

Living for Christ

ST·MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH



Living for Christ, Learning for Life: *New School Year Gets Under Way at St. Michael*

As the 2019-20 school year gets under way, Mrs. Jennifer Haller begins her 16th year as Principal at St. Michael Catholic School, or StMCS. She considers each of these years she has spent in our school community a blessing.

“I am blessed by the opportunity to work with a highly professional staff, serve families committed to Catholic values, and laugh and grow with students who are eager to learn in a faith-filled and rigorous academic environment,” she says.

On Sept. 3, about 460 preschool through eighth-grade students enter the doors at StMCS eager to begin another year.

The new school year ushers in a number of exciting changes in curriculum and instruction. One particularly notable development is that StMCS has been selected by the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence (CSCOE) as one of 18 archdiocesan Catholic elementary schools to participate in a PreK-to-third-grade literacy partnership with Groves Academy.

“CSCOE helps Catholic schools enhance educational excellence, and Groves Academy advocates for evidence-based literacy instruction for all students in Minnesota,” Mrs. Haller says.

Criteria for selection in this partnership includes school size, location, student demographics, leadership capacity and 100-percent teacher buy-in.

“We are excited to be one of the 18 schools selected to begin this unique partnership between CSCOE and Groves Academy,” Mrs. Haller says. “It speaks volumes about the professionalism and commitment of our staff. We thank CSCOE for their generous support to make this happen.”



Jennifer Haller is beginning her 16th year as Principal at St. Michael Catholic School.

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Provide Children with “an
Identity Rooted in Christ”

11300 Frankfort Pkwy NE
St. Michael, MN 55376
www.stmcatholicchurch.org

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Living for Christ, Learning for Life *continued from front cover*

“We are incredibly thankful for the prayerful and financial support of our parish. Every prayer and every penny is helping us to form servant leaders with compassionate hearts.”

— Mrs. Jennifer Haller, Principal

The Groves Literacy Framework™ is a three-year program for reading and spelling which helps to prevent reading problems by using evidence-based practices.

Of course, much of what parents and community members have come to trust about StMCS will remain the same in 2019-20.

“We get to live a legacy of educating children in the faith and academics,” Mrs. Haller says.

As in past years, StMCS students and staff will also continue to draw on themes from the Positivity Project, which centers on the belief that “other people matter.”

“There is a place at the table for all of God’s children, and through this lens we’ll explore 24 virtues-based character strengths with the entire student body throughout the entire year,” Mrs. Haller says.

In addition, we welcome this year’s newest members of the school teaching staff.

Miss Nikki Barthel will teach seventh and eighth-grade math, and Miss Allison Brown will teach seventh and eighth-grade language arts. Mrs. Janelle Hengel will have a long-term substitute for one trimester as she stays home to be with her new baby, who was born in July.

In the midst of all the excitement and new developments surrounding the upcoming school year, Mrs. Haller is quick to mention how important parish support is for the success of the school.

“We are incredibly thankful for the prayerful and financial support of our parish,” she says. “Every prayer



The flyer features the school's logo on the left, which consists of a cross inside a circle with the letters 'STM' and a gear-like border. To the right of the logo, the text reads 'St. Michael Catholic School' and 'LIVING FOR CHRIST. LEARNING FOR LIFE.' Below this, it says 'Now Enrolling' in a script font. Further down, it states 'Providing an Exceptional Catholic Education in a Safe, Spiritual Environment at an Affordable Cost' and 'Limited Seats Available - Call Today for a Tour!'. Contact information includes '14 Main Street North | St Michael, MN 55376', 'stm Catholicschool.org | 763.497.3887', and a Facebook link 'facebook.com/StMCSStMichael'. On the right side of the flyer is a photograph of six young girls in red school uniforms. At the bottom, it says 'Forming Hearts, Minds, and Souls for Generations' and 'Preschool - 8'.

and every penny is helping us to form servant leaders with compassionate hearts.”

Mrs. Haller says students and staff alike enjoy the weekly Friday Mass with parishioners.

“We also have a sincere appreciation for all those who volunteer in our school,” she says. “There is room for anyone who wishes to engage in our school community.”

*Save the date for our
School Marathon — Oct. 5!*

Enrollment is still open for this school year. “Those seeking an educational experience that is both Catholic and challenging as well as welcoming and safe should call for a tour today,” says Mrs. Haller. To learn more, please call 763-497-3887. Volunteers are welcome at any time to read to kids, play in the weekly cribbage tournament or serve in the kitchen. Please call the office at 763-497-2745 for more information. And be sure to stay tuned to the parish newsletter for upcoming events at StMCS.

Living for Christ



A Letter From Our Pastor

Getting Our Priorities in Order

Dear Parishioners,

I know that many people are not on a school year calendar. But for many of us, September brings a livelier rhythm to our schedules. Life just seems to get busier after Labor Day. Therefore, this month seems to be a good time to think about our priorities and to pray for God's guidance.

It has been said that the truly important is often pushed aside by the merely urgent. So, as you review your priorities, please make sure that you include what's really important!

First of all, be sure to include time for God, as well as for job, family and recreation. Of prime importance, make sure that Mass on Sundays is a top priority — that's the most important event of the week. In addition, reserve some time for personal Scripture study, as well as prayer with your family or a prayer group then incorporate that into your daily and weekly routine.

There are many forces pulling at us as we decide where to use our talents. For most of us, our jobs claim the lion's share of our efforts and sometimes threaten to engulf our whole lives. We also have responsibilities to our families and legitimate calls for service to the community — that obviously includes the Church. We have lots of areas for service right here in our own parish — religious education, music, serving



as an usher, or any one of the many ministries in which you may use your talents to grow closer to God.

Finally, we have to set priorities for using our money. As Christians, we are responsible to God for the use of the financial resources He has entrusted to us — no matter if it's a lot or a little — and to make a return to God in thanksgiving. In this regard, Scripture gives us the tithe as a goal. Working toward a tithe may mean some changes in your priorities, but I can tell you from personal experience that those who have adopted this as their standard of giving experience a joy rooted in the spiritual growth that occurs as we continually live out the "three Ts" of stewardship — time, talent and treasure.

Priorities are certainly a part of life. As you review your own priorities, especially now that many regular routines are starting up again, ask yourself how you will use the time, talent and treasure entrusted to you by God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Peter Richards,
Pastor

Through Stewardship, Chuck Blesener

For St. Michael parishioner Chuck Blesener, stewardship is simply about taking action and being a good custodian of the gifts we've been given. It's a way to "reach out to people" and live our lives "the way the good Lord wants us to."

"There are many different ways of doing it," Chuck says. "You just try to live a life which people look at as you living the life of the Lord. It's a way to lead by example, instead of by words."

This is something that Chuck and his late wife, Carol, tried to embrace throughout their married life, finding a wide variety of ways to serve over the years. Together they would volunteer for the Red Cross, traveling to recently devastated areas to offer support and relief, coordinate Masses, and serve as parish ushers. Yet, their biggest endeavor by far was creating and maintaining the church garden, a project which Chuck continues to lovingly maintain today in his wife's memory.

"My wife was the one who came up with the idea during the recession," Chuck says. "She was just the type of person who would see people in need and feel

"We each need to take an active role in our faith. And in those moments of life when our faith might weaken, I feel that stewardship is what keeps you anchored and helps strengthen your faith again. Sometimes, it takes time for faith to come back, but when it does come back, it comes back even stronger."

— Chuck Blesener



Chuck Blesener and his late wife, Carol, found a wide variety of ways to faithfully serve over the years.

we needed to do something. So she said to me, 'You like gardening, so how about I ask the church if we can use this vacant piece of land where we can raise vegetables for the food shelf.' I agreed, so my wife went on to talk to Father, who said 'yes' as long as we were willing to run it."

Since then, says Chuck, the garden has grown into a beautiful labor of love from the entire faith community. Many generous parishioners make it possible each year, growing a wide variety of produce for those in need. For Chuck, the garden has been a beautiful way to put his talents to good use and has become an "absolute lifesaver" following his wife's passing in December 2017.

"It just seemed like an absolute gift from God the moment Carol brought it up — almost like it was meant to be," Chuck says. "It's become a place where I can go to when

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Lesener Takes Action for God

things get hard and just kind of meditate and think about what the good Lord does for us. We don't control the garden, God does. We're just custodians of the land just like we're called to be custodians of the gifts that God has given to us."

Thanks in large to his involvement over the years, Chuck has been blessed with many true-blue friends here at the parish friends who have supported and kept him going during life's most difficult moments. And that, says Chuck, is just another reason why stewardship is such a good thing.

"I feel like it is all the work of the Lord and that, truthfully, more people should get involved," Chuck says. "We each need to take an active role in our faith. And in those moments of life when our faith might weaken, I feel that stewardship is what keeps you anchored and helps strengthen your faith again. Sometimes, it takes time for faith to come back, but when it does come back, it comes back even stronger."



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This Month's Spotlight on Our Parish Ministries

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD (CGS)

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Montessori-based religious formation for children. CGS, Level 1, will help to meet the religious needs of children in our community ages 3 1/2 to 6 and assist them in their religious experience of learning the fundamentals of our faith and falling in love with Jesus and His Church. The children meet during the school year, once a week in an atrium (room) that is carefully set up to allow them to enter into the Scriptures and the life of the Church in a powerful way using hands-on learning materials. Volunteers are needed as assistants in the atrium, adult facilitators, and environment care.

Andrea Zachman — 763-497-2745, ext. 216 or azachman@stmccatholicchurch.org

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Eucharistic Adoration is a sign of devotion to and worship of Jesus Christ truly present Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Blessed Sacrament. Jesus Christ, in the consecrated host, is displayed in a special holder called a monstrance and members of the faithful come to pray and worship Jesus continually throughout the day and night. Our adoration chapel, located to the left as you enter the first set of doors to the church, is open 24/7 except during weekday Mass and Sunday Mass times from 8 a.m. - 12 noon. We always welcome new adorers! Parishioners may sign up for a regular commitment of one hour a week at any day or hour they choose, or as a substitute. Because Christ may never be left alone exposed in the monstrance, we try to have at least two adorers at each hour (prayer partners) in case one adorer is unable to be present. Parishioners may also visit the chapel without being scheduled during the daytime hours before 10 p.m. Please print your name in the log book on the counter when you arrive and sign out when you leave. "Let us be generous with our time in going to meet Jesus and ready to make reparation for the great evils of the world. Let your adoration never cease." (St. Pope John Paul II, *Dominicai Cenae*).

Rob and Jeanne Van Drasek — 763-497-5886 or vandraskr@hotmail.com



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

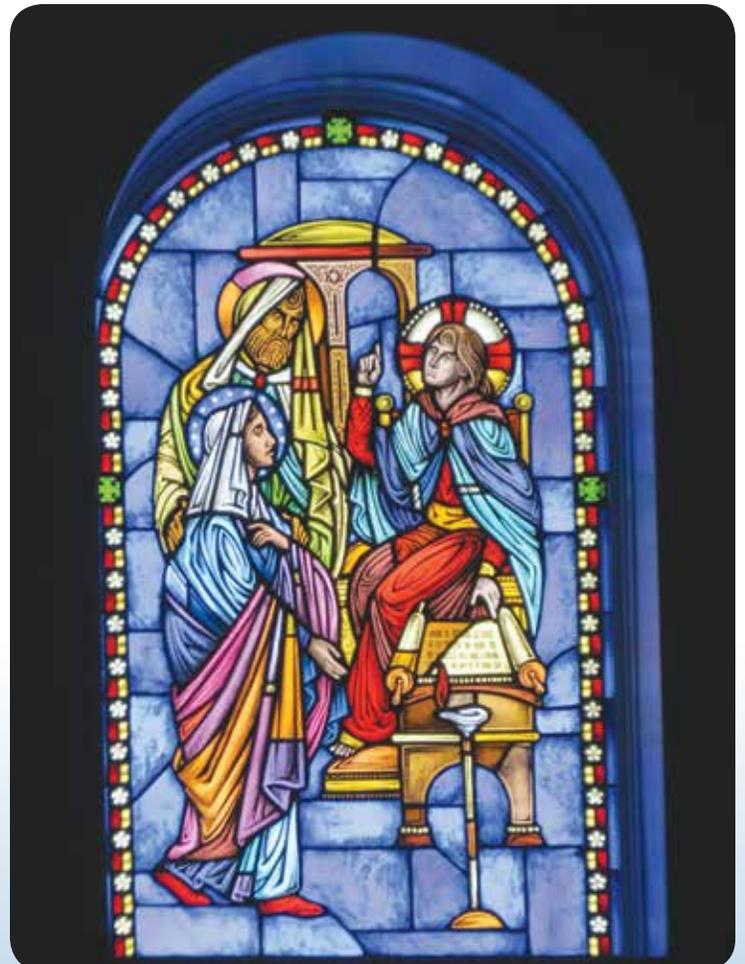
By JIM THORP

The Fifth Joyful Mystery: The Teaching in the Temple

Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor before God and man. — Luke 2:41-52

The fifth Joyful Mystery is Jesus teaching in the Temple, in which our Lord remains in Jerusalem when His parents and family leave, listening and teaching. We see the scroll of the Torah unrolled on the table beside Him, foreshadowing the Proclamation of the Kingdom of God in his public ministry 21 years later — it is illuminated by an oil lamp, the symbol of the light of wisdom. We see, as well, the question in Mary's eyes and body language "Why have you done this?" and the youth's answer conveyed in His raised finger, gesturing toward his Father in Heaven. Again, the *baldacchino* appears as the temple backdrop, reminding us that Jesus is priest, prophet and king. The prominent Star of David above the pillar, next to St. Joseph, reminds us of our Lord's kingly lineage.

Something new is taking place here: Although Jesus has yet to begin His public mystery, He does foreshadow it here, and the result is *astounding* and *astonishing*. Jesus is, in a sense, transfigured in this place. He appears dressed more richly than we would expect of a 12-year-old carpenter's son, in reds, purples, blues and gold, and He speaks with divine wisdom and understanding beyond His years. The divinity of this moment is reflected in his parents, as well, whose clothes are also richly colored and whose anxiety does not manifest itself in anger, but in wonder.



Living for Christ



Sacred Heart Homeschoolers

Provide Children with “an Identity Rooted in Christ”

The beauty of homeschooling, as Kirsten Dehmer explains, is its adaptability, for homeschooling looks different for every family.

“In our home, my husband and I decided to assume the responsibility of providing an education for our children that addresses their whole personhood as being a child of God,” Kirsten says. “Surrounding ourselves with families and friends who share a similar vision is a critical component in building and shaping who we are.”

Sacred Heart Homeschoolers is a Catholic homeschool co-op that formed last year to provide Catholic homeschooling families with support from other Catholic Home Educators. The Board of Directors are all members of St. Michael — Kirsten, President; Julie Traynor, Vice President; Stefany Beyer, Treasurer; and Andrea Zachman, Secretary.

“Members who joined us last year were from many of the surrounding parishes, including Corcoran, Elk River and Monticello,” Kirsten says. “At this time, everyone is Catholic. Christians in general are welcome and would be asked to sign our statement of faith which outlines our beliefs as Catholics through the lens of the Nicene Creed and an agreement to not say or do anything contrary to that belief.”

Beginning on Sept. 11, the co-op will meet each Wednesday at St. John the Baptist in Dayton beginning with Mass at 8 a.m.

“Throughout the school year we meet for Mass and supplemental classes,” Kirsten says. “The classes are catechism, choir, art, STEM, preschool, Socratic Seminar and a class called WRaP, which helps children gain confidence in writing reports and presenting in front of peers.”

Students rotate through classes until noon, when everyone prays the Angelus together and then enjoys lunch and fellowship.

“We have homeschooled students from preschool age to 12 years old,” Kirsten says. “We’re hoping to extend into high school-age students this year and are anticipating a bigger class than last school year.”

Together, the group has done some field trips and play dates. As they grow, they hope to create committees to help organize these activities for homeschooling families.



The Board of Directors for Sacred Heart Homeschoolers — (from left) Kirsten Dehmer, President; Stefany Beyer, Treasurer; Julie Traynor, Vice President; and Andrea Zachman, Secretary

“We just try to support one another in our efforts to homeschool our kids by getting to know each other over coffee while our kids learn and play,” Kirsten says.

Homeschooling families have the opportunity to choose from a variety of teaching techniques, methods and curriculums. They learn alongside their children and can witness firsthand where they are excelling and where they are struggling, and then modify teaching methods accordingly.

“Teachers are some of my favorite people in the world,” Kirsten says. “They give everything to their students in order to see them succeed. If I’m able to give that same passion to my kids, then I don’t see why I wouldn’t.”

Homeschooling is not without challenges. When asked about them, the members of the board say that their struggles vary from keeping the kids motivated and on task to getting

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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

“If you want to change the world, love your family.” — *St. Teresa of Calcutta*

Sacred Heart Homeschoolers *continued from page 7*

through the long winter months. These are overcome and worked through with lots of prayer, working with our husbands and seeking advice from other home educators.

All families are welcome to join the co-op or to reach out to the board to learn more about Sacred Heart Homeschoolers. If you are already homeschooling, please consider trying the group and meeting other families one Wednesday this fall.

“I love spending this time with my children every day and just being with them as they navigate life,” Kirsten says. “We are trying our hardest to build a foundation based on our Catholic faith that will hopefully give our children an identity rooted in Christ to navigate this world on their own.”

“In our home, my husband and I decided to assume the responsibility of providing an education for our children that addresses their whole personhood as being a child of God. Surrounding ourselves with families and friends who share a similar vision is a critical component in building and shaping who we are.” — Kirsten Dehmer

If you would like more information about Sacred Heart Homeschoolers, please reach out to Kirsten Dehmer and the board at sacredheartboard@gmail.com. Applications for enrollment are accepted on a rolling basis.