

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

CARDINAL CONNECTION



"St. Mary's Catholic Schools strive for a united community of academic excellence and stewardship by embracing the Gospel and carrying the light of Christ."

SPRING 2026
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KEEPING SCORE FOR THE CARDINALS

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF DEDICATION

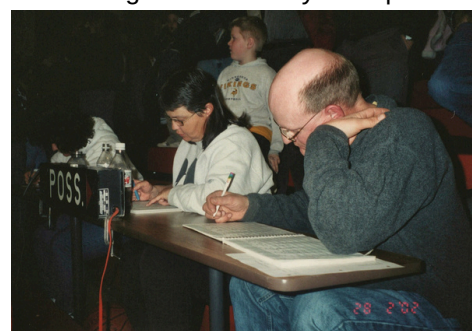
For decades, anyone attending a St. Mary's basketball game has likely seen a familiar face seated at the scorer's table. '76 Joanie Redder Lacey has quietly played an important role in Cardinal athletics for an incredible 50 years as the team's scorekeeper.

Joanie started writing down stats in a little black scorebook in the 60s for her brothers who played, when her parents could not make it to a game. She began keeping the official scorebook shortly after finishing school when girls' basketball was first introduced at St. Mary's. What started as a simple way to stay involved with the program quickly turned into a lifelong commitment to the school and its student-athletes. Over the years, she has handled the scorebook for nearly every game, including boys and girls, junior varsity and varsity. She has been serving as the official scorer for countless home contests and many postseason matchups. Her steady presence has made her a recognizable part of game night for generations of Cardinals.

In fact, her dedication spans multiple generations of St. Mary's families. Joanie has kept score for players whose parents and even grandparents once played on the same court. During her time, she has only missed one game, because she was recovering from a kidney transplant.



PICTURED '04 COLBY FITZGERALD, '76 JOANIE REDDER LACEY, AND ALAN HOUGH



PICTURED IS JOANIE AND '77 SCOTT NELSON

Athletic Director Casey Michel says having someone so dependable at the scorer's table makes a huge difference on game days. With many moving pieces involved in hosting an event, knowing the scorebook is in trusted hands is invaluable to the athletic department.

Her favorite memories include the teams from 2000-2004, when the Cardinals won their first State Championship. She enjoyed watching those boys get better and better every year, leading up to winning the title game in 2004. Joanie remembers working the home games with Connie Klein, '53 Buzz Huewe, and '82 Robert Michel for many years. She says "They made doing the book at home enjoyable."

Former players and coaches say Joanie's commitment goes far beyond simply recording statistics. She has been a constant supporter of St. Mary's athletics and a welcoming presence for teams, fans, and even officials, who often enjoy the homemade cookies she brings to games. Throughout five decades, she has witnessed the growth of the basketball programs and the impressive talent that has come through the school. Being able to watch the programs develop and to remain connected to the community has been one of the most rewarding parts of the experience.

Over the course of a season her and her husband '59 Jim Lacey drive anywhere from 2,000-3,000 miles covering both the boys and girls games. In the last 50 years, she has taken book for a little over 2,200 games.

Despite reaching this remarkable milestone, Joanie says she is not finished yet. As long as she is able, she plans to continue taking her seat at the scorer's table and doing what she has done for half a century, faithfully keeping track of every point for the Cardinals.



'04 CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL TEAM



SCAN THE QR CODE
FOR THE
DAKOTA NEWS NOW
STORY AND VIDEO.



LETTER FROM FR. STEVENS

By Fr. Shane D. Stevens, Pastor & Superintendent

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Across the years, St. Mary's Catholic School has stood as more than a place of learning. It has been a place of formation, a home where faith and reason meet, where young hearts are shaped for truth, goodness, and holiness. This enduring mission is not sustained by bricks and mortar alone, but by your fidelity, generosity, and prayer.

Sacred Scripture reminds us: "*Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it*" (Proverbs 22:6). These words are not mere aspiration. They are a promise rooted in God's providence. Every lesson taught in the light of Christ, every prayer offered in our classrooms, every act of charity modeled in our halls contributes to a lifelong path of discipleship.

The Church herself affirms the gravity and beauty of this mission. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: "*Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years... The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents*" (CCC 2226). Catholic schools, in communion with the parish and the family, share profoundly in this sacred duty—to form not only minds, but souls for eternity.

In our own time, we find a luminous example in St. Carlo Acutis, the young apostle of the Eucharist. He once said, "*The Eucharist is my highway to heaven.*" Though he lived in a digital age filled with distractions, Carlo chose instead a life centered on Christ, demonstrating that holiness is not reserved for a distant past, but is possible here and now, even for the young. His witness reflects what St. Mary's strives to cultivate: students who not only succeed academically, but who fall in love with Jesus Christ and His Church.

You, our alumni and benefactors, are a vital part of this mission. Many of you once walked these same halls, formed by the same truths, guided by the same Gospel. Others have supported this work through sacrifice and generosity, believing in the power of Catholic education to transform lives. Because of you, the light of faith continues to shine in new generations.

Our Lord assures us: "*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth... but store up treasures in heaven*" (Matthew 6:19–20). Every gift you offer—whether of time, prayer, or resources—becomes part of a greater investment, one that bears fruit not only in this life, but in eternity. The young souls entrusted to St. Mary's are, in a real sense, the treasure we steward together.

As we look to the future, we ask for your continued partnership. Pray for our students, that they may be courageous in faith. Support our teachers, that they may remain steadfast witnesses to truth. And, as you are able, continue to invest in this sacred mission so that St. Mary's may remain a place where Christ is known, loved, and served.

Let us take to heart the words of St. Paul: "*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth*" (1 Corinthians 3:6). Together, we labor in the Lord's vineyard, but it is God who brings forth the harvest.

Peace to you and yours! With gratitude and prayer,

In Christ I remain,

Fr. Shane D. Stevens

ST. CARLOS ACUTIS



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Our committee loves to receive updates to include in the Cardinal Connection. A vast majority of information we share has been found. Sending us these updates helps save us time and effort. New job? Address Change? Recently married? New baby? Big accomplishment? We want to hear from you!

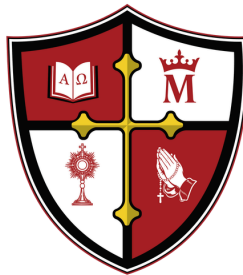
Send your information to:

St. Mary's Catholic School c/o Cardinal Connection

812 N State Avenue Dell Rapids, SD 57022

or email updates to communications@stmarydellrapids.org.

CELEBRATING OUR MISSION



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

HOME OF THE CARDINALS

A NEW CHAPTER FOR ST. MARY'S

At St. Mary's Catholic Schools, our mission has always been to provide an education rooted in Christ. As we grow and look toward the future, we want our visual identity to reflect the strength, history, and excellence of our community.

This fall, we were thrilled to share a new school tagline and crest that celebrate who we are and where we are going.

Central to this refresh is our new school tagline: "St. Mary's Catholic Schools, Where Faith Shapes Futures." This phrase captures the essence of our daily work. It is a promise that an education at St. Mary's goes beyond the classroom, providing a spiritual and moral foundation that prepares our students for a lifetime of purpose.

The St. Mary's Catholic Schools Crest:

To complement this mission, we are also introduced an official School Crest. This crest was designed to represent our identity as a center of academic excellence and faithful formation.

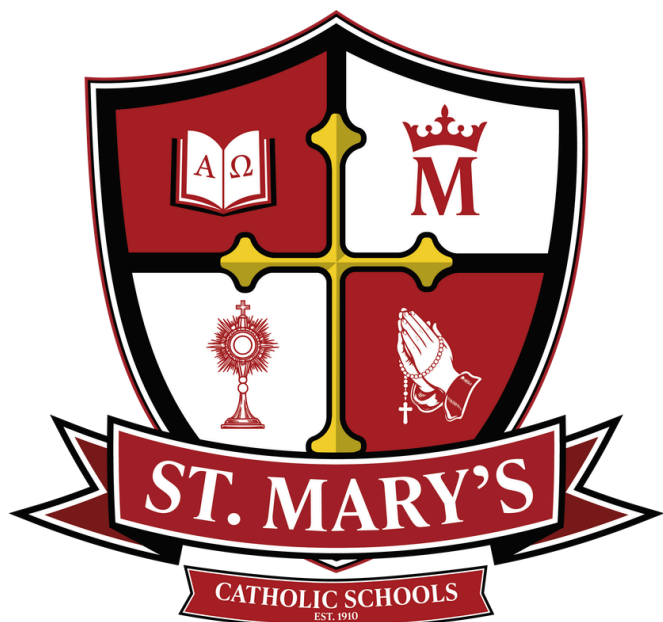
- A Symbol of Excellence: The crest will be used for formal publications, official communications, and long-term branding.
- Honoring Tradition: Our current school logo—which we all know and love—isn't going anywhere. It remains a vital part of our history and will continue to be used alongside the new crest. The new crest will be used specifically for materials that highlight academic excellence and Catholic identity.

A Heartfelt Word of Gratitude:

The development of this new identity was a collaborative effort. We wish to extend our deepest gratitude and grace to those who dedicated their time, prayer, and creativity to this process. A special thank you to the dedicated group of school parents who served on the committee. Their many meetings and thoughtful discussions ensured that these new symbols truly reflect the heart of St. Mary's. We are incredibly grateful for their commitment to ensuring our school's message remains clear and faithful for generations to come.

What will happen to the Cardinal Logo?

Our Cardinal is not going away, but is being used in a different capacity. It has taken on more of a mascot role and used less in professional settings. The two logos are used in conjunction, not against one another. Many institutions have two (or more) logos used for different situations and needs!



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS CREST

Cross:

The Cross represents Jesus Christ and His sacrificial love at the heart of our Catholic faith. Its placement signifies that Christ is central to the mission and vision of St. Mary's Catholic Schools.

Bible with the Alpha & Omega:

Reflects St. Mary's Catholic Schools commitment to forming students in God's Word and Gospel values.

Monstrance of the Eucharist:

Emphasizes Christ is truly present in the school community through worship and the sacraments.

"M" for Mary with a Crown:

The crowned "M" honors the Blessed Virgin Mary, patroness of the school and sponsoring parish. The school's mission is to form students who strive to imitate Mary's virtues.

Praying Hands with a Rosary:

Praying hands with a rosary symbolize a life rooted in prayer and devotion. The rosary also highlights a special devotion to Mary as a guide in faith.

We are looking for Alumni who keep updated address lists of their classmates.

Please send this list to the parish office by emailing, office@queenofpeacesd.org

FROM THE CARDINAL NEST

FOLLOWING ANNOUNCER '26 WYATT BAUMBERGER



Since April 1st of 2012, when Big Sioux Media was launched, St. Mary's fans have been fortunate to be able to watch broadcasts of most of our events via Big Sioux Media (BSM). It has proven to be a great resource for fans unable to attend these events in person. Matt Larson, owner of Big Sioux Media said, "When we started, we picked select games between St. Mary's and Dell Rapids to broadcast. We're now doing almost 60-70 events per school each year." At the time he purchased the website he had a partner. It was just the two of them and his partner did the play-by-play while he tended to the technical aspect. Through the years, as Big Sioux Media has grown and expanded from covering just St. Mary's and Dell Rapids Public, to now also covering Tri-Valley, Baltic away games, and with plans to add West Central in the fall of 2026, Matt now has 6 people who help him regularly, with a couple of others who fill in as needed. For St. Mary's, one of those people is senior, Wyatt Baumberger.

Wyatt, a Colman native, came to St. Mary's his junior year and said, "I didn't know many people at St. Mary's, but during the summer after I had enrolled, I was able to spend a lot of time with the football team and meet guys that way. When the first day of school came around, I felt very welcomed."

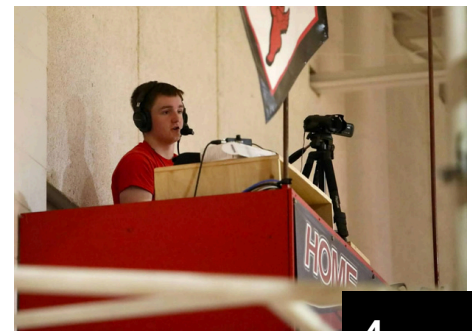
And though Wyatt had only been at St. Mary's a short time, he found a way to get to know a lot more of St. Mary's people, and it was through his start with Big Sioux Media, which was actually a fluke. "I started working for Big Sioux Media during the second quarter of opening night for girls' basketball during the '24-'25 season." That game, he remembers, was a 71-41 win over the Hills-Beaver Creek Patriots. But how was it a fluke? Wyatt says, "I thought broadcasting would be an interesting thing to do, but I really had no intent on ever putting a headset on. Except on this night, Mr. Michel (St. Mary's 7-12 Principal and AD) came down to the student section to see if anyone could take over the stream since Matt Larson needed to leave. I decided that I would go up and broadcast. I didn't plan to do it again. I thought, even though it was very fun, that it was a one-and-done kind of thing, but then Craig Libis put me in touch with Matt and he asked me if I was interested in broadcasting some more. I said that I was and I've done it ever since." And Wyatt has grown to become a fan favorite!

Many may wonder how much time goes into preparing for these broadcasts. For Wyatt, he says he spends about an hour to an hour and a half before each game getting things set up and ready. "I like to be in the gym and be set up an hour before the game. This gives me enough time to make sure that the stream is healthy." As far as calling the games and getting to know player names, "It doesn't take long to learn in basketball, but football and volleyball are challenging in the sense that there are more names and numbers to learn and volleyball is very fast paced." He added, "I usually asked my classmates how good the other team was going to be and I'd find a live stream to tell me the starters. In some cases, I would just ask the opposing team's coach for their starting lineup. In the final boys' basketball game this season I tried out a starting lineup graphic and a team compilation graphic, which was about a 20-minute setup." So, many things factor into game prep, and Wyatt was always ready to go at game time.

Matt Larson had this to add about Wyatt, "Wyatt has been great working for Big Sioux Media. He volunteered to step in during the middle of a St Mary's basketball game in December of 2024. I had to run my son to urgent care for a very high fever, and he just jumped up there and took over for me without any training whatsoever. He did great and wanted to do more games, so from that point on, he's been the voice of the Cardinals. It took him no time at all to learn all the details with the scoreboards, double camera set-up, commercials, logos, setting everything up, etc. He learned it so fast that I didn't have to worry about him having issues or not. He's able to handle just about anything with the broadcast set up and live stream. Not only that, he invited younger kids to come help him during Junior High and Junior Varsity games to do some play-by-play, work the camera, and just see how it all works to try to groom the future voices of the Cardinals."

When asked about his memories of his broadcasting experience, Wyatt shared, "There are a ton of good memories. Watching Trevon Beckman, Maverick Lebrun, and Madala Hanson hit 1,000 career points in basketball was very fun. From this past football season I would say watching Trimmier Hanson's 4-touchdown game against Alcester-Hudson, Lincoln LeBrun taking the very first kick return of the year for a touchdown, and of course, Jaxon Baumberger's interception to put away Faulkton in the semifinals account for the favorites, but it's really just special being able to broadcast games that my peers are playing in."

Wyatt has been a great addition to St. Mary's in many ways and as far as his feelings about his time here he says, "As time went on, my relationship with God and how I interact with the people around me has changed entirely for the better, it has definitely been a great change." As graduation approaches and he makes his post-high school plans, Wyatt says, "I will be attending Augustana in the fall, double majoring in history and secondary education, as well as pursuing a minor in coaching, with the hope of becoming a Social Studies teacher, as well as a football coach." He added, "I may also be back to broadcast for Big Sioux Media if my schedule allows for that." We sure hope it does, as he will be greatly missed here at St. Mary's. We wish Wyatt the best of luck in all his future plans and thank him for all he has done for our school!



FIRST COMMUNION

Second Graders had a big year. They received their First Reconciliation in the Fall and on April 19th they received their First Communion.



Pictured Back Row L to R: Tucker Schrempp, Luke Burkhart, Cooper Scott, Carson Bendt, and Nelson Rademacher. **Middle Row L to R:** Audrey Heirigs, Brynna Lacey, Catherine Walsh, Lukkes McMillan, Gus Klein, Holdyn Brandt, Jaxon Michel, Deitz Klein, James Walsh, Keirra Voelker, Zelie Price, and Amelia Ahlers. **Front Row L to R:** McKinney Soulek, Avery Buskey, Brielle Fiegen, Yareli Mora, Kendall Fitzgerald, Gabriella Geraets, Fr. Shane D. Stevens, Olivia Gonsor, Maddie Genzlinger, Lydia Bunkers, Trinity Hoffman, and Quinly Penning.

CONFIRMATION



On January 11, St. Mary's students, along with other parishioners from the Queen of Peace Pastorate, received the sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop DeGrood.

Pictured Back Row L to R: Elliot Bowers, Caleb Larson, Cory Huntimer, James Froke, Zachary Pederson, Mason Ellefson, Jacob Hamilton, Carter Leibeg, Alex McFarland, Michael Gardner, Cooper Marty, Eli Schimdt. **Second Row to the back L to R:** Ellee Deranleau, Harper Werdel, Allie Hansen, Josie Price, Natalie Gilbert, Maddyn LeBrun, Sydney Carlson, Lillian Schlueter, Sophie Burggraff, Elizabeth Vogel, Maci Voelker, Lila Boysen, Harper Mousel, Caleb Nelsen. **Second Row L to R:** Cutler Royer-Kerns, Claire Sorenson, Claire Witte, Addy Witte, Finley Luze, Brianne Bowen, Whitlie Shoenrock, Dominic Swift. **Front Row L to R:** Kearys Asio, Ashlyn Murphy, Brielle Hilmoie, Molly Meyers, Phoebe Vargas, Fr. Shane D. Stevens, Bishop Donald DeGrood, Fr. Bill Hamak, Fr. Ernest Abugri, Dana Garcia, Julianna Gaspar, Avery Baumberger, Logan Kontz.

GRADUATION

Congratulations to the St. Mary's Graduating Class of 2026. Graduation was on May 8

Pictured Back Row L to R: Carlo Pica, Lincoln LeBrun, Peyton Lamb, Trimmier Hansen, and Mason Spoonemore. **Middle Row L to R:** Wyatt Baumberger, Lukas Gaul, Luke Symens, Stephenie Geraets, Madelyn Klein, and Clara Geraets. **Front Row L to R:** Rylee Chamley, Brianna Weiland, Cami Wolles, Jenna Miller, Makyla Buchholz, Lucy Vargas, and Ella Kangas.



Please pray for all our students from St. Mary's and our Pastorate who have received these sacraments or reached these milestones the last few months.

GENERATIONS TO GENERATIONS CAMPAIGN UPDATE

MOVING FORWARD WITH PURPOSE

CAMPAIGN UPDATE - MAY 2026



We are excited to share a significant milestone in our beloved school's campus renewal campaign. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our community, we have reached nearly 70% of our \$14.9 million goal.

This progress reflects the tremendous strength of support for our mission and a shared commitment to securing the future of St. Mary's School. Every gift, large and small, has brought us closer to turning our vision into reality, and for that, we are deeply grateful.

As we celebrate how far we've come, we also look ahead with renewed energy and enthusiasm. The finish line is within reach, and with your continued support, we are confident we will get there together. To those who have already supported this second "Moving Forward with Purpose" campaign, thank you for your generosity and dedication. For those who have not yet joined us, we warmly invite you to be part of this final push and help us complete this important mission for current and future generations. Thank you for being an essential part of this journey.

CAMPAIGN COMPARISONS	Generations to Generations Campaign	Moving Forward with Purpose Campaign
Campaign Dates	2021-2026	2026-2030
Total Number of Donors	413	118
Total Raised	\$9,431,495.09	\$882,925

Help us reach our goal of retiring the debt on the new school building and ensuring the future of Catholic education at St. Mary's!

WHY DO WE ASK FOR PLEDGES?

The campaign emphasizes pledging because it allows donors to consider larger commitments than they might be able to make through a one-time gift. To ensure every gift is accurately recorded and acknowledged, we ask donors to complete a Donor Agreement Form. While these pledges are not legally binding, they are made in good faith and reflect a donor's commitment to support the campaign over a schedule and method of their choosing.



ARE GIFTS TAX DEDUCTIBLE?



Yes, gifts to the campaign are tax-deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law. However, the application of tax laws can vary based on individual financial circumstances. Donors with specific questions about the deductibility of their contributions are encouraged to consult their attorney or tax advisor.

WHO ARE WE ASKING TO PARTICIPATE?

Everyone! In the initial 2022 capital campaign, parishioners of St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's School families, friends, alumni, and the Dell Rapids community members were asked to support this important initiative for our beloved school. In the 2025 Moving Forward with Purpose campaign we are re-approaching those whose support was requested in 2022. Additionally, we are also looking for new donors to support this campaign as well!



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We invite all alumni to join our parish and school community in prayer for the success of the "Moving Forward with Purpose" Campaign. We also ask each family to thoughtfully discern how they are being called to support this effort. Your generous participation, through prayer, financial support, and advocacy, will help ensure that quality Catholic education remains available at St. Mary's School for generations to come.

As you consider your gift, please know that a variety of giving options are available to support the campaign. These flexible options allow you to make a meaningful contribution that works best for your family, while also helping the school plan for the future through committed support.

If you feel called to give, you may do so by scanning the campaign QR code. For additional information about giving options, or questions contact Jeff Trumbauer at 605-428-3990 or email coo@queenofpeacesd.org.



SCAN QR CODE

BIRTHS

The following children were born to/adopted by alumni or have grandparents or great-grandparents who are St. Mary's alumni.

James Michael Thompson: son of '17 Spencer and Jennifer; grandson of '84 Amy Pederson; and great grandson of '61 Ray Pederson.

Greely Marie Miles: daughter of '09 Breanna (Wolles) and Derek; granddaughter of '81 Mike and Sherri Wolles; great granddaughter of '53 Rog Wolles, and '61 Roseann (Klein) and John Mousel.

Clara Gayle Wolles: daughter of '14 Joe and Kayla Wolles; granddaughter of '86 Ed and '87 Teresa (Klein) Wolles, and '86 Matt Nelson; great granddaughter of '53 Rog Wolles, and '60 Bill and Gayle Klein.

Josiah Joseph Roemen: son of Josh and Madison; grandson of '86 Mark and Christy Roemen.

Nolan Thomas Meyer: son of '15 Claudia (Schwebach) and Jacob.

Raelyn May Schreier: daughter of Jacob and Trystan; granddaughter of '86 Tim and Paula Schreier.

Paisley Jatton: daughter of Natasha and Caleb; granddaughter of '91 Donna (Berg) and Alan Reit; great granddaughter '51 Erma (Hansen) Berg.

Briar Ruesink: daughter of Logan and Paige; granddaughter of '95 Eric Majeres; great granddaughter of '67 Jack and '67 Alice (Mergen) Majeres.

Ozi Raymond Kahler: son of Nic and Meg; grandson of '89 Sheri (Pederson) Dearduff, great grandson of '61 Ray Pederson.

Hazel LeAnn Fiegen: daughter of '20 Paige (Bunkers) and Trevor; granddaughter of '88 Jeanne (Michel) and Travis Bunkers, and '84 Tad and Brenda Fiegen.

Oakley Grey Kubly: son of '14 Austin and Mckynze; granddaughter of '89 Shelly (Vortherms) and Jon Kubly.

Rayna Lee Leighton: daughter of '12 Ellie (Everist) and Kutler.

Jackson Alex Welbig: son of '15 Ryan and Courtney; grandson of '80 Dan and Diane Welbig.

Destyni Holly Honey Overcashier: daughter of '07 Holly (Price) and Zach; granddaughter of '85 David and '82 Julie (Fiegen) Price.

Norma Bernadette Gee: daughter of '14 Sarah (Ginsbach) and Tyler.

Santiago Espada: son of '22 April (Hof) and Ricardo.

Jovie Eleanor Heintzman: daughter of '15 Angelia (Jorgenson) and Jarrod; granddaughter of '82 Dan Jorgenson.

Brinley Lee Reecy: daughter of '17 Lane and Madison; granddaughter of '93 Mike and Jennifer Reecy; great granddaughter of '61 Tom and Kaye Reecy.

Waylon Weston Geraets: son of '20 Weston and Gabi; grandson of '95 Jeff and Amanda Geraets; great grandson of '63 Pat Geraets.

Rhodes Wylder Easterby: son of Billie and Marcus; grandson of '87 Keith and '85 Cheryl (Ahlers) Miller; great grandson of '58 Arnold and '59 Bonnie (Ellis) Ahlers.

Statler Luke and Sage Elliot Berg: twin sons of Monte and Michaela; grandsons of '83 Mark and Alice Berg; great grandsons of '51 Erma (Hansen) Berg.

Warren Edward Reiff: son of Brendon and Rachel; grandson of '82 Teri (Skatvold) and Brian Reiff; great grandson of '63 Elouise (Kern) and Harold Skatvold.

Bennett Thomas Edwards: son of Noah and Elise; great grandson of '61 Roseann (Klein) and John Mousel.

Violet Kay and Alexandra Vera Burggraff: twin daughters of Grant and Renee; granddaughters of '90 Susie (Geraets) and Bert Burggraff; great-granddaughters of '63 Pat Geraets, and '57 Vera (Penning) and Bernard Burggraff.

PERMANENT VOWS OF LOVE

The following alumni, or relation to alumni, were united in marriage.

Taylor Benson and Chase Hemmer: June 20, 2025. Taylor is the daughter of '95 Lisa (Klein) and Mike Benson; granddaughter of '60 Bill and Gayle Klein.

'19 Clare Klein and Noah Buseman: November 17, 2025. Clare is the daughter of '92 Mark and Renae Klein; granddaughter of '60 Bill and Gayle Klein, and Bernard and '57 Vera (Penning) Burggraff.

'12 Lee Hoffman and Kelcey Blair: January 9, 2026. Lee is the son of '81 Kurt and Mary Hoffman.

'11 Brandon Schnieders and Shelby Thomas: March 28, 2026. Brandon is the son of '79 Mark and Jan Schnieders; grandson of '45 Darlene (Pierret) Schnieders.

ALUMNI NEWSMAKERS

'61 Art and '64 Joan (Ginsbach) Klein celebrate 60 years of marriage. They have 3 children and 5 grandchildren.

Congratulations to **'25 Trevon Beckman** on earning All GPAC 2nd teams honors as a true freshman.

'17 Haley Michel earned the Registered Play Therapist (RPT) credential. This certification reflects hundreds of hours of specialized training and supervision focused on helping children heal, grow and express themselves through play.

REMEMBRANCES

The following alumni, or relation to alumni, have passed away.

Rosanne Brown: November 5, 2025. Survived by husband Tony; children '09 Jordan, '12 Maddison Shuette and '16 Joshua.

Lucille Boeve: November 14, 2025. Survived by daughters Kathy Bolt, '77 Diane Bunkers and '81 Debra Mergen.

'76 Cindy Rae (Kolbeck) Swenson: December 23, 2025. Survived by husband Joe; children Stacia McGrann, Andrea Cunningham, Erika Boyd and Riley; parents Gene and Donald Kolbeck; siblings '78 Karen Hoffmann, '80 Krisi Karst, '82 Tom Kolbeck and '85 Darin Kolbeck.

'75 Kathy Jane (Miller) Mousel: January 8, 2026. Survived by husband Carl; daughters Andrea and Desirae; siblings '67 Joann Dickinson, '69 Wayne, '70 Patti O'Connor, '72 Dee Dee Iwen, '73 Mary Lou Johnson, '74 Tom, '77 Donna Springman, '78 Doug, and '85 Teresa Gatto.

Mary Ann (Thompson) Donahue Burns: February 4, 2026. Survived by children '69 Mary Harmon, '74 Judy Pearson, '76 Richard, '79 Betty Weber, '80 Kathy Goodale, '82 Theresa Burggraff, '83 Dorothy Blauwet, Michael and John.

'62 Charles Dennis Schmidt: February 5, 2026. Survived by wife Karen; children Carla Michel, Brian, Josh, and Jill; siblings '68 Leonard, '70 Grace and '75 Raymond.

Jane T Kuper: February 16, 2026. Survived by husband '73 Dan; children Walter Wright III, Kathryn Hendrickson and Jennifer Mason.

Sister Paulette Garry: March 3, 2026. Sister Paulette, "Our Cherub", taught 7th and 8th grade from 1978-1999, and was one of the last resident sisters at St. Mary's before moving to Aberdeen.

'66 Bobbi Marie (Van Dam) Christensen: March 7, 2026. Survived by husband Dick; children Lisa Jorgensen, Denise Schmidt, Angie Eide and Steve; siblings '70 Jeanette Arnold, '74 Laurie Arbes, '76 Shelly Burh, '77 Kristi Madison, '78 Marilyn Williams, '79 Marsha Schlueter, Diane Van Dam, Tracy Van Dam and Robert Jr.

'47 Evelyn Catherine (Hinricher) Weinact: March 24, 2026. Survived by children '70 Patrick, Connie Voelker, Duane and Kevin.

'61 James David Wolles: March 24, 2026. Jim served as maintenance manager at St. Mary for five years. He is survived by wife '62 Shirley (Bunkers); children '84 Lisa Buechler, '85 Diane Thomas, '86 Robert, '87 Anthony, '89 Karen Steffen, '92 Peggy McGuire and '99 Nancy Shellum; siblings '51 Ethel Schmidt, '53 Roger and '58 Walter.

Leland H Palmer: March 30, 2026. Lee taught English for 7 years at St. Mary's, along with coaching multiple activities during those years. Lee was a voice on Big Sioux Media for the Cardinals before moving away. He is survived by sons Nicholas, '21 Samuel and '25 William.

CALLING ALL 5TH GENERATION FAMILIES

One of the Cardinal Connection Committee's greatest desires is to bring light to the alumni of our school, and the commitment our families have to continue the legacy of St. Mary's. We feel one of the best ways to do that is through covering the generational families who have continued to attend and support St. Mary's. In the past, we have covered families who have four or five living generations of St. Mary's attendees. It is becoming harder and harder to find those families who have four generations living, so we are now looking to cover any and all fifth-generation families, even if one or more members are now deceased. We will cover one family per issue.

There are so many interesting stories we want to hear about our school from both the older and newer generations. If you are a member of a fifth-generation family and would like to share your story, please reach out to any member of the Committee listed on page 12 or contact Lili through the parish office at communications@queenofpeacesd.org. We would also love pictures of the attending members and/or any school photos you have throughout the years. Thank you for your help.

SUMMER CHALLENGE CAMP CELEBRATES ROOTS IN COMMUNITY-DRIVEN EDUCATION

What began as a simple idea to keep talented local teachers in town during the summer has grown into a beloved annual tradition for area students.

The Summer Challenge Camp launched in 1997 following a suggestion from Joe Thornell, then principal of St. Mary's High School. School leaders noticed many skilled teachers were leaving the area each summer to take jobs in Sioux Falls. The goal was to create engaging classes that would both retain teaching talent locally and allow educators to earn extra income without the commute. This also filled a gap for young families looking for educational children's programs in the summertime. The initiative quickly became a creative outlet for students and a valuable opportunity for local educators, blending fun, learning, and community spirit in its early years.

'71 Linda (Schmidt) Daugaard, Jen Ruesink, and Dawn Longville served as the program's first volunteer coordinators. From the beginning, the camp kept costs low to ensure accessibility. Most courses were offered for just \$25 per student, and St. Mary's is proud to still offer these for mainly between \$15-\$35. Considering how different the world is compared to 30 years ago, it is a great feat to still offer these so reasonably to families in our community.

In addition to fun camps at the school, Summer Challenge has expanded to offer Soccer, T-Ball, and a variety of Sports camps for our athletes, from beginner to high school.

This year, there are six teachers and multiple volunteers helping with over 36 school and sports camp offerings. The opportunities are endless in the classroom with camps ranging from learning a new craft, challenging their STEM abilities, and immersing themselves in a make-believe world (based on popular books or cartoon characters).

Summer Challenge has become more than just a summer program; it is a reflection of the generosity, creativity, and strong sense of community that defines Dell Rapids. Families are given affordable, enriching opportunities for their children, teachers are able to share their gifts close to home, and students are inspired to learn, grow, and connect in new ways. The continued success of Summer Challenge is a testament to what can happen when a community invests in their people. Dell Rapids is truly blessed to have such a program, one that continues to make a lasting impact on generations of students each and every summer.

DR. SUESS CAMP 2016



CHEER CAMP 2018



2023

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES CAMP 2017



PINKALICIOUS CAMP 2015



SUPERHERO CAMP 2019



2020



COOKING CAMP 2025



2024



2021



2022

COMING TOGETHER FOR COMMUNITY

The Lasting Impact St. Mary's Catholic Schools Food Drive Has on the Dell Rapids Community

For over 20 years, a spirit of generosity has been quietly woven into the fabric of St. Mary's Catholic Schools (SMCS). In addition to the Catholic Schools Week activities, SMCS sponsors the Dell Rapids Community Food Pantry's biggest food drive of the year. This tradition continues to shape students' hearts as much as it fills local pantry shelves. While no one can pinpoint exactly when the effort began, it has become a longstanding and meaningful part of the school year, one which students and staff alike look forward to.

Each year, the Student Council takes the lead in organizing the drive, thoughtfully planning a week dedicated to serving others. In preparation, students reach out to the local food pantry to learn which items are most needed. Those requests then inspire the daily collection themes, ensuring that every donation makes a direct and meaningful impact for families in need. To round out the effort, the week concludes with a free-will offering, allowing the school community to contribute financially toward perishable items and any remaining needs.

The Food Drive is not only about service, it also brings a sense of excitement and camaraderie. A friendly competition among grade levels encourages participation, with classes striving to collect the most items per student. This year, the 3rd grade led the way in the K–6 division, while the 8th grade and freshman class shared top honors in the 7th–12th division.

Once the collections are complete, junior and senior students take on the important task of delivering the donations to the food pantry, providing a tangible connection between their efforts and the impact on the community.

Year after year, the St. Mary's Food Drive stands as a testament to the school's commitment to faith in action. Forming students who not only learn about compassion, but live it out in service to others.

2026 FOOD DRIVE BY THE NUMBERS

\$2,755

Brought in on Free Will Donation Friday. An **8%** increase over last year.

2,833

Items donated over the course of the week. A **42%** increase over last year.

ON AVERAGE IN 2026 EACH STUDENT:

Brought **3.24** items each day of the week.

Donated **\$12.64** in cash/gift cards on Free Will Donation Friday.



HEY!

WANT TO JOIN THE CREW?

Are you passionate about St. Mary's Catholic Schools, and want to help be a driving force in making the Cardinal Connection? Now is the time, to join in!

We are always looking for fresh ideas and new insights to represent our school and alumni in this news publication.

Our current committee members are not stepping down, but it would be nice to get the next generation of volunteers up to speed on the process before anyone decides they would like to step away. With current technology, living in Dell Rapids is not a deal breaker!

If this interests you in the slightest, please reach out to Lili with any questions or for more information at communications@queenofpeacesd.org.

2025 - 2026 ALUMNI APPEAL UPDATE

Current financial support amount during the past fiscal year, July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026.

\$66,165

raised to date

No envelope? No problem! You can donate to the Alumni Appeal by visiting giving.parishsoft.com/app/giving/st606120 and choosing Alumni Fund.

CORRECTION FROM 2025 FALL ISSUE ALUMNI APPEAL DONORS:
St. Mary's Sponsor \$1,000-\$5,000: Roger & Judy Fiegen

What is the Cardinal Connection Alumni Appeal?

The money given through the Alumni Appeal is one of the many ways that keep SMCS affordable and is used for everyday expenses for a school. Alumni are given the opportunity to give back and support the next generation of Catholic education at St. Mary's Catholic Schools.

5 Ways Your Money May Be Used:

- Hiring quality educators and offering a competitive salary.
- Textbooks and curriculum in line with our mission and values.
- Provide a clean and safe environment for all students.
- Helps keep our tuition rates lower.
- Printing costs for the Cardinal Connection Newsletter.



Give to the Appeal

Scan the QR Code at any time to donate to the Alumni Appeal. Our online portal accepts Venmo, Google Pay, Apple Pay, and your typical Credit Card or ACH payments.

CARDINAL CONNECTION COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

Connie Fitzgerald - fitzgeraldconnie@hotmail.com, '83 Deb (Klein) Wolles - ddw@goldenwest.net, '83 Tammy (Vortherms) Michel - tammymichel83@gmail.com, Lili Schulte - communications@queenofpeacesd.org

We hope you enjoyed this edition of the Cardinal Connection. We do our best to keep up with all of the alumni happenings. Please feel free to submit any information, stories, or updates to any of the committee members or contact the Parish Office.