

St. Leo's

PARISH COMMUNITY



PARISH COMMUNITY BIDS **FR. DON BUHRMAN** *A Fond Farewell* **AS PASTOR**

*Reflecting on a Lifestyle of Stewardship
and Bringing the Parish into the Present*

Fr. Don Buhrman became pastor here at St. Leo's 12 years ago, on July 1, 2014. He retires this year on June 30.

"We had a Parish Council and a Finance Council already," Fr. Don says. "So, I pursued establishing a Stewardship Council to promote a lifestyle of stewardship. They always had an annual Ministry Fair to get people to volunteer for lectors, altar servers, different things like that."

With an already active parish, Fr. Don had no problem pulling together volunteers for this next venture.

"In establishing the Stewardship Council, I had some really wise people help me put together a presentation," he says. "It's about volunteering and living a lifestyle of time, talent, treasure, generosity, and gratitude. I took a volunteer and one of my staff members down to the Catholic Stewardship Consultants Advisory gathering in Wichita for the two-day presentation. We hired Catholic Stewardship Consultants to support us in developing stewardship as a lifestyle at St. Leo's."



MAY/JUNE 2026

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THE HEART OF CATHOLIC

STEWARDSHIP

Sharing Time, Talent, and Treasure in Gratitude to God

Stewardship is not just a concept; it's a way of life deeply rooted in the teachings of the Church and our faith. At its core, stewardship is about recognizing that everything we have — our time, talents, and treasure — are gifts from God. It's a response of gratitude and an active commitment to use these gifts for the service of God and the benefit of others.

Time: A Commitment to Prayer

Our time is one of the most precious gifts God has given us. In the hustle and bustle of modern life, it's easy to overlook the value of time. Yet, as Catholics, we are called to use our time wisely and in gratitude. This means dedicating time for prayer, reflection, and worship. Time spent in prayer is a powerful way to connect with God. It's not just about asking for things, but also about being in God's presence, listening, and expressing our gratitude. Regular prayer, whether it's personal or communal, strengthens our relationship with God and deepens our faith. Attending Mass and receiving the sacraments is a significant use of our time. It is during these moments that we come together as a faith community to celebrate the Eucharist and receive the Body and Blood of Christ. Worshiping as a community is a vital aspect of our faith, and it reflects our gratitude for God's love.

Talent: Sharing Our Unique Gifts

Each of us possesses unique talents and abilities. Stewardship calls us to recognize our talents as gifts from God and to use them for the greater good. Actively engaging in ministry and service within our parish community is a way to share our talents. Whether it's teaching, singing in the choir, participating in outreach programs, or any other form of service, our talents enrich our faith community. Sharing our knowledge and skills through education and

formation is a form of stewardship. Teaching religious education, leading Bible study groups, or mentoring others are ways we can help others grow in their faith. Offering emotional support, encouragement, and a listening ear are talents too. Our ability to be compassionate and understanding can make a significant difference in the lives of others.

Treasure: A Means to Serve

Our financial resources, though often viewed as a personal possession, are also a gift from God. Stewardship encourages us to view our financial means to support the Church, charitable causes, and those in need. Tithing, the act of giving a portion of our income to the Church, is a tangible way to share our treasure. By doing so, we support the Church's mission and ministries, which include providing spiritual guidance, caring for the community, and spreading the Gospel. Apart from tithing, we are also called to give to charitable causes. Our financial contributions can support organizations that serve the less fortunate, work for social justice, and provide essential services to those in need. As an extension of financial stewardship, planned giving — such as leaving a bequest to the Church or charitable organizations in your will — ensures that your legacy continues to benefit the Church and society even after you've passed away.

In embracing stewardship, we acknowledge that everything we have is a gift from God. By actively using our time, talent, and treasure in gratitude to God, we strengthen our faith, support our faith community, and serve others. This is not merely an obligation, but a joyful response to God's boundless love and generosity. Stewardship is a way of life that deepens our connection with God and empowers us to make a positive impact in the world.

FAREWELL: BE FAITHFUL AS WE MOVE TOWARD

Ordinary Time

Dear Parishioners,

Much of the Christian life is lived outside of the Church's most intense seasons. As we move through the weeks of the Easter season and look ahead to Ordinary Time, the Church gently shifts its focus toward the steady, everyday practice of discipleship. The month of May invites us to reflect on this rhythm and on the role that faithfulness plays in shaping our relationship with Christ.

The weeks that lead us toward Ordinary Time remind us that following Christ is not sustained only by great moments or special celebrations. It is sustained by consistency — returning to Mass each week, making time for prayer every day, and remaining connected to parish life through seasons of change. These simple decisions carry lasting spiritual weight and help form habits of faith that keep us rooted in Christ. Steady faithfulness is closely tied to stewardship. Our time, our abilities and our material resources are gifts entrusted to us, and faithfulness means offering those gifts consistently rather than occasionally.

Parish life depends on this steady commitment. A parish grows strong not only through special events or major initiatives, but through the faithful participation of parishioners who understand that their presence matters. When many people contribute what they can, the Church becomes a place of welcome, stability and hope for all who enter.



In the month of May, we move to Ordinary Time. We continue the long stretch of this season through June and beyond. I hope you make prayer a priority, and I pray you engage in the life of the parish. I trust your offerings of gifts will be consistent and faithful.

As I move through the months of May and June, I prepare for a grand shift in my life — retirement. I am so grateful for all the support you have extended to me as your pastor. You have been open to my leadership skills and have trusted my decisions. Being open to stewardship as a way of life, evangelizing discipleship and a culture of God's call to serve has been very affirming. Your active participation in

liturgies is inspiring for me and many visitors. Your generosity of prayer and faith is powerful. May God strengthen us in these weeks of the Easter season and prepare our hearts for the work of faithful discipleship in the time ahead. I strongly encourage you to welcome Monsignor Huber with love. He will love you in return.

Alas, I say goodbye. This is a brief extension of a blessing from the old formal English tongue. In effect, to say goodbye means “God-be-with-Ye.”

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Donald A. Buhrman
Pastor

PARISH COMMUNITY BIDS **FR. DON BUHRMAN**



The stewardship way of life at St. Leo's blossomed from there. "It's evolved over the years, but it's continued to promote that culture of stewardship," Fr. Don says. "We got people who are actively involved, and we got people who aren't, that we want to get actively involved. That was a major thing."

The other big development centers on faith formation.

"We have good children's ministry and teen and young adult ministry directors," Fr. Don says. "We don't have much for adult faith formation. In order to support both directors and nurture adult faith formation without hiring, we established an evangelization team, the "E Team". They meet once a month to plan events for Advent and Easter and summer things. One year, we brought in Fr. Jim Sichco to do a presentation."

They've done book giveaways at Christmas and Easter. The E Team supports the other faith formation leaders.

"Establishing a Stewardship Council and an Evangelization Team have been two of the things I started here," Fr. Don says. But that is not all that he has accomplished here.

"We have really good Music Ministry," Fr. Don says. "There was a wonderful pianist-singer when I came. Her husband was a principal of the Catholic high school in town, and then he got a different job. She moved, and I'm panicking."

Being without a music director is jarring, but Fr. Don received a suggestion.

"God takes care of me," he says. "I called her, and she agreed to come here. She's a fantastic pianist, singer, and motivator. She was a high school music teacher, so she knows how to help the adults. We have another gal who's a good pianist and singer, and she's the assistant director. I'm so blessed to have those two on staff."

Kristen Schutte and Jami Kusek have led our music ever since. All but one person on staff changed from the time Fr. Don started.



*"Thanks be to God for what he's called me to do.
I'm really grateful for the lifestyle I've lived."*

— Fr. Don Buhrman

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“My Youth and Young Adult Ministry Director, Rita Hemmer, has been here for over 20 years,” Fr. Don says. “She’s very good. I’m really blessed with good staff. I’m blessed with good facilities.”

Other changes over the years include infrastructure.

“The parking lot needed concreting,” Fr. Don says. “We needed a new roof, and the accordion doors in the parish hall needed to be replaced. We did a capital campaign and raised the money to do not only all of those, but we had enough extra money that we put in security system

cameras and upgraded sound systems. There were a number of things we were able to do within the first three to five years.”

The Vocations Ministry Team is another ongoing group. They meet regularly to help create and form a culture of vocation awareness. We keep praying that young men and women are listening for God’s call to serve.

The generosity from parishioners has made St. Leo’s what it is, which is something to celebrate. In fact, at the 50th anniversary in 2023, the parish put together a three-day event including a wine and cheese gathering at Stuhr Museum, a banquet at the Pinnacle Bank Expo Center, Masses, and golf at Indianhead Golf Club.

“My staff pulled it together and did a great job,” Fr. Don says. “That was a real joy.”

St. Leo’s continues to grow with active parishioners and new improvements.

“When I came, I was surprised they had no automatic donation,” Fr. Don says. “We recently started Vanco. We get donations whether it’s a snow-storm or blue skies. That’s beneficial financially for the parish.”

Fr. Don has many fond memories and friendships.

“We have a young man ordained from this parish,” he says. “Four years ago, Pope Francis called him to be the bishop of Colorado Springs, Bishop Jim Golka. He’s the first priest



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PARISH COMMUNITY BIDS FR. DON BUHRMAN A FOND FAREWELL AS PASTOR *continued from page 6*

who's ever gone to be a bishop from our diocese. He's a good personal friend of mine. He's recently been named Archbishop of Denver."

Our parish is a model of stewardship, drawing many parishioners to service, community, and generosity.

"It takes decades to nurture a culture of stewardship," Fr. Don says. "We've taken care of facilities, maintained quality staff. We're stable, have no bills. We have funds to do things. Hopefully, the next pastor builds on that, continues to nurture it. Not just finances, get involved, share your faith, use your gifts and talents to the glory of God and the good of the Church. We've accomplished a lot in 12 years."

Upon Fr. Don's retirement as pastor, staying in Grand Island, he's still Vicar General for the diocese.

"This is the longest assignment I've been on," he says. "I plan on doing some traveling. I'd love to play golf. I have a little paddleboat. I hope to do some fishing and go hunting. I'll keep busy."

The weekend of June 13 to 14, Fr. Don will celebrate all Masses, followed by a celebration in the parish hall. The 10:30 Mass will be the main celebration of his 40 years of priesthood. He's grateful to all the various committees — the Knights of Columbus,



the Ladies of Leo's, the Human Concerns Committee, the E Team, Finance Council, Parish Council, Vocations Team, the Stewardship Council, the Liturgy Committee, and many ministries beyond.

"Thanks be to God for what he's called me to do," Fr. Don says. "I'm really grateful for the lifestyle I've lived."



STEWARDS JOYFULLY SUPPORTING OUR PARISH'S MISSION

Meet Our Council Members



MICAH SCHUTTE,
Parish Council

“What I like most about our parish is that it feels like home,” says Micah Schutte, Parish Council member. “It is full of so many generous and talented parishioners. It is always so comforting to be greeted by so many smiles and people who care.”

Micah has been a member of St. Leo’s for seven years. His wife,

Kristen, is the music director. Micah, a fifth-generation farmer, felt that attending Mass wasn’t enough. He wanted to become more involved. When he heard the parish council had spots, he threw his name in the hat.

“I thought it would be a great way to understand better what makes St. Leo’s so special and to help support all of our wonderful committees and ministries,” he says. “I am a problem solver and a good listener, but most importantly, my decisions are driven by my faith.”

Micah also serves as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. But joining the Parish Council really opened his eyes to all the happenings at St. Leo’s.

“Being part of the council has introduced me to new people and new opportunities,” he says.

Involvement on the Parish Council also led him to start a podcast, *Called to Serve*, which features the staff of St. Leo’s.

“It gives a unique behind-the-scenes perspective on how the staff uses their God-given talents to serve the parish,” Micah says. “I serve because it’s the least that I can do to use the talents God has given me to help serve others.”

CANDACE CONRADT,
Finance Council

Candace Conradt and her husband, Mike, joined St. Leo’s in 2014. They have four children and nine grandchildren. Candace is a recent retiree, having worked 47 years in education — 23 years teaching, seven years as a principal, and 17 years as a superintendent. She holds a doctorate in school administration.



“Serving on the Finance Council allows me to use my background in finance and budgeting to benefit St. Leo’s,” she says. “As a former public-school superintendent, I bring extensive knowledge in finance, budgeting, and administration.”

Candace feels blessed to bring her skills to serve God and St. Leo’s. This parish is a second home to Candace and Mike.

“St. Leo’s has so many great qualities that make it special — the friendly, welcoming members, and the many educational opportunities offered throughout the year,” she says. “What truly stands out to me is the beautiful music that enriches the liturgy.”

There are so many things to value about St. Leo’s. For Candace, number one is the people.

“St. Leo’s parishioners are extremely welcoming,” she says. “This makes it easy to form friendships and feel a part of St. Leo’s.”





The Feast of **CORPUS CHRISTI:** *Celebrating the Eucharistic Miracle*

The Feast of Corpus Christi, celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, is a day set aside to honor the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. It draws our attention to the heart of our faith — the belief that, at Mass, bread and wine truly become the Body and Blood of Christ. This mystery, known as transubstantiation, is not symbolic but real, and it invites us into a deeper relationship with Him.

Corpus Christi is more than a feast day; it is an opportunity to renew our understanding of the Eucharist and its place in our lives. The Church calls us to reflect on what it means to receive Christ — not only as a ritual act, but as a personal encounter that strengthens, nourishes, and transforms us.

In a special way, this feast is connected to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' National Eucharistic Revival, a nationwide effort to renew devotion to the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Christian life. The timing is fitting. Corpus Christi places our focus squarely on the gift of Christ's presence and invites us to respond with renewed faith and reverence.

As we celebrate this feast, we are reminded that the Eucharist is central to everything we are as Catholics. It unites us, strengthens us for mission, and calls us to live lives of charity and witness — rooted always in Him.



LITURGY SCHEDULE

Daily Mass: 9 a.m., **Saturday:** 5 p.m., **Sunday:** 8:30 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.

Exposition/Abide Adoration: Fourth Sunday of the Month, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.