

# THE JOURNEY

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

Photo Credit  
David Swenson

March  
2025



## LENT 2025

When I returned to the parishes for a visit on the first weekend of February, I shared a message about "recovery". I offered thoughts about OLV's recovery from the January fire and my own, personal recovery from alcohol dependency leading to a reflection on the renewal and rebuilding of our hearts and souls joined together as a "spiritual temple".



My brothers and sisters, this is the invitation offered to us this Lent. At Our Lady of Victory we will very much be about the repair of our church building. But through this, and alongside it, Jesus who Himself goes into the desert for forty days calls all of us to that "inner repair

work" of spiritual renewal. The Scriptures suggest a three prong approach.

Intensified **prayer** leads to a deeper relationship with God. **Fasting** can make us aware of not only physical hunger, but our hunger for better relationships with the people in our lives and our thirst for justice...and then doing something about it. Our **almsgiving** helps us realize how much we have to share, and that whatever we give can truly be a blessing for others. I know it's a cliché, but I'll say it anyway, with sincerity: may this be the best Lent ever! Let us all find ways to repair and renew our spiritual lives and become ever more pleasing to our God.

**A blessed Lent, Father Alan**

### *An Irish Blessing*

*"May you always walk in sunshine.*

*May you never want for more.*

*May Irish angels rest their wings*

*Right beside your door."*



# The Silent Apparition at Knock, Ireland

Saint Patrick is easily identified with Ireland, but who is Our Lady of Knock?

On August 21st, a wet dark evening in 1879, the villagers of this place had spent the day doing the usual work of the harvest time of the year – gathering winter fuel and fodder. As evening approached, the heavy mist that had been persistent throughout the day, turned into a steady downpour. The villagers gathered around the turf fires in their homes, taking comfort and shelter on a terrible night.

Suddenly word spread throughout the village that something extraordinary was happening at the Church, and so they hurried to the windswept gable where they witnessed a heavenly vision surrounded in a brilliant white light. Men, women and children gathered in prayer at the gable wall of the parish church.

The witnesses clearly saw the Blessed Virgin Mary dressed in white robes, her hands and eyes turned towards heaven in prayer. On her head was a gold crown, and where the crown fitted the brow, a single golden rose. On her right, bowing respectfully towards her, was St. Joseph. He appeared older, his beard and hair grey, and like Our Lady, he was barefoot.

To Our Lady's left stood John the Evangelist vested as a bishop, wearing a small mitre. He held an open book in his left hand, and in its pages the lines and letters could clearly be seen. He appeared to be preaching, but no voice was heard. He stood so that his back was neither turned to the Virgin nor to the Lamb that stood upon a simple plain altar. Behind the Lamb was a Cross. The witnesses watched and prayed for over two hours, and though they were wet, they noticed that no rain fell upon the Apparition or on the gable.

Many have reflected on the rich symbolism of the Apparition. Those who saw it were immediately drawn to Our Lady's presence, a reflection of the deep Marian devotion of all those present. For

many years after, it was the presence of Our Lady that people were instinctively drawn to.

Devotion to St. Joseph has always emphasized his role as the protector of the Holy Family, and he appears at Knock as a secure gentle presence beside his wife, head bowed reverently toward her acknowledging and reminding us of her unique place in the history of the Church.

St. John the Evangelist stands between Our Lady and the altar and Lamb. It is his Gospel that refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God. He appears to be preaching on the Eucharistic altar, cross and Lamb that is at the very center of the Apparition.

Unique to the Apparition is the presence of the Lamb of God upon the altar, a visual presentation of the gift and mystery of the Eucharist. This central element is not to be found in any other recognized Marian Apparition. Knock Shrine is honored to have been officially recognized as an international Eucharistic and Marian Shrine by Pope Francis, through the Pontifical Council for New Evangelization



in March 2021.

When you cross the threshold and enter Knock Shrine, you leave behind the worry and cares of a troubled world and join with your fellow visitors on a journey. Each person who comes to Knock has their own reason for making the journey, however long or short, to experience a unique and tranquil atmosphere.

Knock is a reminder of the faith that has been passed down through generations. Some come searching for answers and consolation, others to reflect and find peace. One thing that is guaranteed is that you will leave Knock Shrine feeling refreshed and renewed. There are no strangers here, only fellow pilgrims....

Lady of Knock song sung by Rosemary Scallon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fm6ss1PBC1Q>

## 1% CONNECT CHALLENGE

Share your name with 1% of our folks, share your name with someone you haven't met yet, or haven't remembered their name, it's our excuse to build community and build relationships.



# Baptisms



**LAURENCE ANN**

Irish & Micheal Johansen  
1/19/2025

Thank you much to Our Lady of Victory and St. Elizabeths staff for accommodating us. We really appreciate it. The reception was held at Brenny Hall. The Johansen are also New Members to OLV. Welcome Laurence Ann and her parents Irish and Micheal!



**THOMAS W. ROONEY**

Anthony & Emily Rooney  
1/26/2025

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ST. ELIZABETH

**March 26**

Ham Bingo starting at 5 pm. Supper will be served.

**April 6**

Men's Pancake, Sausage and Ham Breakfast – Free Will Offering  
Bake Sale by the Christian Women – Free Will Offering

### ST. LEONARD

**March 2**

Coffee & Rolls at St. Leonard

**April 6**

Coffee & Rolls at St. Leonard

**May 4**

Coffee & Rolls at St. Leonard

### OUR LADY OF VICTORY

**Lenten Fish Fries**

We don't have dates at this time as we don't know when the space will be available to be used. Updates will be posted in the bulletin.

**May 3**

OLV School Spring Gala

*Ticket information will be coming out soon.*

### ACC

**Lenten Penance**

*Date will be announced in the bulletin.*

**March 28 – 30**

ACC Pilgrimage to Shrines in Wisconsin

**April 3**

Revive: "Women's Night Out" at OLV  
'Forgiveness – The Gateway to Healing & Peace'

**April 25**

Revive: "Women's Night Out" at OLV – 'Mercy & Faith'

## Coffee & Rolls at St. Leonard

By Mary Bongers

Beginning with the first Sunday after the January 14 fire at OLV, coffee and rolls began to be served after Masses here at St. Leonard's. A 9am Mass was added to our schedule on behalf of OLV members. It turned out we had a few OLV members attend and were happy they joined us for coffee after Mass! On the second Sunday there weren't as many. The 3rd week the 9am Mass was moved to St Elizabeth. At our 10:30 Mass we had 8 people from OLV!!!

Our small group of coffee drinkers increased to 25 people the 3rd week. At this point we made the decision to serve coffee and rolls on the first Sunday of every month, starting March 2nd. Everyone is welcome to join us, members and visitors!!! It is a great time to socialize and get to know other members and visitors. The coffee/rolls event will start at 11:20am and go until 1:30pm.

You could be tapped to help serve from time to time!!!





# Faithful Servants

By Mary McGovern

***"Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy"***

**Psalm 47:1**

If you are looking for fun, look no further than Mike and Marlys Lucy; they carry it with them wherever they go! Sometimes it comes with the guitar that Mike carries and the Bodhran (Irish drum) that Marlys brings. Other times the joy comes from the wit and humor that is a large part of their persona. In fact, that's what attracted Marlys to Mike when they rode the school bus together in Blackduck, MN!

Mike spent his first three years out of high school in the Marine Corp as a Code Operator in the Far East, and they lived in CA until the north woods of MN and a teaching position at Fergus Falls High School called them home.

Mike and Marlys each come from a large family, and Mike's was especially musically gifted, although he didn't take up the guitar until after he retired from 30 plus years of teaching Graphic Arts in the Vocational Dept. Their love of music has spread delight wherever they go—to assisted living homes, to the Vets Home, to small area churches that only had traveling pastors, visit-

ing sick people and shut-ins, and to sing in Gospel groups. They even attract nearby young singers around their campfire when they travel with their camper! A trip to Ireland and jamming in an Irish pub was a dream come true, and convinced them to add more Irish music to their repertoire. Along with music, there are stories, jokes and much audience engagement. What a great ministry, making friends and bringing joy wherever they go!

Hunting, camping and fishing satisfy the outdoor bug that each of them has, and much time is spent with family and friends in the boat, camper and hunting shack. Mike has been a member of the local Fish and Game Club, and both have shot and processed deer themselves, gifting friends with venison sausage, bacon and their wonderful homemade "Duke's Wood 'N Bear" wine. An abundant garden also keeps them busy and enjoying the fruits of their labor.



Multiple OLV committees have been blessed with Mike and Marlys's wisdom. Both of them were on the original Building Committee in 1994, and Marlys continues to this day! They stay active in the many Mass ministries, fundraisers, and funeral lunches. Marlys is a member of the Catholic Daughters and has served two terms on the Parish Council. One of her joys has been bringing the Word and Eucharist to the Broen Home and also to shut-in parishioners. Co-owning Nelson Brothers Printing with Bob and Jo Weatherly for close to 25 years, Marlys was very active in the Business Professional Women's group and also with the Fergus Falls Chamber of Commerce. Wherever these two go, they continue to be Faithful Servants in so many ways!

***This series of pictures tell the story of Children's Mass at St. Elizabeth***





# Reflecting on Resilience: Our Journey Together

By Jake Rath

As many of you know, Our Lady of Victory School faced a challenging moment when a fire forced us to relocate. While the fire itself was an unexpected and difficult event, what followed was a powerful reminder of the strength and support of our community.

From a student's perspective, the relocation brought uncertainty, but it also brought unexpected gifts of kindness. We found ourselves moving to temporary spaces, leaving behind our familiar classrooms and routines. But in every new room, there was a sense of safety and a shared commitment to keep learning, even in times of hardship. The teachers and staff worked tirelessly to ensure that we still had a place to grow, learn, and feel supported.

From a teacher's perspective, the relocation was a challenging transition, but it also revealed the deep roots of care and connection

we have at OLV. The support we received from our church, local organizations, and The Naz was invaluable. They immediately opened their doors to us, offering us a place to continue classes. Without hesitation, they provided not only space but also emotional support. These efforts allowed us to maintain a sense of normalcy and to focus on our students, helping them through this transition in the best way possible.

There were so many who stepped up in ways big and small. From the staff at The Naz who welcomed us with open arms, to the organizations that helped us get back on our feet, we are truly grateful. They showed us what it means to be part of a community that looks after one another. Their generosity was a blessing in a time when we needed it most.

We also want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who

supported us through this journey. From our families and parishioners to local businesses, each act of kindness reminded us that we are not alone. Your prayers, your donations, and your words of encouragement have been a source of strength for all of us. We are stronger because of the love and support that surround us.

As we prepare to return to our restored space, we carry with us the lessons of resilience, unity, and faith. Together, we've shown that no challenge is too great when we face it as a community. We are incredibly thankful for each person who helped us through this time. Your kindness and support have been a true reflection of God's love in action.

We look forward to the many blessings ahead as we continue to grow and learn together at Our Lady of Victory School.

## Traveling to St. Elizabeth

By  
Mary McGovern

Tom and I love to "See the USA from our Chevrolet" (except we have a Buick!) That little advertising ditty popped into my head as we "traveled" to Mass at St. Elizabeth on Sunday. It brought me back to attending Mass at various locations on some of the driving trips we've taken:

- Walking into St. Joseph Catholic Church in Rawlins, WY and being asked to bring the gifts up.
- Easter Mass at a different St. Joseph Church in Elko, NV and noticing that during the Our Father, every person in church held hands, even across the middle aisle!
- Immaculate Conception Church in Green River, WY, where the priest met us at the door, invited us in, asked us our names, and announced in his homily which was about making choices, that Tom and Mary from MN made the choice to come here for Mass today.
- Sunday Mass at St. Elizabeth, a tiny church in Guerneville, CA, where everyone knew each other and during the Mass intro, Father Luis had us stand up and introduce ourselves. Then he had the congregation pray for a safe trip home for us!

- Attending St. Andrew the Apostle Church on Chincoteague Island, VA, in a cozy white church (just like St. Elizabeth) that was packed with worshipers and a life-changing statement was made by the priest during his homily, "When you die, will it matter that you have lived?"

At St. Elizabeth it matters that people live! From the smiling welcome at the front door, to the warm greeting of the priest, to the delicious homemade treats and coffee made by parishioners, it's a joy and an honor to "travel" to St. Elizabeth on Sunday mornings!



# STEUBENVILLE 2025

Each year a group of teens from our Area Catholic Community (ACC) and their youth ministry team travel down to the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul for the annual Steubenville Conference the last weekend of July. This conference is one of 19 such conferences happening each summer at arenas and colleges throughout the nation. At the conference, teens experience a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ that ignites their faith, strengthens their prayer life, and empowers them to live on mission long after the conference ends.

Throughout the 3-day weekend, teens encounter the love of Christ alongside 2,100 of their peers. The teens hear from incredible Catholic speakers and participate in Mass each day. There is praise and worship, confession opportunities, Eucharistic Adoration, and so much more offered. They sleep in the dorm rooms, meet new, like-minded people in a safe environment, and experience their faith with their peers. What an awesome way to spend a weekend in the summer!

Teens are welcome to attend as rising 9th graders through the summer after their senior year. College students are welcome to attend as young adult participants up until age 21.

Last year, our ACC brought 28 teens and adults to the conference, with half of our teens experiencing the conference for the first time with the other half of the teens returning for the second, third and even fourth time.

Maria Schroeder, 9th grader and daughter of David and Kelly Schroeder, attended for the first time in summer of 2024. She describes her experience as, "nothing she's ever gone to before." Initially nervous about attending but bolstered by hearing of her older sibling's experiences, Maria came away loving the conference. "I felt like I could do anything faith wise. I didn't have to hold [my faith] back, I could let myself go and not worry [about what other people think.] During adoration, when Jesus in the monstrance was processed around the gym, I just wanted to be closer to Him. Jesus was actually there."

While each participant's experience is unique to them, Maria is not



alone. Many of our teens (and adults!) come away with a renewed passion for the love of Jesus and the Catholic faith.

While I did not attend this conference as a teen, I have been blessed to attend as a chaperone for the past three years. Each year, however, I am blown away by the incredible faith our teens have and the growth they experience as their relationship with Jesus Christ blossoms. Their willingness to step into their faith journey and allow God to work in their hearts reminds me as an adult that I need to do the same.

Each year, the conference has a guiding theme for the weekend. The 2024 theme was ILLUMINATE with the accompanying verse: "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." John 1:5. This year, the 2025 theme is CONSUMED with the accompanying verse: "For the LORD, your God, is a consuming fire, a jealous God." Deuteronomy 4:24

The 2025 Steubenville St. Paul conference takes place July 25-27.



Our ACC has 45 tickets to share among our three parishes. We are asking for participants to commit to \$100 to help cover the \$345 ticket price and help to fundraise the rest. Funds raised from the annual Ash Wednesday Soup Supper and the donut fundraiser over Palm Sunday weekend go to cover the remaining cost of the tickets and our bus ride for the event.

If you are interested in learning more about this incredible opportunity for the teens in our parish communities, please reach out to Andrew Jennen 701-371-1821 or myself, Emily Stawarski, 320-292-7939 for more information. We are happy to answer any questions you may have. God Bless!

*Heavenly Father,*

*May this Jubilee Year strengthen our faith and help us to recognize Christ in the midst of our lives.*

*Transform us into pilgrims who bring Christian hope to the world.*

*The Special Intentions  
of Pope Francis*



# Women's Revive Night Out



**APRIL 3<sup>RD</sup> & APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup>**

**SOCIAL 6:15 - 7 pm**

**EVENT 7 - 8 pm**

**PRAYER HOUR 8 - 9 pm**

Prayer Hour includes Eucharistic Adoration, confessions, worship music and opportunities for prayer ministry

Please join us at these women's faith gatherings for fellowship, wine, chocolate and refreshments.

We are excited to share with you that our next Women's Revive Night Out is scheduled for Thursday, April 3rd from 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Registration will begin at 6:15.

We are praying that OLV Fellowship Hall will be renovated and ready for use, but if not, we will set up in the gym.

Our speaker for the event is Peggy Rezac. She will share her experience on **"Forgiveness, The Gateway to Healing & Peace."** It is the perfect topic during our Lenten journey.

Watch the bulletin, website, MyParish and event flyers for more information and updates.

**Please feel free to share the date and registration information with others!**



**You can register here or SCAN the above QR code for the April 3 event:**

**<https://form.jotform.com/dianeschnewitz/april-3rd-2025-revive-registration>**

Revive topics are relevant to you and your life. Each gathering is a standalone event. Come when you can. All women are welcome! Bring the favorite women in your life: your mom, sister, daughter, friend, co-worker....the list is endless!

## HOLY SITES OF WISCONSIN | A MARIAN PILGRIMAGE | March 28-30, 2025

### DAY 1 - FRIDAY

Board bus at 6:30 a.m. and depart from OLV.

Travel to Champion, Wisconsin and visit Our Lady of Champion

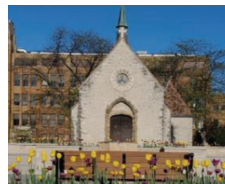
This is the only approved **Marian apparition** site in the United States or Canada.

*The Mysterious Woman in White Said to Adele... "Gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they need to know for their salvation. Go and fear nothing. I will help you."*

Travel to Milwaukee for the night.



**Shrine Chapel**, a Chapel of St. Therese, and a Replica of the Shroud of Turin.



tual devotion, and patriotic pride by building impressive houses of worship. At the time of completion, the only building in the country with a larger dome was the United States Capitol. It contains a Marian side altar.

### DAY 3 - SUNDAY

Attend Mass at the Basilica of St. Josaphat

The Basilica epitomizes the striving of early Polish immigrants to express their ethnic heritage, spiri-

Arrive back at OLV approximately 8:30 pm



**Tour Includes:** Deluxe motor coach transportation, 2 nights hotel, 2 Hot breakfast buffets, 2 dinners, all entrance fees and donations. (Lunches not included)

**Single:** \$530.00 **Double:** \$380.00 **Triple:** \$-335.00 **Quad:** \$315.00

Price is per person; you must have a roommate to choose multiple rate.

### DAY 2 - SATURDAY

Have Mass in the St. Joan of Arc Chapel in Milwaukee

This chapel, built around 1420, was brought over stone by stone from France. It contains a stone believed to be touched by St. Joan of Arc.

Basilica of Holy Hills, near Milwaukee

Holy Hill was declared a Shrine with "Portiuncula privilege" by Pope Leo XIII in 1903. In addition to the main basilica, it contains a **Marian**

**Circle one:** Single: \$530.00 Double: \$380.00 Triple: \$335.00 Quad: \$315.00  
Price is per person; you must have a roommate to choose multiple rate.

#### REGISTRATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Roommate: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration and payment must be received at the OLV offices by Feb. 24th, 2025

**Make Checks payable to: OLV Stewardship**

Call Rhonda Petersen 701-640-7039 with questions.

## 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](http://www.ffolvschool.org)

## REFLECTIONS OF AN OLD MAN

### *You've Gotta Have Hope...and More*

I was feeling pretty punk in mid-January. Maybe I was just being an alarmist, but things entirely beyond my control seemed to be spiraling into chaos. A seemingly endless parade of devastating tornadoes, fires, floods and life-taking heat waves was destroying lives and property in our nation and around the world. Death and destruction in Ukraine, Gaza, Lebanon and other hot spots were increasing, while millions of innocent, defenseless men, women and children (my sisters and brothers all) were facing starvation in places like Darfur, Syria, Sudan and the Congo.

I'm keenly aware that this isn't "the worst of times." The world's been around a long time, and bad things have been part of it ever since Eve ate the apple and Cain slew Abel.

Nonetheless, after returning home from a memorable fun-food-family 90th birthday bash honoring my indispensable, still-beautiful wife of 66 years, I found myself sitting in the same warm, comfortable, safe home in which she and I had raised our four much-loved and very-loving sons. No floods, no bombs, no drones, no bullets, no missiles, no torture, no imprisonment, no starvation—nothing but good! Much more, in fact, than any man deserves.

"Aye," as Hamlet might say, "and there's the rub." What right had I to so much when so many have so little? And how, feeling as I did, could I offer a positive message to readers?

Then followed what I consider an amazing series of events. I knew, of course, that Pope Francis has pronounced 2025 as a "Jubilee Year of Hope." Hope. I certainly needed that.

Not long after, I recalled St. Paul's listing of Hope with Faith and Love—which, as Margaret informed me—are the "Theological Virtues."

And then came, not a divine revelation, but an entirely secular thought. Seemingly out of nowhere came a few words from the Broadway musical, "Damn Yankees."

*You've gotta have hope, mustn't sit around and mope"*

That was it! Yes, Hope was essential. No doubt about it. But the last phrase added the finishing touch. "Mustn't sit around and mope!"

Those who have achieved hoped-for goals such as eradicating serious communicable diseases, becoming a great mother, walking on the moon, winning a championship, discovering ways to make food safer, or just plain being a good person didn't achieve them by sitting around and moping. They achieved them, as I must, by exerting the effort needed to do so. Without that effort I might as well, as my mother might say, hope "until my face turns blue."

So, I'll do as much as I can to hope instead of mope. Perhaps that will help my effort to devote a little more of my time, talent and treasure—coupled, of course, with prayer—to those selfless men and women who continue, despite overwhelming odds, to heal a broken world.

I know that those efforts—no matter how sincere—will do little or nothing to heal that break. At the same time, I will continue-in the hope that my efforts will help make life just a little better for one of my sisters or brothers who has so much less than I.

Of course, it helps to remember, "Whoever gives a cup of water to one of the least..."

Lee Krogh