

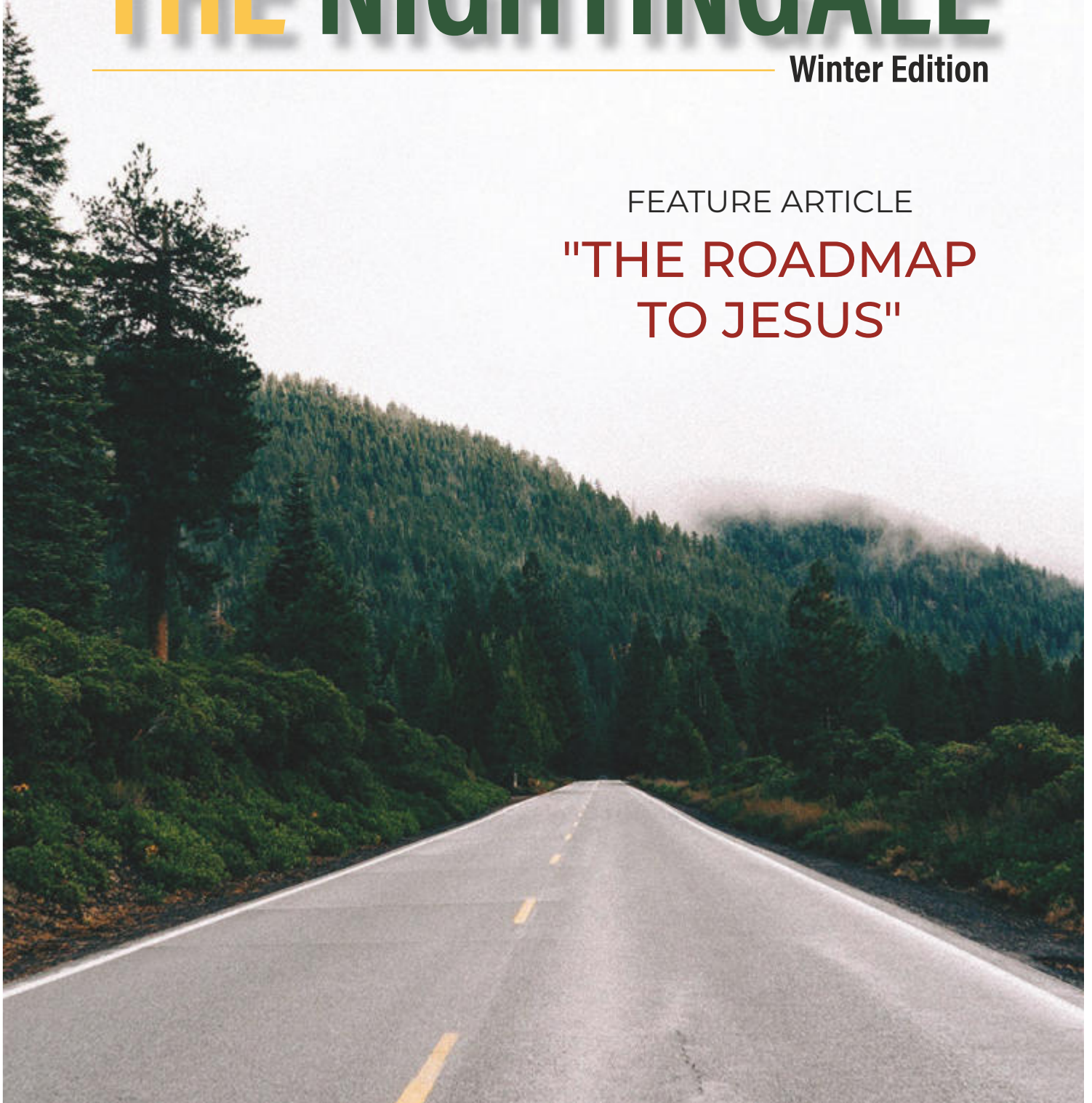


THE NIGHTINGALE

Winter Edition

FEATURE ARTICLE

"THE ROADMAP TO JESUS"



"Share Your Voice"

Been hurt or helped by the Church? Share your feedback with Archbishop Hebda this February.

Page 5

"Caring for Your Mental Health"

Make your mental health a priority this year with these 3 practical tips.

Page 8

"Meet Chris Bernard"

Parishioner Chris Bernard opens up about his journey with divorce and his relationship with Jesus.

Page 10



ST. PATRICK

Catholic Church

SACRAMENTS SCHEDULE

MASSES

Saturday 5:00 PM

Sunday 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM

Tuesday at 6:15 PM

Wednesday 8:00 AM

Thursday 8:00 AM

Friday 8:00 AM

First Saturday 8:00 AM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday 3:30 PM

Tuesday 5:30 PM

Also available by appointment

ROSARY

Thirty minutes before all Masses

DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET

Five minutes after all weekend Masses

Saturday 6:05 PM

Sunday 10:05 AM & 12:05 PM

ADORATION HOURS

Sunday 6:00 PM- Friday 8:00 AM

CONTACT US

PARISH ADDRESS

19921 Nightingale Street NW

Oak Grove, MN 55011

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 8:30 AM-5:00 PM

GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (763) 753-2011

Email: stpats@st-patricks.org

Website: www.st-patricks.org

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Check out [@st_patricks_mn](https://www.instagram.com/st_patricks_mn) for weekly updates, reminders, videos, and behind the scenes of Community Life!



UPCOMING EVENTS

- FEB 7** **ADULT ADVENTURES: WWII PLANE MUSEUM**
Open to all adults (18+).
- FEB 8** **DATENIGHT MINISTRY: VALENTINE BOWLING**
Open to engaged and married couples.
- FEB 17** **FAMILY DAY AT WILD MOUNTAIN**
Spend the day skiing with your family (all ages).
- FEB 26** **ASH WEDNESDAY MASS**
Join us for Mass at 7:00am, 12:00pm, and 7:00pm.
- FEB 28-
APR 3** **FISH FRY DINNERS**
Join us for a delicious dinner every Friday in Lent.
- FEB 29** **ENCOUNTER YOU: CALLED & GIFTED WORKSHOP**
Discover your strengths & grow in self-knowledge.
- MAR 2-
MAR 30** **BOOK STUDY: Q & A GUIDE TO MENTAL PRAYER**
Take your prayer life to new heights.
- MAR 19** **NACE EMPTY BOWLS FUNDRAISER**
Support our local food shelf.

LEARN MORE AT WWW.ST-PATRICKS.ORG

CATECHIST CORNER

CAT·E·CHIST (*noun*)

A teacher of the principles of Christian religion, especially one using a catechism.

Resolution vs. Conversion



It's January, the time of year everyone is making a resolution; perhaps to shed a few pounds, save money, or spend less time on your phone. As we all know, the challenge with resolutions is they often fall flat after just a couple months. Resolutions require our own determination, but we lose motivation, life becomes busy, or we simply fall back into old habits. So, let's dedicate

ourselves to conversion instead. Conversion is the constant pursuit toward becoming who God created us to be. Conversion is accomplished one day at a time by making small changes and taking small steps in the direction God is calling us. Conversion is never complete; it is something we will work on for the rest of our lives. Conversion is about something greater than ourselves, and even when we fail or forget, God invites us to get back up and keep pushing forward. Take one small step today and be one step closer to God tomorrow.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE
01

General Information
Upcoming Events
Catechist Corner

PAGE
04

"Life is Too Short to Live it Alone"

PAGE
06

"Forming Disciples &
Committing to Youth Ministry"

PAGE
08

"A New You in 2020"
"Caring for Your Mental Health"

PAGE
10

"Meet Chris Bernard"

PAGE
03

"Begin with the End in Mind"
Pray for Us

PAGE
05

"Share Your Voice"
"How Do You Keep Sunday Holy?"

PAGE
07

FEATURE ARTICLE
"Our Roadmap to Jesus"

PAGE
09

"The Spirit of Service"
Stewards Among Us

PAGE
11

Welcome Home

FEATURE ARTICLE **"OUR ROADMAP TO JESUS"**



DON'T MISS THIS ARTICLE!

READ MORE ON PAGE 7

"Our entire purpose at St. Patrick is to provide opportunities for you to grow—both individually and as a community. We have a plan, and want you to be part of it."

- Dan Jaeger

"BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND"



After Christmas each year, I like to spend time reflecting on my roles in life: husband, father, grandfather, etc... There's more than you think! I take the time to put together a Personal Plan for the new year, and it includes some goals that I hope to achieve in each of my various roles. It includes how I want to spend time with my sons, things I want to work on in my marriage, goals for my relationship with my aging mother, fitness goals, financial goals, spiritual goals—and the list goes on. It's quite comprehensive and always brings me a great sense of achievement, as well as hope and excitement for the new year.

I mention this because it's a habit I learned many years ago from a friend, a habit that allows me to "Begin with

the End in Mind" as the author Stephen Covey suggests in his book, "7 Habits of Highly Effective People." It forces me to visualize an entire year in the short span of a one-hour reflection. How do I want to be in the new year? What do I hope to accomplish? What changes could make for a better me?

Creating the plan is only the beginning. I make sure that I do quarterly reviews throughout the year. How am I doing? Did I get out and play golf with my son, Steve, as planned? Did my wife and I do monthly date-nights, as planned? If not, what adjustments do I need to make in my life?

If you want a "new you" in the "new year" it has to be very intentional. You have to

identify what the new you is going to be. What's going to change? Only then can you determine how to go at it. All of this requires some thought—a plan.

This couldn't be more true than when it comes to our spiritual life. For most of us, our relationship with God can always be improved. But how will we do it? Will it be daily prayer time? Will it be attending Mass more frequently? Or will it be through action—serving those in need, participating in a study, joining the choir? Whatever it is, we have to *begin with the end in mind*.

St. Patrick Church has evolved over the past 5 years. We created a plan called Vision 2020, and then executed that plan to become a more welcoming community that meets people where they're at. We developed several ministries and programs that help people grow in their relationship with Christ. Today, St. Patrick is a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can come together and experience Christ.

With the new year comes a new YOU. Make your plan, and allow St. Patrick Church to be part of it. Together, we can search for purpose and acceptance.



Dan Jaeger,
Business Administrator

ORA PRO NOBIS - "PRAY FOR US"

Please remember those of our parish who are ill and have asked for our prayers, especially:

Bonnie Audette, Don Bach, Carol Beckman, Jerry Bisek, Everett & Pat Bourbeau, Larry Chevalier, Winnie Conger, Tim Cutschall, Judy Dalve, Linda Dierkhising, Ray Domogalla, Julie Dooley, Marie Ann Downs, Charles Dustman, Emma Frost, Judy Gapp, Charlene Grachek, Eleanor Grachek, Roger Herdina, Little Leo Jaeger, Daniel Kemmits, Mike King, Lucas Kramer, Kathy Johnson, Brad LeTourneau, Shirley Lockwood, Joanne Lubarski, Pat Marinan, LaVina Martin, Susie Mogdans, Sam Morgan, Kimberly Okvist, Gayle Perra, Emily Perrin, Sean Pritchard, Blake Rebelein, Mary Rohr, Lee & Donna Schoon, Doug Stein, Vern Suchla, Patricia Trombley, Lisa Vos, those on our prayer chain, those written in our Book of Intentions, and all those serving in the military.

Need additional prayer? Please contact Cathy at 763-753-2011.



"LIFE IS TOO SHORT TO LIVE IT ALONE"

It's hard to believe it's already 2020! The beginning of a new year is full of resolutions and daydreaming about what this year will bring. No matter what your goals are, it's helpful to have a community to cheer you on, keep you accountable, and relight your fire when it gets dulled by stress or anxiety.

Did you know that each person is created for community? No matter your personality or stage in life, we all need community. That community can look a little different for everyone. Some prefer small groups and a more intimate setting, whereas others prefer large gatherings full of activity. The bottom line is that we can't go it alone. Community is important, but where do we find it?

In the past, there were many opportunities to find friends with relative ease. There were neighborhood BBQs and frequent community gatherings. While these things still exist, I think most would agree that the world doesn't work like that anymore. On average, many of us don't spend time with our neighbors or regularly gather as a community. The world has become a little busier and more disconnected when it comes to face-to-face interaction. Community can seem hard to find, but it's actually closer than we might think.

Many people don't realize that churches are more than a place to pray on Sundays. St. Patrick's is full of opportunities! It's easy to forget that people who spend time at church are regular people who have normal interests like watching sports and going to concerts. At St. Patrick's, there's no prerequisite for getting involved.

We have almost 100 ministries, from Feed My Starving Children, to a Loss Support Group and a Separated & Divorced ministry, and social groups like DateNight ministry and Adult Adventures. Our ministries are open to everyone, no matter where you are in your faith journey. To see our full list of ministries, visit our website (www.st-patricks.org) or the Information Station after Mass.

Opportunities for Women

The Circles of Claddagh seek to help women grow in their faith, foster friendships, and serve the community. There are also plenty of social opportunities at their monthly meetings and the annual women's event. If you're interested in joining the Circles of Claddagh, email circles@st-patricks.org.

Our **Women's Choir** meets once a month and there is no experience or audition required. The goal of this group is to foster a community of women to bond through singing. The Women's Choir will typically sing for one Sunday per month and rehearse on the Tuesday before the Masses from 7:00-8:30pm. If you're interested in joining the Women's Choir, contact Amee Heigl at ameigl@st-patricks.org.

Once a year, we host our **Women's Retreat** over a weekend in the spring at an off-site retreat house. We'll invite a dynamic speaker to guide us in topics that relate specifically to women's hearts. This is a great opportunity to meet new friends and encounter your faith in a unique way. If you're interested in learning about our Women's Retreat, contact Linda Abel-Thomas at lmabel-thomas@st-patricks.org.

Opportunities for Men

The Catholic Watchmen (17+) meet once a month for prayer, education, and fellowship. Participants gather

on Saturday mornings for Mass and a breakfast meeting covering a topic related to their faith. If you're interested in joining the Catholic Watchmen, contact Larry Von Mosch at larry@patvonmosch.com.

Another option for men is joining **the Knights of Columbus** (18+). The Knights of Columbus is a multi-faceted organization with members from all over the world. Our St. Patrick chapter (Council #9585) participates in service projects and raises money to support local organizations. They also have social meetings like their monthly breakfast brunch. Men who are interested in learning more are invited to contact Jim Isle at jisle@msn.com.

We also host an annual **Men's Retreat**. This year's retreat will be held at the Dunrovin Retreat Center in the beautiful St. Croix area on February 21-22. Presenter Glen Gauer will lead us through the weekend. He is an expert at reaching men's hearts with topics that help men identify and fulfill their mission. If you're interested in attending this year's retreat, contact Dan Jaeger at djaeger@st-patricks.org.

Make this year count and experience the joy of belonging. It doesn't matter when you start, the important thing is taking that first step. Life is too short to live it alone.

Written by Maria Furness



"SHARE YOUR VOICE"



I'll be the first to admit—the Catholic Church will never be perfect on this side of heaven. While we strive to put Jesus at the center of all our words and actions, every day we fall short of that goal. Let's face the facts: The Church is made up of imperfect people (sinners)—that's you, me, everyone—striving to imitate a perfect Savior, so there's always room for growth. Where do we start?

By praying, listening and sharing. We can't move forward as a community of believers called to follow Christ and help others to do so until we acknowledge both our strengths and our weaknesses (sins and failures). And that's where you come in. We need your ears and your voice, your open and honest input to help us move forward. We cannot do it without you: The People of God.

Throughout this year, Archbishop Hebdia will be visiting 20 parishes across the Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis to hear from people like you. During these "Prayer and Listening" events, the Archbishop is offering everyone the chance to share their voice.

That includes those who attend Mass every Sunday, as well as Catholics who recently left the Church or who haven't stepped foot in a church for many years. This is your chance to let your voice be heard and share what is going well in your parish, as well as the challenges in your parish and our archdiocese. How often do you get the chance to tell the Archbishop what is working and what isn't?

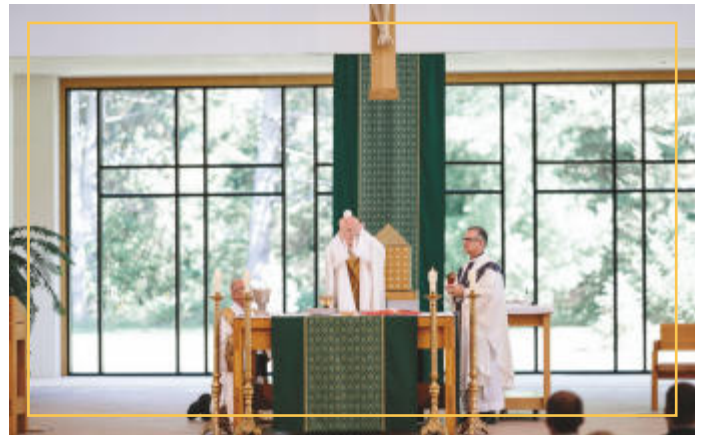
Sadly, many people have been hurt by the Church, be it by clergy, religious, or fellow parishioners. I pray all who believe in truth, charity, and justice will find the courage (fear given over to prayer) to share their voice and insights, so we can bring greater healing and wholeness to the Church.

While too many have been wounded by the Church, many more people have experienced the joy of the Gospel and what it has meant for their lives. Take some time to reflect on your relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church, and then I invite you to share how a personal relationship with Jesus and a community of believers has brought greater meaning and purpose to your life.

Please join us on Tuesday evening, February 18th at St. Stephen's Catholic Church in Anoka from 6:00-9:00pm for a local "Prayer and Listening" event. Can't make it that night? Check out www.archspm.org/synod to find a date and location that works best for you.

In the meantime, let us pray for the bruised and broken Body of Christ and each of Her members. God will heal Her, but He won't do it without you and me, without our praying, listening and sharing. May the Lord bless you with the grace and mercy of knowing and believing in His unconditional love.

"HOW DO YOU KEEP SUNDAY HOLY?"



For many of us, a 'day of rest' probably causes us to think of a quiet day at home, a restful retreat from the world out in nature, or simply hanging out with family and friends with no big activities planned. God calls us to rest in this way, and it is good that we do.

So why break the peace by rushing out the door to church every Sunday morning?

Here at St. Patrick, we pray that visitors and parishioners alike find rest when they come to God's house for Worship. We envision a spiritual home where people feel welcome and valued from the moment they arrive. Where they sit with their brothers and sisters in Christ, and find meaning and purpose through the beauty of the Mass. We strive to create an environment that helps us all to be receptive to the message God wishes to speak to each of our hearts, through music, scripture, preaching, and Eucharist.

Most of all, the utmost goal of Worship is that God be praised and glorified for all he has done, and that every human heart may know they are beloved.

What if you don't have time? If you've ever heard of "The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren, you may have heard the phrase, "It's not about you." By this phrase, Warren points out that everything in life starts with God. Everything is from God, and all gratitude is owed to God. If anything—career, sports, housework, even our family—comes before God, our priorities need reevaluating. The search for meaning, fulfillment, and happiness cannot be found within ourselves because we didn't create us; God did. There will always be questions in life that we can't answer on our own. There will always be circumstances that challenge us, or even cause suffering. But our help comes—always—from the Lord (Psalm 121).

[Pro tip: If you're away from home on the weekends and can't make it back for Mass, use masstimes.org to find a Mass time wherever you are.]

Consider making Worship a habit. Think about increasing your attendance at weekend Mass or daily Mass and devote yourself to being present with God while you're there.

"FORMING DISCIPLES & COMMITTING TO YOUTH MINISTRY"



Our St. Patrick Community is blessed to have great Catholic families, outstanding youth, impactful ministries, and faith-filled leadership, so much so that it's often hard to imagine practicing our faith anywhere else! Having grown up in the parish before joining the formation team a few years ago, I have always been struck by the way St. Patrick's shapes lives and creates opportunities for people to encounter Jesus Christ. For me, I first encountered Jesus in a real way while I was in high school, and our parish community helped me to build upon that first encounter. Now, I get to see those changes occur within the youth of our parish regularly. Those changes occur because of the involvement and investment of incredible people within our community.

This year one of those incredible people stepped forward in a BIG way and decided to donate \$75,000 to support our youth ministry programs. This generous contribution allows our parish to unlock new opportunities for our youth and get rid of obstacles that may prevent families from participating. While the thought of receiving those significant funds is exciting, feeling the weight of responsibility to put those resources to good use is inevitable. So, the formation team and I went to work determining the most appropriate areas of ministry to be invested in, looking for the biggest return on investment.

This mindset resulted in examining the vision for youth ministry in our parish. Fortunately, Jesus laid the groundwork 2000 years ago. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us that the mission of the Church is to make disciples; people who know Jesus in a personal way and allow God's love to shape their lives. Jesus spent His three-year public ministry demonstrating how to make disciples, and when you boil it down to the essentials, the steps toward discipleship are pretty simple.

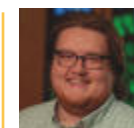
Discipleship begins with relationship, not with Jesus Christ, but a relationship with a person who already knows Jesus. Jesus shared meals with His first disciples, climbed into their boats,

and met them in their everyday lives. He built their trust and became their friend. This is still the most essential step toward discipleship. We cannot hope to teach a person about Jesus, or convince them to come to church on a regular basis, until they know they are loved, until they feel like they belong, until they trust us. After that bond of friendship and trust has been made, then we can introduce them to Jesus, teach them all that He commanded, and send them forth to make disciples as well.

With that, it became clear where the donor's gift should be invested. The greatest impact could be made if we invested in the ministries that gave us opportunities to build relationships with youth in a big way. Some of these ministries include youth groups for all age groups (elementary, middle school, and high school), summer ministries like Mission Trip, Extreme Faith Camp, and Reach Out, and fund events with wide appeal like Winterblast and praise and worship nights. We also included opportunities to multiply the people who are investing in relationships with youth, because it takes a village!

Increasing our youths' access to these sorts of ministries by reducing costs, expanding resources to enhance ministries in a way that would have not been possible otherwise, and expanding the teams of people who are investing in our youth, will begin a domino effect of discipleship. Though it may take some time to see tangible fruits of our donor's gift, I am confident that 2020 has big things in store for St. Patrick's youth ministry, and I encourage you to consider becoming part of the process. Challenge yourself or your child to try something new in youth ministry; become part of the process by investing in relationships with the youth in our community.

Thank you to our donor for opening new doors to our youth!



*Rob Masloski,
High School & Middle School
Formation Coordinator*

FEATURE ARTICLE - "OUR ROADMAP TO JESUS"

Do you ever get those letters at Christmas where they go through every person in the family and what they accomplished throughout the year? "And Meghan finished her doctorate program at Yale and will be starting her own company." "Paul ran the Boston Marathon and finished third!" "My wife and I opened a new orphanage in Haiti." Sometimes they make me feel so unaccomplished!

I hope this doesn't sound that way, but here at St. Patrick, we accomplished a great deal in 2019, all with the goal of leading people to a relationship with Jesus.

Where We've Been

Youth Ministry – This was an exciting year for us, thanks to a generous grant of \$75,000 toward our youth programs. This allowed us to put a greater emphasis on mission trips and camps for our youth, subsidizing the cost so more kids can go. We have found that when your kids participate in mission trips, camps, and retreats, they come back fired up for their faith!

Outreach – This is our 3rd year of having a full-time Outreach Coordinator and it's making a difference in the greater community! We have served hundreds of people in need, through new ministries like Adopt-A-Family, Loss ministry, and our Separated & Divorced ministry.

Community Life – During 2019, we hosted two Encounter events, which are intended to help people encounter Christ outside of the Mass in a variety of unique ways. In addition to Encounter events, our community life continues to expand through DateNight Ministry, Marriage in Christ, Adult Adventures, and a variety of new studies. This year, our community grew by almost 100 families!

Worship – In the Catholic Church, the worship experience is extremely special and based on some long-standing traditions (thousands of years!) of worshipping God. We take it pretty seriously here at St. Patrick, and we want it to include the entire community. In 2019, we focused on excellence in music and hospitality as part of the Mass experience.

Facilities – With any church, the big maintenance expenses are roofs and parking lots and we were able to address both in 2019. Our parking lots were re-sealed and striped, and are in very good condition for the future. The shingled roofs were replaced and are good for the next few decades.

Financial – We were able to accomplish all of this within our means. We continue to work with a balanced budget (expenses do not exceed income), while also continuing to pay down our debt. As of December 31, our loan balance is \$240,000, compared to \$4.5 million just five years ago!

Where We're Going

With 2020 upon us, we look to our strategic plan that we created in 2015—known affectionately as Vision 2020—and ask, "How did we do?" We completed seven out of the nine key initiatives that we developed. This year, we'll conquer the remaining two.

Teach Us to Pray – This was an initiative that came from parishioners asking for clarity on prayer, the Mass, and our Catholic identity. Why do we do the things we do? What makes us unique? We began to answer these questions with Encounter Prayer in the Fall of 2019, where we introduced the power of prayer to our members. This year, we'll continue to introduce you to the power of prayer in

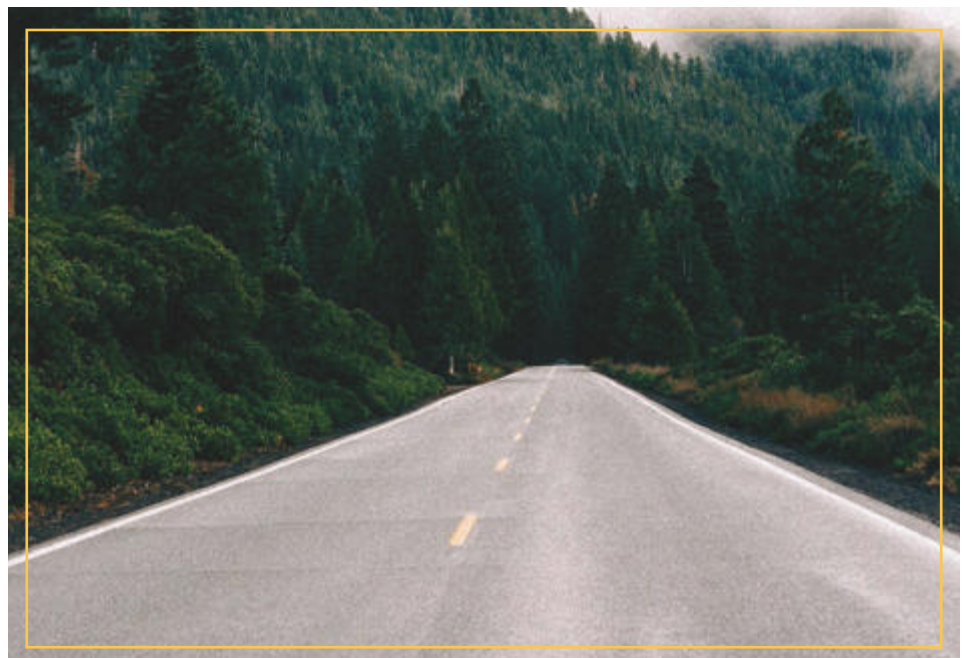
your daily life. Look for new studies, small group opportunities, and web-based content that can help you enhance your personal prayer life, no matter where you are in your spiritual journey!

Discipleship Training – A disciple is someone who knows Jesus in a personal way. As a parish community, we will focus on evangelizing to others effectively while learning apologetics (ability to defend the faith). Though this might sound like a deep lesson in Theology, it really allows the average Christian to go deeper into their faith and be better at sharing it with their "neighbor." In 2020, we hope to launch an entire movement that will provide for a deeper understanding of our rich and beautiful traditions in the Catholic Church.

Financial Freedom – In 2020, we will be debt-free for the first time in many decades, and we intend to stay that way! Generous parishioners—both current and past—have made this a reality. In recognition of this great achievement, the Finance Council will be planning and hosting a Debt Elimination Party this Summer!

Our entire purpose at St. Patrick is to provide opportunities for you to grow—both individually and as a community. We have a plan, and want you to be part of it.

Written by Dan Jaeger



"A NEW YOU IN 2020"



I don't know about you, but I'm tired of setting my New Year's resolution only to feel like a failure before January is over! Exercise more, take more pictures, eat healthy, less screen time, blah, blah, blah... and the list goes on! Why is it so hard to accomplish such a simple goal? Maybe, just maybe, because I have not put "first things first." We all know—whether we do it or not—that God comes first, then others, then me. Even Jesus commands it—Love God, Neighbor, and Self. So if we aren't reaching our external goals, maybe it's time to look at the internal.

We have great news—our Spring Encounter is exactly what can jumpstart the New Year with a new YOU! Our upcoming Encounter You event will feature a **Called and Gifted Workshop** where you will learn all about the spiritual (supernatural) gifts you received at baptism. Let me explain...we all have natural gifts; things we are innately good at like singing, or because we developed them over time, like riding a bike. We also have supernatural gifts given to us so we are able to complete our mission (the purpose for our life)—a mission only you

were created to do! If you don't fulfill your mission; no one will. When we discover these gifts, our mission becomes clearer, our lives become more intentional, and we find real joy and peace with our families, jobs, and everything in-between. Who doesn't want that?!

"Even though I wasn't extremely surprised to learn what my supernatural gifts were, the workshop was powerful in reminding me that I was created uniquely for a specific mission and helped me to focus on my individual gifts." -Amber H.

Join Amber and the many others that have completed a Called and Gifted Workshop to discover the YOU that will bring authentic peace and joy in the New Year.



Linda Abel-Thomas,
Community Life
Director

"CARING FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH"



We look forward to the New Year for many reasons. Whatever the motivation, we are all prompted to do one thing—reflect. This year, I encourage you to add your own mental health to your reflection.

When it comes to our physical health, we don't exercise only when we are sick. Exercise and a balanced diet are preventative measures to keep us healthy. Our mental health needs to be viewed in the same way; we don't have to be hurting or sick to give it attention. In fact, being aware and mindful of where we are and how we want to take better care of

ourselves is vitally important to our long-term well-being. As we turn the calendar, it's important we take time to pause and ask ourselves how we want 2020 to be different. Here are a few practical steps to guide your reflection:

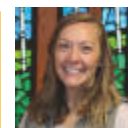
1. Where in my day do I have time for silence and stillness? I recently heard in a podcast that the best use of our "happy hour," or first hour after work, is to pause and breathe. When we rush, rush, rush from one thing to the next we become run down, taking our attention away from the simple but very important things like

driving safely and hugging our loved ones.

2. Who are my 24/7 people? A 24/7 person is someone you can call any day, any time. They might not have all the answers for you, but their presence is enough. They are available to listen, offer you unconditional support, and sound advice. Identify the one or two, 24/7 people in your life. Reach out to them and be intentional in your time with them.

3. G.R.A.C.E - My uncle came up with an acronym for grace I like to remember: **God's Riches at Christ's Expense**. As we learn to understand more of what grace is in our lives, our relationships will change with others and, maybe most importantly, with ourselves.

My hope and prayer for you is that 2020 brings new light, new hope, and new joy.



Anna Wernimont,
Formation Support
Specialist

"THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE"



When you think about the word **service**, what comes to mind? Maybe it's a ministry you're currently involved in or it may be something you did years ago. Usually our most meaningful memories embody what service is all about.

For my family, it was serving homeless mothers and their children in Minneapolis. When my kids were younger, we began volunteering at a shelter. It was a place that defined what service was all about... meeting people's most basic needs. It was a weekly opportunity to share our many blessings with the residents of the shelter.

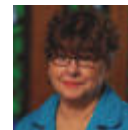
Oftentimes, the best part of service is the impact it makes on those we are serving. When our Sharing & Caring ministry goes to serve a meal in Minneapolis, the homeless men and women are filled with immense gratitude. When our Homebound & Hospital Ministers visit people in need, they are moved by the beautiful opportunity they have to bring Jesus to those unable to attend Mass.

For some of us, it's not only the impact of the service, but the people we serve with. Our annual Fish Fry events build community and camaraderie among the

team, as well as all those who attend what we think is the #1 Fish Fry in Anoka County. Similarly, our bi-annual garage sales are another example of how we can work as a team to accomplish a common goal... providing our community with affordable clothing and household goods. (A little known fact: Our garage sales provide clothing, etc. at no cost to nearly a dozen non-profit organizations in our area).

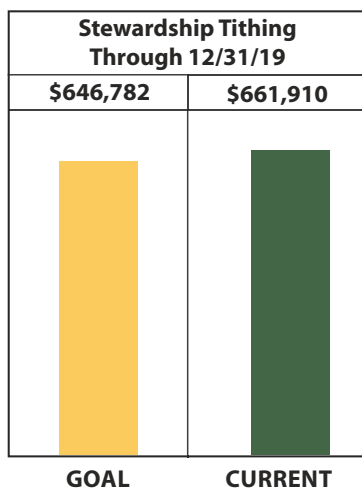
As most of you know, St. Patrick's is a community that celebrates service. Our parishioners embrace the notion that service is another word for giving—giving of ourselves. That giving reaches far beyond the walls of St. Patrick's and serves our entire community.

We invite each of you, young and old, to join us in becoming the hands and feet of Jesus as you serve others. Please explore the many opportunities for service in our twenty-five Pastoral Care & Outreach ministries. We know there is a ministry that can become a life-changing service experience for you and your family.



*Kerri Rooney,
Pastoral Care &
Outreach Coordinator*

STEWARDS AMONG US - "END OF YEAR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT"



Thank you for your commitment to Giving Generously. It is because of your generosity that St. Patrick Church continues to thrive in ministry. Our Youth Formation programs continue to increase in numbers, our Adult Ministry offerings are expanding, and our commitment to Social Justice and Outreach is serving more people in desperate need. If we can continue to have success in our pledges and contributions, we will do even more in 2020 and beyond—all to serve the glory of God!

All who donated to our parish should make sure to check their mail in the new couple weeks for their 2019 contribution statements for their tax records.

An electronic contribution statement is available for you to review and download at any time through "My Church" on our website: <https://st-patricks.org/my-church>. In addition to printing your statement, with My Church you can update your family information, including names, addresses, email addresses, and you'll be able to upload your favorite family photo.

We strive for financial accuracy, so if you find any discrepancies in this report, contact the parish office at 763-753-2011 or at stpats@st-patricks.org.



*Laura Garcia,
Bookkeeper*

"MEET CHRIS BERNARD"

I recently had the opportunity to sit down with parishioner Chris Bernard. For those of you who haven't had the pleasure of meeting him, Chris is an electrician for Gephart Electric and a proud father of two children, Colin (20) and Camryn (15). During our time together, Chris shared how his relationship with Jesus has strengthened over the years, especially through his involvement with the Separated and Divorced ministry.

Chris grew up in Brooklyn Park and is the oldest of five children. He was born and raised Catholic and attended Mass at St. Gerards with his family every Sunday. "Both my parents are Catholic. I'd say that my mom was my go-person; I would ask her a lot of questions. She helped me go to Mass and not just sit there and listen, but really think about what was happening." As Chris got older, he attended college at St. Cloud State and struggled to make his faith a priority. "I started falling away. There are other distractions that college kids encounter that seem more important than going to church. I came home and went to church with my family, but rarely went to church by myself at school."

Once Chris got married and had kids, he had a renewed interest in his faith. "My faith seemed important again, but not important enough for me to go all the time." Then in 2010, Chris and his wife filed for divorce. "It was a very dark time for me. I really needed to dig deep to get through the pain. The hardest part was definitely having less time with my kids. Those two mean so much to me. My ex-wife was very good about splitting the time, but especially in the beginning, it wasn't nearly enough. Over time I've learned to deal with it, but it's definitely hard when they aren't there. During this dark time, I was really doing a lot of soul-searching and looking for something," shared Chris.

He continued, "I started spending more time at church because I knew I needed to do something. I started with a bible study, and my involvement at church has grown ever since. As God worked his miracles through me, I felt better and wanted more. I became more involved wherever I was needed. As I met people here, I mean I'm still meeting people today...I'm drawn

to them. The people I've met are genuine and have become some of my closest friends. Before it was just Sundays, and now it's becoming more."

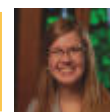
Then in 2017, Chris was asked to help lead a new ministry called "Separated and Divorced." Chris continued, "Divorce never goes away, but I felt a lot better about things. I wasn't in my darkest hour anymore and I felt like I had something to offer others. At first, I wasn't sure the group would take off. But we added people and it's really awesome. There are people that are really hurting and it's fun to see them smile for the first time in awhile. Because of this group, I've been able to actually leave my house and do things I normally wouldn't do. As the group has gotten closer we've started to call ourselves "the super friends" because we all get along so well. I wish people would give it a try, even if it was just one session. It's all genuine and these people really care about you."

Amazingly, Chris shared that his divorce has really strengthened his faith. "You're always searching for reasons when something traumatic happens. I felt like God was saying, 'You've fallen away and you're not living your life the way you should be.' I don't have all the answers, but my divorce pulled me back in. I really

sought Jesus and did a lot of praying. This is the strongest I've ever been in my faith."

In addition to his involvement with the Separated and Divorced ministry, Chris also participates in Arts and Environment, the Knights of Columbus, S.P.O.T., and volunteers as a catechist. I asked Chris what advice he has for someone who's hesitant to get involved at church and he said, "You just have to get started and get your foot in the door. Once you do that, it gets easier and you want to be here. Do all 2,100 of our parish families know everything that goes on here? I know I don't. Going through the ministries on the website is a lot of fun. There are things for married and single people, if you've lost someone, if you like gardening, etc. If people gave one thing a try I think it would be huge."

Chris is one of many people who've found a home at St. Patrick. We hope that each person who walks through our doors knows that they have a place in our pews and our community.



*Maria Furness,
Communications
Coordinator*





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WELCOME HOME

"We feel like part of the family." - Bill

"This is my spiritual home." - Patti

*"The people I've met are genuine and have become
some of my closest friends." - Chris*

