



# Living for Christ

## ST·MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

### This Month's Stewardship Witness: *Parishioners Chad and Brandi Ronning and Family*

**T**his month, we speak with Chad Ronning, who reflects on his family's stewardship journey as members of our St. Michael parish community.

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

Brandi and I have been parishioners for 15 years. We were married in the historic church in 2003 and moved here a week later. At that time, we did not attend church regularly so although we were parishioners, we were not truly living out our faith. This changed once we started to have children. We made the decision to have our children attend St. Michael Catholic School. When our oldest, Ava, went to kindergarten I started to attend Mass with her on Fridays. From this point, our family started to go to church every Sunday. We didn't really become involved, though, until after Brandi and I both attended the Christ Renews His Parish retreat (CRHP). This retreat was a gamechanger for our

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*Chad and Brandi Ronning with their daughters Ava (10), Chloe (7) and Noelle (2)*

## Parishioners Chad and Brandi Ronning and Family

*continued from front cover*

spiritual life. Since then, we have been involved in various groups/ministries. Brandi attends the MOMS Group, is in her fourth year of Familia, is a part of two bi-monthly prayer/book club groups, and has participated in a Temperament Study. She also is active in the kids' school with volunteering and is a new member of Home and School committee. Since CRHP, I have become involved in Cornerstone Options for Women Clinic as a board member, Knights of Columbus, CRHP Continuation Committee, attend Catholic Watchmen meetings, and am involved in a small men's group.

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

As a family we make prayer a priority. We do this by praying every morning on the way to school and praying before meals, whether at home or eating out. We pray out loud for any intentions that may present themselves throughout the day. We also have been doing a weekly family Rosary that we found on YouTube that has an interactive Rosary which helps keep the kids focused, involved and reverent. We end our day with the same prayers that we start the day with, which are the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, St. Michael, Angel of God and then end with our personal intentions.

Our life of prayer as a couple is one of many things we are going to strive to do better at in 2019. We both have an individual prayer routine of reading the daily readings/reflections and devotionals. Brandi enjoys reading Catholic books for her book clubs and has a constant queue of new books which I see regularly in my Amazon cart. Overall, our prayer life ebbs and flows. Being a part of the small men's/women's groups has helped tremendously to hold us accountable and to keep us inspired to strive to be better Catholics.

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

*What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them,*

*'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead'' (James 2:14-17).*

This Bible verse truly explains how God feels about stewardship to others which is "works." For Brandi and me, our gifts include our children, which is our most important priority. Our goal is to raise strong, faith-filled children that love God, and give our girls the confidence and knowledge of their faith so that they can pass that onto their own children someday, and for all of us to get into heaven. Brandi and I have embraced making our faith the focus of our family, becoming involved in our church and community, because we have realized that God has prepared us to have a positive impact on others and to use our gifts, talents and resources to give back. By saying "YES" and sacrificing and sharing a little time, a little talent and a little treasure, we have watched God work in our lives to strengthen our faith, marriage, family and friendships.

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

By becoming engaged and involved in various ministries of our church, we have met a lot of great people that have inspired Brandi and me to be better disciples and have encouraged us to grow in our faith through prayer and the sacraments of the Church. I think the biggest impact for me is being a part of the annual CRHP retreat, where I can serve and pray for others while watching God transform them and open their eyes to a whole new world and meaning. Brandi has grown a lot through her Familia and book club discipleship groups, which has given her a deeper understanding of our faith by studying the *Catechism* and the Saints and shown her how to be a good daughter of God, wife and mother. Our two oldest daughters are also involved in Little Flowers. They have really enjoyed learning about the saints with their peers. These examples of how the saints lived give them a solid example of what to strive for in their lives and how to treat others.

Our spiritual growth as a family is ongoing but through our challenges, adversity, joys and happiness, we are blessed to be a part of St Michael Catholic Church and to have met and worshiped with an amazing community of God's army of disciples.

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## *A Letter From Our Pastor* Celebrating God's Love

Dear Parishioners,

**W**hat is the most widely observed saint's day in February — the one that is kept even by those who aren't practicing Catholics? Undoubtedly, it would be St. Valentine's Day, Feb. 14.

So who was St. Valentine? The saint we celebrate was a priest of Rome martyred in the late third century. But that doesn't explain how his feast came to be celebrated as the day for sending letters, cards and presents as expressions of romantic love.

The truth is that the custom of sending tokens of love comes not from any direct connection with St. Valentine, but from the ancient belief that birds begin to pair off on Feb. 14. And if courtship in the natural world occurred then, it must be appropriate for humans, as well. The association between St. Valentine and love notes is a later development.

Nevertheless, it's not wrong to connect the two. Love has many aspects, and our conception of it is richer if we keep more than one of them in mind. Martyrdom is the result of loving God more than our earthly life. St. Valentine was a martyr because of his love — his love for Jesus Christ and the Church. If he had not loved God so much, he could have repudiated his Lord and saved his life. We, in turn, express our love by sending cards and gifts on St. Valentine's Day.

But isn't that what stewardship as a way of life is, a little martyrdom? Not to push the image too far, but when we are faithful stewards, we give up a little portion of our lives out of our own love for Christ. Most Christians will not be called on to be martyrs, in the sense of forfeiting our physical lives for God. But we are called to give up some of our comforts, indulgences and riches because of our love for Him.

So then, as you prepare to celebrate and share your love with your valentine this month, remember St. Valentine and



his love for Christ. As well, keep in mind that God loves us, and return that love with your own toward Him. Loving God will be reflected in how you prioritize your use of the time, talent and treasure God has entrusted to you. As St. John wrote (1 Jn 4:19), "We love because he first loved us."

Happy St. Valentine's Day!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Peter Richards,  
Pastor



# ST·MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

## Our St. Michael Catholic *Mission Director:*

*“You will not be bored, and your life WILL be changed forever!”*

— FR. LARRY RICHARDS

### **Four Nights in Lent**

**April 8 — 7 p.m.**

Monday: God’s Love and Prayer

**April 9 — 6:30 p.m. (our regular daily Mass time)**

Tuesday: Love of Others, done in the context of a Mass

**April 10 — 7 p.m.**

Wednesday: Passion of Christ and the Need for Confession, followed by individual confessions

**April 11 — 7 p.m.**

Thursday: Adoration and Healing done in the context of Eucharistic Adoration and a Healing Service

### **Fr. Larry Richards’ Bio:**

Our Parish Mission will feature Fr. Larry Richards, a gifted and captivating speaker, preacher, retreat master and author. Fr. Larry Richards holds the answer to some of life’s most profound questions. He speaks from experience as a pastor of an inner city parish, a high school chaplain, a counselor and evangelist.

Ordained to the priesthood in 1989 for the Diocese of Erie, Fr. Larry Richards serves as pastor of St. Joseph Church/Bread of



Life Community in Erie. He is also the Founder of the DME (Divine Mercy Encounter) Retreat Program for the Diocese of Erie.

Fr. Larry Richards is the founder and president of The Reason for Our Hope Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to ‘spreading the Good News’ by educating others about Jesus Christ.

### **The Third Evening — Confession**

*Wednesday, April 10*

*7 p.m.*

The theme for this night is repentance and the need to go to confession. This night includes an intense passion talk followed by a detailed examination of conscience. Confession is one of our Catholic faith’s most misunderstood sacraments, and you can expect that Fr. Larry’s talk will be humorous, honest, human and riveting. It will provide humility, sincere contrition and hope for a closer, healing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Living the stewardship way of life calls for each of us to hold the sacraments close as true disciples of Christ. The Sacrament of Confession is one of the greatest gifts of our Catholic faith, as our sins are truly wiped away. Fr. Larry’s mission on Confession brings souls to Christ in a glorious, rejuvenating and intimate way!

Individual confessions will start at about 8:30 p.m. and there will be at least nine priests available.

### **The Fourth Evening — Adoration and Healing**

*Thursday, April 11*

*7 p.m.*

The theme this night is the Eucharist, and we will have adoration and then we will have a healing service as part of the adoration. Fr. Larry will bring blessed oil from St. Joseph Oratory in Montreal to anoint those people

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## St. Mary's Church Parish Mission

*Fr. Larry Richards*

who seek it. This is not the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, but a sacramental anointing, for those who desire it.

We then end the Parish Mission with a commitment to Jesus Christ, especially in His Sacramental Presence.

We will have time for refreshments and fellowship following the close of the mission.

### The call to action for every parishioner:

Join us in praying the special prayer that Fr. Larry wrote below for all who attend.

In the spirit of our 2019 Stewardship theme “You invited Me In,” make sure you are inviting others to this mission! We expect that the church will be packed, and we need you to reach out and invite your neighbors, friends, relatives — anyone that needs to have God touch their life! That’s everyone!

Volunteers are needed! If you can help during one or all of the sessions, please contact Patty Washatka at [patricia.washatka@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.washatka@gmail.com) or 612-220-6671

### Fr. Larry’s Mission Prayer

Holy Father, great God of love and mercy, You have surrendered everything for love of us. May we learn to surrender everything for love of You. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit that we may do Your will and not our own. Help us to love You above all things and to love Your people the way You have commanded us. Quiet our minds and hearts that we may be open to the gift of Your truth, and grant that our Parish Mission may be:

a time of Grace for all,  
a time of growth for the young,  
a time of refreshment for the old,  
a time of renewal for families,  
a time of healing for the broken,  
a time of joy for the sorrowing,  
a time of challenge for the complacent,  
a time of forgiveness for the sinner,  
a time of strength for the holy,  
a time of homecoming for all who have been away.

We beg You these things, Holy Father, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Questions can be directed to Patty Washatka at 612-220-6671 or to the Parish Office at 763-497-2745.

## This Month’s Spotlight on Our Parish Ministries

### **EXTREME FAITH CAMP**

The mission of Extreme Faith Camp is to help youth who have completed sixth through eighth grade fall in love with Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist and experience the Father’s love, Christ’s Real Presence, and the Holy Spirit’s power. Over the years, we have been blessed to see young teens respond to the baptismal call God has placed on their life through Extreme Faith Camp. Their response has been proven by what they have brought back to their parish communities. They have become teen leaders in their youth groups, taken the Sacrament of Confirmation more seriously, and been visible examples of Christian discipleship and leadership. Typically, it takes place in June at Big Sandy Camp near McGregor. The camp includes teens from other parishes.

*John O’Sullivan — 763-497-2745, ext. 242 or [josullivan@stmccatholicchurch.org](mailto:josullivan@stmccatholicchurch.org)*

### **BAPTISM ASSISTANT**

For Baptisms outside of Mass, a baptismal assistant is scheduled to assist the priest, deacon and families in attendance. This includes welcoming families and giving instruction, as well as preparing the needed supplies. The assistant makes announcements to the group as needed. After the Baptism, the assistant ensures everything is put away, takes the Baptism towels home to wash, and then returns them to the parish office. Commitment is approximately once every other month.

*Kevin and Heidi Barthel — 763-497-3466 or [heidibarthel@charter.net](mailto:heidibarthel@charter.net)*



### THE ART OF ST. MICHAEL: *The Altar (Part 2) and the Lectern*

By JIM THORP

While it is common and encouraged that consecrated Catholic altars contain the relic of a canonized saint, until recently our altar did not. In 2014, during a pilgrimage to Rome with teens from the parishes of St. Michael, St. Albert in Albertville, and St. Raphael in Crystal, our former associate pastor, Fr. Nathan LaLiberte, brought back a relic of St. Catherine of Siena from the Basilica of St. John Lateran to be installed in the altar. A special cavity, or *sepulchrum*, was cut into the stone for this purpose, so that the relic could be sealed within. St. Catherine was chosen for three reasons:

- First, there is an icon of her among the doctors of the church on the wall behind the tabernacle — indeed, Father tried to get relics of both St. Catherine and St. Helena but could only bring home Catherine.
- Second, St. Catherine is one of the patron saints of unity in the Catholic Church, as she spent her entire life trying to reconcile warring parties among the faithful. This is important since one of the major themes of the art and architecture of our church is a prayer for the reunification of the eastern and the western Catholic churches.
- And finally, before St. Catherine of Siena died, her last recounted words are, “Blood, Blood, Blood” — petitioning for the blood of Christ to cover her and the wounds of the Church. St. Catherine saw clearly that salvation and unity come only through the Blood of Christ.

This altar was used for many years in Nazareth Hall at the old archdiocesan high school seminary, before the campus was sold to Northwestern Bible College — now University of Northwestern — in St. Paul. The Latin inscription on the left side of the altar when facing it states that it was consecrated in memory of the first three bishops of the



diocese — Bishop Joseph Crétin, Bishop Thomas Grace, and Archbishop John Ireland. The altar and *baldachino* were stored in crates in the chancery basement until they were requested and restored for use in our church. The top of the altar was broken and unusable, but God’s providence not only enabled us to identify the same Italian quarry from which the original altar was cut, but to craft a new altar top, lectern and tabernacle stand to match the old altar pieces almost exactly.

To the left of the altar as you face it is the lectern, from which the Word of God is proclaimed. Carved of the same marble and accented in gold, it features a patriarchal or metropolitan cross, a double-beamed cross calling to mind the role of the bishop — and thus the priest — as both leader and shepherd of the people, emerging from vine-work calling to mind the Tree of Life. On either side of the lectern itself stand stone monoliths featuring the four living creatures from Revelation chapter 4, symbolizing the four Gospels proclaimed from the lectern during the Liturgy of the Word.

Next month we will take a closer look at these four creatures, the tabernacle and its marble stand.



## Winterfest Offers Wonderful Opportunities for Fellowship and Community Building

While the upcoming Winterfest Feb. 16 and 17 will be raising funds for our parish youth program and parish needs, the event's purpose rises far above the monetary level.

"While Winterfest is our second biggest fundraiser, we actually keep prices pretty low, which is our goal," says Steve Long, event coordinator. "People have just gone through Christmas and it is a lull time. We always do the festival before Lent begins, a penitential time. This is our parish bringing our community together for a time of more community and fun, and games, and a nice dinner, offering something for everyone. You can enjoy the time and get to know people you don't know, and spend time with people you do. It's an outreach to all communities to come and enjoy the event."

Our Parish Finance Council sponsors Winterfest.

Winterfest activities will all take place in our Gathering Space and begin with the spaghetti dinner, including Caesar salad and dessert, at 6 p.m. Saturday. The card tournament will follow at about 7:30 p.m. The bake sale, featuring homemade baked treats, will begin at 5 p.m. Saturday and run after all Masses that weekend.

At 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, contestants who have pre-registered will begin serving their entries for the Soup and Chili Contest. At 1:30 p.m., Bingo will get underway, followed by the meat raffle, which offers a package of a variety of meats such as steaks, roasts and hamburger.

A main raffle featuring cash prizes and a snowboard will continue throughout Winterfest, with the winning entries drawn on Sunday afternoon. The winners need not be in attendance.

"All families in the parish will get a packet of main raffle tickets in the mail," Steve says.

"We encourage them to fill them out, and if they need additional tickets, to please check with the parish office. Raffle tickets will be sold until 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 17."

Our parish youth will benefit from the Winterfest proceeds in recognition for their work to make the event possible.

"The youth of our parish are the ones who do the work for the event," Steve says. "They set up, work the aisles, serve refreshments, and they are working very hard

over the two days. A portion of the income from Winterfest is used to help support parish youth programs. The rest will go to general parish operations."

As planning for Winterfest was underway, as in any event, there was discussion on whether certain events should be continued.

"In the example of the spaghetti dinner, it doesn't make a lot of money," Steve says. "We serve between 300 to 400 meals. But for some who attend, it is the only event of Winterfest they come to. It's not a money-maker — it's a community time. All of our planning for this event considers the question — what does it do to build community? The focus is on the four pillars of stewardship — hospitality, prayer, formation and service. The rest comes together on its own."



*The fun and excitement of the Sunday afternoon Bingo games during Winterfest will be followed by the drawings for the meat raffle and the major raffle. Major raffle tickets will be sold until 3 p.m. on Sunday. Proceeds from Winterfest will go to our youth program and general parish operations.*

*For additional information about Winterfest, please check for postings in the Gathering Space and in the weekly bulletins.*

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# ST·MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

**11300 Frankfort Parkway  
St. Michael, MN 55376**

**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.

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

## QUOTES FOR CATHOLIC LIVING

“All this reverence that is paid to me I never take to myself, but I simply pass it all on to God.” *St. Francis of Assisi*

# LENT AND HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

## **Ash Wednesday — March 6**

7 a.m. Mass

5 p.m. Mass

7 p.m. Mass

## **Stations of the Cross**

*Fridays at 7 p.m.*

March 8, 15, 22, 29

April 5, 12

*Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. (with parish staff)*

March 12, 19, 26

April 2, 9, 16

## **Lenten Penance Services**

Tuesday, April 2 at 7 p.m.- Mary, Queen  
of Peace - Rogers

Sunday, April 7 at 1 p.m.- St. John the  
Baptist - Dayton *(note time)*

Sunday, April 14 at 7 p.m. - St. Albert;  
Albertville

Monday, April 15 at 7 p.m.— St. Michael;  
St. Michael

*Individual confessions are also  
available on:*

Tuesdays from 5:15 to 6:15 p.m.

Thursday from 8 to 8:30 a.m.

Fridays from 6 to 7 p.m. prior to the Stations  
of the Cross, during Lent only

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

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

## **Living Stations of the Cross at Church on Frankfort Parkway**

*(Note: New location from previous years)*

Sunday, April 14 and Friday, April 19  
at 8 p.m.

## **Holy Week**

Holy Thursday, April 18 – Mass at 7:30 p.m.  
followed with adoration until midnight.

Good Friday, April 19- Service at 3 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 20- Easter Vigil Mass at  
8:30 p.m. *(NO 5 p.m. Mass)*

Easter Sunday, April 21- Mass at 6:30, 8:30  
and 10:30 a.m. *(NO 6 p.m. Mass)*

*(Please note: There are no confessions on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday or Easter Sunday)*