



Our Lady of HOPE

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Children's LITURGY OF THE WORD

Bringing the Gifts of Christ and the Faith to Our Youngest Parishioners

Those who have had children are either currently living the reality or can recall moments of chasing the kids around during a weekend Mass. Some weekends are better than others, but corralling our little ones for an hour can certainly be a tough task.

This is why Lindsey Sell coordinates the Children's Liturgy of the Word, which is offered at 9 a.m. Mass. This program is a special place for preschool students to learn the readings and Gospel at their level. Occasionally, older children and siblings also attend. About eight stewards teach along with Lindsey — and she'd love to see some youth and young adults step forward to help. It's a rewarding way to give back.

"It's important to start that love for Jesus early," Lindsey says. "We want them to start an enjoyment of Mass while they are young."

The children come forward shortly after Mass begins and typically return during the offertory. They go to the parish office and focus on the Gospel and what the message might mean for them. They also have the chance to learn more about the current liturgical season. The lesson always ends with a craft or a coloring activity. The end project is



Children's Liturgy of the Word offers a valuable opportunity for children to learn more about the Catholic faith at their own level.

used to drive home the lesson for the week. Usually, about eight to 10 children attend Children's Liturgy of the Word.

"Teaching kids of any age is wonderful," Lindsey says. "The little ones are so pure of heart, energetic, and joyful."

Lindsey admits that the teachers often learn just as much from Children's Liturgy as the children.

"You have to look it over and dig deep into the material so that you can teach it at their level," she says. "So you learn some things along the way. We all learn more going into the week."

Each time Lindsey teaches, she is continually amazed by the children's knowledge and insights.

"Their worldview is so beautiful," she says. "It's fun to

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Thanksgiving:

A SECULAR HOLIDAY WITH SACRED SIGNIFICANCE

Thanksgiving is a cherished holiday in the United States, celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November each year. While it may not have religious origins, Thanksgiving holds a deep significance in the Catholic Church and serves as a perfect example of living the stewardship way of life. As Catholics, we can find spiritual meaning in this holiday and apply the principles of stewardship to our Thanksgiving celebrations.

Thanksgiving and Stewardship

Stewardship is a core principle in the Catholic faith, emphasizing the responsible and generous use of time, talent, and treasure for the service of God and others. Thanksgiving aligns with this principle in several ways:

- **Gratitude to God:** Thanksgiving encourages us to express gratitude for the blessings we have received. In the Catholic faith, acknowledging and thanking God for His gifts is a fundamental aspect of stewardship.
- **Sharing with Others:** The act of sharing a meal with loved ones and providing for those in need echoes the spirit of stewardship. Just as stewards share their resources with others, Thanksgiving prompts us to share our abundance with family, friends, and the less fortunate.
- **Acknowledging God's Creation:** Thanksgiving often centers around a feast featuring the fruits of the earth. This feast reminds us of our role as stewards of God's creation and our responsibility to care for the environment.

Living Stewardship on Thanksgiving and Beyond

Here are ways Catholics can live the stewardship way of life on Thanksgiving:

- **Gratitude and Prayer:** Begin your Thanksgiving celebrations with a prayer of thanksgiving, acknowledging God's providence and expressing gratitude for His blessings. Encourage everyone to share what they are thankful for during the meal.
- **Sharing with Others:** Reach out to those in need by volunteering at a local shelter, donating food, or participating in charitable initiatives. Sharing your time, talent, or treasure is a practical application of stewardship.
- **Family and Community:** Thanksgiving is an excellent time to strengthen family bonds and build a sense of community. Welcome those who may be alone or in need, extending the spirit of stewardship to your own household and beyond.
- **Gratitude Journal:** Encourage family members to maintain a gratitude journal throughout the year. Documenting daily blessings reinforces the stewardship principle of recognizing and appreciating God's gifts.

Thanksgiving may be a secular holiday, but its significance in the Catholic Church is profound. It provides an opportunity to express gratitude to God, share blessings with others, and practice stewardship in daily life. As Catholics, we can embrace the principles of stewardship on Thanksgiving by focusing on gratitude, charity, and environmental responsibility. This holiday serves as a beautiful reminder that living the stewardship way of life is not confined to the church walls but can be incorporated into our everyday lives, enriching our faith and our relationship with God.



“What’s in It For Us” May Surprise You

Dear Parishioners,

You already know that our parish is committed to living as intentional disciples of Christ through the holistic practice of stewardship. What you may not know is that one of our inspirations and mentors is the late Msgr. Thomas McGread of the Diocese of Wichita.

Who was Msgr. McGread?

Msgr. McGread was a humble, servant priest who created a model for how stewardship should be practiced — both here and in many Catholic parishes across the country. What began simply with Msgr. McGread applying his stewardship principles at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Wichita — where he served as pastor for 31 years — has become a way of life for our parish family and for Catholics around the nation.

With such an incredible blueprint from this visionary priest, how could we go wrong?

We have truly embraced stewardship here at Our Lady of Hope, and for that, I am blessed and grateful. From the beginning, however, the question “What’s in it for us?” had to be on our minds as our efforts to educate parishioners and promote the stewardship way of life were introduced.

At first, “What’s in it for us?” seemed to center on what people were willing to do to give back to God as part of practicing their faith and living as disciples of Jesus Christ.

While this is important, there is so much more to it.

The truth is, “What’s in it for us?” is really about “What’s in it for you?”

“What’s in it for you?” perhaps is best explained as one simple principle — cultivating a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

When Christ calls us to discipleship, He is also calling us to be faithful stewards of our time, talent, and treasure. Our gratitude for these gifts is best expressed through giving a portion of each back to God. Thus, stewardship becomes a way of life that is also the way to holiness. Our



relationship with Christ is what we get in return.

Our efforts as a parish to promote the spiritual benefits of active stewardship are designed to foster a deeper relationship with God for all of us. Membership in a parish family should encourage, support, and celebrate that relationship with the living God, first and foremost. Everything else flows from that.

If we are not focused on our relationship with God, then what will define our spirituality?

If we have embraced the blessings of stewardship as a practical way of being the disciples we are called to be, we will in turn know a deeper relationship with Christ.

We celebrate Thanksgiving this month, which truly is a stewardship holiday since stewardship begins with an attitude of gratitude. I am truly thankful for all that is done here at Our Lady of Hope, and for the many parishioners willing to do so much.

In closing, let me share one final thought to help you realize the gift that our parish is to each and every one of us.

Be grateful for all you have.

Be generous in giving something back to God.

Be faithful stewards, and you will have done both.

That is what’s in it for you, and in turn, that is what’s in it for us!

And don’t forget — God has been doing this for centuries. We’re just the latest and most fortunate recipients.

Happy Thanksgiving, and may God bless you and your family.

In Christ,

Fr. Paul Ferguson

Fr. Paul Ferguson

Pastor

A Look Back on the Annual Outdoor Mass *Bringing Our Community Together for*



Every year since 2016, Our Lady of Hope has held an Outdoor Mass and Picnic at Eastside Park. Coordinated by the Outreach Committee, the event aims to unite parishioners for a wonderful day of Mass, dinner, and fellowship.

“We all get a little routine and attend whatever particular Mass on the weekend,” says Beth Browning, Outreach Committee member. “Then we don’t actually see some of the other parishioners. We were trying to figure out an opportunity to bring everybody together. That’s where the idea evolved from.”

It works well, bringing the community together and breaking routine — at least for one Sunday!

“We end up combining one of our regular Mass times with a Hispanic Mass, a bilingual Mass with bilingual music,” Beth says. “The Knights of Columbus have been very gracious to help with cost since the beginning. It helps with the cost of the building rental, the cost of food. The Daughters of Isabella group made a donation to the outdoor events this year which was greatly appreciated.”

The event typically starts with Mass outside.

“There’s a bandstand in the park where the Mass is held,” Beth says. “Then we move over to the Community Building for the dinner.”

This year, however, was a little rainy and everyone kept their eyes to the sky.

“The rain was too iffy,” Beth says. “It had not been raining a lot, but we were watching the radar.”

They moved the Mass inside to be safe, though it presented some challenges.

“That was a little difficult for our girls to get everything set up,” Beth says. “Usually, that building is empty during Mass, and we can get the food situated before Mass is over. It presented quite a challenge this year. We had a lot of hands, and everybody was patient.”

With just over 250 in attendance, about a third of the parish, the event was still a success.

“We had all the food out,” Beth says. “Members of the Young Families Group did the grilling for us so that was very much appreciated. Everybody pitches in and brings their favorite side dish or dessert to share. It was just a fun day.”

The event is all about bringing the parish community together and a little rain couldn’t stop that from happening.

Door Mass and Church Picnic

for a Day of Faith, Fellowship, and Food

“We welcome anyone to join us, especially to bring any new, fresh ideas.” — *Beth Browning*

“If we attend our normal Mass on the weekend, we see the same people all the time,” Beth says. “When we come together for this type of Mass, we’re seeing different folks — especially this year as they were sitting at tables. There’s a lot of intermingling that’s normally not happening at Mass. Having two different groups in church, having the Hispanic population, there are some different traditions and it’s nice to share that.”

The next fellowship opportunity is coming in December — Our Lady of Guadalupe.

“This is a Hispanic celebration,” Beth says. “There’s always a special combined Mass with a mariachi band and a dinner. That takes place at the church and the school.”

Beth and those in the Outreach Committee continue to provide fellowship opportunities to bring this parish community together.

“We welcome anyone to join us, especially to bring any new, fresh ideas,” she says.



*Interested parishioners may reach out to
Beth Browning at 812-486-5783 or
email her at browningb65@att.net.*



The Feast of the
**PRESENTATION OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY:**

Honoring the Mother of Christ

In the rich tapestry of feasts within the Catholic Church, the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary holds a special place. Celebrated on Nov. 21, this feast honors the young Mary's dedication to God in the Temple. It is a day to reflect on her unique role in salvation history and to con-

sider how modern Catholics can best celebrate and honor the Mother of Christ.

The Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary commemorates a pivotal event in Mary's life. According to tradition, when Mary was around 3 years old, her parents, Sts. Joachim and Anne brought her to the Temple in Jerusalem. There, they dedicated her to God, a gesture of profound faith and devotion. This event holds great significance for several reasons:

A Life Consecrated to God: Mary's presentation in the Temple marked her consecration to God and her willingness to fulfill His divine plan. She would later become the Mother of Jesus, making her dedication an essential step in salvation history.

A Life of Holiness: Mary's life was characterized by holiness and purity, virtues that were cultivated from an early age. Her presentation in the Temple symbolizes her lifelong commitment to God's will and her extraordinary sanctity.

Model of Obedience: Mary's obedience to God's call is exemplified in this feast. She serves as a model for all Catholics, demonstrating the importance of saying "yes" to God's plan, even when it requires great trust and sacrifice.

Celebrating and Honoring Mary

Catholics around the world can celebrate and honor the Blessed Virgin Mary in various ways on this special feast day:

Attend Mass: Participate in a Eucharistic celebration dedicated to the Feast of the Presentation of Mary. Pray for her intercession and ask for the strength to emulate her faith and obedience.

Reflect on Mary's Virtues: Take time to meditate on the virtues of Mary, such as humility, purity, and trust in God. Consider how you can incorporate these virtues into your own life.

Pray the Rosary: The Rosary is a beautiful way to honor Mary and meditate on the mysteries of the faith. Consider praying the Joyful Mysteries, which include the Annunciation and the Presentation of the child Jesus.

Acts of Charity: In keeping with Mary's example of selflessness and service, engage in acts of charity and kindness on this day, reaching out to those in need and caring for others.

Visit a Marian Shrine: If possible, visit a Marian shrine or church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Spend time in prayer and reflection at these sacred places.

The Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a moment to honor and celebrate the extraordinary life of the Mother of Christ. By reflecting on Mary's virtues, attending Mass, praying the Rosary, and engaging in acts of charity, modern Catholics can best celebrate this feast and draw inspiration from Mary's profound faith, dedication, and obedience to God. In doing so, we can follow her example and strive to live lives that are more aligned with God's will, bringing us closer to the divine and to the heart of Mary herself.



Holy Communion to the Homebound

Bringing Christ to Our Faith Family Beyond the Walls of the Parish

The holidays bring warm feelings of food, family, and togetherness. Unfortunately, this is not the case for everyone. Some people don't have a lot of family around, and this time of year can be especially difficult. The Holy Communion to the Homebound Ministry is a way to relieve that loneliness all year round for those in our community who can no longer attend Mass.

Yvonne Evans coordinates this ministry to take Communion to the homebound and those in nursing homes. She has gotten to know the recipients over the years, and they have become like family. It's important to her that these members of our parish community have the chance to receive the Eucharist.

"I love to be with people who need the sacrament as a support," Yvonne says.

One beautiful part of bringing people Communion is the gift of presence. The minister often spends time with the person — this may be the only visitor they have all week.

"These people get to be like family — they really do," Yvonne says. "I've gotten to know so many people over the years. It's a blessing to be part of this ministry."

To Yvonne, this isn't just a ministry — rather, it's a calling. Most of the people receiving the Eucharist have watched Mass via livestream. So, this is a way to get them the most important part of Mass that they miss when they can only watch it — Jesus in the Eucharist.

About 15 people bring the Eucharist to the homebound. Yvonne is so thankful to all of them. They truly make a difference in people's lives.

"The people that receive are so grateful," Yvonne says. "Often, the ministers say they get more out of this than the recipients."

Typically, family members will call to add someone to the list to receive the Eucharist on Fridays — this could be permanent or temporary. On Fridays, Yvonne gets the Eucharist ready — along with roses, if they are in season — and a bulletin.

As Yvonne notes, when someone can no longer attend Mass, we don't want them to think they are forgotten. They are still an integral part of our community.

"They feel connected and cared about, which is so important," Yvonne says. "They know that they still have a part in our parish."

In addition, the ministers pray with the recipients, which is another beautiful part of this ministry. Yvonne tries to always pray with people from the heart.

The ministers also bring ashes for Ash Wednesdays and administer the St. Blaise throat blessing in February. And if a person is having surgery, a family member often contacts Yvonne. She typically goes with Fr. Paul Ferguson when he administers the Anointing of the Sick. If Fr. Paul can't administer the Sacrament, Yvonne will go pray with the person.

To get involved in this ministry of bringing the Eucharist to the homebound, contact Yvonne Evans at 812-486-5192.

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see the faith through their eyes.”

Lindsey's own children attend Children's Liturgy of the Word, and she enjoys watching them grow in faith. On the weeks she doesn't teach, she enjoys listening to her children reflect on what they learned at Children's Liturgy of the Word.

“They share what they learned and prayed for,” Lindsey says. “We love hearing that on the way home.”

Children are always welcome in Mass, but Children's Liturgy of the Word offers a valuable opportunity to

learn more about the Catholic faith at their own level. All preschool-age children are welcome to attend, even if they are visiting.

“When they can go to a different environment with peers their age and do something fun, it brings it to life for them,” Lindsey says.

Lindsey invites more children to come to the Children's Liturgy. Parents are welcome, too, if their child is too nervous to go alone.

*To learn more about Children's Liturgy of the Word, contact
Lindsey Sell at 812-698-0493 or lsell10@gmail.com.*

