



# ST. JAMES BASILICA *of Jamestown*

Parish Newsletter

APRIL 2016



## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 The Wise Men's Gifts Symbolize Our Lenten Obligations
- 3 Make Prayer and Hospitality Pillars of Your Lenten Journey
- 4 Passing on the Faith: The Catechists of St. James' Faith Formation Program
- 6 Brian and DeAnn Ament  
*Words to Live By*

## YOUNG ADULTS: The Future of Our Church and the Future of Our World

For many people, the college years are an exciting time. Not only are these young adults taking classes and learning about various fields of education, but they are also experiencing what it is like to live on their own for the first time – along with all of the pressures and distractions that come with a life “away from home.”

Fr. Sean Mulligan, Associate Pastor, notes how pivotal friendships built on faith can be in moments of temptations or when wrestling with the Truth.

“College is such a vital time,” Fr. Mulligan says. “There are so many different pressures to lead us away from Christ in our culture and on our campuses. It’s really important for young adults to get to know other Catholics.”

Understanding the need to meet such pressures and distractions head-on, the College Campus Ministry at St. James Basilica teaches and encourages college students as they live out their faith and enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Fr. Mulligan started leading a weekly Bible study for students about a year and a half ago. In that time, four other students have stepped forward to start leading Bible studies, as well. The idea is for students to have a personal experience with Christ and learn about



*Each year, as part of Freshman Welcome Week, there is a college block party.*

*continued on back cover*



## STEWARDSHIP

# The Wise Men's Gifts Symbolize Our Lenten Obligations

**W**e experience great joy when we celebrate the coming of the Magi at Epiphany each year. For many of us, it is the completion of Christmas. Yet, the gifts offered by the Magi – gold, frankincense and myrrh – can serve to guide us as we observe Lent this month.

It may seem strange to connect the joyful celebration of Epiphany with the penitential season of Lent. Yet, our spiritual life should not be divided into separate bits having no connection with each other. In the same way, the Church's liturgical year should also flow from one season to another. The different feasts and seasons certainly have different emphases, but they are intended to build on each other. So let's see if we can connect what the Magi gave Jesus with what we're going to offer Him this Lent.

The basic ingredients for our Lenten rule normally come from what are termed the Three Notable Duties – prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These in turn come from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

How do we connect the wise men's gifts with the notable duties? Actually, what the gifts symbolize matches up surprisingly well.

Frankincense is the basic ingredient in the incense used in the worship of God, in the ancient world and in the Church today. Offering it to Jesus points out His divine nature, and so it symbolizes prayer. Our Lenten rule needs to include prayer and worship. Of course, we are bound to worship at Sunday Mass year-round. Maybe during Lent, we might add a weekday Mass. Perhaps we can increase the time we devote to private prayer at home or at adoration. Devotional reading from the Bible or another appropriate book can be added. In addition, don't forget the possibility of adding family devotions during Lent, so that the whole family prays together.

When we offer our gold to Christ to build His Church and to help His poor, we are engaged in almsgiving. While giving from the treasure God has entrusted to us is a duty



throughout the whole year, maybe this Lent we can practice being a little more generous than usual. If our giving is a thankful response to the gift of eternal life that God has given us, we will find that the giving is indeed a means of grace.

For centuries, myrrh has been associated with fasting. Although myrrh comes from the same family of plants as frankincense, it has a more pungent scent and bitter taste.

In the ancient world, it was regularly used in embalming. Generations of theological writers have seen the gift of myrrh as a foreshadowing of Christ's sufferings. And fasting strengthens us in holiness and prepares us to come into God's presence after our own deaths. St. Thomas Aquinas himself linked myrrh with repentance and fasting when he wrote that myrrh represents the penance by which we preserve our souls from the corruption of sin.

Fasting may be the most difficult of the three notable duties for modern Americans. After all, most of the advertising and many of the magazine articles we see are devoted to making us more, not less, comfortable. We usually think of fasting only under the heading of dieting to lose weight. Instead, try to think of fasting as a way to become more spiritually fit. Body and spirit affect each other. The whole sacramental system is built on the truth that we can receive spiritual grace through material things and physical actions. Our specific requirements of fasting are limited – abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, and a reduction in the quantity of food we eat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. But discipline of our physical bodies for our spiritual well-being does not have to be limited to Lent!

Gold, frankincense and myrrh were indeed valuable gifts for the wise men to present to the Child Jesus. When we look at their symbolism, we can see their relationship to the three notable duties of almsgiving, prayer and fasting. What gifts are we going to offer to Jesus this Lent?



A Letter from Our Pastor

# Make Prayer and Hospitality Pillars of Your Lenten Journey

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

**I**n the coming weeks, we will conclude our Lenten observance, experience Holy Week, and celebrate the joy of Easter. Of course, I hope that you have made some effort to make this Lenten season special and significant, but if you have not, it is never too late to accomplish that goal.

With thoughts of Lent, Easter and the Year of Mercy at the top of my mind, I offer a couple suggestions to help carry you to the end of your Lenten journey.

As you know, prayer is foundational to stewardship, as it is one of the Four Pillars of a stewardship parish – along with hospitality, formation and service. With this in mind, here are some suggestions on how you might make your prayers even more consequential.

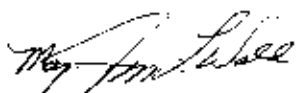
Pick someone to pray for, perhaps even someone you don't get along with. Just pray for them. You do not have to tell them you are praying for them, but the exercise is good for you, and for them, as well. If possible, find a time this month to pray before the Blessed Sacrament, especially if this is something you do not normally do. Pray every morning shortly after you get up, and again each evening before you turn in. It does not have to be a long prayer, but it does need to be done consistently.

In terms of the pillar of hospitality, there is also much we can do in this area, both as a parish and as individuals and families. Here is a suggestion that involves hospitality – one that is also connected to gratitude and even the Year of Mercy. Many of us spend time at a computer. It is a way for us to stay connected to those who are close to us, and to the world around us. Why not begin and end each week emailing someone a note of thanksgiving? Again, it does not have to be lengthy, but when we think about it, each of our lives is filled with people to whom we should be grateful.

Just send that someone a note thanking them for something specifically, or in general. By starting and ending each week like that, our minds are in the right place for prayer and for having the attitude that Christ asks us to have.

I thank you for all you do, for our parish, for the Church, for one another, and for me personally. I am blessed. Like most, I may not express it often enough. I pray for you, and I ask you to pray for me during this holy time.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Msgr. Jeffrey L. Wald  
Pastor





## PASSING ON The Catechists of St. James'

When Candy Smith was asked to serve as a faith formation catechist here at St. James almost 10 years ago, she first felt hesitant and unsure if she was qualified for the task.

"I remember thinking I didn't know enough – but I've found out that you don't have to know everything and we can't know everything," says Candy, who currently teaches kindergarten faith formation. "But I know God's love and I can share His love. And I'm learning as I go.

"It's a matter of trying to live by example and sharing God's love and mercy and being passionate about that and excited to share it," she continues.

For Matt Kohler, a college student who started working with middle school faith formation students two years ago, it's about sharing what he received in as a child.

"As I got older, I realized how lucky I was to have the teachers that I had," he says. "So, I figured I'd take what they taught me and try to pass it on."

Matt is also grateful for the chance to be an example of faith to the students he serves.

"I feel good when I see them out in public, and it's not just restricted to the classroom," he says. "They can see that I live my faith during the week."



*Candy Smith (far left, with the kindergarten class) is in her ninth year serving as a catechist.*

According to Sadie Lech, one of the fifth-grade catechists, helping her students embrace the faith has brought her closer to God.

"It's really neat to teach them how to live the faith," Sadie says. "Trying to get them to understand that everything they do, all day long, is connected to their faith and the Lord – they really stop and think about that. And at the same time, it makes me stop and reflect on my day, and did I walk with the Lord in everything I did? You can't be a good teacher of the faith if you don't live the faith."

For Sadie, serving as a catechist has given her the opportunity to learn more about her own faith.

"When I teach, I feel like I'm continuing to get to be a student of the faith at the same time," she says. "Every week, when I see those young kids and I listen to them, it just helps me get closer to God myself."

Sixth-grade catechist Cindy Gee – who, like Candy and Sadie, is also a parent – is glad to serve with the Faith Formation program, because she believes in the importance of sharing the faith with children.

"They learn so much from so many different sources, and it's not always what we want them to be hearing," Cindy says. "I think it's important to give them a basis of what our Catholic faith is and what we believe."



*"You put your talents into the people who are going to be carrying the Church for years to come," says Matt Kohler, who serves as a catechist for middle school students.*



# THE FAITH: Faith Formation Program

“I think it can’t be stressed enough how important it is to establish that foundation, especially with all the negative outside influence we encounter,” Candy adds. “If kids grow up with the faith, that’s what they’ll know and hopefully use as a guide throughout their life.”

As Sadie notes, children learn through the example provided by their parents.

“If we show them it’s important, that learning about our faith is something we prioritize, my hope is that my kids will follow in my footsteps and continue their faith,” she says.

Candy encourages fellow parishioners to consider serving as a catechist – and she offers a reminder that God might want to work through you to show His love to a child.

“Msgr. Wald said something that I still think about – ‘God has someone He wants you to meet this year,’” she says. “I keep going back to that. God’s in charge, He knows what He’s doing and He called me for a reason. [Jesus] taught us to love one another and to serve one another, and I feel like that’s what I’m doing – hopefully making a difference and bringing a child closer to God.”

“I encourage parents to get involved so they can interact on the topics that they’re learning, and you can reinforce it and go further with it,” Cindy adds.

Not only is this a significant ministry within the parish, but sharing your faith with children can also be a whole lot of fun.

“I really enjoy the kids,” Candy says. “They’re so fun, they’re so energetic. They have this longing to learn and it’s so exciting to see them get excited about our faith.”

“It’s just so exciting to see their faces light up when they connect something with their own life,” Sadie adds.



*Faith Formation catechists having fun in the 1st grade classroom.*

Forming our youth in the faith is an important task – and it is certainly not without reward.

“You put your talents into the people who are going to be carrying the Church for years to come, and the people who are going to be going out and sharing the faith with people their age and younger,” Matt says.

“Like St. Francis said, ‘It is in giving that we receive’ – it’s so true!” Candy says. “We’re giving, but what we get back is sometimes more than we feel like we’re giving. Just be open, think about it, pray about it, listen to what God is saying to you, and He’ll take care of the rest! You never know, you may be a blessing someone needs! If we can let him work through us, amazing things can happen.”

*If you are interested in getting involved with the parish as a catechist, or would like to use your gifts to serve the Faith Formation program in another way, please contact Katie Webster at [ffelementary@stjamesbasilica.org](mailto:ffelementary@stjamesbasilica.org), or Whitney Somsen at [youth@stjamesbasilica.org](mailto:youth@stjamesbasilica.org). You can also reach the Faith Formation office at 701-252-0478.*



## Brian and DeAnn Ament *Words to Live By*

**F**aith. Church. Community. Taken individually, there is no doubt that these three words are important – but when viewed together, they can help us discover God’s purpose and meaning in our day-to-day lives. Each one is part of the whole, and each one builds on the other. It is these three words that hit home for parishioners Brian and DeAnn Ament, as they try to raise their own children with a solid faith foundation, a love for the Church, and a strong sense of community.

Of course, it all begins with faith, and both Brian and DeAnn credit their parents for teaching the faith by both word and example. Brian, who was the oldest of four children, says that growing up, they always attended Mass as a family and that his parents often had the priest over for dinner. But most importantly, he remembers the example his parents set by praying, and then putting their faith into action by being active members of their parish community.

“From my parents, I learned that praying is probably the most important way parents can help children grow in their faith,” Brian says. “But what is also important is providing an example for our kids to follow – kids need to see their parents living their faith.”

And DeAnn had a similar upbringing. Not only was she taught the faith, but she was also excited about it – the summer after she received her First



*Parishioners Brian and DeAnn Ament have been married 21 years.*

Communion, she was especially looking forward to Vacation Bible School because she would be able to receive Communion five days in a row! She remembers her family gathering at the dinner table at Lent for a Lenten reading that always included a commentary and a discussion question. Her parents were very involved in the parish – her father was an usher and a member of the Knights of Columbus, her mother was active in the Catholic women’s group – and from them, DeAnn learned

to see and feel God’s presence by being with others.

“Being involved in the parish was part of our family life,” DeAnn says. “One of my first memories was helping my parents serve coffee and donuts after Mass. Of course, that memory stands out because I pulled the fire alarm, but that’s another story! But I also remember helping to clean the church, or raking the church lawn. When I was in middle school, I played the organ at

*continued on page 7*

*“From my parents, I learned that praying is probably the most important way parents can help children grow in their faith. But what is also important is providing an example for our kids to follow – kids need to see their parents living their faith.” – Brian Ament*



## Brian and DeAnn Ament *continued from page 6*

Mass. Our family life and our church life weren't separate – the two were so entwined that they were one."

Several years ago Brian and DeAnn truly experienced what it meant to be part of a parish community when DeAnn, pregnant with their third child, went into premature labor. At St. Alexis Hospital, DeAnn was placed on total bed rest, and while it was undoubtedly a stressful time, she and her husband were surrounded by prayer and support – Sr. Renee brought Communion to DeAnn every morning, their church family from their time in Bismarck (St. Mary's) had their hospital deacon stop by, and prayer chains were started both at St. Mary's and St. James Basilica. Then, after 11 days of total bed rest, their daughter, Abby, was born weighing just 1 pound, 9 ounces. And the support continued.

"That first month was pretty tough, and I remember praying the Rosary to the cadence of her ventilator," DeAnn says. "When I look back, I see that time as a kind of 'Footprints in the Sand' because God made sure we had a support system – I was able to stay with my widowed aunt who lived half a mile from the hospital, I could still go into my Bismarck office and work a little, our extended family helped during the times Brian and the kids visited us in Bismarck, and friends and family took care of them when they were 100 miles away. It was such an amazing experience that still makes me tear up when I think how God made it all work out so well. We finally got to hold Abby at 41 days and take her home after 94

days. She turned 7 years old this past February, and although she is small in stature, she is big on personality."

Today, having been members of our parish for over 10 years, Brian and DeAnn still strongly believe that faith and community go hand-in-hand. But like many families, finding the time is not always easy. Brian is the manager for the Pharmacy Department at Jamestown Regional Medical Center, DeAnn works for the North Dakota Public Finance Authority, and with three children – Jacob, 17; Emily, 11; and Abigail, 7 – schedules are hectic. And yet, Brian says that in much the same way they build their offering into their budget, so it goes with involvement – they simply make the time. Brian is a Eucharistic Minister, is a member of St. John's Academy School Board and the long-range planning committee, and in the past, he has served on the Parish Finance Council. DeAnn helps with the SJA HOPE Dinner, Vacation Bible School, and Bible Study.

"The key is that you don't have to do everything," DeAnn says. "A



*Brian and DeAnn Ament with their children – Abigail (center), Emily (bottom left) and Jacob (bottom right)*

few years ago, I participated in the program, Living Your Strengths, where I learned that it's important to build on our strengths rather than try and improve our weaknesses. I know that one of my strengths is being a good communicator, which is why I like to organize, send emails and pull things together. But others have different strengths and talents. But if we all come together as a community, if we all pool our talents, then all the pieces come together."

In the end, faith, church and community are the means by which we can find true meaning in our lives. These three words remind us that we are all one body in Christ and show us who we are called to be as children of God. Ultimately, as Brian and DeAnn learned from her parents and as they are now teaching their own children, these three words lived as one can be words to live by.



*Emily, Abigail, and Jacob Ament*



# ST. JAMES BASILICA OF JAMESTOWN

622 1 Ave S · Jamestown, ND 58401  
701-252-0119 · www.stjamesbasilica.org

NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
MAILED FROM  
ZIP CODE 58040  
PERMIT NO. 3

## PLEASE COME AND JOIN US!!!

Address Service Requested

### Weekend Mass

**Saturday Vigil**  
4:30 p.m. Mass

**Sunday**  
8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Mass

### Daily Mass

**Monday thru Friday** - 12:10 p.m. Mass

**Saturday** - 8:00 a.m. Mass

### Reconciliation

**Monday thru Friday** - 11:40 a.m. - 12 noon

**Saturday** - 3:30 p.m.

### Adoration

**Every Thursday** - 1:00-5:00 p.m.;

**Monthly** – 1st Friday All Night adoration  
8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Saturday

## Young Adults *continued from front cover*

His Word, and then to go forward and share that with other fellow students by leading a Bible study.

Of course, recreation and opportunities for socializing are essential to a healthy young adult life. So, the group will also gather for various fun social events such as going to movies, bowling or playing dodge ball.

“It’s really an opportunity for students to share in Christ’s friendship,” Fr. Mulligan says. “The Truth is a person, Jesus Christ, so as we study over Scripture the truths of our faith, we get to know Him personally.”

If you know of any college students, please invite them to join a Bible study with the College Campus Ministry! In turn, all in the parish are invited to keep our college students in prayer as they spend their time studying and in recreation.

“They are the future of the Church and the future of the world,” Fr. Mulligan says.



*The Young Adult College Ministry provides an opportunity for young adults to both grow in faith, as well as friendships.*



*Last year’s Bible study group*

*Are you a young adult/college student who would like to get to know other young Catholics? Or would you like to support this essential ministry? If so, please contact Whitney Somsen in the parish office at 701-252-0119.*