



# ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

*Monthly Newsletter*

## In This Issue:


- 2** New Programs Enhance Student Faith Life at Our Parish School
- 3** A Letter from Our Pastor
- 4** Parish Bids Heartfelt Farewell to Four Members of Our Staff  
*Extending Gratitude for Devoted Service*
- 6** St. Peter Catholic Church and School Annual Fundraiser *Join Us on June 7*



MAY 2024



# ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH



## NEW PROGRAMS *Enhance Student Faith Life* AT OUR PARISH SCHOOL

It's been an exciting year for the students and faculty at St. Peter Catholic School. Between the renovated church, the new Virtue in Education program, the speech team, and even an addition to the playground, our school is fully embracing its mission "to prepare for the Kingdom of Heaven." Principal Curt Feilmeier shares his thoughts on some of this year's highlights.

"We have been blessed to have so many opportunities to enhance our mission over the course of this school year," Mr. Feilmeier says. "Without question, the return to our renovated Church following its recent dedication is a highlight."

Since last August, the school community was still able to have daily Mass in Bishop Vasa Hall, but returning to the actual Church and witnessing its renewed beauty has been especially meaningful, and the school is delighted to celebrate sacraments and other special events in the new space.

There also are a couple new initiatives aimed at helping students to grow in virtue. The Virtue in Education program, designed by the Dominican Sisters of Ann Arbor, has

created a strong foundation for students to understand how to treat others. Additionally, students in sixth through eighth grades benefited from the junior high retreat program.

"This has allowed us to expand our faith formation for junior high students as they prepare for high school and beyond," Mr. Feilmeier says.

In terms of academics, the school has added several new programs to promote excellence in reading, STEM exploration, and even competitive speech. The newly implemented LEXIA program helps monitor reading progress, with the aim of having all students at or above grade level in the area of reading by third grade.

"This tool has allowed real-time data for both the school and parents to address areas of strength and identify those areas of needed improvement," Mr. Feilmeier says.

Another new initiative, the Jr. Panther Program, offers complementary opportunities for students after school, including a new STEM club. Also, for the first time in school history, there is a speech team for students in grades 6-8. Over 30 students have signed up

Lastly, in partnership with the School Family Association and other donors, St. Peter has expanded the playground, specifically adding pieces designed for students in preschool through second grade.

"The importance for students to 'reset' through recess and time outside is an important part of our school day and we are excited that the pieces that have been added will enhance our campus," Mr. Feilmeier says.

To wrap up the year, graduating students will have two ceremonies to celebrate their success. First, on Wednesday, May 15, the St. Peter graduating students will join other eighth-grade students from the area Lincoln Catholic schools for Mass with Bishop Conley at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ at 10 a.m. Then, on Monday, May 20, the school will have its own graduation ceremony at 7 p.m., followed by a reception.

It's been an exciting year at St. Peter Catholic School, and the new programs that began this school year will provide an enriching experience for classes in the coming years. The school community is grateful for these many blessings. St. Peter, pray for us!

*A Letter From Our Pastor*

*May We Follow Mary's Example,*  
**GIVING AND SERVING  
AS DISCIPLES**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,



This month, we celebrate Mother's Day. Motherhood is a glory to behold. I thank all mothers for the gift of life and their "yes" to following the Lord.

The month of May is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is our Mother, in the order of grace, because we have been adopted by God at our Baptism. As our Mother in heaven, we turn to her for tender guidance towards her Son and fierce protection from the wiles of the Devil.

I am pleased to announce that our narthex has a beautiful new painting done by Neil Carlin for our church. It is titled, *Our Lady, Protector of Life*. St. Mary is positioned under a cottonwood tree with St. Joseph by her side. She protects both our Savior, Jesus, and our patron, St. Peter under her mantle as the storms rage on a Nebraska prairie and the serpent is crushed under her foot as she reads from the prophecy Genesis 3:15, "He will strike at your head while you strike at his heel."

It was the motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary that changed not only her but the whole world. Her humble "yes" to the proposal of the Archangel Gabriel brought new life — the author of life, into her pure womb so that we could have eternal life in heaven.

When we say "yes" to following God by giving of our time, talent, and treasures, we discover our great dignity of being a disciple. Mother Mary was the first disciple of Jesus. May we learn to give generously like she did and may we allow her to protect us on the path of following her Son.

In His Mercy,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Eric Clark".

Fr. Eric Clark,  
Pastor



# PARISH BIDS *Heartfelt Farewell To* EXTENDING GRATITUDE



*Bill Graeve*

St. Peter Parish is bidding a heartfelt “farewell” to four members of our parish staff family. These staff members have made significant contributions to our parish life during their years of service, with each, in her or his own way, helping us become stronger disciples of Christ. We wish them well as they begin their new journeys in life!

Vicki Valaika is retiring from her post as third-grade teacher at St. Peter Catholic School. She spent her first six years as a teacher’s assistant before taking the third-grade position, where she taught for 17 years.

Mrs. Valaika’s children were attending school at St. Peter, but when the principal learned she was teaching at SCC, she was asked if she would be interested in being a teacher’s assistant/substitute teacher.

During her tenure as third-grade teacher, Mrs. Valaika has enjoyed the tradition of the Living Rosary with her students. This is among her favorite memories from her time at St. Peter School, but she has many others, as well.

“It’s challenging to pick one favorite memory,” she says. “I love the memories that revolve around the activities I do with my students. One activity is the ‘I can’t funeral.’ During this activity, students write down things they believe they cannot do and we hold a funeral to bury them. Afterward, they are not allowed to say ‘I can’t’ anymore. It has been a fun and creative way to encourage students to believe in themselves and their abilities.

“Another favorite activity is when my students write about having an alien teacher,” she adds. “I am always amazed by their creativity and imagination. It is a great way to encourage them to think outside the box and explore new ideas.”

Another aspect of her teaching has been to teach her students about our

Catholic faith. She has found this to be most fulfilling.

“It has been a privilege to teach about our faith,” Mrs. Valaika says. “Few people have the chance to impact the students’ lives in this way. It has been gratifying watching students develop their trust in God and to learn to rely on His strength.”

As she begins her retirement, traveling at times other than during summer break is something she is anticipating. However, there always will be the memories of her time with her students.

“The students have enriched my life in so many ways!” she says. “Not interacting with the kids every day will be what I miss the most.”

Cindy Schueth is retiring as the School Lunch Administrator, after having served in this capacity for 27 years. She also plans to do some traveling and spend more time with her grandchildren. But she looks back fondly at her time at St. Peter School.

“I started at St. Peter when Vasa Hall and the kitchen were finished with construction,” she says. “This truly dates me. Sister Mary Michael was the principal at the time. I remember she was overjoyed to have someone finally apply for the position. My youngest children were ready to start kindergarten, so it was a perfect time to try something new, although I had been working in the food service industry since college.”

Catholic Schools Week stands out as one of the major events in Mrs. Schueth’s tenure.

“That was challenging, but also so rewarding, preparing meals for parents and grandparents during Catholic Schools Week,” she says. “I was grateful for all the parents I asked to volunteer to make it all go smoothly.”

Mrs. Schueth also has fond memories of her staff at the school.

“I was always so blessed with a great



*Kassidy Sloup*



*Cindy Schueth*

# FOUR MEMBERS OF OUR STAFF

## FOR DEVOTED SERVICE

supporting staff over the years,” she says. “Most of them were moms like me who now had a little extra time when they sent their youngest off to school at St. Peter. I will have to admit that some years we had a waiting list! Hopefully, we strengthened and restored the hungry bodies of the children we served, so they could become all that St. Peter School is preparing them to be in God’s image.”

Kassidy Sloup has been the art teacher at St. Peter for two years. She now is retiring to stay home to raise her daughter, Maura. During her time at St. Peter, she has contributed not only to her students’ education but to enrichment activities at the school.

“I have helped design the ‘Praise for St. Peter’ logo, the school brochure, and the school’s curriculum overviews,” Mrs. Sloup says. “I have been in charge of displaying the students’ artwork in the halls, including the larger group installations like the Nativity scene this past Christmas. I have also been in charge of the making of many of the props that are seen in the musical productions last year and this year.”

Her favorite memories at St. Peter School have been formed, partly thanks to the smaller class sizes our students and faculty enjoy.

“I have seen the fruits of the education the students receive at St. Peter in my junior high drawing and ceramic classes,” she says. “The class sizes are a bit smaller, so we are able to have more one-on-one conversations and discuss our relationships with God, how He made us, and how He works in and through us.”

As Mrs. Sloup worked with her students to nurture their artistic talents, she also worked toward our parish’s mission to make disciples of Christ. At times, it was not an easy journey.

“As we hear in the Gospel, we can throw seeds and sometimes we see the fruit, and other times we do not,” Mrs. Sloup says. “What I know for sure is that I question more often how my students help me become a better disciple than how I am making them better disciples. Our Lord says it best, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.’”

“My time at St. Peter has been very blessed, and I am looking forward to seeing the fruits from my colleagues and other educators in the Diocese in the future,” she adds.



*Vicki Valaiika*

Parish Bookkeeper Bill Graeve is stepping down from the post he has held for two years, but he will continue his service as sacristan at St. Michael Parish.

Phone calls from Fr. Doty, then Fr. Clark, and Katherine Norman led him to the bookkeeping position until someone could be found for the job. He worked at St. Peter for two months in the spring of 2020, then two months at the end of 2020, until he joined the parish staff in June 2022.

He looks back with satisfaction on his work to establish structure, procedures, and accounting principles so the parish could have a better understanding of how the parish is faring financially.

“I also set up the accounting for the capital campaign, of which I had a lot of experience from St. Michael’s campaign,” Bill says.

Bill also has enjoyed fulfillment in working toward St. Peter Parish’s mission to make disciples.

“Nothing is more important than making disciples,” he says. “Everyone, regardless of their duties, has this responsibility. When I am out in public, I try to represent St. Peter, and, by extension, the Catholic faith to the best of my abilities.”

Bill and his wife, who is retired, plan to do some traveling, and he has a goal of riding 1,500 miles during the upcoming bike riding season. He also plans to delve more into readings about World War II, a subject of interest for him.

He leaves with good memories of working with the parish staff.

“I have really enjoyed my time here,” Bill says. “I give Fr. Clark a lot of credit for hiring joyful mission-driven staff. May God bless each and every one of you!”



# ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

## ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH AND JOIN US ON JUNE 7 TO SHARE IN FUN AND FE

After a hiatus due to the capital campaign and renovations last year, our annual parish fundraiser event is coming back this spring! On June 7, we will be hosting a luau to raise funds for our church and school community.

"It is at St. Peter, both in the gym and on the field with tents set up outside," says Katherine Norman, parish manager. "It will include fellowship, delicious food, band, signature cock-tails, exclusive live and silent auctions, games, dancing, and more!"

All adults are welcome and encouraged to attend! Tickets are \$75 or there are different sponsorship levels to support the event as well. Proceeds from the event will help support the mission of our church and school in many ways.

"It provides funding to make disciples through outreach, formation, and evangelization," Katherine says. "Please support this event by buying tickets, donating

a bottle for the Wall of Spirits, volunteering the night of the event, and/or making a monetary gift."

Megan Cooper is co-leading the event planning for the fundraiser night. It is her first year participating in this process and she feels blessed to be part of it.

"When we first met, we knew our goal was to host an event that we all would be excited to attend," Megan says. "That is when it was agreed upon that the event needs to be casual, fun, and creative, and since it is in the summer, hosting a luau seemed like the perfect idea!"

Although there was no event held last year, two years ago the event was a huge success, bringing in about \$70,000 for our parish and school community. This year's luau event will be complete with plenty of great food, music, and atmosphere.

"We have really spent time focusing on making this event feel as if you stepped into a Hawaiian luau," Megan says. "Through the food and drinks, a tiki bar,

### Play Heads or Tails for a chance to win \$500!



**Purchase a flower Lei for the "Heads or Tails" game played the night of the event. Leis will be placed around your neck when you enter the event. The more leis, the better chance you have of winning!**

#### Rules of the game:

1. Place all purchased lei's around your neck.
2. Choose "heads" or "tails" and then a coin is flipped.
3. Keep your lei necklace on if you chose correctly or remove one lei necklace if you chose incorrectly.
4. This will continue until the last person with a lei necklace is left standing, they win \$500!



# AD SCHOOL ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

## ELLOWSHIP WHILE SUPPORTING OUR PARISH

the live music, and decorations, we want the experience to be unique and something you'll remember for years to come."

New this year is a Maui Golden Ticket Getaway raffle. Tickets are \$100 each for a chance to win a seven-night stay in a villa in Maui, valued at \$7,000.

"We are also adding desserts of 12 from local bakeries on the silent auction to bid on and win that night to enjoy or take home," says Tamera Toof, auction committee lead.

While we are blessed to have many different events happening year-round, the parish fundraiser event is truly special.

"This event is unique in the sense that it's hosted with the goal of fellowship as well as to provide financial support to our parish," Megan says. "St. Peter offers many programs to further its mission in creating disciples of Christ and this event is a way for our adult

parishioners to come together and enjoy each other's fellowship while raising funds to further the church's mission. It's a special night and a great opportunity to invite neighbors and friends to join in supporting our beloved parish!"

There are many opportunities for parishioners to donate and volunteer for the event. From setting up to food prep, bartending or clean up. There are so many ways to contribute to this wonderful event and help ensure it will be a success once again this year.

*Scan here to  
see the various  
ways you can  
volunteer!*





# ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH



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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 Catholic Church & School Annual Fundraiser



*lei'd back*

# LUAAU



## FRIDAY, JUNE 7 @ 6:30PM

Buy Tickets - Become a Sponsor - Purchase a Lei

