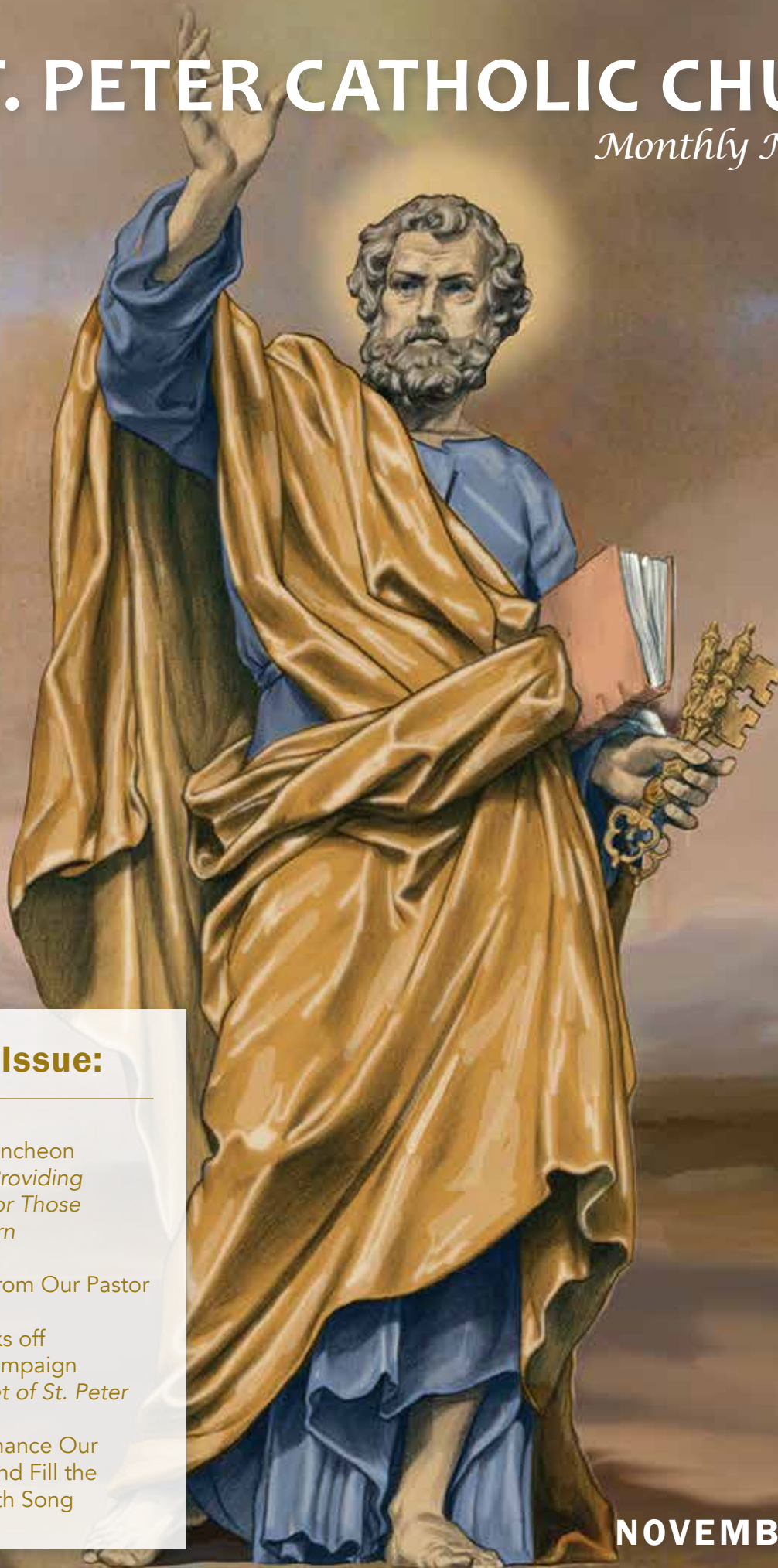




ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter



In This Issue:

- 2** Funeral Luncheon Ministry: *Providing Comfort for Those Who Mourn*
- 3** A Letter From Our Pastor
- 4** Parish Kicks off Capital Campaign *At the Feet of St. Peter*
- 7** Choirs Enhance Our Worship and Fill the Church with Song

NOVEMBER 2022



ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

FUNERAL LUNCHEON MINISTRY: PROVIDING COMFORT FOR THOSE WHO MOURN

As many of us have experienced the loss of a loved one, we recognize the importance of comforting those who mourn. This kindness of being with those who grieve can take many forms – for the Funeral Luncheon Ministry, it's providing and serving a meal to those who attend the funerals at the parish. For the family who is mourning, the process of planning and being at the funeral is a busy and difficult one. And for many, weddings and funerals may be the only time that they see extended family. This meal allows them to gather with the friends and family who have also lost this special person. It is a ministry of compassion to help facilitate that.

At St. Peter Catholic Church, the Funeral Luncheon Ministry is a part of the Parish Council of Catholic Women (PCCW). All women members of the parish are automatically a part of this council. The members of PCCW provide the food and serve the meals. This is just one part of PCCW where women are invited to participate in as many of the activities as they can.

There are several different opportunities to serve in this ministry. Some of the volunteers prepare the evening before the funeral, while others serve the meal and clean up the day of the funeral. Many volunteers also provide dessert bars or salads for the meal. This allows flexibility for members who may work or have other obligations to still be able to be involved in this important work.

"We have a SignUpGenius so the people in the ministry can sign up to help if they are available," says LaDonna Hegemann, one of the coordinators for this ministry. "This works very well for us to organize the events."

LaDonna has also experienced firsthand how helpful this ministry is for the families of those who have lost a loved one.



(From left) LaDonna Hegemann, Mary Hayes, Kathleen Noonan, Carol Koranda and Chananne Slepicka

"I have lost my parents and a granddaughter," she says. "Having the support of the parish family in this way is just so important. It is one way to ease the burden on the family."

The volunteers in this ministry have also grown in community and friendship with each other as they have served together over the years.

"I have seen the friendships grow as we have served side by side over the years," LaDonna says. "Being a part of our parish community is important and serving others at the same time is a special thing that connects us."

For the families and friends who have lost a loved one, this ministry serves them by allowing them to spend time together amid their mourning. This straightforward ministry is an important part of making the parish a caring and welcoming one. It also allows us to welcome and evangelize others who attend the funerals but may not frequently come to church – making them feel welcomed and provided for is a great witness to them.

If you would like to get involved in this ministry, please contact LaDonna Hegemann at ladonnahegemann@earthlink.net or 402-421-9333.

A Letter from Our Pastor

NOVEMBER IS A TIME FOR *Thanksgiving*

Dear Brothers and Sister in Christ,

November automatically brings us to thoughts of thanksgiving and Thanksgiving.

It is both a time of year when we think in terms of being grateful to God for our gifts, and a time when we also formally celebrate our American holiday. My memories of Thanksgiving are filled with food, of course, but they are also filled with thoughts of family and a sense of togetherness and a sense of my faith.

But this is also a significant month in the Church from several perspectives. Nov. 1 is a Holy Day, the Solemnity of All Saints. The next day is All Souls Day, a day devoted to all the saints in our lives – living, not living, known, and unknown.

Most of us have people in our lives who have had a profound impact on us – people we can consider our own personal saints. This month is a wonderful reminder to think of them, thank them, and thank God for making them a part of our lives.

Our Thanksgiving holiday falls on Nov. 24 and is a time for families and gratitude. Thanksgiving became official in the United States in 1863, and in his proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln made very clear Whom we needed to thank. “To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail



to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God,” Lincoln said. In other words, we all need to thank Almighty God for our many blessings.

Finally, November also brings us to the end of one Church year and the beginning of a new one. The Feast of Christ the King on Nov. 20 officially begins the final week of our liturgical year, and the First Sunday of Advent is on Nov. 27. From the beginning of the month when we thank God for the example of the saints and the saintly people in our lives, to the end of the month when we thank God for everything we have and everything we are, November is a time to approach the Lord with a grateful heart. That is what stewardship truly is all about – about approaching God, about approaching each day, and about approaching all those whom we encounter with hearts filled with gratitude and love.

In His Mercy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Clark".

Fr. Clark, pastor

A close-up photograph of a burlap bag tied with a twine string. A small, rectangular, light-colored tag is attached to the string, with the words "Happy Thanksgiving" written on it in a simple, dark font. The background is slightly blurred, showing some autumn leaves.



ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

PARISH KICKS OFF CAPITAL

St. Peter Parish in Lincoln kicked off a capital campaign the weekend of Oct. 1-2 — an \$8.5 million update to the 32-year-old campus, external changes matching the renewal happening at the parish.

The parish placed the campaign under the care and intercession of its patron, St. Peter. Flowing from the parish’s stewardship way of life, parishioners are being invited to place their gifts “At the Feet of Peter” during the campaign.

The campaign process began in 2020 when Fr. Eric Clark was installed as pastor. In his first assignment as pastor, Fr. Clark says he knew he had to first listen and come to know his parish. Some of his initial observations came from the results of a 2019 parish survey on the state of the parish — desires, needs, and wants. All parishioners were asked to give their perspective on the state of the parish and what they thought needed to happen. Then in January 2021, a SWOT analysis was conducted by a third-party consultant at many levels of the parish, including staff and teachers, council members, school parents, and other parishioners. The survey and SWOT analysis gave Fr. Clark a good understanding of where things stood and where the Holy Spirit, working in the hearts of parishioners, was inviting the parish to go.

In January 2021, Fr. Clark identified and invited

individuals to serve on the strategic planning committee that would set goals and plans of action for the parish’s needs. The committee identified several areas of focus; facilities, hospitality, school, prayer, service, leadership, formation, communication, sacraments and liturgy, evangelization and outreach, and finances and tithing. From the collaboration of the committee came the parish’s vision and mission: “St. Peter Catholic Church will abide in Christ, and build His Kingdom by making disciples.”

Fr. Clark and committee members knew the parish had to address deferred maintenance as a result of the parish survey and SWOT analysis. John Kuchta, campaign co-chair, trustee and Finance Council chair, is a founding member of the parish. An early campaign marketing material featured John with then-pastor Fr. Robert Vasa — now Bishop of Santa Rosa, Calif. — shovel in hand, at the ground-breaking ceremony.

“The parish has deferred maintenance of the facility for many years because, at first, we were building, but now it is time to plan to budget and plan for ongoing upkeep of our facilities that are over 30 years old,” John says.

Addressing the deferred maintenance such as the parking lots, fire alarms, and HVAC systems, is one component of the campaign. Some of this work has already begun, like the new fire alarm and HVAC system. Another



CAMPAIGN

At the Feet of St. Peter

component is updating security systems and making access more seamless at the parish. The parish is installing a new fob, surveillance camera, and lighting systems to create a secure and welcoming home. Beautification of the sanctuary is another piece of the campaign. The beautification of the sanctuary will begin next summer. The entire project, from start to finish, is projected to last just under one year. The final component of the campaign is creating an endowment for the parish to use for future needs, such as continual maintenance.

On Good Friday 2021, when Fr. Clark stood in the wake of stripping the altar, he said he noticed one thing that was missing. As things were removed and the altar stood bare, Fr. Clark reflected on the experience. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* instructs that altars should be notable, durable, and suited for sacred use. As he inspected the altar he noticed a laminated wood surface and the lack of an altar stone.

He recalled thinking, "I offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on this altar, but I go over to the rectory and make a peanut butter and jelly on a granite countertop."

He pointed out that the parish and its founders accomplished great work in the infancy of the parish. They erected a school, church, and several additions within five years. The focus of the building projects was to make

things structurally sound that could be ornate as the parish developed its own culture and styling. The parish has partnered with Conrad Schmitt Studios to beautify the existing structures in the sanctuary.

"We are building upon the foundation of what has already been accomplished by the founders of this parish," Fr. Clark says.

St. Peter Church, built in a Romanesque style, is characterized by a vast nave, low ceilings, yet large wall spaces that became the hallmark architecture style in the fifth through ninth centuries. An element missing in this Romanesque church is the inclusion of traditional mosaics and murals that decorate the churches built after the conversion of the Roman Empire. After the beautification of the sanctuary at St. Peter, this won't be the case. Incorporated into the artwork will be murals depicting 12 figures from the story of salvation found in the Old Testament and the 12 apostles. The stained glass windows, depicting encounters with Jesus through the eyes of St. Peter, will be redone to match the updated artwork.

As the desire and vision began catching momentum, the parish welcomed Dr. Dennis McNamara, one of the country's foremost experts in church architecture, to help parishioners see that a church space is more than just a

continued on page 6





PARISH KICKS OFF CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

continued from page 5

building. Karen Largen, a parishioner since 1993, is part of the parish's design team to create a beautiful and welcoming place to worship that helps bring individuals to encounter the Lord.

"I believe that beauty stirs the soul," she says. "It's providential that our project coincides with a national Eucharistic revival as called for by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Our parish recently started Eucharistic Exposition during weekday hours.

It is my hope that our efforts at remodeling will help 'lift the veil' so that all who enter the Church may feel a sense of the sacred even more."

The support-raising component of the campaign began in April 2022 when founding members of the parish were invited to view plans for the campaign and they were asked to give their feedback. John says the biggest talk of the night was the plan for the new church sanctuary.

"The grassroots support for this campaign is incredible," he says.

When asked why now, he replied, "When we identified the principles we want to live by as a parish through our strategic plan, there is no question for us who've been around from the beginning that our behaviors must match our goals if we want to live out the principle of incorporating beauty in our sacred liturgy and sacred space."

The plans were then shown to daily Mass goes as well as parish and school staff.

"We wanted to get initial buy-in and feedback from those who attend daily Mass and staff," Fr. Clark says. "They are the ones who use the facility the most."

The staff overwhelmingly appreciated the opportunity to teach visually to parishioners, young and old, with the artwork that is planned. Zachary Kane, a parishioner since 2015 and campaign co-chair, is excited about what the new sanctuary will bring.

"Places and spaces have meaning," he says. "We've felt that in our worship at St. Peter and in our friends and parish community. When we complete the campaign, we will be able to show the world the vibrancy of both aspects of our parish."

The silent phase of the campaign began this summer when Fr. Clark scheduled 60 meetings with 60 prospective donors in 60 days, asking for their support. As of the campaign kickoff Oct. 1-2, over \$6 million has been pledged toward the total campaign goal of \$8.5 million.

The campaign team isn't surprised by the generosity of parishioners, but it isn't lost on them either.

"The whole purpose of this project is to give glory back to God," Fr. Clark says. "Doing just that is easy when you see the generosity of the gifts, from a single-income family with four children to the retired empty-nesters. You realize quickly that it isn't about you or the parish when you see the gifts pour in. It is a humble reminder that we have a good Father in Heaven who is a gift giver."



Campaign information has been provided to all parishioners to enlist support of this project. Anyone interested in contributing to the campaign can donate online at saintpeterlincoln.com or call the parish office at 402-423-1239. The timeline for the church beautification is set to begin June 2023, with a completion date of April 2024.

CHOIRS ENHANCE OUR WORSHIP AND FILL THE CHURCH WITH SONG

“To sing is to pray twice” is a saying often attributed to St. Augustine. In turn, singing and the Mass go hand in hand. With no music, a Mass is still a Mass – it just feels empty. Here at St. Peter Catholic Church, we have several opportunities for the musically inclined to get involved in sharing their musical talents to pray twice.

St. Peter music ministry is actively seeking vocalists for the 4:00 Saturday Mass and the 9:30 a.m. Sunday Mass. Led by Jenn Creager, the 4:00 Saturday choir meets at 3:25 to rehearse ahead of the 4:00 Mass. Co-directed by Judy Fulton and Joy Bartsch, the 9:30 Sunday choir meets at 8:45 each Sunday morning to rehearse and one Wednesday evening per month. Additionally, there will be upcoming opportunities for a youth choir to lead music at various Masses throughout the year. Please watch the bulletin for more details. We are also seeking instrumentalists (particularly strings) to assist at all the music-led Masses.

“If you have musical talents, I will say, ‘You were given the gift for a reason – God wants you to use it,’” Joy says. “Think about the commitment, be a good steward of your talents.”

Joy and the other choir leaders would love to see more musicians involved in any of the choirs. Men are especially needed, and there is also a need for instrumentalists.

“I am so grateful to be able to serve in this way,” Joy says. “I want others to have the same joy in doing this. Music expresses what’s inexpressible.”

In addition, Joy wants others to experience the joy she has found in becoming part of a community during choir. Choir members are there for each other.

“When you rub shoulders with people, they bring their lives, their experiences, and the things they are struggling with,” Joy says. “You become part of a community – a musical community.”



The 9:30 a.m. choir at St. Peter Church

Joy became Catholic in 2016. She had been Protestant and was very involved in planning the Scriptures and music for services. The Catholic Church’s interpretation of Scripture was the biggest draw for Joy.

“When I started to study the *Catechism* and understand how the Catholic Church read Scripture, all of my questions about my faith started to fall away,” she says.

Music has been part of Joy’s life for her entire life, and she’s thankful to have a place to continue sharing her musical talents. Even at home, Joy uses music to express emotions – it’s truly an outlet for her.

“Music is an irresistible draw for me,” she says. “Music at Mass is a place for me to serve and offer back the gifts I’ve been given.”

Joy prays that the choir draws people into the Mass. She never wants the singing to distract the congregation. She believes this is not the case because she has noticed more people singing during Mass.

“The choir simply leads,” she says. “It’s not entertainment. We are there to draw the congregation into singing.”

Please email Mary Odgaard at mzodgaard@gmail.com to get involved in a choir or to offer your instrumental talents.



ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH



4500 Duxhall Dr. | Lincoln, NE 68516
402-423-1239 | www.saintpeterlincoln.com

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.,
5:30 p.m.*

Saturday: 8:15 a.m.

CONFESSION

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

a.m. Wednesday: 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

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

Sunday 30 minutes before each Mass



At the Feet of St. Peter

ST. PETER CHURCH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

“There was no needy person among them for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles.”

— ACTS 4:35

Please return your pledge card to
our parish office or mail it to the
church by Nov. 13.