



ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness,
but will have the Light of life. —John 8:12

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FEBRUARY 2022



ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

A LOOK BACK ON OUR 2021 STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL

“People Are Finding Exciting Ways to Return their Gifts Back to the Lord”

While the past two years have undoubtedly presented us – individually and as a parish – with a host of challenges, St. Peter remains an actively engaged stewardship community. This was abundantly clear as we undertook the 2021 Stewardship Renewal, which gave all parishioners an opportunity to evaluate and discern their commitments to God and the parish. Importantly, despite the many difficulties brought forth due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our parishioners have clearly made deep commitments to living out the stewardship way of life.

“The 2021 Stewardship Renewal was our best renewal yet!” says Parish Manager Katherine Norman. “It has been 4 years since our first renewal, and our participation just continues to grow. We are so grateful for all the parishioners who turned in their commitment cards and for all of the commitments that were made. It is a great testament to St. Peter parishioners living Stewardship as a way of life.”

And just as participation in the Stewardship Renewal has grown, so have individual commitments in the areas of Time, Talent, and Treasure – the “three Ts” of parish stewardship.

“Thanks to our wonderful ministry leaders and their efforts to create ministries that people want to join, we had over 700 new commitments to ministries this year. Not only that, but our ministry leaders take time to reach out to each parishioner who commits to a ministry and helps them get involved. Their effort and dedication to our parish is a big part of why we continue to grow in stewardship.”

Concurrent to these increased stewardship commitments, St. Peter has made remarkable strides in its number of ministry offerings, as well.

“This year, 80% of participating households committed to at least one ministry. And 96% of participating households made prayer commitments, which means on average each household made 10 prayer commitments. This is so encouraging, especially since prayer is one of the four pillars of stewardship and the one we plan to focus on next renewal season.”

A spirit of stewardship often fosters powerful, positive momentum in a faith community – a continually building spirit of involvement, discipleship, and service. This has certainly been the case over the years here at St. Peter – and has been most clearly demonstrated during the 2021 Stewardship Renewal.

“Parishioners are signing up for ministries in large numbers and taking ownership of their parish,” Katherine says. “With all the new ministries, people are finding exciting ways to return their gifts back to the Lord. More people are getting involved and growing together as a community, and closer to Christ.”

But for those who didn’t have the chance to take part in the 2021 Stewardship Renewal, it’s not too late to discern your gifts and fill out a commitment card. Katherine offers encouragement to those who may have missed participating this past autumn.

“If you have not turned in a commitment card yet, pick one up in our church lobby and turn it into the parish office,” she says. “It is never too late to get involved!”

This month, we are happy to share with you some of the results of the 2021 Stewardship Renewal here at St. Peter.

- There were 533 commitment cards received from 58 percent of active households.
- There were 5,374 prayer commitments – the stewardship of time – from 96 percent of participating households.
- There were 2,016 ministry commitments – the stewardship of talent – from 80 percent of participating households. Of these, 703 were new ministry commitments, while 1,313 were re-commitments to parish ministries.
- There were 421 offertory commitments – the stewardship of treasure – from 79 percent of participating households. The average pledge was \$3,305.

If you have any questions about the 2021 Stewardship Renewal, please call the St. Peter parish office at 402-423-1239.

A Letter from Our Pastor

THE WORD OF GOD: HOW DO WE HEAR IT? AND HOW DO WE RESPOND TO IT?

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

A few short weeks ago, we completed our Christmas season. We are now in what we call Ordinary Time – but before long, we will begin Lent. This is one of those rare years when Ash Wednesday is in March – so, Lent does not, of course, begin in February this year.

The Gospel of John begins with the statement, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” We speak often of the Word in the Church. As most of you are aware, the first part of our Mass is called the Liturgy of the Word. What does that mean to us?

Basically, there are four parts of our celebration of Mass: Introductory Rites; Liturgy of the Word; Liturgy of the Eucharist; and Concluding Rites. My focus in this reflection is that second part – the Liturgy of the Word. The main parts of that are a First Reading, a Responsorial Psalm, a Second Reading, the Gospel, and a Homily.

We draw on Holy Scripture from the Bible for the readings. As Catholics, we do not consider that these readings are about God, or about the Church, or about our faith, or a history lesson, or a nice story from long ago. We consider them to be God speaking directly to us. Thus, our attentiveness to what is being proclaimed is important. Are we listening? Do we hear? And then, do we respond in our lives? All of those should be



facets of how we approach the Word of God.

For us, the Word of God is the living Word. God is speaking to us as a community, and He asks us to be faithful to His Word. If we pay attention and truly listen, God can nourish our spirit, and Christ can be more real and present to us. The Homily, the Responsorial Psalm, the Profession of Faith, and the Intercessions develop the Word further and complete it. The Profession of Faith is our acceptance of God’s Word.

However, the question for us is, how do we respond to the Word? Does it change our lives? Does it bring us to the conversion necessary to live lives of stewardship and service? It is not easy, I know. Being able to listen, to hear, and then to act requires time, practice, commitment, and a desire to fulfill all of this. That is one of my prayers for us – that we can hear the Word, and that we can bring it to life in our own lives and in the lives of others.

In His Mercy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Eric Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Eric Clark,
Pastor



SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR UPCOMING



Lisa McArdle of Catholic Stewardship Consultants will be the featured speaker for our retreat on March 5, with the theme “Stewardship Starts at Home.”

The excitement is building for our upcoming parish retreat on March 5 that will bring together our St. Peter community for a time of spiritual renewal, reflection, and adoration. The timing for the retreat, just after we enter into the season of Lent, offers a unique opportunity for reflection and spiritual growth.

Lisa McArdle of Catholic Stewardship Consultants will be the featured speaker with the theme “Stewardship Starts at Home.” There will be four different sessions: “Stewardship – a Family Call,” “Living as a Stewardship Family,” “Bring it to the Lord” and “The Four Family Pillars.” Small-group discussions will enable those attending to share and discuss what they have been learning. Reflection time also will be offered.

Parishioner Amy Fendrick recalls that while she had not attended many such parish events on her own, the experience of attending the parish retreat in 2021 made an immediate and major impact on her faith life.

“My husband and I had recently celebrated our convalidation at St. Peter, with Fr. Clark, and I felt a strong pull to attend,” Amy says. “My thoughts were, God and St. Peter had given me so many recent gifts – the Sacrament of Marriage, wonderful Catholic schooling for my children, a place to belong – I wanted to return my gratitude by opening myself up to becoming a better Christian steward in my parish.

“This retreat taught me to look at life through the cross of Jesus, much like ones looking at crosshairs of a telescope,” she adds. “Having Jesus be the center of my life reminds me that my life, my gifts, my talents, etc., are not my own – they are gifts from God.”

ING PARISH RETREAT – MARCH 5

..... “STEWARDSHIP STARTS AT HOME”

In turn, Amy’s attendance and participation at the retreat left her feeling called to share her gifts with others, in glory to God. It also changed how she understood her own prayer life.

“Since then, I have been so much more intentional about giving my gifts of time, talent and treasure to God,” she says. “Becoming more prayerful has helped me be more conscious of God’s presence throughout my day, and be more open to giving and receiving graces from God and others.”

Having been so deeply impacted by her experience at last year’s retreat, Amy offers encouragement to all of her fellow St. Peter parishioners in attending the upcoming March 5 retreat.

“Going on a retreat like this is going to put you in a position to grow in so many ways,” she says. “Sometimes, God sees areas where we need to grow, mature, or improve areas of our lives, and retreats provide us with opportunities and that space to be called to make those changes.”

For Amy, one of the key aspects of a parish retreat is the opportunity for fellowship with other parishioners, which in turn leads to spiritual growth.

“I was able to meet fellow parishioners and learn that I wasn’t alone in where I needed to improve ar-

reas of my life,” she says. “Listening to the speaker’s words and hearing different individuals in small groups affected me in different, positive ways. Listening to their words and reading Scripture also influenced me to want to grow spiritually. For me, having that awareness gave me the desire to try and do better in my spiritual life.

If you haven’t yet attended a parish retreat, Amy offers some helpful insight as to what a retreat can mean for your own spiritual life.

“I think the number-one thing people can expect from the upcoming stewardship retreat is that they will grow in ways they may not have expected,” Amy says. “I believe this retreat will offer good advice, give opportunities for self-reflection, and open your heart to make changes that will positively impact you and/or your family.

“I believe God has a plan for all of us,” she adds. “Going to this retreat just might make His plan more visible to you – it did for me. It also may help show you areas of your life that can be made better, especially since the new retreat is centered around family. I hope you open yourself up to the possibility of attending and receiving the call from God to make stewardship central to your family life.”

“I think the number-one thing people can expect from the upcoming stewardship retreat is that they will grow in ways they may not have expected. I believe this retreat will offer good advice, give opportunities for self-reflection, and open your heart to make changes that will positively impact you and/or your family.” — Amy Fendrick

Please RSVP by February 23 to Katherine Norman at 402-450-9484 or Katherine-Norman@cdolinc.net. Breakfast and lunch are included, and there is no cost to attend.



VALENTINE'S DAY *The Feast of a Christian Martyr*

Candy, flowers, romantic dinners, and excuses for wooing are the common traditions we associate with the once-pagan holiday known as Valentine's Day.

Dangling cupids, candy "message" hearts, and faux long-stemmed roses clutter every card store, waiting for that last-minute purchase.

The question is — how did this over-commercialized holiday really begin?

There are a few stories surrounding the history of Feb. 14 and St. Valentine himself, all dating back to the Roman Empire. The 14th day of February was a day set aside to honor the goddess Juno, queen of the Roman gods and goddesses. The following day, Feb. 15, began the feast of Lupercalia — a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

As part of the festival traditions, there was a name drawing among the young people. The names of young Roman women were written on slips of paper and placed into a jar. Each young man would draw a young woman's name from the jar, and the two would be partners for the duration of the festival.

Sometimes the pairing lasted an entire year, and often, the couple would fall in love and later marry.

At the time, Emperor Claudius II was involved in many bloody and unpopular campaigns, and he was having a difficult time recruiting soldiers to join his military leagues. Claudius believed that soldiers were

reluctant to join because they did not want to leave their loves or families.

With this in mind, Claudius decreed all marriages and engagements cancelled in Rome. During this time, St. Valentine was a priest in Rome, and he and St. Marius secretly married young couples. For this, St. Valentine was apprehended and dragged before the Prefect of Rome, who sentenced him to be beaten and then executed by beheading. He suffered this martyrdom on Feb. 14, around the year 270 AD.



Before his death, it is said that St. Valentine left a note for the jailer's daughter, who had become his friend, and signed it "From Your Valentine." Although the truth behind the St. Valentine's legend is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and, most importantly, romantic figure. It is no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

Over time, Feb. 14 became a time for lovers to exchange sweet messages, making St. Valentine the patron saint of lovers. The

date was often commemorated with the sending of poems and simple gifts. During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that Feb. 14 was the beginning of the avian mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of February — Valentine's Day — should be a day for romance.

MARRIAGE PREP MINISTRY

Walking With Couples as They Prepare for Life Together in the Sacrament of Matrimony

Weddings certainly have a lot of details – there’s the decor and flowers, as well as the cake and the photos. Many couples spend at least a year preparing for the big day. All of these preparations are important. Yet, we don’t want to miss out on the most important preparations of all – those that take place at St. Peter Catholic Church in the months leading up to the wedding.

Kevin and Anne Hubbell and Mike and Kathy Timmins serve as sponsor couples for engaged couples. The sponsor couples meet with the engaged couples and go through the results of the FOCUS inventory that the engaged couples have completed, and talk through areas where there are significant differences.

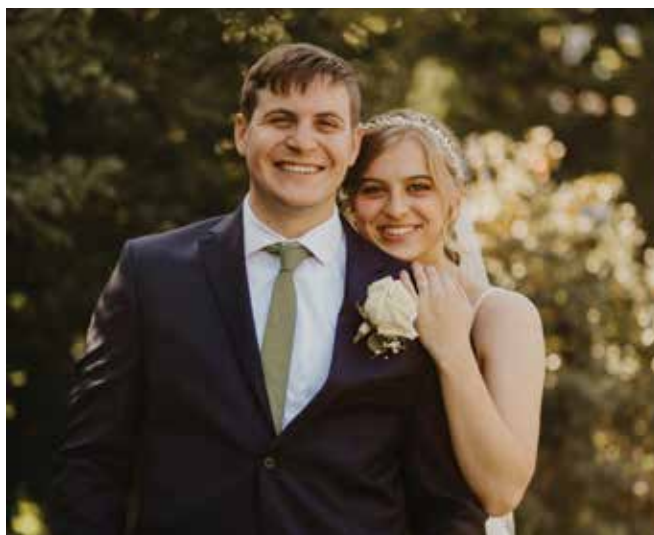
Both couples have been with this ministry for seven years. They all thought this would be a fun way to meet other couples and support the Sacrament of Matrimony. They’ve found all of that and more – it’s become an important part of their lives.

“In this day and age, where almost everything is acceptable, we need good examples of married couples to be models of the marriage covenant,” Kathy says. “We need to provide the reality of the vocation and how to bring God into your marriage.”

“I enjoy witnessing to the value and importance of marriage,” Anne says.

The Wedding at Cana was Jesus’s first miracle, as he turned the water into wine. Using a wedding to perform His first miracle is a true sign of the importance of the Sacrament of Marriage. The sponsor couples try to enforce the true value of marriage through the meetings, as

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Spencer Hruby and Amy Reisher were married at St. Peter in September, 2021.



Colton Helgoth and Lauren Niemeyer were married at St. Peter in July, 2021.



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MASS SCHEDULE:

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday: 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m.

DAILY MASS

Monday-Friday: 6:30 a.m., 8:15 a.m.

Saturday: 8:15 a.m.

CONFESSION

Monday & Friday: 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

Saturday: 3:00-4:00 p.m.

MARRIAGE PREP MINISTRY

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they meet with most couples two or three times before the wedding.

"It's so fun when you see them after the wedding in church and as they start to have children," Anne says.

Kathy says this ministry has allowed her and Mike to reflect on their marriage and the ways they have overcome trials. She also says it's helped them learn how to better pray together. Both couples would recommend serving as a sponsor – this is an excellent ministry for anyone who wants to help enforce the beauty and importance of marriage.

"If you want to help engaged couples understand marriage as a vocation and make sure it's Christ-centered, and a lifelong commitment – that it's about getting your spouse and children to heaven, not just about the wedding day – this is a great ministry to get involved in," Kathy says.

"I would recommend this ministry to other married couples because it is refreshing to meet young engaged couples and help them facilitate conversation about various aspects of married life," Anne says. "I also think it is really important to support couples and encourage them in their faith journey."

*If you are engaged and plan to get married at St. Peter Church,
call our parish office at 402-423-1239 to schedule your wedding
and start your marriage preparation.*