuus

This is a week-long summer program. Volunteers are needed to bring meals and provide housing for team members and leaders.

Adult Faith Formation

Men's Bible Study

Men are invited every Thursday at 6:30 a.m. or every Wednesday at 2:30 p.m. in the gathering area of the church to study Scriptures that will be used in the next weekend liturgy.

Parish Library

Parishioners are welcome to check out books from our Parish Library in the Chapel entrance and Great Hall. The selection includes topics from religion, to history, to art and things in between. Donated materials to supplement this library section can be left at the Faith Formation Office.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

RCIA is a process of formation for those inquiring and for those interested in joining the Catholic Church through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (full initiation) or from another Christian denomination through Confirmation, Eucharist and Reconciliation. It is also for those baptized Catholic but who have had little formation and need to receive Eucharist and/or Confirmation. RCIA meets on Thursday evenings. Volunteers are needed to be sponsors and to assist with hospitality and/or childcare as needed.

Women's Bible Study

Come join fellow women parishioners as we learn more about the transforming power of the Bible with various program studies. We meet most Saturday or Wednesday mornings. No prior Bible Study experience required.

Zoom Bible Study

All are welcome every Tuesday, 6:30–7:30 pm, to study the upcoming Sunday readings.

Supporting Organizations

Christian Mothers

This group is a spiritual organization for Catholic women sixteen years and older. In October, they offer a Mass for their deceased members. In the spring they collaborate with the Daughters of Isabella in several projects such as planting flowers in front of the Great Hall and holding a Mother-Daughter Breakfast after a celebration of Mass for the members of the group.

Daughters of Isabella

This group welcomes all Catholic women sixteen years and older and their focus is on friendship, unity and charity. Daughters of Isabella meet every third Thursday of the month. They remember the birthdays of the elderly of the parish who are in a nursing home. They collect small annual dues and host a salad luncheon in June every year. The proceeds support several local charities. They participate in preparing a breakfast and attending Mass for their living members in May. They offer a Mass for their deceased members in November, and they gather to pray the rosary if one of their members dies.

Knights of Columbus

Membership is open to all practicing Catholic men aged 18 and over. The principles of the Order are charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism. The Knights are involved in many ways that promote the Gospel and enable them to become a spiritual force for the renewal of the Church in holiness, unity and truth. The Knights spread charity and unity among people by their sale of Tootsie Rolls to raise funds for special needs children. They volunteer for Special Olympics. They contribute heavily to all pro-life programs, local needs when tragedies strike, scholarships, specific urgent needs of the parish and school or wherever their help is needed.

Mission Quilting Group

The St. Mary's Mission Group meets once a month for eight months of the year for fellowship and quilting. They are affiliated with the Mission Shop in our diocese. Their quilts are made and distributed around the world through the Diocesan Mission Office and, more locally, to the Red Lake Indian Reservation and to the Caring & Sharing Room in Alexandria. Quilters, 2-ply yarn and batting are always welcome in this ministry.

Non-Parish Faith Enrichment Opportunities

Beginning Experience

Beginning Experience is an international program that helps facilitate the grief resolution process for those who have suffered such a loss through separation, divorce or death and frees them to again love themselves, others, and God. This is accomplished by offering time-tested and copyrighted grief resolution programs presented by trained peers. Founded by a Catholic nun and rooted in the Christian tradition, the ministry's open, ecumenical spirit serves those of all faiths. Beginning Experience of Central Minnesota is just one of over sixty teams serving communities across the United States. Team members lead participants through a program of presentations, private reflection, and small group sharing. A sense of community develops in an atmosphere of care and support that is the hallmark of each Beginning Experience weekend. www.beginningexperiencecentralmn.org

Demontreville Retreat

Demontreville Retreats provide an opportunity for men of all religious backgrounds and convictions to spend a quiet weekend away from the noise and confusion of the business and social world. Retreats begin every Thursday at 6:30 p.m. and conclude after supper on Sunday evening. www.demontrevilleretreat.com

Koinonia Retreat

Are you thinking about doing something for yourself to enrich your faith journey? Koinonia is a community experience in Christian living designed especially for adults 20 yrs. and older. It is a Catholic Retreat program sponsored by the Diocese of St. Cloud. Full or partial scholarships are available for those in need. Applications and dates are available at www.centralmnkoinonia.org

Marriage Encounter

The emphasis of Worldwide Marriage Encounter, a marriage enrichment program, is on communication between husband and wife who spend a weekend together, away from the distractions and the tensions of everyday life, to concentrate on each other. It's not a retreat, nor a marriage clinic, nor group sensitivity. It's a unique approach aimed at revitalizing Christian Marriage. This is a time for you and your spouse to be alone together. Rediscover each other and focus on your relationship for an entire weekend. Every marriage deserves that kind of attention! www.wwme.org

Pacem in Terris Hermitage

Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth) is a Franciscan Center of Spirituality located near Isanti, MN, called to serve God's people through prayer and by providing the opportunity to retreat into the silence and solitude of a simple hermitage environment. The hermitages are nestled amid the natural beauty of forest, prairie, and a wildlife lake. Away from the struggles and influences of a secular society, the hermit/guest enters into the freedom of a "desert-like" environment, following Christ's example where "he would often go off to someplace where he could be alone to pray." Once free from the fast-paced, noisy, and over-scheduled life the hermit can more easily be aware of their needs both personally and in relationships. It becomes possible to listen, truly listen, to one's inner voice and the voice of God – allowing God to become the sole retreat director. www.paceminterris.org

Residents Encounter Christ (REC)

REC is a two-day retreat for jail or prison residents, designed to give the residents a chance to learn about Christ and how He can change their lives. REC is based on the Paschal Mystery, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Retreat Team positions are open to adults who have participated in TEC, Koininia, or Cursillo. The team is predominately staffed by Catholics, but non-Catholics are warmly welcomed. www.rec-connect.org

Retrouvaille

This program offers a weekend experience, with six follow-up sessions, designed to provide the tools to help put marriages in order again. It is for couples with troubled marriages, including separated or divorced couples, who want their marriage to work. For information and registration: www.helpourmarriage.org

Together Encountering Christ (TEC)

TEC is a three-day retreat weekend based on the Paschal Mystery and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. TEC originated as "Teens Encountering Christ" in 1965 as a retreat experience for high school students. There are active TEC centers throughout the United States and foreign countries. CENTRAL MINNESOTA TEC began in 1978 and is one of several TEC centers in Minnesota. CENTRAL MINNESOTA TEC changed its name to "Together Encountering Christ" to better reflect the presence of both teen and adult participants on the weekends. The retreats are held on the grounds of Holy Family Parish, Belle Prairie, Minnesota, just north of Little Falls on Highway 371 up to twelve times a year. https://www.cmtec.org/intro/index.html .