



Living for Christ

ST·MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

Witnessing Stewardship in Our St. Michael Community: Meet Theresa Eicher

This month, we spoke with parishioner Theresa Eicher, who shared her reflections on stewardship, and how she and her family strive to live as disciples of Christ.

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

Jim and I were both born and raised in St. Michael and are high school sweethearts.

We've been married for 23

years now and have seven children — Luke, Joe, Nick, Sam, Grace, Danny and Isaac. Thanks to the great example of our own parents and grandparents, we know no other way than serving our church with our time, talent and treasure. Our entire family volunteers in different ways. A few of them are serving as Mass coordinator, reader, altar servers, Music Ministry, CORE team members, MOMs Group, Women's Group, Elizabeth Ministry, Pro-Life group, Adoration, Focus couple, Sunday hospitality scheduler, Christmas Eve Children's Mass coordinator, KCs, Fall festival and school volunteers.

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

We pray before meals and before bedtime. We also made a tradition a while ago to pray a Litany of Saints prayer at bedtime with the patron saints of our family. We've added Confirmation names to that list. We also make a point of celebrating our feast days each year. On their particular feast day, our children get to pick their favorite meal for dinner and we give them a small Christian-themed gift. We also try to get to daily Mass one time a week and

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The Eicher Family, doing their best to make time for prayer and stewardship amidst the busyness of life.

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ST·MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH



A Spiritual House Your Guide to Our Church

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

Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it says in scripture: “Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in it shall not be put to shame.” Therefore, its value is for you who have faith, but for those without faith: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” and “A stone that will make people stumble, and a rock that will make them fall.” They stumble by disobeying the word, as is their destiny. But you are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

– 1 Peter 2:4-9

Our altar is carved from Italian marble, white with black veins running through it, faced in gold. Although well-crafted wooden altars are allowable in Catholic churches, stone is preferred because the altar itself is a symbol of Christ, the cornerstone, as referenced in the Easter Preface: “he... showed himself the Priest, the Altar, and the Lamb of sacrifice.”

Why is this? In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Jesus rebukes the scribes and Pharisees, saying, “You blind ones, which is greater, the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? One who swears by the altar swears by it and all that is upon it; one who swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it; one who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who is seated on it” (Matthew 23:19-22). If the altar is what makes the sacrifice sacred, then the altar must be as holy as the sacrifice itself — and if the sacrifice is the Son of God, then the stone of the altar must be a special stone indeed: the cornerstone or “living stone” (1 Peter 2:4) that is Christ himself.

The front of the altar is adorned with the image of two peacocks eating from the Tree of Life, laden with fruit. In ancient times, it was believed that the peacock’s flesh did not decay — that, coupled with the peacock shedding its feathers frequently to grow new and more beautiful plumage, had made the bird a symbol of the resurrection and eternal life. The Tree of Life is also a symbol of eternal life seen in both the book of Genesis (3:22-24) and Revelation (22:14), and images of peacocks



eating from the Tree — or drinking from the Fountain of Life, as depicted in the iconography behind the altar — are common on the tombs of early Christians. It is a fitting image for the front of the table from which we partake of the heavenly banquet, the Eucharist, which is the food that prepares and sustains us for eternity.

Next month we will continue our exploration of the altar, including some of the more hidden aspects of its symbolism and beauty.

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A Letter From Our Pastor New Year's Resolutions

Dear Parishioners,

As we arrive at the New Year, it is customary that we make resolutions, which hopefully will be carried out during the course of the year. So many times these resolutions pertain to our physical lives — we resolve to exercise more, build a healthier diet, become more organized, etc. These resolutions may also involve the mental aspect of our lives — reading more, attending more cultural events, and so forth.

Too often we forget about the spiritual part of our lives. Our souls need to be tended to, and we need to make sure that we are deepening our relationship with God throughout the entire year.

I would like to give you a list of possible spiritual resolutions. While it might seem difficult for one person to undertake *all* of these, hopefully anyone can try several of these resolutions at one time or a number of them throughout the year.



- Attend Mass once a week over and above weekend liturgies.
- Spend a hour (or any amount of time) in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament once a week.
- Pray the *Liturgy of the Hours* (the *Divine Office*) at least once a day.
- Read and meditate on a chapter of Scripture a day.
- Take up a devotion of the Church (e.g. Rosary, Stations, novena, other prayers, etc.) and pray it daily.
- Read a spiritual book once a month.
- Make a morning offering as you begin your day, then an examination of conscience as you end your day.
- Offer a prayer of blessing/thanksgiving before/after a meal.
- Take time to pray daily with your spouse/family.
- As an individual or a family, take time once a week to do some form of charitable work — visiting those who are homebound or in a nursing home, do some work for an elderly friend or neighbor, bring food to someone in need, etc.

This is not an exhaustive list, but hopefully it gives you an idea that the small things done with great love can make a world of difference — both in your life and the lives of others.

Do not try to overdo any of these, but build up to doing them on a regular basis, thus laying a reasonable foundation upon which to build. Enjoy doing these resolutions, and see what a blessing they are for you and others.

Let us pray that 2019 will be a year of grace and favor from God. I wish you and yours a very happy New Year!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Peter Richards,
Pastor



ST·MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

An Invitation to Our St. Michael *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

Get to Know Fr. Larry Richards

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.

Fr. Larry Richards has directed hundreds of retreats, parish missions, and conferences for young and old alike. His inspirational talks, presentations and books — always authentic and enthusiastic — have changed the hearts, minds and lives of millions of listeners and readers worldwide.

Fr. Larry Richards was born in Pittsburgh, Pa. After high school, he attended the college seminary at Gannon University and received his Bachelor of Science degree in Mental Health in 1983. Fr. Larry Richards continued his studies at the major seminary at St. Vincent in Latrobe, Pa., and received his Master of Divinity degree in 1987. He will



soon conclude his studies at the University of Notre Dame and be awarded a Master of Arts degree in Liturgy.

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 First Evening — Prayer

Monday, April 8 — 7 p.m.

The theme of this night is to talk about God’s Love and our need to respond to this love by putting Him first in our lives, and the importance of prayer. We will also have a “how to” about prayer.

Fr. Larry Richards will conduct a prayer service and reflection called “If God Should Speak”...A Different Look at the Lord’s Prayer

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Catholic Church Parish Mission

Fr. Larry Richards

The stewardship pillars of prayer and formation are brought together in this first evening as we are given the “how to” on prayer. St. Paul tells us to “pray constantly.” But, as anyone who has ever tried to pray on a regular basis will tell you, prayer is hard work. We have to make a firm commitment to set aside specific time for prayer. Formation, the longing for deeper knowledge of our faith, is a desire that we need to ask the Lord to give us. At St. Michael, we are fortunate to have many opportunities to form our minds, hearts and actions toward God. He never stops calling us forward to learn more and to examine ourselves more deeply. Take this step forward and commit to attending the Parish Mission. As it stated above, your life will be changed forever!

The Second Evening — Mass and God’s Love

Tuesday, April 9 — 6:30 p.m. (regular daily Mass time)

The theme of this night is to live the only commandment of Jesus: “Love one another as I have loved you.” This night, the talk is part of the Mass and will focus on the need to love others, especially our families, and the importance to tell the people we love that we love them. We also deal with the necessity of reaching out to the poor, and also the need for the parish community to be a place of love.

The stewardship pillars of hospitality and service come together tonight through the love of the Mass. With our hectic schedules, we all need time to relax and exercise — but we also need to rejuvenate ourselves through service. Reaching out in love to others, while sometimes difficult, is nonetheless spiritually enriching. Hospitality, another form of service, involves welcoming and integrating every person into the life of the parish. Jesus teaches that whenever we invite and welcome one of the least of our brothers and sisters, we invite Christ Himself.

At the end of Mass, we are told to “go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” Mass is only the beginning — being an active Catholic isn’t fulfilled with our one-hour Sunday obligation. We are called to bring Christ to those we encounter — through generous acts of kindness, compassion and service.

Our call to action for every parishioner:

1. Join us in praying the special prayer that Fr. Larry wrote below for all who attend.
2. 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!

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.

Next month’s newsletter will feature more information about the Wednesday and Thursday missions.

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

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MASS REVERENCE AND ETIQUETTE

For many of us, when we are invited to a wedding, one of our first considerations is “what am I going to wear?” We wouldn’t think of showing up at a formal event in our workout clothes. How many of us search for just the right outfit to wear to our annual office party or on a date? Compare that to how much thought we put into what we wear to Mass on Sunday.

How we dress for an occasion indicates the importance that we place upon that particular celebration. At Mass, we encounter God through the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Dressing appropriately for Mass is one way that we show respect both for God and for our faith family. And this respect is important at all Masses – no matter what time of day or night.

Think about what you are teaching your children when you all wear your “Sunday clothes” to Mass. You are remind-

ing them that Mass is a special celebration. After all, we are going to Jesus’ house.

Some people may quickly point out that Mass shouldn’t be a fashion show – a place to show off your finery – and they are right! We also know that some parishioners come to Mass on their way home from work, and they certainly should not feel embarrassed about arriving at Mass in their work clothes. And no one should ever stay away from Mass because of simplicity of clothing.

But one rule should apply in all instances – our attire at Mass should always be modest. Our clothing should never distract others from what we are gathered together to celebrate – the life, death and resurrection of our Lord.

The celebration of Mass is always a holy occasion and thus should be treated in the most holy manner – in body, mind and spirit.

SAVE THE DATE!

Reboot with Chris Stefanick — April 17

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*God didn’t create us to just get by, He created us to live life to the full! Internationally renowned speaker and author Chris Stefanick is coming to St. Michael Catholic Church. **REBOOT! is the fun, inspiring and practical** experience for all, ages 12 and up, of applying the beauty and genius of the Gospel to every aspect of your life — from prayer and spirituality, to work, dating, marriage, parenting, health and more!*

Get your tickets now! Contact Bob Swift at 763-497-2745.

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Thank You for Supporting St. Michael Catholic School's 46th Annual Marathon!

The St. Michael Catholic School would like to wholeheartedly thank you for your extremely generous free will donations that were collected after Mass on Sept. 29 and 30. Around 450 StMCS students and family members participated in the marathon, including Fr. Richards and Fr. Joe. All donations are used towards new technology and curriculum materials. We are very blessed to have strong supporters of our St. Michael Catholic School! Thank you!



This Month's Spotlight on Our Parish Ministries

ROSARY LEADER

The Rosary is arguably the most recognizable Catholic devotion and is one of the most powerful weapons in our arsenal for spiritual warfare, and one of the greatest aids in the pursuit of a fruitful spiritual life. Parishioners lead the rosary in our church, which is said before the 5 p.m. Mass on Saturday, and before the 8 a.m. Mass on Sunday, as well as on Tuesday evening prior to Mass and after all other weekday Masses. Commitment is one time per month as fits your schedule.

Peggy Steinert — 612-644-4088 or peggy.steinert@gmail.com

WELCOME CENTER/GREETER

This ministry of hospitality greets and welcomes parishioners and visitors before and after each Mass. The Welcome Center is a great resource for those interested in joining our parish, as well as parishioners that have general questions. Volunteers are scheduled approximately once a month.

Heidi Arndt — 612-749-2008 or sharndt2@gmail.com

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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.

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

QUOTES FOR CATHOLIC LIVING

“A great crown is laid up for you, brothers; don’t barter away a great dignity for a petty pleasure.” — *St. Cyril of Jerusalem*

Meet Theresa Eicher *continued from front cover*

we have adoration hours. We do our best in the busyness of life to make time for prayer.

How do you live your life as stewards of God’s gifts?

We do our best to help others in need and to faithfully give our time to serving the Church whenever possible. We certainly fall short, but try to turn the mundane daily tasks that are necessary for our family into our ministry. Our goal is to get each other to heaven, and if we can help others along the way, that is a bonus!

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

We feel so blessed that our children were able to attend the Catholic school. We value Catholic education,

and the school does a fantastic job of educating the whole child and forming faith-filled Catholics. We are also very appreciative of the amazing Youth Group at our parish. The older kids have all been very involved in things like Core Team, Extreme Faith Camp and D Groups. We feel very fortunate that they were able to grow and share their faith in that way. Our oldest sons were so used to giving their in time this way, that it was second nature for them to become very active in their Newman Centers when they left for college. They both attend different schools in North Dakota and are part of their church’s music ministry, peer ministry groups as well as countless other church-driven activities. Without our youth program, I truly believe they wouldn’t have gotten involved. It is important that we constantly are looking for ways to grow on our journey. We know it is a work in progress!