

St. Leo's

PARISH COMMUNITY



Sharing Talent in Worship:

OUR MUSIC MINISTRY

JULY 2019
Inside

Although you may first think of the priest, lector or altar server when recalling those who serve to make the liturgy beautiful, there is another important role when it comes to helping parishioners become engaged in the Mass — the role of our music ministers.

“Music at Mass is supposed to help the congregation unite together and strengthen their faith by praising and worshiping God by the use of sacred and liturgical music,” says Music Director Kristen Schutte. “It’s a form of prayer. ‘Singing is praying twice.’”

There are several different ways that people are involved in our Music Ministry here at St. Leo’s. A number of musicians serve as accompanists, playing piano, guitar or organ, and others share their musical gifts as vocalists.

Those involved with Music Ministry meet with Kristen on Wednesday evenings to go over the music for the upcoming weekend. People are then divided into groups based on availability and Mass preference.

During the year, there are also several unique opportunities for those not regularly involved in Music Ministry to participate. These opportunities include our third Sunday youth Mass, where high school and middle school students are invited to sing and cantor, as well as the Children’s Choir, which has provided music for one of our Christmas Masses.



Those who participate in our Music Ministry — such as the members of our 10:30 a.m. group — use their talents to serve the parish and help others enter into the prayer of the Mass.

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Stewardship

Becoming Fishers of Men

Whether you hold a high-profile position, such as parish council president, or have more of a behind-the-scenes role as a coordinator of a parish ministry, God has called you – as a parish leader – to help build His Church.

This challenge is just as important as the call of any other Catholic leader, including the earliest disciples.

When Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, He urged a group of fishermen, “Come follow me.” Jesus promised if they laid down their nets and followed Him, He would make them fishers of men. These men were among His original disciples, and they knew Christ’s call was so important that they left their secular occupations to follow Him.

Just as He did with the fishermen, Jesus calls each of us today. He is not necessarily asking us to leave our secular careers, but He *is* asking us to put Him first in our lives and to share His message of love with others.

God truly wants us to serve Him and to build His Church through the secular occupations we have chosen. It is through the Church that new disciples are born, and it is in the Church that disciples continue to mature. Forming disciples of Christ is the most important work that can be done on earth, and each of us has been called to play an active role in this work.

So, how do we go about building the Church? Where do we find the plans?

Some people mistakenly think that building the Church – in particular, building our own parish or diocese – is no different than building a successful business. Indeed, the purpose of

building the Church is to change hearts – a goal that only God can accomplish.

Secular society has not prepared us for this work. However, the Holy Spirit – sometimes referred to as the “Architect of the Church” – has the plan. In order to implement this plan, we must become good listeners. We must open ourselves to the workings of the Holy Spirit as He transforms us and guides us to carry out God’s work and to serve as His instruments on earth, building the Church together with Him.

This is where spiritual exercises, such as retreats, come into play. A retreat offers the individual an opportunity to spend time alone with the Lord, allowing God to draw the person deeper into the mystery of who He is, who we are and what He is doing in our lives. Stewardship retreats can offer parish leaders the opportunity each year to spend time with the Lord as He directs them in the ways of discipleship. As leaders, we must take time to meditate on the Scriptures and allow Jesus to open up His Word to us. Then, as we grow deeper in our understanding of what God wants of us, we can exclaim, just as the first disciples did on the road to Emmaus, “Our hearts are burning within us” (Lk 24:32).

God has placed an extremely important call on the lives of all parish leaders, no matter how big or small the role. It is vital to understand how we, as parish leaders, can best answer His call. What, in particular, is the Lord calling each one of us to do? He most likely is not asking us to drop our nets, but to pick them up and become “fishers of men.” We must discern how we can most effectively cast our nets for Him.

REMEMBERING AMERICA IS A GIFT FROM GOD

Dear Parishioners,

We're all familiar with the song "America the Beautiful." Many of us share the feelings that inspired Katharine Lee Bates when she composed it as a poem.

*O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.*

Katharine Bates drew her inspiration from her experiences during the summer of 1893. An English professor at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, she went to teach summer school at Colorado College, necessitating a journey across the country. The trip's highlight came when she reached the pinnacle of Pike's Peak and could gaze upon range after range of the Rocky Mountains on one side and the expanse of the Great Plains on the other.

Moved by the vistas around her and the varied features of America she had seen, an idea for a poem and some of its words formed in her mind atop the mountain. That night, back in her hotel room, she completed the poem.

I think the reason for the popularity of "America the Beautiful" is that it combines several themes into one coherent whole. The beauty and immensity of America's natural creation, the rich abundance of



our harvests, and the recognition of God's generosity are woven together. The final product forms a hymn of thanksgiving for our land that goes beyond national pride to prayer, for God is the spiritual source for all the goodness we have.

I think it's a suitable theme for July, the month we celebrate Independence Day, our national holiday. Thankfulness, after all, is the basis of stewardship, the recognition that we've been given all we have. We're then responsible to the Giver for the use we make of His gifts.

The gifts we celebrate are manifold. Some are of a spiritual nature — our salvation by Christ and the sacraments, for example. Others are in the natural order, such as the beauties of creation and abundant harvests. Still others relate to social relationships, like families, friends and national life. Whatever the class of these gifts, God is their ultimate source, and they are blessings.

Let us then receive these gifts — the time, talent, and treasure entrusted to us — with thanksgiving. Let us offer praise to the Father of mercies for them, and let us use them in His service.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Donald A. Buhrman
Pastor

Experiencing Communion **THE BROTHERS**

Men building each other up and supporting each other in Christ — this is the goal of Brothers in Christ Men's Group, which consists of 50 to 60 men, ages 18 to 80, gathering each Friday morning at 5:30 a.m. With Proverbs 27:17 in mind — "Iron is sharpened by iron; one person sharpens another" — the men enjoy a hot breakfast, a short video and small-group time. Each small group includes five to six men.

"Guys don't always look for assistance with things," says Mike Kalvoda, a Brothers in Christ core group member. "We don't want anyone to know we need help."

In last spring's session, the men watched *The Ministry of the Wild Goose* series, which focuses on the Holy Spirit. This series was accessed with the parish subscription to FORMED. In the past year, the men's group has expanded to St. Mary's and the name was changed to Brothers in Christ. The first five years of the group, the men's group was held at St. Leo's and called That Man is You.

The Friday gatherings end at 7 a.m., but men can choose to stay for Mass. They plan their schedule on the school calendar and alternate between St. Leo's and St. Mary's each semester. Sessions begin in September, break for Christmas, and then continue until mid-April. Members of the core group serve in the "kitchen crew" starting the hot breakfast at 4:30 a.m., or in a hospitality role with Kory Koralewski serving as emcee.



Brothers in Christ Men's Group gathers to watch a video from FORMED on a topic and discuss in a small-group setting.

"We want this to be a way for Catholic men to encounter Christ," Mike says.

Mike values the relationships he has made as part of his six years in the men's group and

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"There are a lot of challenges that face men, and fathers specifically. We all have similar challenges, and can ask each other how a situation was handled in the past. We can also support each other in evangelizing to our families."

— Mike Kalvoda

Community Each Week:

IN CHRIST MEN'S GROUP

knows how important this camaraderie is for men in particular.

"There are a lot of challenges that face men, and fathers specifically," Mike says. "We all have similar challenges, and can ask each other how a situation was handled in the past. We can also support each other in evangelizing to our families."

The small group time is meant to build relationships and give men an opportunity to open up about challenges, which Mike says is often hard for men.

"I know offhand there are 10 guys I could call for spiritual guidance or advice," Mike says. "This is a brotherhood for me."

Mike knows he's not alone in viewing this group as a brotherhood. An important community is being built with Brothers in Christ. As Proverbs says, "iron is sharpened by iron." Men gathering and creating community can support each other.

"Each week, I may come with a different stress on my mind," Mike says. "We often sent texts to our small-group members throughout the week just to let each other know we are praying or with a religious saying."

Men from all four Catholic parishes and non-Catholics are invited, and attendance at every session is not required. The group wants to be inclusive of all men.

"Since we are watching a series as part of our parish subscription to FORMED, men can also watch the video they miss on a particular week on their own time," Mike says.

Brothers in Christ members take a free will donation each week that helps pay for the meal. The group recently gave \$500 to a few families from Grand Island that are in need.

The ultimate goal is to rotate between all four Grand Island Catholic parishes.

"I really think this is a great opportunity for men to have a place where they can further serve Christ and to share their faith," Mike says.

For more info on the Brothers in Christ Men's Group, please contact Mike Kalvoda at 308-379-2261 or by email at mkalvoda@grandislandpt.com. You can also find out more by following @GIBROTHERSINCHRIST on Facebook. All men are welcome to attend the first meeting for the fall on Friday, Sept. 13 at St. Leo's Church.

SAVE THE DATE!

*Annual
Parish Retreat
To Be a Christian Steward*

**Friday, November 1
Saturday, November 2**

in the Parish Hall

St. Leo's Parish Community

“TRANSFORMED BY THE SACRED LITURGY”

The Celebration of the Paschal Mystery

In a limited way, the liturgy can be compared to a story or a film – upon a first reading or viewing, we might understand the basic outline of the narrative, yet through every subsequent encounter, the story further unfolds before us, becoming richer and more complex.

Often, inquisitive children teach us about how to understand a story or the Mass. As a child inquires about the priest's green vestments, the foregrounded wreath or the presence of palm branches, we might pause to recall the symbolism undergirding the rich rituals of the liturgy.

There is a sense of the sacred in the liturgy, but its rituals and ceremonies can appear as empty pantomimes when divorced from their meaning. Far from empty signs, the liturgy is the celebration of the Paschal mystery, of Christ's passion, death, resurrection and glorification by which He “accomplished the work of our salvation” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1067).

From the Greek *leitourgia*, meaning public service or worship, liturgy in the Christian tradition refers to the communal participation of the people in the work of God, and God is always present and at work in the liturgy, acting in and with the Church through the sacraments.

Annually, the Church's liturgical year is structured around the Paschal mystery, which we observe every Sunday. We begin each year with a season anticipating Christ's birth and, following a celebration of Christ's Incarnation, we gradually enter a period of preparation for the Easter Triduum, for His passion, death and Resurrection. The year closes with a period of ordinary time – a time to grow in our faith and in living out the Gospel.

Daily, the Liturgy of the Hours unifies the Church Militant in prayers said by the clergy and increasingly by the laity. As the liturgical calendar structures our year, the Liturgy of the Hours structures our day,



offering us an opportunity to consecrate each present moment to Christ.

Ultimately, the liturgical life of the Church “revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments” (CCC 1113), for we receive God's grace to fortify us in our spiritual lives and as His disciples through the sacraments, particularly the Holy Mass.

The Mass nurtures us spiritually, inviting us to reflect on the Paschal mystery and to lift our hearts to God as individuals and a community through spoken and sung prayer.

The Mass moves us corporeally, drawing us to sit as we listen to the Word, to stand as we unanimously profess our faith, and to kneel as the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Mass inspires us apostolically, sending us out to proclaim the Gospel and to share Christ with our brothers and sisters.

Though the “source and center” of all prayer, the liturgy and a sense of the sacred has, in some ways, become marginalized in the American Church. Once-robust parishes are seeking to rebuild, but they frequently overlook the connection between the empty pews and the decentralization of the liturgy, which was underscored by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

“I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is, to a large extent, due to the disintegration of the liturgy,” Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote in his autobiography *Milestones*.

Something in the simplicity of the child's experience of the liturgy teaches us to return to what we might call the basics of the faith – meaning a love for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the sacraments and the rituals of the Church. Only through the liturgy are we nurtured on our stewardship journey and inspired to proclaim the Gospel.

As Archbishop Alexander Sample from the Diocese of Portland, Ore., writes, “If we are transformed by the sacred liturgy, then we, as believers, can help transform the culture.”

Office Support Ministry Members

Faithfully Helping to Keep St. Leo's Up and Running

The parish office for St. Leo's can be a busy place, but Office Manager Sue Kohles has a crew of willing volunteers in the Office Support Ministry who help make the work lighter. And she is so grateful to these volunteers for giving of their time and talent.

There are volunteers who help answer the phones and direct calls, those who help count the weekend collection money, others who help with filing, those who help with mailings and a crew who come in on Fridays and call themselves the BF Group — Bulletin Folders.

Sue assembled a list of helpers from the commitment cards turned in by parishioners during our annual Stewardship Renewal. Those who signed on to the Office Ministry were forwarded to Sue. She made note of the tasks towards which each person expressed an interest, and she calls upon them when that task needs to be done.

"Some people say, 'I can't count, but I'm more than happy to help with mailings' — those I will call when I have to do special mailings," Sue says. "Others say, 'I can do filing and answer the phone.' Then I know the different tasks I can call. I want people to feel comfortable with the task they do."

On Mondays, two persons will arrive to help Sue count the collection money. Her schedule for that task extends out six months. While that task is underway, someone is covering the phones and the door.

"Especially on Monday mornings it's always helpful if someone can answer the phones and greet people who need help," Sue says.

On Fridays, the bulletin folders arrive after Mass to help fold the bulletins for the weekend.

"This is great, and it can be quite a task when

The BF Group, short for "Bulletin Folders," prepare the weekend bulletins as part of the Office Support Ministry. A large group of dedicated parishioners help ease the workload in the St. Leo's parish office.



we have a special holiday like Christmas and Easter when I make more bulletins," Sue says.

As far as necessary skills or required training, there is nothing daunting.

"For answering the phones, you need to know how to transfer calls, put someone on hold and how to send a call to a voicemail," Sue says. "You'll need to know my filing system — everyone has their own. And when you help count collections, you need math skills and the ability to be discreet."

Besides helping keep the parish office running, the Office Ministry members also enjoy meeting other parishioners and building fellowship.

"The bulletin folders group on Fridays enjoy the camaraderie as they help others and get to know other parishioners," Sue says. "The collection counters also get to know other parishioners. Everyone who helps here on Mondays gets to know others. When I schedule people, I do different ones so they get to know each other. Some have said they just enjoy helping and know they're helping me. And they know they're helping St. Leo's."

And while the Office Ministry helpers go about their tasks, they are enabling their faith to grow.

"The Bible says you get more out of what you give," Sue says. "By helping, you get more out of it and your faith will grow. Things I enjoy seeing are those like the group that calls themselves the BF Group. They will come up and ask me if there are bulletins to be folded. They help me out so much. And I'm seeing people grow in fellowship."

Additional helpers are always welcome, especially on Monday and Friday mornings. Those interested may call the parish office at 308-382-4753.



OUR MUSIC MINISTRY *continued from front cover*

Music ministry has always been part of Kristen's life — her mother is a parish Music Director, and she became involved with liturgical music as a high school student.

"I was born into a very musical family with talent," Kristen says. "My entire life, I've worked really hard to develop that talent through lessons and practicing, and then I went to college for music. God gave me those gifts and so to be able to share those gifts to praise God, and to help draw other people closer to God is very fulfilling. And hopefully, I inspire other musicians to help share their gifts to praise God as well!"

Kristen explains that music ministry is different from other types of musical performance, and she hopes the distinction is clear to both those who serve in this ministry and members of the congregation.

"As a musician I was trained to perform, to be

the center of attention, but in a church setting, God is the main focus," she says. "Your job is to lead the congregation so they can participate fully in all aspects of the Mass. I hope that it is a prayerful experience for parishioners. I don't want them to think about us — I want it to be about them having a prayerful experience of God during Mass."

Kristen encourages parishioners with musical gifts to consider using them to serve the parish.

"God gave you this talent," Kristen says. "And what better way to use your talents than to share them with your parish?"

Whether you have particular musical talent or not, Kristen is grateful for the participation of the entire St. Leo's community praying together in song.

"I've never been at a church where the entire congregation sings so well as at St. Leo's," she says. "At Mass on Sundays, everyone is singing. It's great."

If you would like more information on our Music Ministry, or to become involved in sharing your musical talent with the parish, please contact Music Director Kristen Schutte at 308-382-4753 or kristen@saintleos.org.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Daily Mass: 9 a.m., **Saturday:** 5 p.m., **Sunday:** 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. **Confession:** Saturday 4 - 4:30 p.m.
Adoration: First Friday of the Month, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. **Abide Adoration:** Fourth Sunday of the Month, 7 - 8 p.m.