



Voice of St. Mary's
Parish Monthly
Newsletter

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LENT 2023

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Masses offered at 6am, 8:15am, and 5:30pm

Ashes will be distributed at all Masses

Collection will be taken to Aid Eastern Europe Churches

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Each Friday of Lent, except Good Friday, at 5:30pm

EUCCHARISTIC PARISH MISSION

Sunday, Monday & Tuesday, February 26-28

See page 3 for more details

WATCH WEEKEND

March 17-19 in the Parish Hall

See page 3 for more details

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FISH FRYS/LENTEN MEALS

Ash Wednesday, February 22 and

Fridays, March 3, 10, 24 & 31

5-7pm in the Parish Hall

HALLOW APP

Everyone is invited to download the Hallow App for **FREE** during Lent. It is filled with prayers, music, meditations, rosaries, and features well known Catholics such as Bishop Barron, Fr. Mike Schmitz, Dr. Edward Sri, Jeff Cavins and more. There is something for all ages. See page 3 for how you can download the **FREE** app to your phone or computer. After Lent, if you wish to continue the app, it is at your own expense.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



Happy February everyone!

St. Mary's has several exciting events and updates to let you know about in the coming month of which I think will be very fruitful to help us to grow in our walk toward heaven in evangelization and discipleship.

To start, we are very excited to be partnering with Hallow this Lent. Hallow is currently the number one Catholic app available. I discovered it by invitation of a parishioner during Advent and found it

extremely helpful to lead and teach prayer as well as help teach about our faith. For more information about how to use Hallow and get engaged with it for Lent and beyond, you can download the app on your phone or computer by going to the Hallow website or using the QR code in the graphic on the next page. Please contact us if you have any questions about getting the app set up.

Ash Wednesday is "fast" approaching as is the whole of the Lenten season. Mass times on Ash Wednesday will be 6am, 8:15am (school Mass) and 5:30pm. Please join us to begin the first of these 40 holy days on the right foot. That evening will also be our first Knights of Columbus Fish Fry. Please see the schedule for other nights in Lent where you can have some great meat-free options offered by the Knights.

On the first weekend of Lent (Feb. 25 and 26), Fr. Luke Spanagel will be offering all the Masses at St. Mary's in Pontiac to get ready for a Eucharistic Parish Mission taking place on Sunday, February 26 through Tuesday, February 28. Fr. Luke is one of 50 priests in the country who are doing Eucharistic preaching for the next three years. He is also a very holy priest and has been helping me grow in holiness as my

spiritual director for many years. I know he will help you begin this Lenten season well. He will be tag teaming the mission alongside Matt Faley, our Diocese of Peoria Chief of Mission. Matt is a great musician and we are blessed to have him working in Peoria. You can hear some of Matt's music at www.mattfaley.com to get ready for a few powerful nights. Thank you to the family of Teresa Stark who have helped make these three nights happen. More specific information is in a graphic also in this newsletter, but come to the church at 4pm on Sunday and 6pm on Monday and Tuesday to build a great start to your Lent.

Another way to give your faith a boost this Lent is by joining the WATCH retreat. It is a fantastic weekend to hear inspiring witnesses of faith, have some great times with some other fun, holy people and to grow in deeper knowledge of your Catholic faith. Please join the retreat for the weekend of March 17-19, and I assure you that you will be grateful for the great help it will be to you in the middle of your Lenten season as well.

Finally, in 2023 – the Year of Small Groups – we are rolling strong with small groups at this point, and we would love you to join a small group for prayer, spiritual growth and our need to grow in a Christian community of people who can help support us. In the season of Lent, please consider joining some of the Small-Group options that Kel Krenz and others are going to be leading. Contact Kel at the St. Mary's Office if you are interested in joining a small group.

As you can see, there are a lot of options to have a very spiritual, strengthening Lent. Please consider one of these options and/or some extra daily Masses, getting to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and watching some episodes of The Chosen to help build a deeper love of Scripture. I am excited for a great Lent with many opportunities to grow in relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Keep taking steps toward heaven everyone!

Fr. Adam



HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP NEWS

In early January, we hosted the annual Gonzaga retreat for high school students. It was an incredible weekend filled with the teens coming together to listen and learn and support one another in the faith. It is always so powerful to see just where God takes the weekend. The theme this year was "You Will Never Run" which served as the common thread through all the talks that weekend that God is ever present in our lives and will never leave us. I would like to give a special shout out of thanks to Peg Meier and Allison Hankins for keeping everyone well fed over the weekend and to Mick and Amanda Lauritsen for helping out with the overnight security.

Youth group continues with our regular Sunday evening meetings from 6:30-8:30pm in the old rectory. All high schoolers are invited to attend and we would love to have you. We spend time diving deeper into our faith and what we believe as Catholics and also have a wonderful time hanging out and having fun each week.

This summer we are once again gearing up to go to the Steubenville Conference in Springfield, MO. The theme is "Refuge" for the 2023 conferences. We will be taking a group July 13-16. I am so excited to be going again this year with a group, this is a powerful weekend for all who attend. This weekend is open to incoming freshmen in high school to seniors who will have graduated in May, so if you are in that age category and are interested, please reach out to me at lauritsen.megan@stmaryspontiac.org ASAP so I can answer any questions you may have and get everything sorted out!

Megan Lauritsen



*Join us for a three-day Parish Mission
featuring Fr. Luke Spannagel
with praise & worship music by Matt Faley*

About our guests:

Fr. Spannagel is one of 50 Eucharistic preachers in the country and is from the Diocese of Peoria.

Matt Faley is the Chief of Mission for the Diocese of Peoria and is a Christian recording artist.

Program highlights:

Sunday: True presence of the Eucharist; Eucharistic miracles

Monday: Mass from a sacrificial lens; explanatory Mass

Tuesday: Unity as the Body of Christ; Eucharistic Adoration

Mission made possible by the Teresa Stark Memorial Fund

*All are welcome.
No registration
necessary.*

St. Mary's Parish 119 E. Howard St. Pontiac, IL 61764 (815) 844-7683

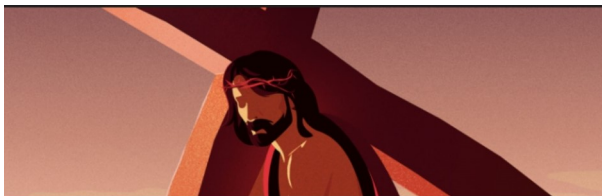
When:

February 26 @ 4:00 pm

February 27 & 28 @ 6:00 pm

Where:

All sessions will be held in the church and will last 90 minutes.



Hallow

Registration Steps:

1. Scan QR code or go the the website below.
2. Type in Pontiac and click on St. Mary.
3. Continue with your email or through Google.
4. Download the app onto your phone.
5. Enter the same email you used to register.
6. You will be sent a verification code.
7. Fill out the rest of your information.



hallow.com/holyday

JOIN US FOR WATCH WEEKEND

As we approach the Lenten season consider doing extra in your journey. We have a brilliant way for you to make that happen. WATCH is short for "We are The Church". It is a weekend for and by the people and clergy of St. Mary's Church which focuses on God, self and neighbor. The entire weekend is spent at St. Mary's Parish Hall and church. It begins on Friday evening and ends on Sunday afternoon. All meals are provided and all participants for home to sleep each evening. During the weekend a series of talks are given focusing on the renewal of the individual. There is time set aside for community discussion, meditation and private reflection. New experiences will be presented in this stress-free atmosphere with fun filled activities, free time and time for making new friends. Participants are both men and women so both married couples and singles are encouraged to attend. Space is limited so you will want to grab a registration form at the entrances of the church and turn them in. If you have additional questions or want further clarification, please contact Sherri Hatzer (815)848-6787. The WATCH team would love to have all of you attend. It's a weekend you won't want to miss and one that will leave you wanting more!!

From the Principal's Desk...



Mrs. Karen Jones

Catholic Schools Week is a time to celebrate being Catholic and do special activities throughout the week! We had a seminarian, Frances Strong from Fairbury, visit classrooms. It is always great when our seminarians can come into the school and visit with our students and teachers. Other activities included a living rosary, this is where students and teachers (with their prayer partners) lined up along the walls in the MPR room, each person had a paper plate, depending on what color the plate was, determined the prayer that was recited. Other activities included a prayer service led by our Student Council as well as our traditional hot dog lunch followed by Bingo.

February is a busy month for sports! Congratulations to our 7th Grade Boys Basketball team for making it to the State Tournament. We also host the Kevin Casson Tournament as well as the Volleyball Extravaganza. I invite you to come to school and watch our students compete against other schools either in basketball or volleyball.

No matter how busy we are with our special events or sporting events, our focus is still on Jesus and getting souls to Heaven. Our foundational truths are rooted in prayer, healthy teamwork, and active discipleship. Without these three things, we cannot work as a functional school or parish. God is our center, now and for always.

I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13



A note of gratitude to those who contributed to the St. Mary's School Annual Fund. Our goal this year was \$35,514 and we raised \$35,705. Thank you to our parishioners, alumni, and school families who gave so generously.

JOIN US FOR LEARNING CAN TAKE US EVERYWHERE!



THE 30TH ANNUAL ST. MARY'S SCHOOL DRAWDOWN

SATURDAY, APRIL 1
\$100 TICKET ADMITS 2
PONTIAC ELKS LODGE
FEATURING BLAKE STADEL AS EMCEE

Our 30th Annual DrawDown event will give our guests the opportunity to bid on 30 silent auction baskets taking them EVERYWHERE...the movies, the golf course, the spa.....to name a few. Your \$100 ticket includes dinner, draft beer, a chance to win fantastic prizes, and participate in games and a live auction. Only 300 tickets will be sold. Tickets can be purchased from St. Mary's students, in the school office, or online at school.stmaryspontiac.org. This event is for adults 21+.

5:15 pm Doors open
5:30 - 7:30 pm Buffet dinner served
6:30 pm DrawDown of tickets begins
 followed by Live Auction

PRAY FOR OUR SCHOOL & CHURCH FAMILIES THIS YEAR

We ask everyone to pray for specific church and school families each week-day. Please remember these families in your prayers each day for them to grow in their faith this year. Thank you.



Mon. Feb 20	Pat & Paulette Krippel Family Donna Gray's Family	Mon. Mar 13	William & Gina Manker Family Rick & Amy Lyons Family
Tues. Feb 21	George & Georgette Kutsor Family Christy Jones' Family	Tues. Mar 14	Ed Legner Family Harold Lyons Family
Wed. Feb 22	Michael & Maria Kreush Family Mary Helen McCorvie's Family	Wed. Mar 15	Alicia Legner Family Kay Lyons Family
Thurs. Feb 23	Jennifer Krueger Family Kelly Krenz's Family	Thurs. Mar 16	Beth Legner Family Mike & Pam Lyons Family
Fri. Feb 24	Don & Linda Lambert Family Megan Lauritsen's Family	Fri. Mar 17	Margaret Legner Family Matt & Heather Machroli Family
Mon. Feb 27	Mary Landrus Family Danielle MacZura's Family	Mon. Mar 20	Mary Lou Legner Family Jesus & Maura Madrigal Family
Tues. Feb 28	Danielle Lang Family Adam Lawrence's Family	Tues. Mar 21	Mike Linsky Family Owen Lyons Family
Wed. Mar 1	Margo Law Family Rhannon Long Family	Wed. Mar 22	Jerry & Joan LoPiccolo Family Patrick & Lisa Martin Family
Thurs. Mar 2	Bill Legner Family Marge Loughran Family	Thurs. Mar 23	Susan Legner Family Patrick Lyons Family
Fri. Mar 3	Amber Lanning Family Erik & Grace Limberg Family	Fri. Mar 24	Dolores Locke Family Don & Rita Mackinson Family
Mon. Mar 6	Jack Leach Family JoAnn Lower Family	Mon. Mar 27	John LoPiccolo Family Gregorio & Marissa Manabat Family
Tues. Mar 7	Dale & Jenny Larkin Family Larry & Lucille Limberg Family	Tues. Mar 28	Andrea Leonard Family Sara Lyons Family
Wed. Mar 8	Sue Ledford Family Jane LoPiccolo Family	Wed. Mar 29	Ray & Christian Logan Family Raul & Cynthia Mangubat Family
Thurs. Mar 9	Doris Legner Family Carl & Margaret Lucht Family	Thurs. Mar 30	Mike & Nancy LoPiccolo Family Maggie Martin Family
Fri. Mar 10	Jane Larkin Family Mary Lucas Family	Fri. Mar 31	Janine Leonard Family Florence Masching Family

ST. MARY'S PARISH DECEMBER 2022



WE THANK YOU: 2022 finally looked a little more "normal" and for that we are truly grateful. We ask you to continue to support our church and school to the best of your ability, sharing the gifts that God has given you.

A QUARTERLY UPDATE ON OUR FINANCIAL JOURNEY

	Previous Fiscal Year July 1 - Dec. 31, 2021	Current Fiscal Year July 1 - Dec. 31, 2022
REVENUES	\$832,356.64	\$921,934.46
EXPENSES	\$733,391.81	\$829,348.99
GAIN/(LOSS)	\$98,964.83	\$92,585.47

- Report covers both Parish and School Operations

We continue to rely on your prayers and generosity to provide what we need to run our operations, and we work hard to be good stewards with the gifts we have been given. The Increased Offertory Appeal held nearly a year ago was most beneficial and we encourage you to continue those commitments made.



CAN YOU HELP A CHILD RECEIVE A CATHOLIC EDUCATION? Through the Invest in Kids Act, students living at or below the federal poverty level can receive a scholarship to attend St. Mary's School. Scholarships cover up to 100% of private school tuition and fees. These scholarships are 100% funded by donations. Donors will receive a 75% tax credit for their donation. We have 27 students who have qualified and are on the waiting list, hoping to receive a scholarship for the 2023-2024 school year. Please consider making a gift to help these families provide a Catholic education for their child. Caterpillar employees and retirees can have their gift matched by the Caterpillar Foundation. Your \$1,000 becomes \$2,000 to SMS! All donations must be made directly to Empower Illinois, our Scholarship Granting Organization. If you can help, call the school office at (815) 844-6585 or email Danielle Gill at gill.danielle@stmaryspontiac.org.

From The Back Page

by Kim Cheek

About one year ago in anticipation of Lent, I wrote a reflection about preparing for Lent. After rereading that reflection, I find that much of it still holds true today for me. A few differences in my life are that my son is in college and I am in a different job, but I still find myself unsure of how to prepare for Lent. What is taking my focus away from what God wants for me? Am I loving God to the best of my abilities? Am I loving others? I know what it means, and every year I learn more and more about the value of praying, sacrificing, and almsgiving. I just don't know if I am doing it right or good enough. I want to be a good example to all of the people in my life, but I especially want to be better for God.

I want to be prepared for Lent by planning ahead on how to be ready for what we are called to do. Prayer is something we should all do daily. Prayer is a relationship with God that requires time, patience, honesty, good listening skills, and good communication. Our relationship with God is like every relationship in our lives. If we don't give it the attention it needs, it suffers. So make a plan to increase your daily prayer time by 15 minutes more.

Fasting during Lent is meant for us to give up meat on Ash Wednesday and on Fridays during those 40 days. However many people also use Lent as a time to give up other things. I know many people give up specific things they enjoy in their daily lives like their favorite food or drink. Some people give up social media or other things they enjoy. I read about the concept of fasting from words and being more silent. I believe for me the silence is critical to improving my prayer life.

Lastly in preparation of Lent is almsgiving. For some, almsgiving encompasses prayer and fasting. Giving oneself in some way for the good of another is a gift. Maybe it is giving of your time, giving of yourself and/or your treasure or skill. Maybe it is giving your ear to someone in desperate need. Maybe it is the gift of not talking. Almsgiving is meant to be giving above and beyond what you already do for those around you. I pray that you all feel God's love and grace as you prepare to go into Lent 2023.



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