

MARCH 2020

DISCIPLE

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL

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God's Children



A FIRST LOOK AT OUR BOLD FUTURE

Dear Friends in Christ,

Welcome to the first issue of DISCIPLE, the new monthly newsletter for St. Michael Catholic Church and School. This replaces the stewardship newsletter we have sent to parish families for the past 10 years. Our purpose is to inspire you with stories of how our parish and parishioners are doing amazing things to draw people into deeper discipleship with Jesus.

Why DISCIPLE? In short, it is both who we are and what we are called to do. Disciples make disciples—it's our purpose as a Church. As you read these articles, I hope you see your own story reflected: the ways that Christ has called you and the ways that you can invite, welcome and serve others, within our parish community and beyond.

This newsletter also marks the launch of our new parish logo and tagline: Blessed Heritage. Bold Future. Blessed Heritage recalls our deep Catholic roots, strong faith and positive history of growth, vocations and communal life. Bold Future conveys a promise that we are no longer content to live comfortably in our "Catholic bubble" and maintain the status quo. Our community is growing. Our mission—from Christ

Himself—is to grow the Church with it. And we intend to do so.

The world around us is in turmoil, but the Catholic Church in St. Michael is strong. We must act differently—**boldly**: to love and serve one another, and to evangelize and lead others to Christ. Please pray for this mission and for your own role in it. God bless you!

Fr. Peter Richards
Pastor

FAITH + ACTION

Arndts Embrace New Welcome Ministry

Heidi Arndt first began coordinating the welcome ministry at St. Michael Catholic Church in 2008. It was a family affair: Her husband Scott and daughters Lucy and Marah joined her in greeting parishioners as they arrived for Mass. But after several years of struggling to find and keep volunteers, they stepped away from the role.

Now the Arndts are back, leading a broader approach to hospitality at St. Michael that seeks to encompass every parishioner and visitor, every Sunday.

"It's hard for people to commit week after week if they don't feel called and fed by what they are doing," Heidi says. "That's why we need to move past volunteering and ask, 'Who has the gift of hospitality and feels called to this ministry?'"

In 2018, she was asked to revisit welcoming at St. Michael, especially in connection with Holy Week and Easter.

"Scott and I agreed to take it on with our friends Brian and Angie Lenneman," says Heidi. "Hospitality [i.e., doughnuts, coffee and juice after Mass] was only once a month, so with their help, it seemed doable."

It quickly became apparent, however, that if St. Michael was going to get serious about inviting people into the communal life of the parish, hospitality needed to be a priority every week, at every Mass.

"Our church has the Holy Spirit here—you can feel it—but sometimes it's difficult to get to know people without the opportunity to connect each week," she says.

Then last fall, Heidi joined the church staff to support parish operations. She immediately began revamping the approach to welcoming and hospitality:



Heidi and Scott Arndt staffed the kitchen at last month's Winterfest. Heidi joined the parish staff in Fall 2019. (Photo courtesy of parishioner Bethy Engel.)

seeking joyful and proactive greeters who open doors, answer questions and help however they can, and reaching out to ministry groups like the Knights of Columbus, the Adoration Committee and our youth Discipleship Groups to help with greeting and serving food and beverages after all four weekend Masses.

The parish is also testing a more personalized and timely approach to welcoming new members: Instead of inviting them to a quarterly dinner, all new parishioners are contacted shortly after they register with information and a proposed mentor family suited to their own interests and state in life. They are invited to meet or not, at the church or off-site, according to their own schedule and preferences.

"We want to meet new members where they are and give them only what they need," Heidi says.

Welcoming and hospitality continue to be a labor of love for the Arndt family, but delivering on this ministry every week requires lots of generous disciples.

"We need more parishioners willing to meet people with a smile as they arrive, introduce themselves and take care of any needs they might have before and after Mass," Heidi says. "My family loves greeting, but people don't want to see our faces week after week!"

Asked what keeps her motivated in this ministry, her answer is simple: "I love people, and I want them to love the Church!"

What Can You Do?

If you enjoy meeting and greeting new people or belong to a group within our parish that would like to host hospitality, contact Heidi at harndt@stmichaelchurch.org or 612-470-3740.



Architects and planners ATS+R imagine what a new Social Hall for hospitality, funeral luncheons and other parish events could look like. This rendering is only conceptual; parishioners will be engaged in the actual design of the space.

A MASTER PLAN FOR A PARISH ON MISSION

When the current St. Michael Catholic Church building was consecrated 15 years ago, it was to be the centerpiece of a new campus. Housing developments were sprouting in local fields, and new faces appeared at Mass every weekend. The parish planned to pay down debt quickly, then add social and educational space to serve the growing community.

Instead, the economy stalled, contributions slowed, and the church began to make do. Temporary office and classroom space in the basement became more permanent, with overflow groups meeting in storage areas and hallways. Several blocks away, parish school leaders worked hard to adapt a facility built in the 1940s to serve the needs of today's students. It has taken years to talk seriously again about expanding the Frankfort Parkway campus—but that time is finally here.

Firm Foundation

Of course, the parish hasn't been stagnant: Youth Ministry now serves more than 700 students, the school has expanded to include preschool and grades 7-8, and church membership has grown to more than 2,300 families.

“We couldn't do a lot because of carrying the debt, but at this point, it's time to look at what's next.”

Steve Long

Parish trustee Steve Long became Catholic in 1984 while courting his wife, lifelong parishioner Mary Beth Kilian. All four of their children attended St. Michael Catholic School, so his love for the parish runs deep. A few years ago, Fr. Peter Richards, Long and other leaders took a hard look at expanding, however, no one wanted to rush forward without a comprehensive master plan.

“We have people asking for a social hall and new Catholic school space; we have such strong youth ministry and faith formation programs, and we've had requests for more space for ministry to various groups,” Long says. “We couldn't do a whole lot because of carrying the debt, but at this point it's time to look at what's next.”

Imagine the Opportunities

Through a series of parishioner consultations, a vision began to emerge—not only of immediate needs, but of a future campus built to serve parishioners of all ages.

“We had some ideas when the church was built—a social hall, a school—but they were just ideas,” Long says. “This time we had a greater discussion about the mission of the Catholic Church and of St. Michael, in particular. One thing that came up again and again was an intergenerational campus where we could serve our newborns, our students, our families and our seniors.”

The parish then engaged architectural firm ATS+R to come up with a long-range plan for church property (more than 40 acres surrounding the current church building) and facilities.

“The process gave me a lot of confidence,” says Long. “Now we can look at all the things people were asking for and see how they fit.”

Susan Farr is no stranger to the community or to land-use and facilities planning—she works in business

development for Fairview Health, and she and her husband Daniel are long-time parishioners. They put their son through St. Michael Catholic School; he graduates from St. Michael-Albertville High School this year. Farr served on the master planning committee and describes the master planning process as thoughtful, thorough and inspiring.

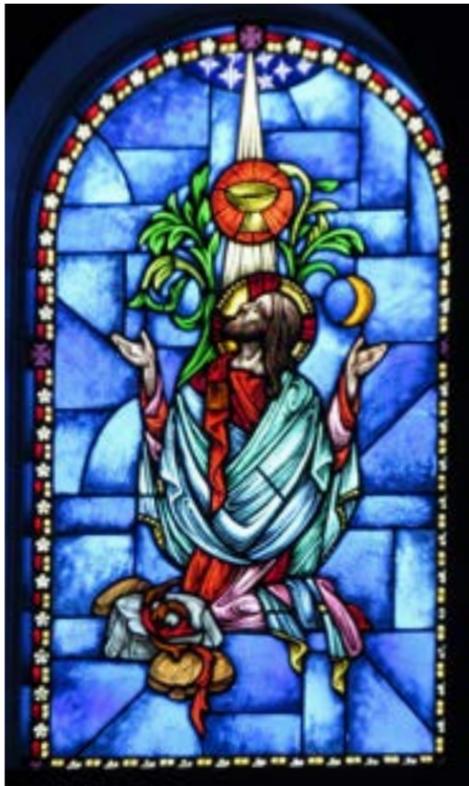
“We made a decision to go slow and get it right,” she says. “We have such a variety of parishioners—children, seniors, millennials, families. How exciting to know that we will be able to serve all of those people we love!”

The long-term plan envisions facilities to accommodate even the largest parish weddings and funerals, as well as holiday programs, galas and festivals, great Catholic speakers and more, along with more intimate spaces to sit and have a cup of coffee with a friend—or a stranger. New shared education spaces would enable faith formation programs like LIFT (Learning In Faith Together) and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to expand and St. Michael Catholic School to be reunited with the church. The plan also includes the possibility of a Catholic senior living community onsite—an opportunity that the parish is already actively pursuing.

“Imagine the intergenerational opportunities of moving all of our students to this campus—especially if a senior living community opens here, as well,” Farr says. “I guarantee the seniors will be helping out at the school, and our youth will be visiting the seniors. It's very exciting to see a vision coming together—the opportunities for ministry are endless!”

Want to Know More?

For more on the master plan, visit stmccatholicchurch.org/masterplan or contact parish administrator Dave Ferry at 763-497-2745. Watch the bulletin, newsletter and website in the coming months for ways you can get involved.



The stained glass windows representing the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary appear to the right of the sanctuary and altar, above the pillars and Stations of the Cross.

THE ART OF WORSHIP

THE FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY: THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch." He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will." – Mark 14:32-36

The First Sorrowful Mystery is the Agony in the Garden, in which our Lord, anticipating the trials and suffering of His passion and death, prays to His Father in Heaven for the strength to do His will. In an earthly sense, Jesus is alone in the darkness; His three closest disciples, unable to fathom what is to come, fall asleep while He prays. But our Lord is never alone in prayer: As He said before raising His friend Lazarus from the dead, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me" (John 11:41-42). God the Father is always near, always listening, always responding to the prayers of His faithful ones.

Christ is kneeling, His face and hands raised to heaven in prayer. At his feet are harsh stones and a red vine, foreshadowing the hard road ahead and the lashes and thorny crown He will receive along the way. The cup symbolizes His prayer of agony, but through the olive branches shines the light of heaven, illuminating the way of suffering and salvation. The source of this light is the Source of all: God the Father, symbolized here by the deep blue of the heavens at night and a cluster of eight-pointed stars.

ONE BODY

Learning Tools for All of God's Children

Imagine a classroom in which students are invited to explore the day's topic in the way that works best for them. One group sits around a small table, looking at a colorful model of the problem at hand and discussing how best to share their solution. Two students are standing; one balances atop a wobble chair, and another is leaning in for a closer look, her feet bouncing silently on an elastic band stretched between her chair's front legs.

Other students are clustered in twos and threes, discussing the same problem. After several minutes one boy steps away from his group, sits on a low rocker, puts on noise-canceling headphones and begins to write out his own solution.

The volume of voices in the room jumps, and the teacher looks up to see a flushed-faced student coming toward her. "I think I need some time away," the girl says. The teacher smiles and nods, and the student goes to the take-a-break area, sets a timer for when she needs to return to her lesson and works to control her emotions.

Thanks to support from the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence (CSCOE), these new approaches to teaching and learning are becoming the norm at St. Michael Catholic School (StMCS). Each classroom has its own "toolshed," equipped with alternative seating options, "fidgets" like rubber balls and squishable pencil grips, and elastic chair bands for silent foot-tapping, as well as games and resources to encourage students to think more deeply, make new connections and engage in creative problem solving.

"It's very freeing," says support specialist Mae Paluck, who oversees the toolshed initiative. "Teachers are always asking, 'Is this okay? Can we try that?' The answer is, 'If you feel it will support learning in your classroom, it's okay.'"

Paluck and Principal Jenny Haller, who is leaving StMCS to become CSCOE's first director of excellence, say these new approaches are essential for students.

"One in six students has a mental health issue—that's roughly four in every classroom," Haller says. "We know so much more about learning today...the needs are different for every child, not just at the two ends of the spectrum."



Although teachers may prescribe specific tools or approaches to individual students, toolshed resources are available to everyone. Additionally, many of the resources encourage grit and perseverance, two traits that will serve StMCS students well in a world that will challenge their Catholic faith.



"That's the benefit of a Catholic education centered on Christ," Haller says. "We are striving to educate all of God's children and to form the whole child—mind, body and spirit. We want every student to be connected to the St. Michael community, to each other and to Jesus."

Want to Learn More?

Schedule a visit at stmccatholicchurch.org/stmcs—or check out these articles from CSCOE's magazine:

- Enhancing Education (Spring 2019): www.cscoe-mn.org/enhancing-education-7
- Helping All Students Thrive (Fall 2019): www.cscoe-mn.org/helping-all-students-thrive

**PARISH MISSION:
HOLINESS REVOLUTION
WITH DAN DEMATTE**
Sunday, March 15 – Tuesday, March 17
7-9 PM each night

SESSION 1: BE HEALED
SESSION 2: BE EMPOWERED
SESSION 3: BE TRANSFORMED

Free and open to the public;
come to any or all sessions

Adoration, Confession, prayer
ministry and hospitality

ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

Men, Do You Want More?

Join other local men for our annual Men's Welcome (CRHP 2.0) Retreat Saturday, March 28 – Sunday, March 29 at the St. Albert Parish Center

**Meet good men. Eat great food.
Change your life.**

Sign up in the gathering space at St. Michael Catholic Church or call the parish office, 763-497-2745, for more information.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SUNDAY MASS

Saturday Vigil 5 PM

Sunday 8 AM, 10:30 AM, 6 PM

WEEKDAY MASS

Monday 7:30 AM

Tuesday 6:30 PM

Wednesday 7:30 AM at St. Albert

Thursday 7:30 AM

Friday 7:45 AM (Summer 7:30 AM)

First Saturday 8 AM

RECONCILIATION

Saturday 7:30-9 AM, 3:30-4:45 PM

(except 7:45-8:30 AM on first Saturdays)

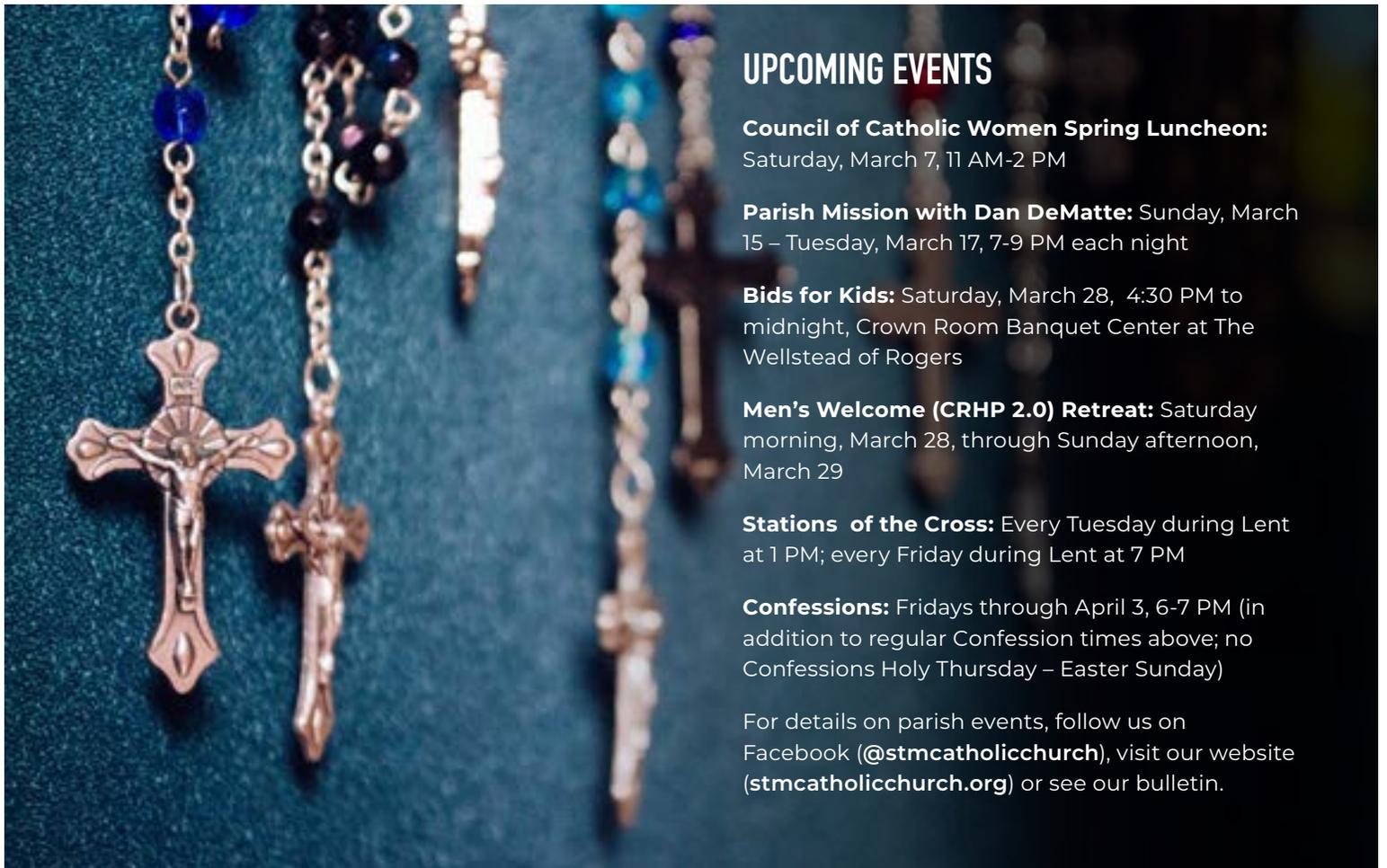
Sunday 9:30-10:15 AM

Tuesday 5:15-6:15 AM

Thursday 8-8:30 AM

The DISCIPLE newsletter is created by St. Michael parish staff and the Stewardship Committee unless otherwise noted. For more information, call 763-497-2745 ext. 245 or email jthorp@stmccatholicchurch.org.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Council of Catholic Women Spring Luncheon:

Saturday, March 7, 11 AM-2 PM

Parish Mission with Dan DeMatte: Sunday, March

15 – Tuesday, March 17, 7-9 PM each night

Bids for Kids: Saturday, March 28, 4:30 PM to

midnight, Crown Room Banquet Center at The Wellstead of Rogers

Men's Welcome (CRHP 2.0) Retreat: Saturday

morning, March 28, through Sunday afternoon, March 29

Stations of the Cross: Every Tuesday during Lent

at 1 PM; every Friday during Lent at 7 PM

Confessions: Fridays through April 3, 6-7 PM (in

addition to regular Confession times above; no Confessions Holy Thursday – Easter Sunday)

For details on parish events, follow us on Facebook (@stmccatholicchurch), visit our website (stmccatholicchurch.org) or see our bulletin.