

# *Immaculata*

*.....from our parish family to yours*



*Vol. 16 Issue 1 Winter/Lent 2023*





## *A Message from Fr. Mark Steffl*

### *Jesus, the Good Shepherd*

On the cover of this issue is the statue of Jesus as the Good Shepherd that is on top of the pulpit in the church. It is aptly put above the place where we can be sure that so many sermons and homilies were preached for many years of parishioners to hear. For those who have always wondered about the pulpit and its placement, it was common for large churches to have such a construction in the days before microphones and sound systems for the priest to be more easily heard. (And I confess that in my time at St. Mary's, I have only used it one single time for a homily. It is one thing to be in front of a large crowd, but a whole other experience to be above the crowd!) It is a beautiful piece of art, and St. Mary's wouldn't be the same if it were not there! (The Cathedral in New Ulm had something similar, which unfortunately got removed sometime along the way...)

Jesus proclaims Himself to be the Good Shepherd in St. John's Gospel. He points out that there are all sorts of shepherds, but Jesus is singularly the good shepherd! And following Him, we will always be protected and nourished as sheep in His flock (even if what the Lord is asking of us is difficult or counter-cultural). But the image is helpful because to receive what the shepherd can provide means that we need to stay near to Him, not wandering off or on the outer fringes of the flock. Unfortunately, in our time, as in every generation before us, there are those who think that following the Good Shepherd will somehow deprive us of happiness or freedom, when in reality it is the opposite. To know the Lord, to live the Truth, is the best use of our freedom and the Lord says it is the only thing that can bring us true and lasting happiness. So instead, some find a different shepherd to follow, but one that does not protect and nourish them. (I was encouraged when Bishop Zielinski spoke to us as priests the first time and indicated that the Church needs priests, who as shepherds are not afraid of the Gospel.)

The image of the Good Shepherd was not something new that the Lord introduced when He declared Himself the Good Shepherd, but something that built on many references in the Old Testament to God who would shepherd His people. Most people, if they have any psalm committed to memory, know Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want..." This psalm is usually heard as the responsorial psalm at Funeral Masses. In the Old Testament, kings and prophets were supposed to be shepherds to God's People. Some of the earliest existing Christian art depicts images of the Good Shepherd decorating catacombs, the burial places of early Christian martyrs, who found extra solace in the Good Shepherd in times of persecution when people had to risk their lives to follow the Lord.

One intention that I pray for daily, and commend to you as an important need is the return to the practice of the Faith for those who have wandered off. I would like to conclude with the following prayer that someone reminded me of seeing a number of years ago during my time at St. Catherine's in Redwood Falls:

*O glorious patriarch St. Joseph, who merited to be called "just" by the Holy Spirit, I urgently recommend to you the soul of \_\_\_\_\_ who Jesus redeemed at the price of His Precious Blood.*

*You know how deplorable is the state and how unhappy the life of those who have banished this loving Savior from their hearts and how greatly they are exposed to the danger of losing Him eternally. Permit not, I ask you, that a soul so dear to me should continue any longer in its evil ways; preserve it from the danger that threatens it; touch the heart of the prodigal child and conduct him/her back to the Lord. Abandon him/her not, I implore you, till you have opened to him/her the gates of the heavenly city, where he/she will praise and bless you throughout all eternity for the happiness which he/she will owe to your powerful intercession. Amen.*

# Divine Mercy AFC Lent & Holy Week Schedule for 2023

*St. Mary's, Sleepy Eye ~ St. Michael's, Morgan ~ St. Paul's, Comfrey ~ Japanese Martyrs, Leavenworth*

## ASH WEDNESDAY, February 22, 2023

St. Mary's ~ 7:15am; 8:15am All School; 11:30am Latin; 7:00pm  
St. Michael's ~ 8:30am; 6:15pm  
St. Paul's ~ 7:00pm  
Japanese Martyrs ~ 8:00pm

## STATIONS OF THE CROSS

AFC Parishes ~ Sundays 7-8:00pm - rotating parishes each week (check bulletin for location)  
St. Mary's ~ Mondays 5:00pm; Thursday & Friday 6:00pm  
St. Paul's - Tuesdays following the 5:30pm Mass  
St. Michael's ~ Fridays following the 5:00pm Mass  
Japanese Martyrs & St. Paul's - Fridays at 7:00pm - alternating weeks (check the bulletin for location)

## CONFESSION TIMES

### Sunday's

AFC Parishes ~ 7-8:00pm - rotating parishes each week (check bulletin for location)  
St. Mary's ~ 11:00am weekly before the 11:30am Latin Mass  
St. Michael's ~ 8:00-8:15am weekly before the 8:30am Mass; 3-4:00pm  
St. Paul's ~ 11:30-11:45am weekly after the 10:30am Mass

### Monday's

St. Mary's ~ 6-7:00pm

### Tuesday's

St. Paul's ~ weekly following the 5:30pm Mass

### Thursday's

St. Michael ~ weekly following the 8:30am Mass  
St. Mary's ~ weekly following the 6:00pm Stations of the Cross until 7:00pm

### Friday's

St. Mary's ~ weekly following the 6:00pm Stations of the Cross until 7:00pm  
St. Paul's/Japanese Martyrs ~ following the 7:00pm Stations of the Cross during Holy Hour (check bulletin for location)

### Saturday's

St. Mary's ~ 9-10am; 4:00-5:00pm weekly  
St. Michael's ~ 9-10am weekly  
Japanese Martyrs ~ 7:30-7:45pm weekly before the 8:00pm Mass

## PALM SUNDAY MASS TIMES

### Saturday, April 1

St. Mary's ~ 5:30pm  
Japanese Martyrs ~ 8:00pm

### Sunday, April 2

St. Mary's ~ 7:30am; 9:30am; 11:30 (Latin)  
St. Michael's ~ 8:30am  
St. Paul's ~ 10:30am

## HOLY WEEK

## CONFESSIONS

### Monday, April 3

St. Mary's ~ following the 5:30pm Mass until 7pm

### Tuesday, April 4

St. Michael's ~ 3-5:00pm  
St. Paul's ~ following the 5:30pm Mass after Stations of the Cross during Holy Hour  
St. Mary's ~ 6-7pm

### Wednesday, April 5

St. Mary's ~ 6-7pm

### Holy Thursday, April 6

St. Mary's ~ 11-noon; following the 7:00pm Mass with Adoration until 10:00pm  
St. Michael's ~ following the 7:00pm Mass with Adoration until 10:00pm  
St. Paul's ~ following the 7:00pm Mass with Adoration until 10:00pm

### Good Friday, April 7

St. Mary's ~ 1-2:00pm

### Holy Saturday, April 8

St. Mary's ~ 9-10:00am

## HOLY THURSDAY MASS - APRIL 6

St. Mary's ~ 7:00pm; St. Michael's ~ 7:00pm; at St. Paul's with Japanese Martyrs ~ 7:00pm

## GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE TIMES - APRIL 7

St. Mary's ~ 12:00pm; 3:00pm; 5:00pm Latin; 7:00pm Stations of the Cross  
Japanese Martyrs ~ 12:00pm  
St. Michael's ~ 3:00pm  
St. Paul's ~ 5:30pm

## HOLY SATURDAY EASTER VIGIL - APRIL 8

St. Mary's ~ 8:00pm; St. Michael's ~ 8:00pm; at Japanese Martyrs with St. Paul's ~ 8:00pm

## EASTER SUNDAY MASS TIMES - APRIL 9

St. Mary's ~ 7:30am; 9:30am; 11:30 (Latin)  
St. Michael's ~ 8:30am  
St. Paul's ~ 10:30am

# Parish Family Profile

by Andrew and Abeni Docter

Sleepy Eye, Minnesota is not a place that Andrew and Abeni ever dreamed they would end up, but now it is a place they call home for themselves and their three children – Theodore (4), Thaddeus (2), and Bianca (8 months). Little did Abeni know that her conversion to the Catholic faith began on a 4-H trip in August of 2006. It was on this trip with other high schoolers from Wisconsin that she met her husband, Andrew, who attended a different high school 1.5 hours from hers. After facing her fears to tell her mom about the cute Catholic she met, Abeni started dating Andrew. Continuing their long-distance relationship in college, Abeni attended UW-Oshkosh for Education and Andrew attended UW-Green Bay for Biology and Environmental Science. During that time, Abeni went abroad where she happened to visit Ephesus (where Mary last lived). Naturally, Abeni's feelings were, "This would be really cool if I was Catholic;" she snapped some photos and carried on without a second thought. Both Abeni and Andrew went on to complete master's programs. 8 ½ years of dating and theological debate later, Andrew was not swayed to become Lutheran and compromises were made. On March 14, 2015, they married in the Lutheran church that Abeni was attending while teaching in Green Bay. By the time Andrew was ready to look for jobs, Abeni was ready to teach elsewhere. After accepting her dream job teaching middle school English in Superior, Andrew was offered a job working for Del Monte in Sleepy Eye.

Abeni, not wanting to have a long-distance marriage, told Superior she couldn't take the job and the couple scouted an apartment and moved to Sleepy Eye in a whirlwind weekend. Without a MN teaching license or a job, Abeni did the only thing she could think of; she explored the town and ended up at Randy's where she was told to look in the paper for local jobs. It turned out St. Mary's had an opening for a high school English teacher. Abeni applied as a Lutheran, not expecting to get the job, but was surprised by a call saying she was hired for the 2016-2017 school year. Abeni was told that an expectation of working at St. Mary's was that the couple needed to have their marriage validated by the Catholic Church and desperate for a job, but not seeing St. Mary's as a long-term position, she agreed. Andrew and Abeni went through their third round of marriage prep and in the process, Abeni agreed to take RCIA. Throughout her first challenging months teaching at St. Mary's, Abeni was struck by the commitment of her



students to attend Mass on their own, the dedication of her coworkers to their jobs and faith (which they gladly shared with her), and the depth and tradition of the Catholic faith she learned about through RCIA. Abeni decided she was ready to join the Catholic Church. Andrew and Abeni convalidated their marriage on their anniversary – March 14, 2017. It was that same day that Abeni received three other sacraments (Confirmation, Reconciliation, and the Eucharist). By the end of that year, Abeni knew that as long as they stayed in Sleepy Eye and she was teaching, St. Mary's is where she'd be. After only a few short years, Del Monte closed and the couple wasn't sure if they would remain in Sleepy Eye. After a lot of prayer and openness to God's plan, Andrew was offered a job working for Bayer in Redwood Falls, where he is employed today.

A few years later, in her sixth year of teaching at St. Mary's (with two children and one on the way), God threw another curve ball that caused Abeni to remember the importance of prayer. Lots of tears and discernment later, Abeni left her job, faculty, and students she loved mid-year to be a stay-at-home mom. Six months later, her youngest was born and she is grateful to be with her family every single day. Looking back, despite Abeni's initial resistance to becoming Catholic, Andrew and Abeni are now unified in their faith and have strengthened their marriage allowing them to share their love for God with their children. None of this would have been possible without a strong faith community at St. Mary's, regular prayer, and openness to God's plan.



## The Significance of the Baptistry Chapel

Recently, the marble and onyx baptismal font, along with its majestic carved wooden top and statue of St. John the Baptist, was restored to its original location in the south side chapel near the main entrances of St. Mary's church. The font was made by the E. Hackner Co. of La Crosse, Wisconsin in 1907, and was donated by the Christian Mothers Society. It was cleaned and the inlaid mosaics were restored in conjunction with its being moved in August of 2022. The wooden top was also repainted and gilded at that time.

In the early centuries of Christianity, baptisteries were built as a large building separate from the main church building, usually a cathedral. This was due to the fact that there were large numbers of adult baptisms and full-body immersion was normal. The catechumens also received their instruction in the baptistery before their baptism. The ancient baptisteries also had to be large due to the fact that it was the bishop who was the minister of the sacrament, and he only baptized catechumens three times a year on certain holy days. It was also for this reason that the ancient baptisteries were usually located next to cathedrals, and not parish churches. By the 6th century, baptismal fonts were being built in the porch of churches, before they started to be built in the church itself. By the 9th century, infant baptisms were the norm and the large, separate baptistery buildings were no longer necessary. One famous example of a separate baptistery that still exists today is that of the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome.

In all Catholic churches built between the Middle Ages and the Second Vatican Council, the baptismal font/baptistery chapel was located as a rule near the entrance of the church building. This has a symbolic meaning, as baptism is the sacrament that marks an individual's entrance into the Church. So it was at St. Mary's Parish when the present church was built: the south chapel near the three main entrances was designated as the baptistery. The fact

that it is a room off of the main part of the church calls to mind its ancient roots as a separate building. The shape of the chapel at St. Mary's follows the octagonal shape of the font, the number 8 being a symbol of rebirth. Its location on the south side of the building also allows for natural sunlight to color a joyous event in the life of an individual.

The three stained glass windows in this chapel portray three angels celebrating the joyous event.

The Second Vatican Council suggested (it did not mandate) that the baptismal font could be located in the sanctuary of a church. In light of this suggestion, the St. Mary's font had been moved into the sanctuary of the church in about the year 2000, probably shortly before the previous wood flooring was refinished. The font suffered some damage due to that move, and the beautiful carved wooden top could no longer be used with the font due to its great height and the visibility problems it would cause being in the sanctuary.

With the installation of the new terrazzo floor, the decision was made to move the font back to its original home in the chapel near the main entrances, which is more in keeping with the intent of the original builders of the church and with Catholic architectural tradition. It also better symbolizes what the sacrament of baptism is for the catechumen being baptized. This restoration also allowed for the carved wooden top to be reunited with the marble base. The baptistery chapel is also a smaller space that

allows for a more intimate celebration of the sacrament for the newly baptized and their family.

The parish's large mission crucifix was also re-hung in its original home in the baptistery chapel in conjunction with this project. Here St. Paul's words in his epistle to the Romans better explain why this crucifix is there: "Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3) It reminds all who enter the baptistery of the link between the life-giving waters of the font and the life-giving Cross of our Savior.



# St. Mary's Church

Sleepy Eye, Minnesota

## Sausage Dinner

Country Style Sausage, Mashed Potatoes, Sauerkraut, Gravy, Applesauce & Ice Cream



**Sunday, March 5, 2023**

**10:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

**Back for 2023: Serving Family-Style in the St. Mary's School Cafeteria**

*Enter through the High School Door.*

### **Ticket Prices:**

**Adults \$15.00**

**Children (6-12) \$6.00**

**Preschool \$2.00**

**Drive-Thru Adult Size  
Take-Out Orders**

**9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.**

**\*\*St. Mary's School Parking Lot\*\***

### **MEAT SALES IN SCHOOL BUS GARAGE**

*USDA inspected sausage and other meats for sale.*

*Saturday, March 4, 2023 ~ 9am-4:30pm ~ Sunday, March 5, 2023 ~ 9am-2pm*

New Ulm Diocese Council of Catholic Women

NUDCCW.org

## 2023 Convention

April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023

St. Mary's Church ❖ 417 S. Minnesota St. ❖ New Ulm, MN

## I AM the Bread of Life

7:30 AM Registration/Free-will Offering Breakfast/Silent Auction

8:00 AM Rosary

8:30 AM General Assembly

9:00 AM Keynote Speaker – Liz Kelly

10:15 AM Business Meeting

10:45 AM Woman of the Year

11:00 AM Mass

12:15 PM Lunch

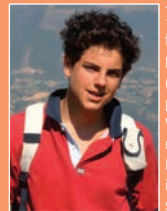
1:30 PM Blessed Carlo Presentation

2:30 PM Closing Prayer

3:00 PM Drawings



**Liz Kelly** is a retreat leader and the award-winning author of ten books. Her most recent book, *Love Like A Saint, Cultivating Virtue with Holy Women* has been called "penetrating and graceful," "a source of encouragement and hope," and "a beautiful deep dive into the lives of inspirational, holy women." Kelly received her certification as a spiritual director from the Cenacle of our Lady of Divine Providence School of Spirituality in association with the Franciscan University of Steubenville in 2015. Visit her website at [LizK.org](http://LizK.org).



### **Blessed Carlo and Miracles of the Eucharist**

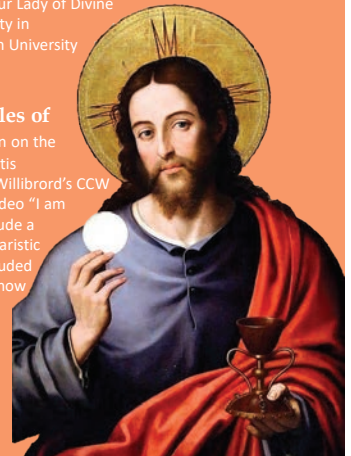
- Presentation on the life and work of Blessed Carlo Acutis (1991-2006) by Berny Berger, St. Willibrord's CCW president, to include the EWTN video "I am With You" about his life. Will include a review of some of the major Eucharistic Miracles (several very recent) included in an exhibit he created, which is now sponsored by the Vatican.

Contact your CCW President, Parish Office or the NUDCCW website for a registration form.

\$35 if registered before April 10

\$40 if postmarked after April 10

\$10 to attend only Liz Kelly's presentation



## Be Still and Know...

"Oh, what awesome mysteries take place during Mass! One day we will know what God is doing for us in each Mass, and what sort of gift He is preparing in it for us. Only His divine love could permit that such a gift be provided for us. O Jesus, my Jesus, with what great pain is my soul pierced when I see this fountain of life gushing forth with such sweetness and power for each soul, while at the same time I see souls withering away and drying up through their own fault. O Jesus, grant that the power of mercy embrace these souls."

— St. Maria Faustina Kowalska

## Divine Mercy Sunday

April 16, 2023

3:00-4:00 p.m.



Divine Mercy Sunday, the Sunday after Easter each year, is a very special Sunday when the Divine Floodgates from Heaven are opened wide and we reflect on the Mercy of God, and avail ourselves to that Mercy especially through the Sacrament of Confession.

Our Divine Mercy AFC will celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday at St. Michael's in Morgan with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Three priests will be available to hear confessions. The Holy Hour will include singing the Divine Mercy Chaplet.



## Welcome To Our Parish



Hector & Celia Hernandez

German & Anel Morales and their children,  
Yael, Quetzalli, and Maria

Dave & Julia Schwamberger

Thomas Windschitl

Anthony & Maria Tanata and their children,  
Andrew, Thomas, Katherine and Samuel



## Holy Matrimony at St. Mary's

Keith M. Hoffmann & Sheena Hillesheim  
11/26/2022

Bridget Mathiowetz & Karl Schmidtke  
1/21/2023

Lisa Sellner & Joseph Michels 2/11/2023



## *Eternal Rest Grant Unto Them, Oh Lord...*

*November 7, 2022 through February 5, 2023*

Carl Thedens 11/10/2022  
Lowell Seifert 11/12/2022  
Meinrad Hillesheim, Jr. 11/21/2022  
Colleen Berkner 12/2/2022  
Mary Hacker 12/4/2022  
Charles Forster, Jr. 12/12/2022  
Kraig Boyle 12/23/2022

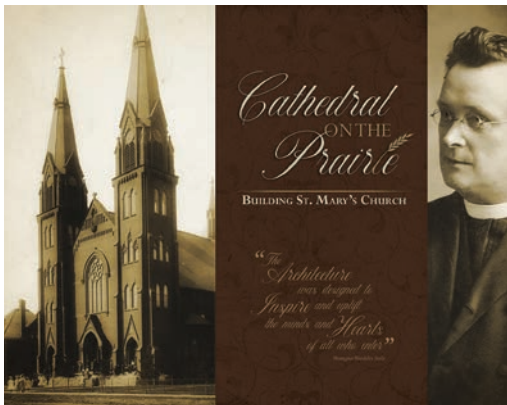
Evelyn Mathiowetz 12/27/2022  
Barbara Mages 1/5/2023  
Kathleen Spaeth 1/21/2023  
Michael Dietz 1/23/2023  
Beverly Simonsen 1/31/23  
Lenora Schumacher 2/4/23



## *Born into God's Family*

*November 7, 2022  
through February 5, 2023*

Leo Michael, son of Nicholas & Mariah Kaminsky  
Michael Andrew, son of Ben & Kaitlin Orbeck  
Meadow Grace, daughter of Seth & Amanda Dobbins  
Addison Mae, daughter of Christopher & Elizabeth Bertrand  
Dominic Joseph, son of Andrew & Cari Peschges  
Adaline Christine, daughter of Thomas & Allison Hillesheim  
Griffen Lee, son of Keegan Christensen & Olivia Berkner  
Samuel Becket, son of Anthony & Maria Tanata  
Henry Joseph, son of Joseph Rosenhammer & Katherine Stark



## *Cathedral on the Prairie Book*

# \$25

*This beautiful keepsake book is available to purchase at  
the parish or school office, Nex-Tu-Nu II store,  
and Sleepy Eye Depot Museum.*

# St. Mary's Catholic Church

636 First Avenue North

Sleepy Eye, MN 56085

Phone: 507-794-4171

[www.divinemercyafc.org](http://www.divinemercyafc.org)

Email: [saintmaryse@sleepyeyetel.net](mailto:saintmaryse@sleepyeyetel.net)

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID

PERMIT NO. 36  
Sleepy Eye, MN 56085

## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

### ***Parish Staff:***

Fr. Mark Steffl – Pastor

Fr. Tanner Thooft – Associate Pastor

Fr. Sam Perez – Associate Pastor

Deacon Mark Kober - Permanent Deacon

Deacon Mike McKeown - Permanent Deacon

Rebecca Visser - Parish Liturgist

Samuel Rosemeier - Director of Religious Education

Matt Grausam - Business Manager

Mike Suess - Maintenance Director

Chris Heiderscheidt - Development Director/Office Manager

Joan Windschitl - Parish Secretary



### ***Immaculata Contributors:***

Father Mark Steffl;

Chris Heiderscheidt;

Josh Sellner; Joan Windschitl

Andrew & Abeni Docter;

Laura Laechel-Graphic Design

### ***Photo Credits:***

Jason Schutz

Schutz Creative Photography,  
Luverne, MN

Cover Photo provided by  
Josh Sellner

### ***Upcoming Events...***

**February:** 22-Ash Wednesday

27-Women's Recollection

#### **March:**

3-KC Fish Fry

5-Men's Sausage Dinner

12-Daylight Saving Time begins

12-AFC Confirmation

13-Bishop Lucker Lecture

16-Deanery 1 CCW Spring Gathering

18-God's Plan Joy-Filled Marriage class

27-Women's Recollection

30-CCW Church Cleaning

30-Christ Mass

#### **April:**

1/2-CCW Spring Bake Sale

2-Palm Sunday

2-KC Auction

6-Holy Thursday

7-Good Friday

8-Holy Saturday

9-Easter Sunday

16-Divine Mercy Sunday

16-KC Cadillac Dinner

16-20-Annual Priest Retreat

24-CCW Sister's Shower

24-Women's Recollection

28-CCW Ladies Night Out

29-New Ulm Diocesan CCW Convention

**May:** 5-Divine Mercy Chaplet at the Way  
of the Cross, New Ulm

6-Caribbean Knight Party

7-First Holy Communion

7-Marian Rosary Procession

10-Rel Ed closing Mass

12-SESM Grandparents Day/

May Crowning

14-Baccalaureate

14-Mother's Day

19-SEPS HS Graduation

21-The Ascension of the Lord

26-Comfrey HS Graduation

28-Pentecost Sunday

28-SESM HS Graduation

29-Memorial Day

**June:** 2- Divine Mercy Chaplet at the Way  
of the Cross, New Ulm

2-CM-Morgan HS Graduation

11-Corpus Christi/Procession

16-The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

18-Father's Day

26-Women's Recollection

**July:** 7- Way of the Cross/Divine Mercy  
Chaplet, New Ulm

24-Women's Recollection

30-Japanese Martyrs Parish Dinner &  
Festival

**August:** 4-Divine Mercy Chaplet at the  
Way of the Cross, New Ulm

6-Parish Summer Festival

13-Marian Rosary Procession

15-The Assumption of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary