

*AN INSIDE LOOK AT OUR*

## **Widow and Widower Support Group**

*Offering Compassion and Community for Parishioners Dealing with Loss*

**L**osing a loved one is a defining moment in our lives. It is a time of mourning and pain, accompanied by memories and stories of the deceased person's life. Sometimes, sharing with others who've lost loved ones can help bring consolation and healing.

Here at St. Jude, we are blessed to have the Widow and Widower Support Group, which specifically serves those who have experienced the loss of their spouse.

"People that haven't lost a loved one don't have those same feelings as someone who is going through that," says Sharon Strong, one of the ministry organizers. "You never forget your loved one, but you learn how to cope with it. The easiest way to do that is to be with other people who are experiencing the same thing."

The Widow and Widower Support Group meets for a



luncheon four times per year. It provides the opportunity for fellowship among those who are grieving and experiencing similar circumstances, giving them the space to share and heal together.

The meetings open with a prayer, then the attendees share a

meal together. Oftentimes during the meal, there are opportunities for sharing.

"If you're going to be sharing food together you can share other things, too," Sharon says.

Following the meal, the participants enjoy some fun and card

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# Embracing Stewardship *During Lent*

**L**ent, the 40-day season of reflection and preparation leading up to Easter, is a time of spiritual growth, self-examination, and deepening one's relationship with God. Central to the Lenten experience is the connection to stewardship and recommitting to our commitments of time, talent, and treasure during Lent, so that we can truly embody the spirit of this season of sacrifice and renewal.

Time is one of God's most precious gifts to us. During Lent, consider how you can commit more of your time to prayer and service. This could involve setting aside a specific time each day for prayer and reflection, attending daily Mass, or participating in additional religious activities such as Stations of the Cross or adoration. By dedicating more of your time to God during Lent, you deepen your connection with Him and grow in your understanding of what it means to be a steward of the gift of time.

When it comes to talent, each of us possesses unique skills, and these gifts are to be used for the greater good. Lent is an excellent time to reflect on how you can commit your talents to serve others and glorify God. Consider volunteering at your parish or a local charitable organization, sharing your skills with those in need, or using your talents to enhance your church community. This act of giving not only benefits those you serve, but also strengthens your own sense of purpose and connection to your faith.

Stewardship of treasure is also an integral part of living a faithful life. Lent provides an opportunity to evaluate how you use your financial resources and make commitments to give generously. You might choose to increase your contributions to your parish or donate to a charitable cause that aligns with your values. Also, consider making financial sacrifices during Lent, such as giving up a luxury or non-essential expense, and redirecting those funds towards acts of charity and kindness. These financial commitments reflect your understanding that all your material wealth is a gift

from God, and you are called to use it responsibly and generously.

As you make these Lenten commitments of time, talent, and treasure during Lent, it's crucial to incorporate prayer and reflection into your journey. Spend time in prayer, asking God for guidance and strength to fulfill your commitments. Reflect on your progress, celebrate your successes, and acknowledge areas where you can improve. This self-examination is a fundamental aspect of Catholic stewardship and is an integral part of the Lenten experience.

Lent is traditionally a season of sacrifice, symbolizing the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness. By committing your time, talent, and treasure, you are making a conscious choice to embrace sacrifice as a path to renewal. The sacrifices you make during this season help you grow closer to God, and in the process, you experience a spiritual rebirth that prepares you for the celebration of Easter.

Acts of mercy and kindness are a tangible expression of your commitments during Lent. By giving your time in prayer, sharing your talents with others, and sharing your treasure with the parish and those in need, you embody the love and compassion of Christ. Your actions become a testament to the principles of stewardship, and they have a positive impact on your community and the world at large.

By focusing on stewardship with your commitments of time, talent, and treasure, you can fully embrace the spirit of Lent and grow in your faith. This approach transforms the season into a time of deeper self-examination, spiritual growth, and a genuine connection to God's gifts. It is a reminder that living as a faithful steward is not a one-time commitment, but a way of life—one that extends far beyond the Lenten season.



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

# Celebrating Valentine's Day Through Acts of Stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

I hope this letter finds you well as we approach a unique and spiritually significant moment in our faith journey. Feb. 14 not only marks Valentine's Day, but also Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, a time of reflection and renewal. As we navigate this intersection of love and penance, I want to shed light on the Catholic teachings behind Valentine's Day and how we can celebrate it with a focus on stewardship.

Valentine's Day is named after St. Valentine, a third-century Roman martyr who upheld the values of love, self-sacrifice, and Christian faith. He defied the Roman Empire's ban on marriage for young soldiers, believing in the sanctity of love and the Sacrament of Marriage. His devotion to love, even in the face of persecution, serves as an inspiration to us all.

This year, Valentine's Day coincides with Ash Wednesday, a day of fasting, prayer, and repentance. We can celebrate this unique alignment of love and devotion by embracing Catholic stewardship. Here are ways to do so:

- **Lenten Sacrifice of Love:** Instead of traditional Valentine's Day gifts, consider giving something more meaningful. Make a Lenten sacrifice, such as giving up a favorite treat, luxury, or habit, and donate the money saved to a charitable cause. This act of almsgiving, rooted in love, reflects St. Valentine's commitment to those in need.
- **Acts of Love and Kindness:** Throughout Lent, perform daily acts of love and kindness. These gestures need not be grand; a simple act like calling a friend in need, helping a neighbor, or showing appreciation to a family member can be a profound expression of love and stewardship.
- **Prayer and Reflection:** On this Ash Wednesday, attend Mass and receive ashes as a visible sign of your commitment to repentance and renewal. Dedicate

time to prayer and reflection, considering the ways you can deepen your relationship with God and with one another.

- **Service to the Community:** Serve our community by participating in charitable activities or volunteering your time. Lent is a time for selflessness and giving. Join initiatives in our parish or engage in community service to extend your love to those in need.
- **Marriage and Family Enrichment:** On this day of love, focus on enriching your marriage and family relationships. Attend marriage counseling, pray together as a couple, or engage in family activities that promote unity and love.
- **Renewal of Stewardship Commitments:** Use this time to review and renew your stewardship commitments of time, talent, and treasure to our parish community. Reflect on how you can contribute to the growth and vibrancy of our faith family.

By celebrating Valentine's Day on Ash Wednesday through acts of stewardship, we can infuse this day with the deep love and commitment that our faith encourages. This unique confluence reminds us that love and self-sacrifice are at the heart of our faith, as exemplified by St. Valentine's dedication to love and Christian values.

May this Valentine's Day be a profound and spiritually rich experience, allowing us to renew our love for God, one another, and our commitment to stewardship as a way of life.

In Christ,

Fr. Peter Marshall  
Pastor



# MUSIC MINISTRY Brings Musical and P



Singing a song starts with our breaths, and there is no doubt a big breath of fresh air is breathing new life into our parish Music Ministry. When Mike Powell took on the role of Music Director, our parish was not only coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we were also undergoing the transition to a new pastor and the retirement of our previous Music Director. Mike met with volunteers from the parish to create a vision for renewal.

“We came up with great plans,” Mike says. “In the fall, we hit the ground running.”

One of the key changes was the creation of a Children's Choir.

“I've had an enthusiastic response to that,” Mike says.

“Parents were looking for that opportunity. That was one of the brilliant things the volunteers brought to the process. I would not have started a children's choir yet if it was just my planning, but the volunteers pushed me in that direction and sensed that this was a place the parish was ready to grow.”

Currently, the Children's Choir has 21 kids who sing each week and that number continues to grow. On March 9, the choir will attend the Louisville Catholic Youth Choral Festival, and Mike hopes to take the choir to more children's choir festivals.

“I hope to create a culture around Children's Choir where it's a community more than just something that happens,” Mike says.

In addition to doubling the size of the Sunday choir, we are also working to build up a Saturday choir. Mike has brought in a couple of music majors from the University of Indianapolis to help guide and coach the singers.

“I see my job fundamentally as supporting congregational singing, so I believe having a vibrant choir to lead music is the best way to do that,” Mike says. “The special pieces that the choir sings at Mass are great opportunities for prayer and for the congregation to encounter sacred texts that they wouldn't otherwise encounter.”

There are no requirements or skills necessary to join any of the choirs. Mike believes that singing is a skill that everybody can improve at.

“I do a lot of teaching along the way about vocal technique and musical interpretation,” Mike says. “Everyone is learning and growing regardless of their current level. If you enjoy singing, there's a place for you in our Music Ministry.”



## Prayerful Beauty to Our Liturgies

Mike and the Music Ministry are looking forward to more growth over the next few years — larger choirs and more complex music will lend richness and beauty to the liturgy, particularly at special Masses such as the Easter Vigil and Christmas.

“This parish is large and full of potential, and I see no reason to limit the size of our ensembles,” Mike says. “It wouldn’t be overkill if we had a choir of 50 people on a Sunday morning.”

All choirs rehearse in the St. Joseph Room. The Children’s Choir, for second through eighth-graders, rehearses on Wednesdays at 5 p.m. and sings once a month. The Saturday Choir rehearses on Saturdays at 2:45 p.m. and sings at 4 p.m. Mass. The Sunday Choir rehearses on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. and sings at the 10 a.m. Mass.

To learn more, contact Mike Powell at [mpowell@stjudeindy.org](mailto:mpowell@stjudeindy.org).

## Widow and Widower Support Group *continued from front cover*

games. The idea is to help widows and widowers connect with others, but also to get out of the house — something that oftentimes can be difficult after a great loss.

“As soon as they can get out, the better they are, the less depressed they are,” Sharon says. “That has been my personal experience — doing things, I don’t get depressed. I think that’s a big answer to things. Just keeping people active is a big help.”

Having participated in the parish’s Bereavement Support Group, Sharon heard about the Widow and Widower Support Group. She has been helping out with the ministry for just over a year.

The ministry seeks to provide emotional support for the participants, but it fills a spiritual need, too.

“Helping people that have gone through losing a loved one is a very important thing to do,” Sharon says. “Showing love for one another is what Christ has asked us to do. It’s one of the main things, to love one another as He has loved us. It’s more fulfilling to people when they feel like someone cares.”

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— SHARON STRONG

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The luncheons typically take place on the third Thursday of the month, four times per year. All those who are widows and widowers are included in the email list for updates and further information regarding dates and times. Currently, the ministry is seeking ideas from its participants as well as the wider parish community to build and grow the ministry.

For more information, or to get involved, contact Sharon Strong by calling 317-445-6827.

## A CATHOLIC TRADITION OF REFLECTION AND RENEWAL

# Ash Wednesday

**A** solemn day that marks the beginning of Lent, Ash Wednesday holds a special place in the hearts of Catholics worldwide. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, this observance is laden with symbolism and significance, providing a profound opportunity for spiritual reflection and renewal.

Ash Wednesday falls 40 days before Easter Sunday, excluding Sundays, and serves as a period of penance, fasting, and prayer, mirroring the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert. The name itself is derived from the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful in the sign of the cross. This year, it falls on Feb. 14.

The history of Ash Wednesday can be traced back to the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting, symbolized in Judaism by the sprinkling of ashes on the head. This practice was later adopted by early Christians as a public expression of repentance. The ashes used on this day are typically derived from the burned palms blessed on the previous year's Palm Sunday, symbolizing the connection between death, repentance, and the promise of resurrection.

The liturgy of Ash Wednesday is profound and poignant, emphasizing humility and mortality. The priest applies ashes in the shape of a cross to the foreheads of the faithful, uttering the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust, you shall return" or a similar phrase.

This ritual serves as a stark reminder of the brevity of human life and the need for repentance and conversion.

The significance of Ash Wednesday extends beyond the symbolic act of ash imposition. It heralds the beginning of Lent, a period of self-examination, prayer, and fasting. Catholics are called to reflect on their lives, identify areas of sin, and strive for spiritual growth. Fasting and abstinence from certain pleasures during Lent are seen as a way to detach from worldly distractions and draw closer to God.

The 40 days of Lent are symbolic of the time Jesus spent fasting in the desert, facing temptations from the devil. Through prayer, fasting, and acts of charity, we seek to emulate Christ's journey, fostering a deeper connection with their faith.

Ash Wednesday serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative journey toward Easter, where the faithful celebrate the resurrection of Christ. It invites Catholics to embark on a period of introspection, penance, and spiritual growth, fostering a renewed commitment to their faith. As the ashes are traced on foreheads, the faithful are reminded not only of their mortality but also of the eternal hope found in Christ's sacrifice. In this season of Lent, we are encouraged to embrace the call to repentance, turning away from sin and towards a life of holiness and grace.



# Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

## *Bringing Our Children to Jesus in Wonder and Awe*

Jesus loves the little children, and not just because the song tells us so! He even tells us in Mt. 18:3, “Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.” The humility and simplicity of a child’s faith is one to be respected and even imitated according to Christ Himself. He beckons the children to Himself, just as they are, and He encourages all of us to follow their lead.

In an effort to bring our children to Jesus accordingly, we established the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program here at St. Jude in September of 2023. This Montessori-based religious education program allows the children to discover Christ in an atmosphere where they can touch and work with things, move about the room, and ask questions — where they can be kids.

“I cannot speak enough good things about this program,” says Caryn Hudspeth, a level-one catechist who currently serves to facilitate the program between our catechists and the parish. “It enables young children to joyfully fall more deeply in love with God through contemplation of Scripture and the liturgy.”

In fact, Caryn says she has witnessed this firsthand in the lives of her own children who have participated in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

“Not only were they engaged in class, but they came home and practiced and showed my husband and me what they learned,” Caryn says. “They are also more engaged in Mass.”

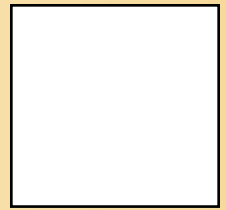
The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program takes place in an atrium — a special space set apart for the children to learn and to pray. There, the children are invited to sit and listen as a catechist reads the Scripture and then presents a lesson based on the week’s passage. Then, the children are encouraged to roam about the room finding time to discover their faith. There are biblical figurines for them to work with, as well as miniature liturgical vessels — like the ciborium and the chalice — along with little altar cloths and more. The children spend time working with the age-appropriate materials and using their wonder and awe to grasp a deeper understanding and a greater reverence for the faith, all under the loving guidance of our trained catechists.

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*“They work at their own pace with hands-on materials that include the Holy Bible, the liturgy, and the sacraments. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd engages the entire child — body, mind, and spirit.”*

— CARYN HUDSPETH



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## **MASS SCHEDULE**

### Weekend Mass

Saturday Anticipation — 4:00 p.m.

Sunday — 7:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m.

### Weekday Mass

Monday/Wednesday/Friday — 8:30 a.m.

Tuesday/Thursday — 6:00 p.m.

### Holy Day Mass

See Bulletin

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Tuesday/Thursday — 5:00-5:45 p.m.

Saturday — 3:00-3:45 p.m.

*Anytime by appointment*

# **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd**

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“The children learn the vocabulary of the Church,” Caryn says. “They learn to pray and to listen to God. They work at their own pace with hands-on materials that include the Holy Bible, the liturgy, and the sacraments. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd engages the entire child — body, mind, and spirit.”

Currently at St. Jude, we offer a level-one program. It is open to 3 to 6-year-olds, and we encourage you to consider registering your children. Classes are held in our atrium in the Guerin Room on Sundays from 8 to 10 a.m., following the school calendar.

“Through the child’s work in the atrium, he or she will deepen their understanding of Scripture and liturgy and be led to a fuller participation in the life of the Church, as well as to a hope born of a sure knowledge of God’s plan and their place in His plan,” Caryn says.

Consider getting involved. There are plans to begin a level-two program in the fall — this level is open to children ages 6 to 9. Keep an eye out for more details as the fall season gets closer.



**To register your child, or to serve as a volunteer, contact Caryn Hudspeth in the parish office at 317-786-4371 or [chudspeth@stjudeindy.org](mailto:chudspeth@stjudeindy.org).**