

Living for Christ

ST·MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH



Bringing Catholicism to Life

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

To both catechists and students alike, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd faith formation program, or CGS, is a profoundly inspiring and enlightening way of coming to know God's love.

"CGS is a beautiful way for children to fall in love with Jesus and the Church," says Andrea Zachman, Coordinator of Faith Formation and CGS at St. Michael. "It is a hands-on approach that isn't found in other faith formation methods. For 90 minutes each week during CGS, the students set aside meaningful time to spend with Jesus and nurture their relationship with Him."

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was founded in Rome in 1954 and is the result of a long period of careful observation of children by Dr. Sofia Cavalletti and her Montessori collaborator, Professor Gianna Gobbi. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is rooted in the Holy Bible, the Liturgy of the Church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator. It takes place in an atrium, a room where work and study spontaneously become meditation, contemplation and prayer. The role of a CGS catechist is to help each child enter into a more conscientious relationship with God. The catechist tries to proclaim the Good News in such a way that each child falls in love with it, as the author of the Good News, God.

By making use of simple, yet beautiful materials that the children call their "works," CGS brings Catholicism to life in an incredibly powerful way.

"During CGS, the children give their 'best work' to God," Andrea says. "For example, each time they pick up a work in the atrium, they fall deeper and deeper in love with God's gifts — with His beauty and His immeasurable love. It helps them contemplate the loving relationship they have with Jesus, the Good Shepherd, as well as with the Mass."

In harmony with the Universal Church, the life in the atrium follows the liturgical year, honoring high feasts with special attention and fervor, such as Christmas/Epiphany and Easter/Pentecost. Certain works and presentations are shown during these times. For example, during Advent, the kids hear the Great Light Prophecy



These Cenacle materials are used to tell the story of the Last Supper.

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Highlights from Our 2019 Stewardship Renewal

This past fall, our St. Michael parish leadership conducted the 2019 Stewardship Renewal. The renewal gave parishioners the opportunity to discern their level of stewardship in our parish and community, and to make commitments of time, talent and treasure.

This month, we are happy to share with you some of the highlights of the 2019 Stewardship Renewal.

- There were 638 commitment cards returned from 47 percent of active households.
- There were 3,847 prayer commitments — the stewardship of time — from 81 percent of participating households.
- Some of the prayer commitments included: “Attend Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days,” 493 commitments; “Spend 15 minutes a day in personal prayer,” 377 commitments; “Pray together with my family,” 336 commitments.
- There were 2,099 ministry commitments — the stewardship of talent — from 77 percent of participating households. Of these, 296 were new parish ministry commitments, while there were 1,803 re-commitments to ministries.
- Some of the ministry commitments included: Funeral Donating Salad/Bars, 247 commitments; Eucharistic Adoration, 224 commitments; Knights of Columbus, 113 commitments; EMHC, 106 commitments; School Volunteer, 94 commitments.
- There were 504 offertory commitments — the stewardship of treasure — from 79 percent of participating households, with the average pledge of \$1,755.

We thank all of those who participated in the 2019 Stewardship Renewal, whether you have made new commitments or are renewing commitments to God, parish and community. If you did not have the opportunity to fill out and return a commitment card, we invite you to consider the ways you may share your gifts — after all, there is no time like the present to begin living out stewardship!

If you would like to see the full 2019 Stewardship Renewal Report, please contact our Parish Business Manager, Dave Ferry, at 763-497-2745 ext. 212 or dferry@stm catholic church.org



You Invited Me In

St. Michael Catholic Church

2019 Commitment Card
My Offering of Time, Talent & Treasure

First & Last Name (One card per family)

Street Address

City

State ZIP

Telephone (Important)

Email

Living for Christ



A Letter From Our Pastor

Honoring Our Lady in May

Dear Parishioners,

As people of faith, we often refer to May as “the month of Mary.” For centuries, Catholics throughout the world have included special devotions to Mary in their activities during this month. Best known, I’m sure, is the widespread and ever-popular practice of May Crowning — crowning an image of Our Lady with flowers.

May is certainly a beautiful time — it is, after all, a month full of renewal and celebration. For many Americans, cold March winds and dreary April showers have given way to blooming flowers and trees. Yet, it’s not only flowers and trees that reflect the newness and joy of May. Many students in junior high, high school and college are celebrating their graduations, and will soon be moving on to new phases and exciting opportunities in their lives. And of course, it is the month when we celebrate Mother’s Day, honoring and extending our gratitude to the women who have faithfully raised and nurtured us.

And May is most certainly a month of joy for all of us who claim the Church as our spiritual home. This year, we spend the whole month in the Easter season, which closes with Pentecost in June. Thus, the joy of the Resurrection and the glory of the Ascension are the themes that fill our Christian calendar this month.

As we rejoice with Mary at her Son’s triumph over sin, Satan and death, we also remember her faithfulness to God’s will throughout her life. Indeed, she can be viewed as the model of Christian stewardship. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops pointed to her in their pastoral letter on stewardship: “After Jesus, it is the Blessed Virgin Mary who by her example most perfectly teaches the meaning of discipleship and stewardship in their fullest sense. All of their essential elements are found in her life: she was called and gifted by God; she responded generously, creatively, and prudently” (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, 41).

As we enter into the month of May, let us take the time to gratefully reflect on the newness and joy that surrounds us. And in doing so, let us follow the Blessed Mother’s example of total dedication to God as we rejoice in the blessings He gives us, this month and beyond!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Peter Richards,
Pastor



Moms Supporting Moms

Several years ago, Pam Kulas, a mother of four, decided to invest in her own faith and vocation by joining a course offered by the Cana Family Institute.

“It can be hard,” Pam says. “It can sometimes feel like just another thing on your plate, but it’s really something that will help you. It is time away from home, but you will feel the fruits of this.”

Designed to support and empower young mothers, the Cana Family Institute facilitates small-group

gatherings that focus on growing in one’s relationship with God, as well as with other Catholic mothers.

Today, Pam serves alongside Tania Moore as one of our parish coordinators, facilitating group courses offered by the Cana Family Institute here at St. Michael.

“The Cana Family Institute is a group that works with parishes throughout the diocese,” Pam says. “They implement small-group meetings, where we grow in faith and learn who we are as wives and mothers.”



The women involved with the Cana Family Institute courses find that it’s an opportunity to grow in faith and fellowship with other women. (Bottom row, from left) Rebecca Peterson, Pam Kulas, Tara Hanson and Bree Holmstadt; (top row, from left) Sherrie Boone, Tania Moore, Brandi Ronning and Shawna Zuchman. (Not pictured — Amy DeWenter.)

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Ms: *The Cana Family Institute*

Two “courses” from the Cana Family Institute are currently offered at St. Michael Parish. The Cana Family Experience usually begins its yearlong groups in the fall, focusing on topics such as what it means to be called to the vocation of marriage and motherhood, the importance of prayer, and how we share and live out the faith. A group focused on learning to understand your personality, as well as the personalities of those you love, based on the temperaments, is typically offered each January.

“These are just tools to get conversations going and to really grow in your faith with like-minded women and have true, deep, meaningful friendships,” Pam says.

A cradle Catholic, Pam found that the group gave her an opportunity to grow deeper in her understanding and appreciation of the faith while investing in meaningful friendships with other Catholic moms.

“I knew what I believed, but I didn’t know why I believed it,” Pam says. “This sparked my interest because I really wanted to learn more about my faith and I felt like I needed that friendship. It’s a non-threatening environment, where you can talk about things that you might not always talk about. It’s extremely valuable to have that consistent support from other mothers.”

Not only has her relationship with God become stronger, but Pam also finds herself more fully enjoying her vocation as a wife and mother.

“I’m looking at my kids more as blessings,” Pam says. “I feel closer to God and I feel closer to my children. I feel that I’m doing more of what He wants me to do.”

For many busy moms, it can be hard to make a priority of spending quality time with other women, growing in faith. However, in Pam’s life, she’s always found the sacrifice to be a worthwhile one.

“It’s meant to be a blessing in your life, it’s meant to fill your cup and that’s exactly what it does for me,” she says. “It’s so hard in our busy lives, whether it’s sports or spouses that work late or travel — it’s hard to get out of

“It’s meant to be a blessing in your life, it’s meant to fill your cup and that’s exactly what it does for me. It’s so hard in our busy lives, whether it’s sports or spouses that work late or travel — it’s hard to get out of the house. But when I go and come home, my cup is full. It’s so valuable. When I look back on where I was when I started and where I am now, I’ve changed completely.” — Pam Kulas

the house. But when I go and come home, my cup is full. It’s so valuable. When I look back on where I was when I started and where I am now, I’ve changed completely.”

Pam encourages other mothers to consider taking advantage of what the Cana Family Institute has to offer.

“These classes are aimed at mothers with young children, but it’s really for any mother who wants to learn more about her faith and gain friendships,” Pam says. “It doesn’t matter where you are on your journey, if you’re a convert or a cradle Catholic. If you’re asking ‘Why are we doing this?’ or ‘What does the Catholic Church teach on this?’ it’s for you.

“It’s beautiful how this is relevant whatever journey you’re on,” she adds. “We have full-time working moms, we have part-time working moms, we have moms who are at home and we all come together. It’s for any mom who wants to learn more about her faith and gain that deeper understanding.”

If you would like more information about the Cana Family Institute, you can visit their website at www.canafamilyinstitute.com. For specifics of what is offered at St. Michael’s, please contact Pam Kulas at 763-291-8210 or pamelakulas@yahoo.com.



THE ART OF ST. MICHAEL: *The Rosary Windows*

By JIM THORP

The First Joyful Mystery: The Annunciation

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. — Luke 1:26-33, 38

The first Rosary window shows the Annunciation, in which the Angel Gabriel tells Mary of God's plan and the Holy Spirit descends upon her so that Jesus is conceived in her womb. Our Blessed Mother is the central figure in this image, and the newly conceived Christ is central to Mary. She is portrayed with her eyes cast down in obedience and her hands folded in prayer, with the flame of the Holy Spirit descending upon her. Jesus appears as an eight-pointed star inside a *mandorla*, an almond-shaped portal representing the intersection of two worlds — heaven and earth — in a moment that transcends time. The eight-pointed star is an ancient symbol of the Divine Light. This one is stylized to look like a cross or monstrance with the Eucharist at the center.

Around Mary, we see symbols of her mission. The rose is symbolic of our Blessed Mother as the Mystical Rose — St. Brigid said, "The Virgin may suitably be called a blooming rose. Just as the gentle rose is placed among thorns, so this gentle Virgin was surrounded by sorrow." The crown represents her heavenly reward and coronation as Queen of Creation.

Finally, the burning bush symbolizes her encounter with God, who reveals His purpose for her as He did for Moses. St. Gabriel is portrayed with a staff, representing his authority from God. His wings, too, are symbolic — in religious imagery, wings represent the role of angels and others as messengers of God. The banner above his head reads, "Hail Mary, Full of Grace" — which remains our greeting to our Blessed Mother today.



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Witnessing Stewardship in Our Community *Meet Erin and Keith Cornell*

This month, we speak with Erin Cornell about the stewardship journey she has shared with her husband, Keith, and their family.

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

Keith and I have been parishioners at St. Michael for 15 years, since June of 2004. Keith is an usher and attends weekly adoration. I, meanwhile, am a reader, serve as the Christ Renews His Parish Co-Chair, and attend weekly adoration. Our family also attends LIFT. Our oldest son, Ethan, attends the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he participates in the worship band and is involved in Bible study. Our daughter, Abby, is a freshman at STMA High School and is involved in D Group, Core Team, and Extreme Faith Camp. Lastly, our youngest son, Brock, is in sixth grade and is involved in both LIFT and Friday Night Live.

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 attend weekly Mass, pray before meals and attend adoration. Both Keith and I read privately our daily devotionals, attend weekly adoration, and make a point of attending monthly confession. As a couple we enjoy listening to Matthew Kelly and were blessed to be able to hear him speak live in St. Paul this past September.

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

I enjoy volunteering as a client advocate at Options for Women Cornerstone in St. Michael, helping empower men and women to make positive choices in parenting and life by providing education and community resources. I also serve meals to the homeless at Sharing and Caring Hands in Minneapolis. Keith devotes his time to high school students where he leads and encourages them to be the best version of themselves.



Erin and Keith Cornell, along with their children, strive to live out stewardship in our St. Michael community and beyond.

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

We attend adoration both individually and as a family and make a point of attending Mass regularly, even when we are on vacation. We've experienced Mass in many different states throughout the years and have visited several shrines. Keith and I read Matthew Kelly books and enjoy watching his *Best Lent Ever* daily videos. We endorse and support the Dynamic Catholic organization.

This Month's Spotlight on Our Parish Ministries

ELIZABETH MINISTRY

This ministry is scripturally based on the relationship between the Blessed Virgin Mary and her cousin, Elizabeth. Those who participate become mentors to women in the parish who are expecting a child or in the adoption process through prayers, personal visits, mail and telephone contact. They also minister to couples with infertility or families that have experienced miscarriages.

Sue Berning — 763-497-2139

Angela Lenneman — 763-497-5096 or elizabethministries@stmccatholicchurch.org

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

Natural Family Planning is a modern, scientific and natural means of postponing, avoiding or achieving pregnancy. It requires no drugs, devices or surgical procedures. There are many different methods of NFP. One method, called the Billings Ovulation Method, is taught at St. Michael. If you use Natural Family Planning and would like to volunteer as a witness couple and share the benefits of using NFP to those learning this method, please let us know. Classes are taught on evenings at the church.

Nora Dehmer — 320-248-5892 or noradehmer@hotmail.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

“God’s love for us is not greater in heaven than it is now.” — *St. Thomas Aquinas*

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd *continued from front cover*

proclaimed. They also learn about various Bible stories through the works they accomplish in the atrium. To learn about the Creation story, they work with a very long ribbon. One of the ends of the ribbon represents the beginning of Creation, when God said, “Let there be light,” and the other end represents the final end, when God will be “all in all.” They also work with a coffee-table-sized model of Jerusalem that is used to tell the story of Jesus from the Last Supper to the Resurrection.

Our parish currently has five “Level 1” sessions, which serve children ages 3 to 6. These sessions take place at

different times during the week and last an hour and a half. Many of the CGS program materials are also being used to enrich our First Communion and First Reconciliation preparation courses as well. Next fall, our parish will have a “Level 2” atrium to bring the gift of Good Shepherd Catechesis to our children ages 6 to 9.

“Good Shepherd Catechesis is a stand-alone program that supplements our parish’s family catechesis program, *Learning In Faith Together*,” Andrea says. “It is designed to help children grow in their relationship with Jesus.”

More catechists are needed to help bring young hearts and souls to Christ through this beautiful program. A CGS training will be offered at our parish on starting next fall. Those who feel led to become a catechist and would like to attend the training may contact Andrea Zachman at 763-497-2745, ext. 216 or at azachman@stmcatholicchurch.org.