



# ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

*Monthly Newsletter*

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JANUARY 2024



# ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH



*Michelle Wagner*



*Michael Laffeur*

## LECTORS AND READERS: PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD DIRECTLY TO OUR HEARTS

We've all experienced a Mass where the readings just really stood out. Maybe they pertained to something we were worried about, or spoke to joy we had recently experienced. A well-proclaimed reading at Mass can speak directly to a person's heart. This is why our Lectors and Readers Ministry is so important, as those proclaiming the Word of God are speaking directly to people's hearts.

It's not a task that Michael Messineo takes lightly. Having served as a lector for nearly 25 years, he knows that it's essential to proclaim the Word loudly and clearly. The distinction between the lector and reader is that the bishop installs a lector to read the Word of God. A reader is allowed to read the Word of God but does not have the distinction of being installed by the bishop.

"It is a great privilege to serve at Mass and read the Word of God," Michael says.

If you have the skills for public speaking, you may consider becoming a reader. You must be able to speak clearly to best convey the Word of God. Michael reiterates the importance of the Liturgy of the Word portion of the Mass.

"If you understand that the whole Bible is the story of salvation history and that the promise of the Messiah, Jesus, is the overarching story of the Bible, then conveying that message to the people of St. Peter Catholic

Church has a profound impact in the celebration of Mass," he says.

Of course, the Liturgy of the Eucharist is also essential to the Mass. This is why we have ways for parishioners to get involved in both — as everything from lectors to servers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. When he's not serving as a lector, Michael assists on the altar as an acolyte. He also is committed to two weekly hours of Eucharistic Adoration.

Michael would love to see more parishioners step forward to assist in the highest form of worship — the Holy Mass. All ministries are important, but those that assist with the Mass are absolutely essential.

"We know that the celebration of Mass is the greatest form of worship we can offer to God," Michael says. "Serving as a lector or reader, acolyte, server or in the Music Ministry is a wonderful way to serve God and His Church."

Consider your gifts and how you might use them this year to serve God and the parish!

*To get involved as a lector or reader,  
call the parish office at 402-423-1239.*

2024

*A Letter from Our Pastor*

## EMBRACING DISCIPLESHIP IN THE YEAR AHEAD

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, it is a time of reflection and renewal, an opportunity to set intentions for how we can grow in our faith and continue to live out our calling as stewards of God's blessings. The concept of discipleship is deeply ingrained in our Catholic faith, reminding us that all we have comes from God and should be used in a way that glorifies Him.

The beginning of a new year is often marked by resolutions — commitments to change, to improve, to grow. This year, I invite you to consider making discipleship a central theme in your resolutions. To live discipleship as a way of life, we must embrace it with a heart open to God's grace, and with practical, intentional actions. Here are some suggestions on how to do just that:

**Gratitude:** Start with a heart full of gratitude. Each day, thank God for the gifts you have received — your family, your health, your talents, and your resources. When we recognize that all we have is a gift from God, it becomes easier to share those gifts with others.

**Time:** Make prayer — sharing the gift of time — an integral part of your life. Seek God's guidance in your discipleship journey. Commit more time to daily prayer, including praying with your spouse, your children, and before meals. Perhaps consider praying the Liturgy of the Hours in the morning and evenings. Pray for wisdom in using your time, talent, and treasure to further God's kingdom and help those in need.

**Talent:** Identify your unique talents and how you can use them to serve others. Whether it's sharing your skills in music, teaching, organization, or any other area, offering your talents for the benefit of your parish and community is a meaningful form of discipleship.

**Treasure:** Discipleship also involves managing our financial resources wisely. Commit to tithing or giving

a percentage of your income to support the work of the church and charitable causes. In doing so, you invest in the spiritual and physical well-being of your community.

**Formation:** Deepen your understanding of discipleship and its role in your life. Read the Scriptures, study Catholic teachings on discipleship, and engage in discussions with fellow parishioners. This will help you grow in your understanding of this calling.

**Community:** Build strong relationships within your parish community. In unity, we can accomplish more. Working together as a community of stewards, we can make a significant impact on the world around us.

Remember that discipleship is not just a one-time commitment; it is a way of life. It's about consistent, intentional choices that reflect your love for God and your neighbors. By embracing discipleship in the year ahead, you will find fulfillment, purpose, and a deepened connection to your faith.

Let us embark on this new year with hearts filled with gratitude, dedication, and the desire to be faithful stewards of God's blessings. May our collective efforts bear witness to His love and grace in our lives and in the world.

May God bless you abundantly in this coming year, and may you find joy and peace in living discipleship as a way of life.

In His Mercy,

*Fr. Eric Clark*

Fr. Eric Clark,  
Pastor





# ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

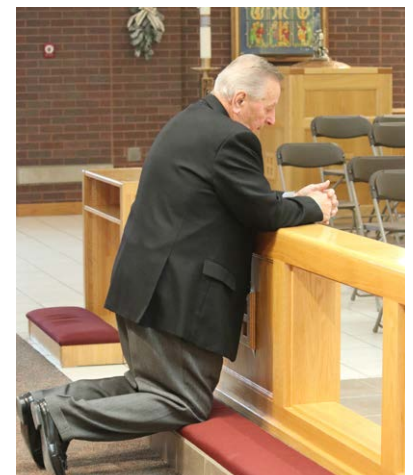
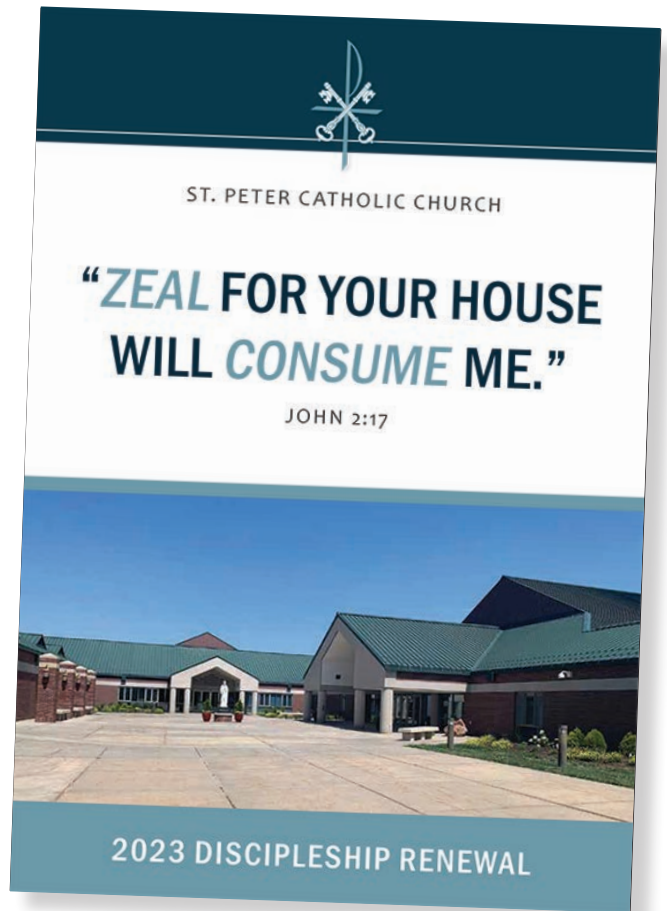
## HIGHLIGHT *2023 Discipleship*

This past August, St. Peter Parish conducted the 2023 Discipleship Renewal. The Discipleship Renewal gave our parish community the opportunity to discern how we are using our gifts of time, talent and treasure in service to the parish and in return to God.

This month, we are happy to share with you some of the highlights of the 2023 Discipleship Renewal.

- ✠ There were 678 commitment cards received from 68 percent of active households.
- ✠ There were 7,250 prayer commitments – sharing of time – from 97 percent of participating households.
- ✠ There were 2,379 ministry commitments – sharing of talent – from 79 percent of participating households. Of these, 653 were new ministry commitments, while 1,726 were re-commitments to parish ministries.
- ✠ There were 509 offertory commitments – sharing of treasure – from 75 percent of participating households. The average pledge was \$3,087.

We thank all those who participated in our 2023 Discipleship Renewal. If you did not have the opportunity to fill out and return a commitment card, we invite you to do so and consider the ways you may share your gifts of time, talent and treasure with God and the parish community!



# RESULTS OF OUR Stewardship Renewal

## ❖ THREE-YEAR COMPARISON ❖

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
• Registered Households	1,396	1,411	1,437
• Household Commitment Cards Received	533	563	678
• Return rate for Registered Households	38%	40%	47%
• Active Households	794	802	816
• Active Household Commitment Cards Received	457	484	551
• Return rate for Active Households	58%	60%	68%
• <b>Prayer Commitments (Stewardship of Time)</b>	<b>5,374</b>	<b>5,813</b>	<b>7,250</b>
• Ministry Commitments (Stewardship of Talent)	2,016	1,889	2,379
- Re-commitments to ministries	1,313	1,340	1,726
- New commitments to ministries	703	549	653
• <b>Offertory Commitments (Stewardship of Treasure)</b>	421	455	509
- Average pledge	<b>\$3,305</b>	<b>\$3,112</b>	<b>\$3,087</b>
- Total annual amount pledged	<b>\$1,391,602</b>	<b>\$1,415,783</b>	<b>1,571,180</b>





## Virtue Tree

### OUR PARISH SCHOOL LAUNCHES NEW VIRTUE-BASED PROGRAM



*Students spend time in class with Fr. Eric Clark.*

Prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance are the four Cardinal Virtues. The Theological Virtues are faith, hope, and love. Students at St. Peter School can learn each of these more in-depth through the newly implemented Education in Virtue Series, also called the Virtue Tree Series. This is the first year the school is utilizing this faith-based program – created by the Dominican Sisters of Mary – and it applies to all students, from preschool to eighth grade. The program is intended to engage everyone associated with the school, including parents. It’s also intended to lay the groundwork for a positive school culture.

Janna Walkowiak, Assistant Principal, has enjoyed seeing the students learn these important elements of the Catholic faith.

“The curriculum defines the virtues, demonstrates how the saints exhibited the virtues in their lives, and invites students to recognize and witness the virtues in their own lives,” Ms. Walkowiak says.

The first step in implementing this curriculum has been training our school staff. The students also learn about a virtue each week, and parents are informed of the virtue in the weekly newsletter. There are prayers specific to each virtue, and the priests also try to weave the virtue into their homilies for the student Mass.

“The curriculum is implemented at the teachers’ discretion,” Ms. Walkowiak says. “It can be used in a variety of ways, so the teachers have tailored the program to match their teaching styles and curriculum needs.”

Ms. Walkowiak is especially excited about this program because it emphasizes the good

# Series

## FOR SCHOOL FAMILY

in students. Many teachers have already been teaching the virtues and accompanying concepts for years, and this now gives them a common framework.

“Teachers were already having these conversations with students, but the curriculum helps create uniformity as teachers intentionally employ a common language when discussing virtues,” she says.

This isn’t meant to be a behavior program – it’s much bigger than that. The Virtue Tree series includes discussions on the Catholic faith, the saints, and the opportunity for prayer.

As part of implementing this program, Ms. Walkowiak has a request for all parishioners – to pray for the students and staff.

“The last step in implementing this program is prayer,” she says. “I please ask that all parishioners pray for the success of this series within our school.”

In the short time this program has been implemented, Ms. Walkowiak has already seen positive results.

“Students have already begun to recognize the virtues that they are blessed with and identify the virtues that their peers possess,” she says.



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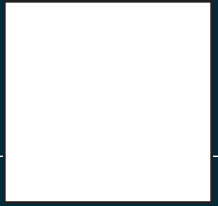
*“The curriculum defines the virtues, demonstrates how the saints exhibited the virtues in their lives, and invites students to recognize and witness the virtues in their own lives.”*

*— Janna Walkowiak, Assistant Principal*

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# ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH



4500 Duxhall Dr. | Lincoln, NE 68516  
402-423-1239 | [www.saintpeterlincoln.com](http://www.saintpeterlincoln.com)

## MASS SCHEDULE:

*Saturday: 4:00 p.m.*

*Sunday: 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m.*

## DAILY MASS

*Monday-Friday: 6:30 a.m., 8:15 a.m., 5:30 p.m.*

*Saturday: 8:15 a.m.*

## CONFESSION

*Monday: 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.*

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

*Friday: 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.*

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

*Sunday 30 minutes before each Mass*

ST. PETER HOLY HAPPY HOUR'S

# TRIVIA NIGHT

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 26**

**6:30PM - SOCIAL • 7:00PM - TRIVIA**

**ST. PETER GYM**

- Team Size 6-8 players
- \$10/player
- BYOB and Food
- Cash Prizes
- Dress your table in favorite theme to win more prizes!
- Raffle Tickets: "Win a Priest for your table"



Reserve a table for your team now!  
Space is limited.