



MARY

Mother of the Church

AREA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Advent in Our Parish Community: *Preparing to Welcome Christ*

ST. JOSEPH

Bertha

ST. HUBERT

Bluegrass

**ST. JOHN THE
BAPTIST**

Bluffton

**ASSUMPTION
OF OUR LADY**

Menahga

ST. MICHAEL

Motley

SACRED HEART

Staples

ST. FREDERICK

Verndale

ST. ANN

Wadena

During the first “Advent,” Mary prepared to welcome her son. What would He look like? How would she serve Him as His mother? Can you imagine it? She, like so many of us have been, was preparing for parenthood. And with all the wonder and the worry that accompanies any pregnancy, Mary was preparing to welcome the Son of the Living God. She was preparing to look upon the Lord! What a season that must have been for her! And while none of us can put ourselves in her shoes, the Church in her goodness gives us a season during every liturgical year to spend time in expectant anticipation — the season of Advent.



Advent is a time during which we are called to prepare for Christ’s coming at Christmas. And beyond that, we are looking forward to Christ’s second coming at the end of time — a time that could come any day — and we are to be preparing ourselves accordingly. Advent is a season full of joyful anticipation.

“Advent is a time for us to reflect upon the incarnation,” Fr. Aaron says. “In his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict XVI tells us that the exploration of our faith is to realize the face of Jesus. What will Jesus look like?”

Advent gives us a particular time to contemplate that, and Fr. Aaron encourages all of us to take the time intentionally this year. Because, again,

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Advent in Our Parish Community

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it is not just the celebration of the Christmas season for which we are preparing. We are preparing to welcome Jesus when He comes again.

“It is a two-fold anticipation,” Fr. Aaron says. “Advent is so important. Just like Mary and Joseph anticipated the arrival of Christ, I know one day I will see Him face-to-face. So will you. I find it so beneficial to contemplate what He will look like.”

What’s more, we must prepare our hearts and minds to welcome Christ.

There are many opportunities throughout the season of Advent, and Father encourages all of us to take advantage of them.

“If we don’t dedicate time to preparing our hearts, then we are cheating ourselves of a good growth period in our spiritual lives.”

On Dec. 15, there will be a Festival of Forgiveness at Sacred Heart in Staples. From 9 a.m. until 9 p.m., there

will be between two and four priests available to hear confessions. Join us!

In addition, there will be a Parish Mission at Sacred Heart on Dec. 17.

The Holiday Festival will take place again this year during one of the first weekends in December. Keep an eye on the bulletin for further details. The festival offers a great opportunity for families to come together and have some faith-filled fun.

We hope you make time to join in some of the Advent festivities this year. Like taking a shower before a big event, we must take time to prepare to celebrate Christ’s coming at Christmas. The God of our Fathers, the Lord of all the Earth, took on actual human flesh for the sake of our salvation! May we take time to acknowledge the depth and wonder of that reality and offer our hearts and minds to Him in gratitude this Advent season!

A Letter From Our Pastor

CHRIST THE KING,

the Perfect Example of Stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

With the liturgical year ending soon and Advent and Christmas close behind, I want to share with you the profound significance of the Solemnity of Christ the King on Nov. 26. This feast holds a special place within the heart of the Catholic Church and shows us what true stewardship is all about.

The Solemnity of Christ the King, observed on the last Sunday of the liturgical year, invites us to reflect on Christ's universal kingship and reign over all creation. In a world often focused on power, control, and self-centeredness, this feast presents a countercultural message. It reminds us that Christ's kingship is marked by self-sacrifice, humility, and service. Our Lord's throne is not one of worldly grandeur but of the Cross, where He gave His life for our salvation.

This feast is a powerful reminder of the core values of Catholic stewardship. Stewardship means recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God — our time, talents, resources, and even our very lives. Just as Christ, the King, entrusted His life for our sake, we are called to be faithful stewards of the gifts He has bestowed upon us. We are caretakers of His creation, called to use our resources wisely, generously, and in ways that bring about His kingdom on Earth.

Christ's kingship and stewardship are deeply intertwined. By recognizing His authority over our lives, we acknowledge that our role as stewards is to use our gifts in accordance with His will. This means serving others, working for justice, promoting human dignity, and caring for the Earth and its resources. Our actions as faithful stewards should reflect the self-giving love that



Christ displayed during His earthly life.

The Solemnity of Christ the King is an important day in the Catholic Church because it brings our focus back to the heart of our faith. It reminds us that Christ's reign extends beyond the confines of time and space, touching every aspect of our existence. This feast challenges us to evaluate our lives in light of His kingship and to ask ourselves whether our choices and actions align with His teachings.

As we approach this solemn feast, let us take the opportunity to recommit ourselves to Christ and the principles of stewardship. May we strive to be faithful stewards of His grace, using our gifts to build a more just, compassionate, and harmonious world. Let us remember that Christ, the King, calls us not to a life of privilege but to a life of service, solidarity, and sacrificial love.

I invite you to join us in celebrating the Solemnity of Christ the King with hearts full of gratitude and reverence. Through our worship and reflection, may we be renewed in our dedication to Christ's reign and to the active stewardship and discipleship He calls us to embrace.

In Christ,

Fr. Aaron Kuhn

Fr. Aaron





A Picture is Worth *ACC Photography Ministry Documents Sp*



Rosemary Dailey has always had a passion for photography, driven by a keen eye for capturing special moments during times of busyness or chaos.

“I see things a little differently,” Rosemary says. “When I take pictures, I’m hoping that I stop a moment in time and that I can share my point of view. This is what makes me feel joy. And I love when other people see things in my photos that I didn’t even notice at the time I was shooting them.”

So, when Rosemary was filling out her stewardship commitment card a little over a year ago, the Mary, Mother of the Church Area Catholic Community Photography Ministry jumped off the page as a great way to enjoy one of her favorite activities while also serving her Catholic community.

“It’s a mission for me,” she says. “God gave me this talent and this passion, and I want to use it to the best of my ability to serve Him.”

As a parish photography minister, Rosemary shoots events and activities at parishes throughout the area Catholic community — from liturgical and sacramental celebrations, to parish fundraisers and fellowship activities. She says that photographing these celebrations often reminds her of important touchpoints on her own faith journey.

“There’s so much joy in it for me,” she says. “When I take photos of first communicants, seeing those little faces almost takes me to tears, because I remember when I made my First Communion.”

Stealth and a healthy respect for prayerful moments during the Liturgy are characteristics that our photography ministers share. Like football referees, our Area Catholic Community photographers often do their best work when they fade into the background, unnoticed.

“People need to feel comfortable,” Rosemary says. “I’m not the type of photographer that’s in



“It’s a mission for me. God gave me this talent and this passion, and I want to use it to the best of my ability to serve Him.”

— Rosemary Dailey

a Thousand Words

Special Moments in Life of Our Community

people's faces. I'm more off to the side or up high and because I don't want to disrupt Mass. We are all here as a congregation, and this is intimate and personal."

Most parish photography ministers shoot on their own equipment, but owning a camera or having previous experience with photography are not prerequisites to becoming actively involved with this ministry. In fact, the Area Catholic Community Photography Ministry provides a wonderful opportunity for individuals who would like to learn more about photography and gain hands-on experience shooting events.

For Rosemary, participating in the Area Catholic Community Photography Ministry represents an act of stewardship — a chance for her to put her passion into practice while hopefully bringing others closer to the Church through her art.

"I'm hoping that my images will nudge someone who has maybe strayed off the path," she says. "They see a picture, and it reminds them of a church that they used to attend, or brings up questions they might have about liturgical celebrations today. So, I'm hoping that I can nudge people to either be inquisitive or to bring back a memory that draws them closer to the Lord."



**For more information on the
ACC Photography Ministry,
or to participate, contact
Jessy Waldock at 218-632-7324
or jwaldock@marysacc.org.**



St. Charles Borromeo:

An Example of Living Completely for the Lord

One important aspect of stewardship — of involvement in parish life and our community — is understanding our own personal vocation. One saint especially embodies this key aspect of stewardship. St. Charles was a model priest, and many priests and clergy-in-training look to his life as an example of how to live completely for the Lord. Let us look to his example as we serve our own faith family and community.

When St. Charles Borromeo died at the age of 46, he had accomplished more than most clergy twice his age. St. Charles is credited with the continuation and completion of the Council of Trent in 1562, extensive reformation within the Archdiocese of Milan and beyond, and the creation of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine — the forerunner of the modern Religious Education system. St. Charles possessed a fierce love for the Church, especially for the people under his spiritual care — the Archdiocese of Milan.

He was born in 1538 to the powerful noble family Borromeo. But rather than live the life of a noble, St. Charles chose instead to serve the Church.

As a young man, St. Charles received the clerical tonsure — a hairstyle where the top of the head is shaved, common among religious orders — and studied at a Benedictine abbey near his hometown of Arona, Italy. His uncle, Cardinal Giovanni Angelo de' Medici, was elected Pope in 1559, and took the name Pius IV. Shortly after becoming pope, Pius IV appointed St. Charles to serve as secretary of state, as well as cardinal and administrator of the Archdiocese of Milan. At the time, St. Charles was still a layperson. While serving in these positions, he encouraged the pope to reconvene the Council of Trent, an ecumenical gathering during which Church leaders corrected various abuses and sought to more clearly define elements of Catholic doctrine.

In 1563, St. Charles was ordained to the priesthood during a secret ordination ceremony. Following the death of his older brother, Count Federico Borromeo, St. Charles' family had urged him to marry and carry on the Borromeo name. However, St. Charles felt that God was calling him to serve the Church, and continued to fulfill his vocation.

Shortly after becoming a priest, St. Charles was



appointed by Pope Pius IV as Archbishop of Milan. Historians say the people of Milan rejoiced under St. Charles' leadership and spiritual guidance — he was the first bishop in 80 years to actually live in Milan and minister to its people himself. Under his rule, Milan became a model diocese that was revered throughout the Catholic world.

Due to his great intellect, St. Charles was often called away from Milan to help the pope in various ways. However, despite his busy life, St. Charles continued to push reformation among clergy and sought to continually improve the ministry of the Church. He often encouraged clergy to spend time educating and spiritually renewing themselves. During a homily at a diocesan synod, St. Charles addressed the priests saying, "Are you in charge of a parish? If so, do not neglect the parish of your own soul, do not give yourself to others so completely that you have nothing left for yourself. You have to be mindful of your people without becoming forgetful of yourself."

St. Charles was a true servant of the people. As the plague of 1576 ravaged much of Milan, he remained with his people, serving the sick and dying in hospitals throughout the archdiocese.

St. Charles Borromeo died Nov. 3, 1584. He was canonized in 1610, and his feast day is celebrated each year on Nov. 4.

St. Fredrick Funeral Luncheons:

Feeding the Grieving with Great Love and Compassion

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us, “Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Mt. 5:4). We will not be abandoned in our grief. God is always there. What’s more, He often sends others to be His hands and feet — to mourn with us in our sorrow and comfort us in our grief. This is a reality Jesus Himself knew firsthand. Scripture tells us Jesus wept at the death of His friend Lazarus (Jn. 11:35). It is a reality that St. Frederick’s Funeral Luncheon Ministry seeks to serve.

“We are here to meet the need at hand so the grieving family doesn’t have to worry about it,” says Tina Moenkendrick, the ministry’s coordinator. “A lot of times the person who has passed is the mom or dad and their family members are coming from other states. They don’t know what is available to them, and figuring

out what to serve after the funeral is one more thing for them to do. We want to help as much as we can.”

Tina began serving this ministry over 20 years ago when the need arose. She says she doesn’t fully remember how it came about, other than a family needed to be served. She stepped up to the plate and has been serving funeral luncheons ever since.

When a parishioner passes away, the parish or the funeral home contacts Tina. From there, Tina contacts the family to find out what needs they have. If they would like to have a meal after the wake and/or after the funeral, Tina will make those arrangements.

“Each of our four parish groups has a head who works closely with me,” Tina says. “I contact the head of the group or groups we need, and they connect with parishioners to get all the help we need.”

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(From left) Vonnie Perius, Norma Youngbauer, Jackie Perius and Shari Dalen are ready to serve.



MARY
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—
AREA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

C/O The Church of St. Ann
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Saturday:

4:00 p.m. - St. John the Baptist, Bluffton
4:00 p.m. - St. Hubert, Bluegrass
6:00 p.m. - St. Frederick, Verndale
6:30 p.m. - Assumption of Our Lady, Menahga

Sunday:

8:00 a.m. - St. Joseph, Bertha
8:30 a.m. - Sacred Heart, Staples
10:00 a.m. - St. Ann, Wadena **livestream*
10:30 a.m. - St. Michael, Motley

St. Fredrick Funeral Luncheons *continued from page 7*

Tina coordinates with the caterer if the family wishes to provide a hot meal, and she does whatever grocery shopping is necessary for the cold food that will be served. From there, the parishioners who have volunteered to serve for that particular funeral gather to get the food ready. They will make sandwiches and salads and set out fruit and more. And then when the time for the meal arrives, the volunteers set-up, serve, and clean up the meal. They will even package leftovers for the family to bring home if there are any.

“Our goal is to simply serve the family,” Tina says. “We want to provide for their wishes as best we can.

And they are always very appreciative. They often tell us ‘thank you,’ and we’ve even received cards of gratitude.”

Tina feels blessed to be able to be such an intricate part of this ministry.

“It is a good feeling knowing we are helping someone in their time of need,” she says. “We are very blessed to have parishioners who are willing to help.”

In addition to serving the families, Tina says that the Funeral Luncheon Ministry serves the parish as a whole.

“It is a great way to build community,” Tina says. “We talk and catch up with one another as we work. It is a wonderful ministry.”

**To be a part of the Funeral Luncheon Ministry at St. Fredrick,
contact Tina Moenkendrick at 218-639-6058.**