

Living for Christ

ST·MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH



Mark Your Calendars for St. Michael's 2019 Parish Mission!

While we are now immersed in the beauty of the Advent season, we know that right around the corner is the new year, and not far behind, the coming of the Lenten season! Here at St. Michael, we will be incredibly blessed to have the opportunity to increase our spiritual awareness this Lent with a parish mission led by the renowned Fr. Larry Richards. By opening our hearts and minds during such an important liturgical time, we can answer the call to deepen our faith as we journey through the Lenten season.

This exciting opportunity to grow in faith is sponsored by the St. Michael Stewardship Council. As one of the council members, Steve House is greatly looking forward to the spiritual enrichment that this year's mission will offer parishioners.

"The parish mission is an opportunity to grow in understanding of our Catholic faith," Steve says. "The topics and activities of our parish mission will strengthen us on the journey of continual conversion in which we strive daily to live in God's friendship and help others to do the same through the stewardship way of living."

Our parish is blessed to have Fr. Larry Richards traveling from the Diocese of Erie, Pa., to lead our parish mission this year. In addition to serving as a pastor in his diocese, Fr. Richards is an author, the founder of The Reason For Our Hope Foundation, and a gifted speaker who has led hundreds of parish missions and retreats. We are thrilled to have the dynamic and inspirational Fr. Larry Richards joining our very own Fr. Peter Richards to bring us these four evenings of life-changing spiritual renewal!

The four evenings of our parish mission will take place the week before Holy Week, from April 8 through April 11, with each session focusing on a different theme. The first night will revolve around God's love and our response to that love in prayer. On the second night, the talk will be a part of the Mass and will center on Christ's command to love one another.



Fr. Larry Richards will lead the St. Michael parish mission in April

Inside

- 2 Witnessing Stewardship in Our Parish: *Jami Meilahn and Family*
- 3 Stewardship Possibilities are Endless at Christmas
- 4 Cassie Swenson Reflects on Stewardship During this Year's Renewal
- 6 The Art of St. Michael: *The Sanctuary, Altar and Tabernacle*

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Witnessing Stewardship in Our Parish: *Jami Meilahn and Family*

This month, we speak with parishioner Jami Meilahn, as she shares her reflections on her family's stewardship journey.

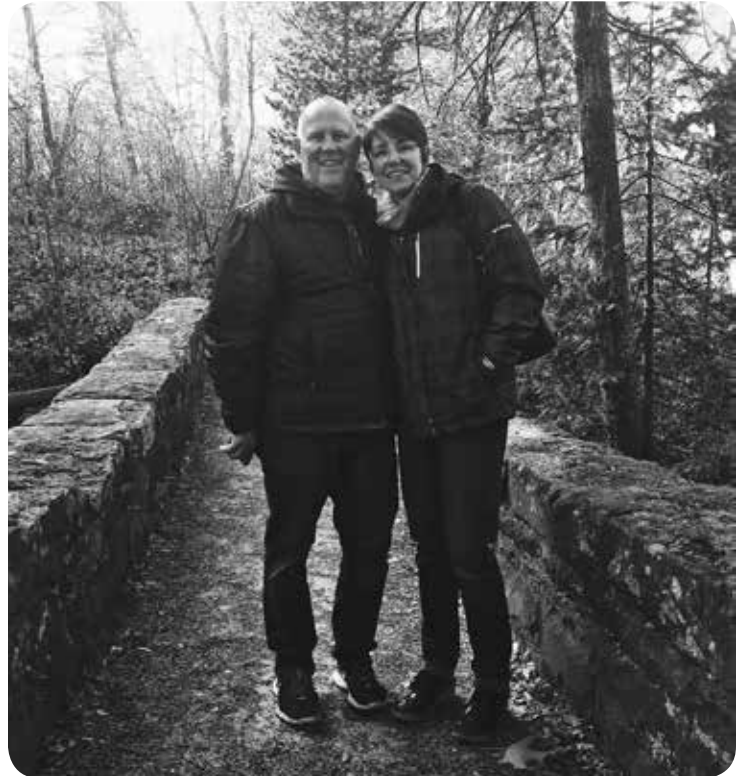
How long have you been a parishioner and in what ministries/groups at the parish are you involved?

John and I along with our five children — Megan, Mitch, Marli, Max and Maddie — have been parishioners for 19 years. During that time, we have been involved in a variety of ministries, including serving as a LIFT teacher, CRHP, Elizabeth Ministries, D group leader, Vacation Bible School teacher, Confirmation teacher, CCW, Faith-Sharing Small Groups, Eucharistic Adoration, New Member Connection, Family Rosary, RCIA and Knights of Columbus.

Our kids have been involved in a wide variety of ministries as well — altar server, reader, LIFT teen volunteer, Vacation Bible School teen volunteer, Core team, D group, Extreme Faith Camp, Lifeline Mass, Friday Night Live, Summer Stretch, Winter Blast and Little Flowers. As a family, we are thankful to all of the wonderful parishioners through the years who have invited us and encouraged us to serve in these ways.

What do you do as part of your life of prayer, individually, as a couple, or as a family? (Mass, prayer at meals, etc.)

Our life of prayer has evolved through the years. Most mornings, John and I begin our day in prayer by incorporating Scripture and reflection. We utilize a variety of sources including the *Magnificat*, *The Word Among Us*, *Laudate*, *The Better Part* and personal devotions. This time spent together helps us focus on God throughout the day. Our children have their own devotions, as well. They make use of Catholic apps and journal writing to strengthen their relationship with Christ. As a family, we



John and Jami Meilahn



The Meilahn family

continued on page 7

Living for Christ



A Letter From Our Pastor

Stewardship Possibilities are Endless at Christmas

Dear Parishioners,

When I think of December, the first thing that comes to mind is Christmas. While that may seem to be the obvious topic, there really are a number of other possibilities. I could think of *Advent*, a season of preparation. I could think of the *Immaculate Conception*, as we celebrate God's gift to the world in Mary. I could think of *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, whose popularity has spread far beyond the Hispanic community. Of course, December also holds the first day of *winter*. And because December marks the end of the civil year, I might be developing my resolutions for the New Year!

But instead, I think about Christmas. It is when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Babe in the manger in Bethlehem, who is the eternal Son of God made man.

The basic truth of Christmas — celebrating the birth of Jesus the Messiah, God Incarnate — is plenty of reason for us all to rejoice and worship. But we've piled such an additional load onto our Christmas observance that worship may be lost in the shuffle.

Think about what weight Christmas has to bear. We have to put up the decorations, or make travel plans to visit relatives. There is also the Christmas dinner to plan and cook. And then, we still have Christmas presents to buy. No wonder the Christ Mass becomes an afterthought!

Yet, we still have a wonderful opportunity this season — an opportunity to combine our Christmas activities with our stewardship commitments. Treasure, although challenging, is the simplest. Shouldn't the most expensive Christmas present we give be the one to Jesus, Whose birthday we're celebrating? Risen and glorified, He needs nothing we have. But His Body, the Church, continues Jesus' mission here on earth and always needs additional resources.

Time and Talent may be a little more complicated, but can't we spend a little more of our time in worship and



prayer? Maybe you can attend Mass each day of the Christmas Octave. Have your family gather for prayers together in the morning or at dinner, in preparation for Christmas Day and through the Christmas season.

And there are so many opportunities to share our Talent! Sing in the choir for the Christmas Masses. Help decorate the Church. Cook or bake for someone who is shut-in. Invite someone who will be alone to share Christmas dinner with your family. Offer to work in a soup kitchen. The possibilities are endless.

With a little planning, we can make this hectic time one of real blessing both for ourselves and others. Pray for me that I can keep Christmas properly, and I'll pray for you. And by the way, have a merry Christmas!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Peter Richards,
Pastor



Cassie Swenson Reflects on Stewardship

This year, our Stewardship Renewal invites us to delve a little deeper into one of the Four Pillars of Stewardship — Hospitality. Welcoming and seeing Christ in the stranger is a fundamental aspect of our faith. Creating a faith community that has the closeness of a family is a valuable part of building God’s kingdom here on earth. When Cassie Swenson and her husband, Brian, first came to St. Michael following their 2009 wedding, they were struck by the warm and hospitable atmosphere.

Looking back on the couple’s first visit to our parish, Cassie remembers well the immediate feeling of belonging she experienced here.

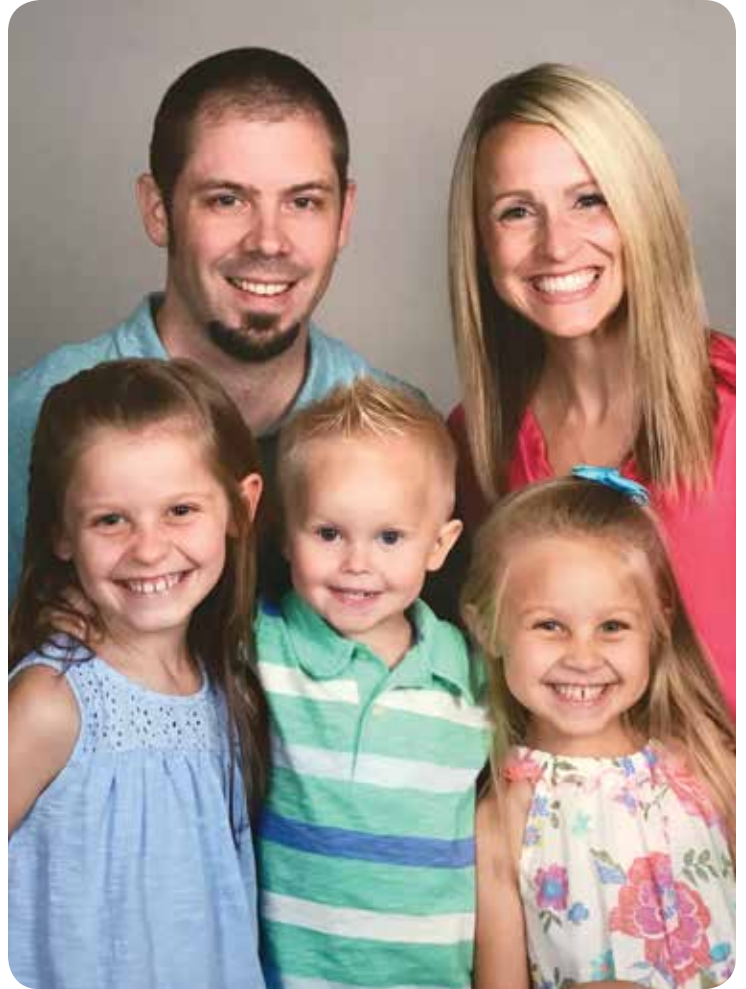
“I was immediately drawn to St. Michael,” she says. “I loved the beauty of the church and the beauty of the devout faith of the parishioners. You can look around and see people of all ages. There are so many different ministries. People connect to their faith in different ways, and St. Michael offers opportunities to serve in various ways. The faith community here is *alive!*”

Desiring to feel more involved in parish life, Cassie signed up to be an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC) during one of our recent Stewardship Renewals.

“When the Stewardship Renewal flyer came out, the invitations to the trainings for different ministries were openly communicated and regularly announced,” she says. “The trainings were held on weeknights after dinner, so they really make it family-friendly. I thought that if I’m coming to Mass anyway, part of my stewardship could be something that’s a part of the Mass.

“I’m absolutely glad I signed up!” Cassie adds. “Serving as an EMHC has really deepened my devotion in contemplating the true presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. I find it such an honor to be in such close proximity to Jesus and to be able to assist our priests and deacons in distributing Jesus to those at Mass.”

Cassie has also found that taking advantage of the many opportunities at St. Michael to stay close to the sacraments — making time for daily Mass, regular confession and adoration — has grown her spiritual life tremendously over the past few years.



The Swenson family — Brian and Cassie with their children (from left) Adeyla (8), Declan (2) and Kinzley (6)

As the parents of three young children — Adeyla, 8; Kinzley, 6; and Declan, 2 — Cassie and Brian are thankful for St. Michael Catholic School, where the students receive a strong academic education immersed in the faith. In addition to sending their children to our parish school and bringing them to Mass, Cassie and Brian strive to make the faith a part of everyday life for their family through regular prayer times, learning about the lives of saints, and routinely bringing their faith into commonplace conversations and situations.

Living for Christ



Stewardship During this Year's Renewal

Whether she is offering parishioners Holy Communion at Mass, volunteering at the parish school, or working with the non-profits Fraser Minneapolis and Presbyterian Homes, Cassie always feels she is receiving much more than she gives.

“Even when I think I’m striving and striving to serve Him, He turns an act of service around into a blessing for me by bringing a new relationship into my life, putting before me an unexpected opportunity, or even filling my heart with grace in knowing how real He is,” she says. “The more we serve each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, the more we become closer to Him. He just showers blessings upon all of the work.”

Having experienced the many blessings of becoming even more engaged in parish life in the last few years, Cassie is quick to encourage any parishioner who might be hesitant about becoming involved to go ahead and take a leap of faith at this year’s renewal!

“Be brave in making that first step,” she says. “Maybe start by reaching out to someone who is already in a position you’re interested in, whether it is a lector, someone in the choir, someone who serves at St. Vincent, or whatever. You don’t have to jump in with both feet — you can learn about the ministry first and see where God is calling you. It can really be an exploration of opportunity.”

Whatever someone’s talents or time constraints might be, with all of the parish ministries and activities here at St. Michael, each and every parishioner is bound to find one that is a perfect fit. While attending Mass on Sundays is a wonderful thing, Christ is calling us to so much more!

“He didn’t stay home with Mary leading a cozy life — He was out on the ground doing the work,” Cassie says. “Then He sent the Apostles out to do the work He left for them. And if we’re descendants of the Apostles, why wouldn’t we do the same?”

Today, Cassie is thankful that she decided follow Christ’s example and take a leap of faith to train as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion during last year’s stewardship renewal.

“When it comes to stewardship, I am definitely still a beginner,” Cassie says. “Fr. Richards is providing such

wonderful shepherding and the infinite opportunities St. Michael offers. I have long understood the importance of what it means to serve, but I feel like I am finally finding the courage to let God lead me to put this knowledge into practice!”

“Even when I think I’m striving and striving to serve Him, He turns an act of service around into a blessing for me by bringing a new relationship into my life, putting before me an unexpected opportunity, or even filling my heart with grace in knowing how real He is. The more we serve each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, the more we become closer to Him. He just showers blessings upon all of the work.”

— Cassie Swenson



A Spiritual House Your Guide to Our Church

THE ART OF ST. MICHAEL: *The Sanctuary, Altar and Tabernacle*

By the oblation of his Body, he brought the sacrifices of old to fulfillment in the reality of the Cross, and, by commending himself to you for our salvation, showed himself the Priest, the Altar, and the Lamb of sacrifice.

— Preface of Easter V, Roman Missal

Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we are a new creation, free of the stain of original sin and members of the Body of Christ, the Church. It is our goal, then, to bring our white baptismal garments unstained into the heavenly kingdom — and our hope that each step from our Baptism is a step closer to the heavenly banquet, the Wedding Feast of the Lamb in which Christ is joined to His bride, the Church, for eternity. So it is appropriate that, from the baptismal font near the entrance to the nave of the church, we process toward the sanctuary, the altar and the tabernacle, where Jesus in the Holy Eucharist resides.

The tabernacle and altar are — and should be — the focal point of the church and the faithful, and so they are front and center in our sanctuary. The *sanctuary* (or *chancel*) is the area of the church reserved for clergy and those serving in liturgical roles, and in historic churches, it is often separated from the *nave*, the ship or ark of the faithful, in which the laypeople sit or stand to worship by a rail or screen. As Catholic Church architecture in the United States took a more Protestant turn in the years following the Second Vatican Council, it has become common for this distinction in the worship space to be erased, so that the entire space is called sanctuary — the priest appears as one of us, a mere presider, instead of *alter Christus* (another Christ); and the tabernacle — the hut or little home in which the Real Presence of Christ resides, is moved to a side chapel or outside the worship space altogether.

In our church, the separation between nave and sanctuary is created by the steps that lead up to the altar and tabernacle, as well as the *apse* — the rounded alcove or recess in the wall of the church — that shelters the tabernacle and altar. The stone altar is prominent and centered, with the golden tabernacle centered behind it on a matching stone table, sheltered by a *balдахchino*, a domed canopy supported by four posts or pillars that recalls both the canopy that sheltered the emperor and spoke to his earthly authority and the *chuppa* —



pronounced “hoopa” — the Jewish wedding tent or canopy beneath which the bride and groom stand, symbolizing their bridal chamber and eternal union. Along the edges of the canopy or dome are inscribed, in Latin, the words of the St. Gabriel the Archangel to Mary, who is the original tabernacle of Jesus and the ark of the new Covenant:

Hail, Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed are thou among women.

The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High overshadow thee,

And that which is born to thee shall be called the Son of God.

The red lamp above the tabernacle helps the faithful locate the tabernacle; its flame indicates the Lord is present within — which is why we genuflect in homage toward the lamp and tabernacle. Our altar, the tabernacle and stand, and the other sanctuary furnishings are beautifully wrought and symbolic, as well — warranting closer, prayerful examination and understanding. We will delve into these beginning next month.

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Mark Your Calendars for St. Michael's 2019 Parish Mission! *continued from front cover*

The topic of the third night is confession and repentance, with an intense passion talk followed by an examination of conscience. Finally, the fourth night features Eucharistic Adoration and a healing service before concluding with the participants' renewed commitment to Christ, made even more sacred by His real presence in the Eucharist.

In today's busy world, a parish mission invites us to step out of our daily routines for a moment and focus on strengthening our relationship with God and, in turn, more fully answering the Gospel call to discipleship.

"Our daily lives seem to grow ever more hectic, and often we are tempted to neglect the very things that ultimately matter most for us and our families — our understanding of God, our place in His creation, and how to live a life dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus by word and action," Steve says. "This is the evangelization we are called to do, and the parish mission offers us the

chance to dedicate time to focus on these critical aspects of Christian discipleship."

In addition to the individual growth that our parish mission is sure to inspire, there is yet another benefit to gathering as a parish for a spiritual renewal, as we experience an increased sense of fellowship and community.

"Parish missions are first and foremost a shared experience, in which each of us can learn together how to better know and practice our faith," Steve says. "It creates at least one thing that we will have in common that we can then use as a starting point to forge even stronger relationships with other individuals, with the whole parish, and beyond."

With the dynamic Fr. Larry Richards at the helm, our 2019 parish mission promises to be an extremely engaging and inspiring experience for all. We hope that all parishioners will plan on taking advantage of the opportunity to experience a deepening of faith during the Lenten season by coming out to participate in the four nights of our parish mission, from April 8 through April 11!

Jami Meilahn and Family *continued from page 2*

attend frequent daily Mass and prayer time in adoration. We also find it important to keep our Sundays sacred. Each Sunday, we take time to pray together and read from a spiritual book to start the week off with our hearts directed towards God.

How do you live your life as a steward of God's gifts?

Living a life of stewardship has become an intentional way of life. It didn't just happen automatically. There have been countless good stewards in our parish, both young and old, who have greatly influenced us. To live as good stewards of our time, talent and treasure takes making intentional steps every day to choose Him. One of the first steps was to become aware of our gifts through time in prayer and reflection. One of the best places for reflection has been in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in adoration. The next step was to respect the gifts God has given us and

choose ways to utilize our gifts to further His kingdom. Most importantly, we give God thanks for our gifts and we honor God by using our gifts to build up His Church.

What are some ways you use to grow yourself and your family as disciples of Christ?

One of the most effective ways for our family to grow spiritually has been to make goals. Each year, we discuss and write family spiritual goals. These include commitments of time, talent and treasure beyond the stewardship challenge. Throughout the year we have frequent family meetings to review our progress as followers of Christ. We talk about our failures, challenges and successes. We then reestablish new goals as needed. We are also intentional about planning time to perform spiritual and corporal works of mercy together. We look forward to the ways God will prompt us to serve Him in the coming year.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Sunday Mass

Saturday Vigil, 5:00 p.m.

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

Daily Mass

Monday, 7:30 a.m.

Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, 7:30 a.m.

Friday, 7:45 a.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday, 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.,
3:30 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Sunday, 9:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

Tuesday, 5:15 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.

Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

VISIT US ON FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/stmcatholicchurch>

QUOTES FOR CATHOLIC LIVING

“The foolish fear death as the greatest of evils; the wise desire it as a rest after labors and the end of ills.” *St. Ambrose*

2018 Advent and Christmas Liturgies

Advent begins on Sunday, Dec. 2

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

(Holy Day of Obligation)

Friday, Dec. 7 — Vigil Mass at 7 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 8 — 8 a.m. Mass

Christmas

Christmas Eve — Monday, Dec. 24

4 p.m. Children's Mass, 6:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.

(Annual Christmas concert beginning at 9:30 p.m.)

Christmas Day — Tuesday, Dec. 25

8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. *(No evening Mass)*

Mary, Holy Mother of God

Monday, Dec. 31 — Vigil Mass at 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 1 — 10:30 a.m.

Advent Penance Services

All at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 11 — Mary, Queen of Peace - Rogers

Sunday, Dec. 16 — St. John the Baptist - Dayton

Tuesday, Dec. 18 — St. Albert - Albertville

Thursday, Dec. 20 — St. Michael Catholic Church - St. Michael

As throughout the year, individual confessions are available on

Tuesdays from 5:15 to 6:15 p.m., Thursdays from 8 to 8:30 a.m.,

Saturdays from 7:30 to 9 a.m. and 3:30 to 4:45 p.m., and Sundays

from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.

