

THE JOURNEY

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June
2026

Pelican Valley Catholic Community Newsletter
Our Lady of Victory, St. Elizabeth, St. Leonard



Dear Members of our Pelican Valley ACC,

Congratulations! On Sunday, May 3 at a diocesan prayer service in Sacred Heart Church, Sauk Rapids, Bishop Patrick announced the formation of many "new parishes" (basically new parish configurations) in our diocese. Included is the new parish comprising the former three parishes of St. Elizabeth, St. Leonard and Our Lady of Victory. So, we are now all part of a "new parish," whose name is yet to be determined! We will continue operating at all three ACC churches until such a time as there may not be two priests available to serve this area. At that time, you may recall, the All Things New planning process calls for a "re-evaluation" of our structure.

But on a practical, day to day basis, or Sunday to Sunday...we have already been collaborating in such a beautiful partnership: sharing priests, some of our staff, business activities, various liturgical celebrations and pastoral activities...so at this time there will be little change in these areas. We will, however, soon be naming an ACC "transition team" composed of representatives of all three communities, to continue the process of managing our collaboration and preparing for the future. I have proposed that this committee consist of two of the four "at large" members of the ACC Council from each community, as well as another representative from each communi-

ty. They will be asked to guide us towards naming our parish, setting a timeline for combining our three finance committees into one committee, choosing trustees, and reviewing other aspects of our parish life. This committee I am envisioning will meet monthly, including the same night as the ACC Council which meets every other month.



*In front of cathedral
in Poland*

Let us ask the Holy Spirit of Pentecost to provide plenty of wisdom and to continue breathing new life into our Church. May we love and support one another on every step of the journey. God bless you and have a wonderful summer!

Fr. Alan

CELEBRATING 250 YEARS!!
1776-2026



A Life of Service

"God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them." Hebrews 6:10



Father Tim Wenzel is a people person! He got his start early (how could he not) being born 6th of 12 children on the family farm near Randall, MN. Growing up, Father Tim attended a country school 2 miles from home and when he was a junior in Little Falls high school, his pastor, Father Harold Kost, recognized a calling in Father Tim and encouraged him to attend Crosier Seminary in Onamia, and "the sooner the better, because you need to learn Latin!" So the transfer was made when he was a high school senior. At that time there were 300 seminarians attending the Crosier Seminary, a far cry from today, unfortunately. After his first two years of college at Crosier, he moved on to the Major Seminary at St. John's University where he majored in philosophy. Upon graduating from college, he continued at SJU to study theology. Scripture studies, preaching, and pastoral care played a large part in his learning.

Father Tim was ordained on June 4th, 1966 at the St. Cloud Cathedral, along with 3 other priests. He felt so joyful upon receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders! His first assignment followed quickly—a 9th grade religion teacher at St. Cloud Cathedral High School and in addition, taking on pastoral work at Sacred Heart Parish in Sauk Rapids. He remained there for 5 years, and was then assigned to St. Joseph Parish in Foxhome, also serving as the assistant pastor at OLV!

Father loved this dual assignment!

Foxhome is a small town in the Red River Valley near Breckenridge. Some of the farmers there raised sugar beets, which resulted in the need for Hispanic migrant workers to hoe the sugar beets, to thin them and eliminate weeds. Most of the migrant workers were from southern Texas, and some were from Mexico. Father Tim saw a need to offer pastoral care to these workers, so he offered a Mass in Spanish on Sundays and helped them with basic needs such as clothing. He facilitated their access to food and health care when necessary. He also organized a school for the children at Kent, MN with the help of volunteers, one of them being his sister, Anne. Besides providing an opportunity to support the children's education, this school program offered child-care for the younger children. After 3 years, a new sugar beet plant opened in Wahpeton, ND, resulting in the growing of more sugar beets and the need for more workers. As a result, the migrant school and the services for migrants then took place in Breckenridge. Father Tim helped organize a Social Service Center there for the workers, which offered many services that the people needed. He continued to offer Mass in Spanish at Breckenridge and in Foxhome.

In 1976, he was assigned to a parish in his home area as Assistant at St. Mary's Church in Little Falls. After 4 good years in Little Falls, he was assigned as Pastor at Our Lady of Victory in Fergus Falls, which he was very happy about.

He served as Pastor at OLV for 5 years, (1980-85). His next assignment was to become the Director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of St. Cloud. This move first took him to Washington DC to attend Catholic University and obtain a master's in social work. After 7 years at Catholic Charities, he was assigned to St. Paul's Church in Sauk Centre. Following his 7 years in Sauk Centre, he was assigned to the parish in Staples, then to St. Anthony's in St. Cloud. His last two parishes were in Rice and Mayhew Lake. Father Tim especially loved pastoral work, and was very happy to stay in parishes where he could get to



First Communion, 1984. Fr. Tim and Keri Overland.

know people on a personal level.

Father retired at age 70 in 2011 and still lives in the Randall area very close to his home farm. He has become quite the gardener, specializing in growing and canning different varieties of tomatoes. His brother works alongside him in this venture, and they enjoy the chance for sibling time together. Every year he pens a Christmas letter and sends it to friends and family. He also fills in at the six parishes in the Little Falls area when a substitute is needed. Spending extended time at St. Elizabeth last winter during the OLV fire recovery, was something he enjoyed, noting the warm welcome he received from all who attended his Masses. Father Tim remains active and involved!

He loves coming back to OLV and enjoys staying with his sister, Anne, who is a parishioner. He appreciates the openness and friendliness of all of the priests who have ministered here. The inspirational music, the history we are blessed with and the active parishioners who live out their faith continue to impress him as he returns to OLV to serve when needed. Father Tim continues Jesus's work on earth with a willing and optimistic spirit!

There will be a celebration at OLV to honor Father as he commemorates his 60th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood at all the Masses on the weekend of June 13/14. Of course, all 3 parishes of our ACC are invited to attend. Please mark your calendars to join in the joyful gatherings and watch the church bulletin for more details.

Baptisms



ORION & ODEN WINGERT
Parents: Patrick Wingert & Missy Sampson



MICHELLE FYHRIE



JOSHUA URBANO
Godparents: Jose Escobar & Aurora Escobar



LUCAS ADRIEL CENTENO ZELEDON
Parents: Policarpo Evenor Centeno Deylin Yazary Zeledon



CORA JOAN ARRAS
Parents: Elijah & Ashley Arras



MARIA NATALIA DIAZ GONZALES
Parents: Fernando Diaz Martinez Blanca Gonzales Garcia

STEPHEN MINISTRY

We are encouraging you to search your hearts to see if God is inviting you into this beautiful personally rewarding ministry. It is a wonderful way to serve as Jesus did, ministering to those who are struggling with life's difficulties. Training for new ministers begins on June 1, 2026. For more information, contact Gail Welle at 218-739-3648, Jennifer Dummer at 218-770-1594 or Peggy Rezak at 218-731-5528.

New ACC Members



JOSHWA & DESIREE FUXA FAMILY

The family is moving into their new Fergus home June 1st! Both Joshwa and Desiree work in Fargo. Their children, Mackenzie & Brianna are college students. Joshwa's grandmother is Betty Fuxa who is a member of OLV. OLV welcomes the Fuxa family!

GLORIA MARPLE

Gloria and her husband, Russell, moved to Fergus after being life long residents of the Wendell / Elbow Lake area. They most often attend the 4:30 Mass. OLV welcomes the Marples'!



ANALIA & MARK JANSEN

Analia Jansen and her husband Mark are recently retired teachers from El Paso, TX and have relocated to Fergus Falls! Welcome to OLV!

MICHELE ANTOINETTE

Michele recently moved from Philadelphia for her work with the Fish and Game Department. Welcome to OLV!



UPCOMING ACC EVENTS:

JUNE 12-14	St. Leonard - Latino Vocation Camp	★
JUNE 19-27	St. Leonard - YTM	★
JULY 24-26	Steubenville in Saint Paul	★
AUGUST 11	Pork Chop Feed for all KC members & family	★
AUGUST 23	St. Elizabeth Pork Out	★
SEPTEMBER 20	OLV Fall Festival	★
SEPTEMBER 24	Revive	★

FIRST COMMUNION

Congratulations! These children have completed their 1st Reconciliation in preparation to welcome Jesus into their hearts and lives. At the Last Supper, Jesus gave himself to the disciples in the form of bread and wine, and told them, "Do this in memory of me". Our newest ACC recipients at the Lord's table.



Luis Genaro Saavedra Gastelum, Evelyn Annmarie Osman, Areli Franco Romero, Sarai Gonzales, Aylin Regina Pantoja Nava, Alberto Nava, Jude Tyler Osman, Dylan Isay Chavez, Melany Nava, Anahi Isabella Soriano



Ellie Biederman, Carlie Biederman, Greta Green, Maximillian Kunz, Ariel Kolstad, Ariez Kolstad



Emmie Black, Elayna Budke, Olivia Chavas-Salas, Ariella Hoeper, Silas Knutson, Oliver Kohorst, Lyla Mashek, Clara Medahl, Everett Peeters, Ella Poljewski, Lilly Rogholt, Athena Schroeder, Lincoln Schroeder, Henry Sibernagel, Hazel Soland, Ellie Steer, Inga Thormodson, Edith Turgeon, Charley Vigen

EASTER VIGIL

The sacred service began with blessing of fire in front of the church doors, lighting the Easter Candle from the holy fire and culminating with Mass and welcoming 8 members into the sacraments of initiation.

OLV: Michelle Fyhrie, Cooper Ernst, Eden Johnson, Debra Jacobs-Byer and Abel Vazquez

St. Elizabeth: Nicole Johnson

St. Leonard: Alba Rosa Castellon, Angel Payan

Congratulations as you continue your faith journey!



RECEIVING THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

40 young area people received the Sacrament of Confirmation on the evening of April 22. This beautiful ceremony was presided over by Father Scott Pogatchnik, a pastor in the St. Cloud Diocese and also Vocation Director. He gave a very inspiring homily, directed at the new Confirmands. Father linked the Sacrament of Confirmation to a bank account. When we deposit money in the bank and then make

a withdrawal, the account lessens. When a person is confirmed, a deposit is made in their soul, to be used to benefit others—the faster you give it away, the more it grows. He told the young people that they were meant to be a gift to the world. God is saying, "I know you, I chose you, now go!!" What marvelous words to live by!

Sometimes the beauty of an event is best said with pictures.



ST. LEONARD YOUTH NEWS

St. Leonard youth have been very busy this spring!

In addition to 10 children receiving their First Holy Communion on May 3, 3 Saint Leonard Youth were confirmed at OLV on April 22nd .

The kids enjoyed 'Kids Movie Night' (The Star) in the church basement about 24 elementary age children participated – February 27th .

For the High School youth movie night outing, 9 high school students joined us for Super Mario Galaxy at Westridge Cinema – April 7th .

Castaway Camp – St. Leonard had 8 high school youth go to Castaway March 20-22.



"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Psalm 22:1

Rhonda Antrim Petersen courageously shared with us her journey of a personal relationship with Christ thru profound loss - her husband, Dan, followed by the loss of her beloved sister, Nicolle. Psalm 22 begins with a cry of anguish but concludes with hope and vindication. Even in the depths of suffering, God has not abandoned His child.

From her lived experience, Rhonda offered these life-giving lessons in grief and faith:

1. Remain attentive to the signs - those quiet God moments and God Winks - while staying mindful of the influence of the evil one.
2. Speak to Mary and ask boldly for what you need; the Rosary is a

powerful source of grace.

3. It's ok to be angry with God, he can handle it. Hold fast to prayer and faith - restoration will come.
4. Healing comes as you embrace the memories. Find meaningful ways to honor your loved ones.
5. Honor the firsts and the lasts - they matter.
6. Ask for help - and receive it.
7. Seek professional help when needed, such as Beginning Experience or Stephen Ministry.

Following discussion, the women entered the church for prayer, beginning with the Prayer of Humility and continuing with The Stations of the Cross from our Blessed Mother's perspective, "Mary's Way of the Cross."

Month of May and Devotion to Mary



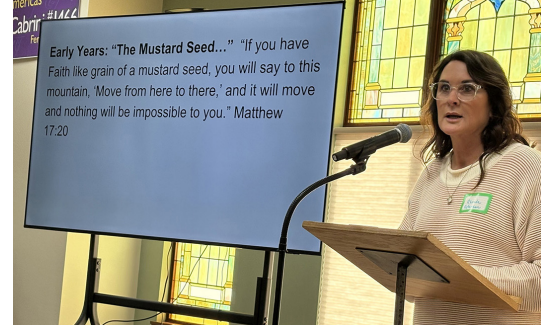
The month of May is traditionally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of God. The Church encourages special devotion to Mary throughout the month, including prayers, processions, and acts of reverence.

On May 1st, the 4th grade students at Our Lady of Victory had the honor of being scheduled for the school Mass. They crowned the Blessed Virgin Mary and placed roses at her feet honoring the beginning of the month dedicated to her reflecting on her role as the mother of Jesus and the spiritual mother of all Christians.



MINISTRIES

There are several OLV weekend ministries seeking new members. These include Altar Servers, Greeters, Ushers, and Eucharistic Ministers. Help is needed at all Masses, but especially Saturdays at 4:30 pm. Training will be provided. If you can help or wish to learn more, contact Diane Aschnewitz at 218-205-9002, or Lone Koep 218-205-7596.



It was truly a sacred evening - our souls renewed, our hearts stirred, and our spirits strengthened.

Please mark your calendars: September 24 and October 22 are the upcoming Revive retreats.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, to give you future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

As Rhonda reminded us: "Trust God as your person, and He will help you find joy and peace."



REVIVE - Trivia Night

Instead of a having speaker in April, Revive had a Catholic Trivia night that was filled with a lot of laughter while learning about the Catholic faith.



OLV Salad Luncheon

"Where flowers bloom, so does hope" Lady Bird Johnson

The Catholic Daughters welcomed in a "sunshine state of mind" on Saturday, May 2, by hosting a salad luncheon in the OLV Fellowship Hall. About 70 hungry folks enjoyed a wide variety of homemade salads and some lively table conversation. A silent auction and colorful door prizes also added to the festivities. All of the funds raised by this wonderful event are donated to various charitable organizations. Thank you Catholic Daughters for ushering in spring in such a marvelous way!



SPRING GALA

By Jake Rath

The spirit of community was alive and well on April 11, 2026, as more than 150 guests gathered for the annual Our Lady of Victory School Gala. It was an evening filled with laughter, connection, and generosity—truly a celebration of the people who make our school so special.

Guests enjoyed a lively night of games, delicious food, and fellowship, along with an exciting mix of silent and live auction items. From friendly competition to heartfelt conversations, the Gala offered something for everyone and served as a wonderful reminder of the strong support behind our school.

A highlight of the evening was the official launch of our "Field of Faith" fundraising campaign. This important initiative aims to transform our school playground with the installation of a new turf field—providing students with a safe, durable, and welcoming space to play, grow, and build community.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of those in attendance, we raised over \$5,000 during the Gala. In an extraordinary act of support, the Antrim Foundation matched

those funds, bringing our total to \$10,000 in just one evening. This strong start reflects not only the success of the event, but also the deep commitment our community has to the future of Our Lady of Victory School.

As we move forward, our goal is to raise \$33,500 to bring the Field of Faith to life. While the Gala marked an exciting beginning, the journey continues—and we invite all members of our parish and school community to be part of it.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who attended, donated, volunteered, and supported this special evening. Your generosity and belief in our mission make all the difference. Together, we are building more than a field—we are building a place where faith, play, and community come together for our students each and every day.





FALL FESTIVAL

**Mark your calendars for
September 20th for
OLV's Annual Fall Festival!**

Pass the word to friends and neighbors as the more the merrier!

The committee has a couple of positions that could use your help.

They are:

-  **Grand Raffle Co-chair (prizes, sales, distribution/collection drawing)**
-  **Dining room C-chair (set/wait tables, seating)**

Please contact Mary Widger at 218-770-2435 if you are interested in learning more about these opportunities.

Thank you to the many who have signed up already to chair and co-chair positions. You are very much appreciated!

FISH FRY RECAP

A big THANK YOU to everyone who helped make this year the most profitable one to date! Chairperson Mike Jones was laser-focused and involved in every aspect of the operation. The Drive-Thru option continues to gain in popularity with 1037 take-out meals. Dine-In served 1230 for a combined total of 2267 meals with a net after expenses of \$21,201.85. The net proceeds go into the general fund to support OLV church expenses.

None of this would have been possible without the many dedicated volunteers who helped prep the fish to the final clean up to make the kitchen and gym ready for the school children's return Monday morning. Speaking of volunteers, we are in need of a new chairperson for 2027 as Mike cannot continue. If you feel nudged in this direction, I believe Mike will share with you what he learned this year to make the role flow as smoothly as possible. Thank you Mike for a great year!

**PELICAN VALLEY AREA
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

Our Lady of Victory, St. Elizabeth, St. Leonard

**C/O 207 North Vine Street
Fergus Falls, MN 56537**



WEEKEND MASSES

Saturday 4:30 pm Our Lady of Victory
Sunday 8:30 am St. Elizabeth
Sunday 8:30 am Our Lady of Victory
Sunday 10:30 am Our Lady of Victory
Sunday 10:30 am St. Leonard
Sunday 12:00 pm St. Leonard Spanish Mass

*Our Lady of Victory School
(K-6th grade)
Learning Ladder Preschool
(3-5 year olds, full
and half day)
218/736-6661
www.ffolvschool.org*

REFLECTIONS OF AN OLD MAN A HOUSE DIVIDED...

You who read these "Reflections" regularly know that they are (most of the time) positive, upbeat and affirming. That won't be the case today. Not, at least, until the last paragraph.

Truth is, I'm experiencing a bit of a downer. Here's why:

I'm sure that most of you, whatever your political persuasion (or lack thereof), know that a host of issues—taxes, welfare, the deficit, immigration, war, global climate change, abortion (name your own poison)—are creating a serious division in our nation.

No matter what news source you choose to read and/or watch, it's there! The spite, the partisanship, the divisiveness—even, at times, the ill-disguised hatred. It seems almost as though we're moving gradually from being a United States to a divided one. I'm reminded of the words of Abraham Lincoln when America was facing Civil War: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." He was, of course, paraphrasing Mark: 3, 25, where Jesus says:

*If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.
And if a house is divided among itself, that house cannot stand.*

Is it any wonder, then, that because of the divisions that exist in the United States today, I sometimes find it difficult to be "positive, upbeat, and affirming?"

I find a bit of consolation in the fact that even the words of David— you know, "The Lord is my Shepherd..." (Psalm 23) and "Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord," (Psalm 89) weren't always positive, upbeat and affirming, either. He also had downers!

*Give ear to my words, O Lord; understand my sighing.
Attend to the sound of my cry, my king and my God. (Psalm 5)
Why, Lord, do you stand aside and pay no heed in time of trouble? (Psalm 10)*

Don't get me wrong. I'm not trying to compare myself to David. Nevertheless, I know that the God he prayed to is the same God I pray to, and that He listens to my prayers, too.

Knowing that, I'm offering a prayer to our God— who parted the Red Sea in order to free His chosen people from slavery, empowered Moses to strike water from a rock to slake their thirst and fed with manna to prevent their starvation—that He will assist the leaders of our house, this *One nation under God*, in finding a way to keep it standing.

Care to join me?