

THE JOURNEY

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September
2025

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



Dear Pelican Valley Disciples,

Those good old summer days I guess have come and gone! Our young people are back to school, vacations are finished, and we gear up for the annual return to faith formation classes and the fall stewardship renewal. It's always an energizing time of the year.

I'm writing right after proclaiming Sunday's Gospel about Jesus coming to earth to ignite a fire. To be clear, we fervently pray to never experience another fire as we did at OLV last January 14. But the fire of God's love and of His Holy Spirit we do hope will burn even more brightly this year than ever before. With the fervor we experience in the faith of so many in these parishes, there's no reason it shouldn't! It's a goal ever before us in our ACC planning process, All Things New.

In his homily on the fire Gospel, Pope Leo referred to the fire of charity which can bring about a more peaceful world. That might serve as one important reminder for us. Sometimes with our fervent faith, and ideas about our Catholic faith, and the particular, personal priorities we have regarding faith practice and involvement, we forget about the greatest spiritual gift and the greatest of the commandments which is namely, love.

What does our faith look like without love? Some versions appear more as competition or an over emphasis on self importance, others like intolerance and exclusion, some like self-righteousness. There's not enough space in this newsletter to get into specific examples, (and there's no reason to dwell on the negative) so suffice it to say, paraphrasing St. Paul, faith without love can easily lead to sounding like a noisy gong or clashing cymbal....and that's certainly not an attractive, evangelical sound! But we know it when we hear it and it creeps into parish and ACC and church life very easily.

So please, in all we do this year, let us burn with both faith AND LOVE so that those around us and all we meet will always know not only what we believe, but also know of our care and concern for them (our love), and our respect for all that they hold important. Then they can say (or sing!) of us: "They will know we are Christians (Catholics) by our love"! God's blessings and burning love!



Fr. Alan



Hospitality Ministers

On the Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (July 20), the First Reading and Gospel were all about hospitality. Abraham and Sarah served dinner to three unknown men



who were standing near their tent. They killed a choice steer, baked bread, and gave the men respite from their travel. The Gospel portrayed the familiar story of Martha and Mary inviting Jesus into their home as Martha prepared dinner for their Guest and Mary sat listening intently to His words. That's essentially what the Greeter and Usher Ministry is all about. These folks welcome parishioners and visitors in all 3 churches of our ACC. The greeters stand at the door and are the first line of hospitality. Some even hold the outside door open, extending hugs to all who enter!

They open the inner doors of the church and offer a friendly smile and welcome to all who pass through. (Just as Abraham, Mary and Martha did for their visitors) The ushers then help those who need accommodations in seating and in receiving Communion. Their task is to take care of all the guests--parishioners and visitors, who are attending Mass. They notice if anyone is in need, take up the collection, and direct people in line to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. Can there be any more important duty than that? Both ministries, greeters and ushers, are among the first people



we see as we enter the church, and their kind and friendly greeting goes a long way in encouraging all to come back and join in the celebration at Our Lord's table again. If you would like to be a part of either of these Hospitality Ministries, please call Louise Wentworth (218-770-0473) to sign up for ushering, and Peter, at the Parish Office (218-736-2429 Ext. 10) to become a greeter. You may also check the box on the Commitment Renewal form.

Faithful Servants

By Mary McGovern

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Matthew 22:37-39



And who is our neighbor? The Christian Women's Group at St. Elizabeth answers that question in a big way—whoever needs help is our neighbor! This amazing group of women responds to Jesus's call to serve each time they meet. Every

6 weeks or so, The Christian Women gather after 8:30 Mass on Sunday and decide on their next goal—helping with the Pork Out, hosting the Holiday Expo as Christmas approaches and organizing their famous Bake Sales! Their group has

HELLO
Fall

been serving different people in need for many years—baking for funerals, donating to area priests, purchasing altar cloths, visiting the homebound, gifting First Communicants with bibles, Confirmation students and graduating seniors with Christian mementos and supporting the senior breakfast. They also look for ways to assist area families in hardship. They are the heart and soul of St. Elizabeth Parish! The Christian Women's group is not a closed organization at all. They reach out and welcome all who attend Mass in our PVACC and also seek out new parishioners to see how they might be of help. If you'd like more information on this amazing group of Faithful Servants, please contact Bridget Wedll at (218) 770-7133.

New ACC Members



Brayden,
Shannon,
and infant
son,
Alexander
Koch

Welcome
to the Koch
Family!

AARON & MEGAN RUEGEMER

They have three beautiful boys: 5 yrs, 2 yrs. & 9 months. As a family they love spending time outdoors, especially on their hobby farm near Dalton. The recently left the Traditional Catholic Church and "we want to still keep our Catholic faith, so we picked this beautiful parish."

NATHAN & SAVANNAH BERG

The Berg family moved to Rothsay (from Moorhead) in July. With their five children ages 6 – 16. The family loves the outdoors and spending lots of time together! Most often you will find the Bergs at the 8:30 Mass. Welcome to OLV!

BRIAN HALVORSON

Brian, a self-employed farmer of the Rothsay area, recently joined OLV. Welcome and we will see you at the 4:30 Mass!

UPCOMING EVENTS

ST. ELIZABETH:

Sept. 21 – Christian Mother's meeting

OLV:

Sept. 2 – First day of school

Sept. 18 – Revive Retreat

Sept. 21 – Fall Festival

Oct. 11 – Commitment Renewal

ACC:

Sept. 2 – OLV Mother's Prayer Group.

Tuesdays from 9-11 in St. Joseph Room, in community with other ACC women. Meetings are also accessible virtually via zoom. Join anytime. For More information contact Heather Lindgren at: olvmothersgroup@gmail.com

Sept. 12-14 - Ecclesia Domestica "MEN ON Fire."

A three- day retreat for Catholic men held in Little Falls. Ecclesia Domestica is a Catholic ministry of laypeople and clergy working together to bring men and women to Jesus Christ, through the inspiration and guidance of the Blessed Mother. To defend the Church by forming Christian Disciples who are dedicated to growing closer to Jesus and holding firm to the truth of the Church's teaching. To defend the Family by encouraging men and women to embrace their vocation as husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, with God at the center of Christian Family Life.

For More Info Contact:

Deacon Thane Barnier (605) 929-2551 ecclesiaretreats@ecclesiadomestica.net

Sept. 17 @ 7pm – PVACC Town Hall meeting at OLV

Sept. 19-21 – Central Minnesota Koinonia "Is the Light of Christ in You?"

Are you looking for that light? Central Minnesota Koinonia is sponsored by the St. Cloud Diocese and will be held at the TEC center north of Little Falls. Go to centralmnkoinonia.org for more information and to register.

BAPTISMS



HARVEY JOSEPH ADAMS

Cain & Megan Adams
7/6/2025



EDEN AMIRA & LUCIA NOELLE

PETERSON-TOOLEY
Jamie & Cerise Tooley
7/12/2025



LUKE JACOB VAN SANTEN

Brandon & Dana Van Santen
7/19/2025

WE ARE HOME! 1ST MASS BACK IN CHURCH!

How fitting it was to have the first Mass back in the church in celebration of the Feast of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven! The church was beautifully decorated, and one could hear the parishioner's joy in their responses and as hymns were sung. It was such a beautiful occasion followed by fellowship and treats after each Mass.

Below are a few highlights from both Mass on the 14th and 15th.



**Monday
it was
back to
work!**



With the OLV site not yet being ready, Vacation Bible School was moved this year to Brenny Hall in Elizabeth. Though I never met him, I kept getting the feeling that Fr. Brenny would be thrilled with this! Several helpers came on Sunday August 3rd to transform the space into an Alaskan wilderness. We had so many well-prepared station leaders, kind crew leaders, and special guests to build a joyful, learning community. We were especially amazed that after our closing with the students, people jumped in to take down, load the decorations, and get the hall ready for the next day, in only one hour!

We hope all children that were there from all 3 parishes of our ACC have memories that will last a lifetime. But most important, that they can rest in the knowledge that they can always trust Jesus.



FAITH FORMATION REGISTRATION SEPT. 17

Registration for Children's Liturgy of the Word (ages 3-6), a program that takes place during the 10:30 Sunday Mass at OLV, will be available before and after Masses on the 13th and 14th of September, and from 4-7 PM on Wednesday September 17. There is no registration fee to participate in this program, but we will accept free will offerings to help cover the cost of materials. The first session will be Sunday 9/28 during 10:30 Mass.

Registration for Faith Formation grades 1-11 will be from 4 to 7 p.m. on

Wednesday, Sept. 17 in the Our Lady of Victory gathering space.

The registration fee is \$50 per student, UNLESS it is the student's Sacraments Year; then an additional \$50 fee is asked for to help cover additional expenses. The family maximum for registration is \$125, plus free registration for children of Faith Formation volunteer teachers. Scholarships are available for those in need.

Faith Formation classes will begin on Wednesday, Oct. 1. Grades 1-5 will meet

from 3:40 to 5 p.m., and grade 6 and up will meet Wednesday evenings.

Second Grade is typically the year students are prepared and receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation (Confession) and First Communion. Students attend the Wednesday afternoon program for this preparation. If a child is older than second grade but has not yet received these Sacraments, special arrangements can be made with Deb Forstner, Elementary Faith Formation Coordinator. Also, grade 11 is typically the year students are Confirmed.

Meet Wonderful the OLV Teachers

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth"

3 John 1:4

HEATHER MILLER

Preschool:

"Teaching at OLV is something that many teachers no longer have the privilege to experience. I enjoy my small class size, and I'm able to connect with each child and family on a deeper level. The OLV families are genuinely supportive and loving. OLV staff support one another whole-heartedly, love each child individually and together we finish guiding the kids down the path of success with a God-centered mindset. Filling the building with happiness and the laughter of students creates the perfect environment for each school year and I have been blessed to be a part of it."



SAM HANNEMAN

Preschool:

"The reason I love OLV—and why I've spent the majority of my teaching career here—is because of the incredible sense of community. The dedicated staff truly feels like family, the students are a joy to teach as I watch them grow and learn, and the supportive families are always willing to lend a helping hand. Having grown up and attended a small school myself, OLV feels like home in all the best ways!"



MAKAYLA HUU

Kindergarten:

"I look forward to building relationships with the students and watching them grow throughout the year. I have heard nothing but great things about the school and am excited to get to experience it myself with my co-workers and students alongside me."



SUE HEIDORN

Grade 1:

"I love teaching at OLV because I have the opportunity to instruct fun, energetic students in a Christ-centered school. To help a child grow academically, spiritually and socially is a career that I truly love. I also appreciate the wonderful support from the staff, parents and parish."



AMANDA HARIG

Grade 2:

"OLV is such a welcoming and supportive school. The small classes, dedicated staff, and faith based learning make OLV a wonderful place to work and for my children to attend school."



KIM JENC

Grade 3:

"I love teaching at OLV because of the connection between our faith and learning. It is such a blessing to be able to work with students and families where God is such an important part of our lives and we can work to develop and deepen our faith each day."



SARAH PAWLOWSKI

Grade 4:

"It is a great honor and blessing to be a Catholic School educator! I delight in weaving God's love and truth into every aspect of our school day. Mary, the perfect model of holiness, is our special friend that tenderly leads us to her Son. Our Catholic church is so beautiful and filled with gifts. It gives me great joy to celebrate these gifts with my students!"



TREVOR LARSON

Grade 5:

"I very much so enjoy the tight knit community of teachers, students and parish families! I also enjoy how everything we do is geared with Christ in mind."



BRANDI OCHOA

Grade 6:

"I'm so excited for the opportunity to combine my passions of teaching and sharing my faith with children. What an exciting and fun year this will be. I can't wait!"



NINA CLARK

Music Teacher:

"I believe that music is for every student. They may not become a classical musician but they can learn to open their eyes to a different side of learning. Music incorporates math, history, religion, social studies, and reading in a different format and I think that is really beautiful."



JARED LARSON

Phy Ed:

"I love OLV because it feels like one big family. Everyone looks out for each other!"



LORI BREDEBERG

Technology:

"My favorite part of teaching at OLV School is the Christ-centered family atmosphere."



*Is it any wonder that
Our Lady of Victory is such a
great school?*

Kampa: Stewardship of treasure: An invitation to trust and generosity

By Anna Kampa

To be honest, when I was asked to write about treasure as it relates to stewardship, I felt a bit of a knot in my stomach. Too often, conversations about stewardship are reduced to money and budgets, to keeping the lights on and paying the bills. But stewardship, when faithfully practiced, is so much more than what we place in the collection basket or how we share the contents of our wallet.

At its heart, stewardship is a way of life. It is a lifelong commitment to discipleship that embraces four pillars of prayer, hospitality, formation and service. It flows from the biblical principle that everything we are and everything we have is a gift from God. It calls us to see ourselves not as owners, but as stewards who receive these blessings with gratitude, manage them responsibly and return them with increase to the Lord.

When we speak of treasure in the context of stewardship, the Gospels are our guide. While the world often measures generosity by quantity, Christ invites us to measure by trust, love and relationship. God, the source of all good things, does not seek our giving out of guilt or obligation. Rather, he invites us to participate joyfully in his mission. Stewardship of treasure is not about financial transactions — it is about our relationship with God, our trust in his providence and our transformation of gratitude into generosity.

This is why our giving should never be reduced to merely “pay-

ing the bills.” Every offering, no matter the size, becomes part of something greater. A dollar given in faith helps to feed the hungry, to form the young in the ways of discipleship, to provide the sacraments, to care for the sick and to welcome the stranger. When we give, we join a network of grace that extends far beyond what we can see or imagine.

Like prayer or fasting, giving is a spiritual discipline that draws us closer to God. Just as fasting frees us from our notions of comfort, and prayer reorients our hearts toward the Lord, intentional generosity loosens our attachment to material possessions. It reminds us that our income, savings and possessions are not the source of ultimate security, but are temporary trusts from God, granted to us for the sake of his kingdom.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in their pastoral letter “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response,” encourage us to make our giving planned, proportionate and sacrificial. When we give intentionally and consistently, generosity becomes not an occasional impulse but a faithful habit — part of our very identity as disciples.

We must remember that God cares less at the amount of our gifts than about the love they reveal. My office often receives donations of one or two dollars accompanied



by heartfelt notes apologizing for the small size of the gift, sometimes accompanied by explanations of financial hardship coupled with a deep desire to help sustain diocesan ministries. These sacrificial offerings move me profoundly. They remind me of Jesus’ teaching in the parable of the Widow’s Mite, where a woman gave only two small coins, yet her gift was greater than all others because she gave from her scarcity, not from her surplus, and with complete trust in God (Mark 12:41–44).

At its core, stewardship of our treasure is about love — love for God, love for neighbor and love for the mission of the Church. When we give from a place of gratitude, our offering becomes more than money — it becomes an act of worship. As St. Paul reminds us, “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7). In giving, we draw nearer to the heart of Christ, who gave everything for us.

So, the next time you think about “treasure” and stewardship, I invite you to recognize the deeper truth. It is so much more than numbers, budgets or bills. It is about trust. It is about love. It is about joining God’s mission of hope and mercy in the world.

Anna Kampa is the diocesan director of stewardship and development.

The above article is printed with permission. It was first published in the Friday Feed edition of The Central Minnesota Catholic August 22, 2025. Sign up at <http://www.stcdio.org> or www.thecentralminnesotacatholic.org to receive the e-edition.

FALL FESTIVAL - Sunday, Sept. 21

Masses at 8:30 am & 10:30am

TURKEY DINNER W/TRIMMINGS & PIES

(Dine In & Drive Thru available) 11am-1pm
Full Portion \$15 - Half Portion \$8

Grand Raffle \$5,000 Drawing 2 pm
Tickets \$25 Each

Tickets available at Viking Cafe,
JK Outdoors &

OLV Temporary Offices (218) 736-2429



Bingo
Meat Raffle
Bouncy House
Silent Auction
Country Store
Quilt Sale
Cake Walk
Food & Beverages
Children's Raffle & Games
And MORE!

FALL FESTIVAL RAFFLE EARLY BIRD DEADLINE SEPT. 7

Please return your sold raffle tickets and sales proceeds to OLV as soon as possible! All raffle tickets sold and returned on or before Sept. 7 will be eligible for the early bird drawing. The early bird ticket seller will receive \$100.

State law requires all unsold tickets to be returned to OLV as well. Please return all sold and unsold raffle tickets in time for the Fall Festival on Sunday, September 21.

**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

Roadblocks to Stewardship

Lord, You've made the message perfectly clear. It's all laid out.
Feed the...clothe the...give drink to...shelter the...visit the. But...
car repairs are...
and medical costs have...
and the roof leaks...
and the carpet looks like...

Honest, Lord. I'm up to my neck! This isn't 30 AD. There's taxes...inflation,...
401K's...There's football...basketball...hockey...cable TV...Netflix...
And have you priced a golf membership lately?
How about a new refrigerator?
A case of beer...a gallon of gas...a gallon of milk?

We've got to do something about those teeth!
We should leave something for the kids.
But mom, I can't wear this old rag!

I know it was expensive, but...
So when are you going to do it?
Hey, Joe! When you get around to it, would you mind?

It's not that I don't believe, Lord.
Whatever you do...Sell all that you have...
But

I'm tired. I'm worried. I'm a little afraid.
I don't know how.
I need a little time to myself.
Have you asked George?

So c'mon, Lord. Be fair! It's a dog-eat-dog world out there!

Lee Krogh

(Reprinted from a
previous issue of
THE JOURNEY)