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SAINT MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC PARISH

IN THIS ISSUE

2

*What Does
Stewardship Mean?*

3

*"We Help People to
Improve Their Lives
by Bringing Them
to Christ"*

*Our St. Michael
Catholic Church
and Catholic Social
Services*

4

*Bringing Little Ones
to Jesus at St.
Michael's Preschool*

6

*Here for a Purpose
Parishioner
Leo Kellner*

Welcome to Our New Parish Newsletter!

Dear Parishioners,

Welcome to the first issue of our new monthly parish newsletter!

As our parish community continues to grow and develop stewardship as a way of life, we recognize the need for increased communication. Through this newsletter, we hope to share stories that will help us all to better understand who we are as Catholics and what we are doing as individual members of Christ's family. In upcoming issues, we will focus on what's going on in the St. Michael's community, and how those activities

and events are changing hearts and minds and helping parishioners grow closer to Christ and each other. Each article will ultimately focus on Christ at work within our community through the stewardship way of life.

Our hope is that this newsletter will be a successful means for ongoing education and formation in our faith, and I pray it will be a vehicle through which you are informed and inspired to become more actively involved in the life of Christ and the parish.

Another way I hope to improve our parish's communication efforts is



through a comprehensive parish survey that will be conducted in early 2017. Through the survey, I want to hear from you regarding our parish and its future. A survey will be mailed to each home,

continued on back cover

As we strive to develop stewardship as a way of life at St. Michael's, the support and involvement of each individual parishioner is necessary to sustain the life of our parish. All of you have a place here, and all of you have a role to fill in the life of the parish as we live our lives as disciples of Christ.

What Does Stewardship Mean?

What comes to mind when you hear the word “stewardship”?

Do you think of it as just another way to talk about money? Do you quickly dismiss it as a notion that has nothing to do with being Catholic?

Stewardship is actually a concept that is Scripturally based, and is absolutely vital to our life as Catholics. God tells us, in the very first book of the Old Testament, “Be fertile and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and all the living things that move on the earth” (Gen 1:28).

What does that mean to us today? It simply means that God is telling us, “This is yours, so take care of it.” One of the first things God tells us to do is to be good stewards of the gifts He has entrusted to us!

The Old Testament is not the only place where we can find references to stewardship. Indeed, of the 36 parables in the New Testament, more than half of them deal with time, talent, possessions, or money. Therefore, if Jesus spoke of stewardship that much, it should be a very important part of our lives!

As Catholics, we refer to the three facets of stewardship as “time, talent and treasure.” Although these are three concrete ways to express and measure stewardship, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops tells us that stewardship is part of discipleship. Stewardship is a way of responding to God’s call in every aspect of our lives.

The Scriptures and Church traditions teach us one important point that cannot be overstated —

that stewardship is primarily based on our need to give in gratitude, not on the Church’s need to receive. Of course, both the Catholic Church and our particular parish will always need money. However, we are not asked to give simply to defray costs and fund charitable programs. We are instead asked to remember our need to gratefully return a portion of our time, talent and treasure to God, recognizing all that He has given to us.

It is important to remember that stewardship is a way of life, and not a program. True Catholic stewardship involves an ongoing call to live as followers of Christ. It takes time to find and define personal goals. You can begin by examining your personal commitments to the parish. How do you live your faith in your daily life with your family and friends? How much time do you spend in daily prayer, going to Mass or being involved in parish ministries and activities? What percentage of your income should you give back to God every week? What talents do you have that could be used to strengthen our parish family?

The coming months will see us increasing and intensifying our education and communication on stewardship. We will be developing a better understanding of how stewardship is a way of responding to God’s call to discipleship. And with God’s help, changes will occur in each of our hearts as we devote ourselves to a stewardship renewal within our parish. Examine how you are currently responding to God’s call to stewardship. If God called you home tomorrow, would He proclaim, “Well done, my good and faithful servant”?

The Old Testament is not the only place where we can find references to stewardship. Indeed, of the 36 parables in the New Testament, more than half of them deal with time, talent, possessions, or money. Therefore, if Jesus spoke of stewardship that much, it should be a very important part of our lives!

“We Help People to Improve Their Lives by Bringing Them to Christ”

Our St. Michael Catholic Church and Catholic Social Services

For more than 80 years, Catholic Social Services has been a force for good and for hope in the Diocese of Lincoln. Established by Bishop Louis Kucera in 1932 to address the challenges of the Great Depression, their stated mission is as follows: “To perform the Works of Mercy in response to the call of God. With your help, we can help those in need.”

We are blessed to have a diocesan regional office here in Hastings. We are further blessed that the Director of that office is parishioner Phil Rosno. Phil has been with Catholic Social Services, or CSS, for eight years.

“We provide people in need with hope,” Phil says. “We help them to see that they have value. Our agencies have the resources and the staff to help those in need. We help people to improve their lives by bringing them to Christ. It is that relationship that is most important. There are four branch offices of CSS in the diocese, and one is right here in Hastings.”

Phil’s involvement with CSS is an example of stewardship and a special regard for the poor and those in need.

“I have always had a devotion to the poor, and my faith has always been at the foundation of who I am and what I do,” Phil says. “Our organization takes some of the burden off the pastors and the parishes to deal with the many needs and people in need in the area. We could not be successful without the generosity of people in the area, in terms of time, talent, and treasure. I would encourage them to do more than just contribute and participate, however. It is important for them to see and meet the people they are helping and that is possible through many of our programs and events.”

The presence and impact of CSS may be even stronger in this Holy Year of Mercy. Most of us are aware that Pope Francis announced a Jubilee Holy Year of Mercy for the Church, for all of us, more than a year ago. The Jubilee began on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception last Dec. 8. It officially closes on Nov. 20, the Feast of Christ the King. This Jubilee truly follows what has been the central message of the pope’s time as our Holy Father, that message being one of compassion and pardon. In announcing the year, the pope said that he had “thought often about how the Church can make more evident its mission of being a witness of mercy.”

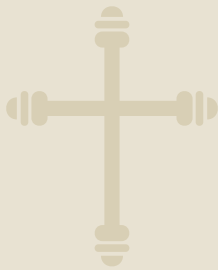


The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are a key part of CSS’ mission.



As we approach the conclusion of this Jubilee Year of Mercy, consider how you may continue to live out such important works of mercy as a member of our faith family!

continued on page 7



*The students and teachers of our
St. Michael's Preschool*



Bringing Little at St. Michael's

For St. Michael's Preschool Director Shelly Wright, teaching is a beautiful experience – and with it comes many meaningful memories, especially those centered around Jesus.

“One special memory of teaching preschool that will always stick in my mind is of a time when a group of children was in the kitchen area during playtime,” she says. “They had the table set and play food on their plates to eat. They sat down in the little play chairs and they folded their hands and said their prayer and then they went on eating their play food.”

Fortunately, faith-filled moments like these aren't too rare at our parish preschool, where Christ finds His rightful place in the education of the littlest ones amongst us.

“I have taught in both a public preschool and now this Catholic one,” Shelly says. “I love teaching in a Catholic preschool, and being able to talk about my faith with the preschoolers and teach them about Jesus.”

St. Michael's Preschool has been in operation for 20 years, and currently serves about 80 children, ages 3 through 5. The school has six classes, which start in September and run until May. They meet for two to five days per week at various times of the morning and afternoon.

“I feel it is important that a child gets to attend a Catholic preschool so they can learn about their faith and be able to talk about it,” Shelly says. “It's exciting to see them ask questions and want to learn more about their faith. St. Michael's Preschool teachers, Denise Howie, Joan Konen, Tracy Bright and myself, are very loving and caring teachers who bring their Catholic faith into the classroom. We also have two wonderful Teacher Aides, Denise Faber and Maria Kavan, who bring much compassion into the classrooms, as well.”

Each month, the preschool's curriculum focuses on several different activities that help the children prepare for kindergarten by learning their letters, numbers, colors, and shapes. It also features a Bible story and a monthly theme. In addition, the children have the opportunity to go into St. Michael's Elementary School and have time for Physical Education, Library and Music once a week. The preschool also has access to the school bus, and

Ones to Jesus el's Preschool

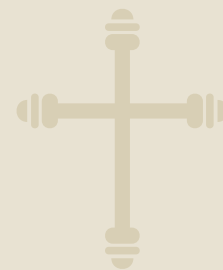
takes field trips, which are a great learning experience for the kids. Older preschool students take a special writing course called *Handwriting Without Tears*.

Profound faith experiences that are centered on the Church's liturgy distinguish St. Michael's Preschool from an ordinary secular day care experience. Children who need care during the day may truly benefit from being in a Catholic Christian environment instead of a non-Catholic one.

"We talk a lot about what Jesus would want us to do and how we want to make Him proud of our decisions," Shelly says. "We pray to Jesus each morning and thank Him for something we have in our life. We pray the meal prayer at snack time and we also make visits into St. Michael's church building to look at the baptismal font, the Stations of the Cross or the Advent wreath. During Lent, we offer a daily sacrifice as well, such as giving something up for the day or just doing something extra for someone."

Furthermore, the preschool puts up their own Advent wreath before Christmas, and during the Christmas season, they act out a short play about the birth of Jesus and sing Christmas songs.

The cost of St. Michael's Preschool is \$85 a month for the classes that are held two days a week, \$100 a month for the three-day, and \$130 per month for the five-day with a \$45 nonrefundable registration fee. Registration begins Feb. 1 for families presently enrolled in the program and March 1 for newcomers. For more information on this wonderful program, please contact Shelly Wright at 402-984-2583.



*The students and teachers of our
St. Michael's Preschool*



Here for a Purpose *Parishioner Leo Kellner*

When we think about retirement and old age, many of us imagine enjoying a well-earned rest – a time to enjoy ourselves, reaping the benefits of our hard work. Yet, at the age of 98, parishioner Leo Kellner continues to labor faithfully in the vineyard, joyfully serving others and spreading kindness wherever he goes.

Raised in a strong German-Catholic family, Leo grew up on a farm in South Dakota where, due to extreme drought conditions, life wasn't easy. Money was often tight and food scarce. Even still, Leo's parents worked hard to instill a deep appreciation for the Catholic faith within him and his siblings, always emphasizing the importance of trusting in the Lord.

"I was taught from an early age the importance of faith," Leo says. "I believe in the Catholic Church with all of my heart. To me, it is my life – it's who I am."

Leo's family was so poor, in fact, that he was unable to go to high school. So, at the young age of 17 he set out on his own to begin working in Minnesota. There, he met his wife, Madelon, and the young couple was married after only two months of dating.

"I met her at a dance," Leo says. "She was Catholic and I didn't have much competition, because all of the other young fellows were Lutheran. We were married for 72 years before she passed. My wife was a very devout Catholic, and she always strengthened me in my own faith."

Parishioners of St. Michael's since it was first built, Leo and Madelon were blessed to live nearby the church, allowing them to frequently attend Mass together and to actively participate in parish life. Leo eventually became involved in the Knights of Columbus, which he has now belonged to for over 50 years, and has remained ever willing to lend a helping hand whenever and however he can. For him, life is all about sharing love and kindness with others – spreading the joy of Christ.



For St. Michael parishioner Leo Kellner, helping others through his pie and cake ministry is a wonderful way of following God's will – spreading kindness and joy to others. (Photo courtesy of The Hastings Tribune)

"I enjoy being kind to people," Leo says. "I learned that back when I was at school, because I was often criticized for being poor and for not being as well-educated. So back then, I made up my mind that I would go out of my way to help those who are less fortunate than me. To me, there is nothing nicer or more beautiful in the world than seeing the smile on a person's face when you show them love and kindness."

Over the years, many of us have been the recipient of Leo's kindness, most especially through

continued on page 7

Here for a Purpose *continued from page 6*

the cakes and pies he so generously donates. This particular ministry began after Leo's wife passed away. Having devoted himself to the care of Madelon throughout her illness, Leo was suddenly left alone with time on his hands. So, he decided to put his time and talent to use for others in the form of baking.

"My mother was a good cook and after my wife passed away I didn't know what to do with myself," Leo says. "So I decided that I could cook, and I began baking cakes and pies for people who are sick, to widows or families who have recently lost a loved one, and for funeral receptions. The ministry just grew from there. This past week alone, I gave away three cakes and a pie."

Leo does not accept any payment for his cakes and pies, but rather uses them as just another way to spread love and kindness to others. Over the years, he has baked hundreds of treats for parishioners and friends. And though Leo would say it is just his way of being useful, through his seemingly endless energy and generosity, he sets a beautiful example for us all of Christian discipleship.

"Serving others makes me feel like God has left me here for a purpose – to help make others happy, to make them feel good," Leo says. "Most people don't get to live to be 98 years old. Most of my friends have already passed on and I'm the only one of my siblings left. I feel like by continuing to serve others, I'm doing what He has called me to do."

"I made up my mind that I would go out of my way to help those who are less fortunate than me. To me, there is nothing nicer or more beautiful in the world than seeing the smile on a person's face when you show them love and kindness."
– Leo Kellner

Our St. Michael Catholic Church and Catholic Social Services *continued from page 3*

CSS is and has been an example of mercy from the beginning. In fact, the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are a key part of CSS' mission. With these works in mind, Phil notes how there are countless ways to become involved with the organization.

"If you're the type that likes to see the fruits of your labor, check out our volunteer opportunities where you can directly affect those we serve," he says. "We also appreciate those that may not have the time but have the wherewithal to make a difference financially. If you're interested in seeing what's going on, visit our calendar of events."

As we approach the conclusion of this Jubilee Year of Mercy, consider how you may continue to live out such important works of mercy as a member of our faith family!



*"We provide people in need with hope,"
Phil Rosno says.*

If you would like more information about Catholic Social Services, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Julie McMahon at 402-463-2112 or visit our website at www.cssisus.org.

SAINT MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC PARISH

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Welcome to Our New Parish Newsletter!

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and then I will ask you to take the time to fill it out and return it as soon as possible. Your input will be very important, and it will give the Parish Council and me a better understanding of your thoughts about our parish.


We are currently conducting our Annual Stewardship Renewal. The Renewal is the time each year when we ask each other to re-prioritize the way we use God's gifts in the Church. It is the time we write down how we will become more devoted to Christ over the next year with our commitments of **time** (using my time on earth wisely; making time for personal prayer, family prayer, and quality time with friends and loved

ones); **talent** (using God-given gifts to strengthen the Church through service to parish ministries and other activities), and **treasure** (the wise and just management of my financial resources; giving a proportionate amount of my income to the parish).

As we strive to develop stewardship as a way of life at St. Michael's, the support and involvement of each individual parishioner is necessary to sustain the life of our parish. All of you have a place here, and all of you have a role to fill in the life of the parish as we live our lives as disciples of Christ.

May the Holy Spirit renew and refresh all of us as we work together to build our parish family through the use of our time, talent and treasure.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Houlihan,
Pastor

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sunday:

Saturday Vigil 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m.
and 11:00 a.m.

Weekday:

Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m. & 8:10 a.m.
(School Mass)
Saturday 8:00 a.m.