



Liturgy Schedule

Saturday Vigil:

5:00 p.m.,

7:00 p.m. (Spanish)

Sunday:

7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m.,

11:30 a.m.,

4:00 p.m. (Lifeteen)

Daily Mass:

Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri, 7:30 a.m.;

Wed, 12 p.m. (noon)

Adoration:

Mon, Tue, 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.;

Wed, 8:00 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.;

Fri, 8:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Confessions:

Sat, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Youth Ministry Opportunities Provide a Safe Place to Grow and Discover

Particularly in this day and age, the teenage years are difficult. Faced with hundreds of questions and uncertainty, these young men and women are tasked with discovering themselves and, more importantly, who God created them to be. That's why it's so important, explains St. Mark's Coordinator of High School Youth Ministry Brad Horn, that we provide a safe place for these young people — a place where they can feel truly loved and accepted as they navigate through this difficult stage of life.

"So much is going on in their lives during this time," Brad says. "These teens are trying to find out their identity and to discover both things about themselves and things that adults are telling them. So, we're here to provide them with that safe place where they can honestly ask those questions — a place where we can be sure that they are being led in the right direction."

St. Mark's weekly Band of Brothers and Women of Wisdom — BoB and WoW — gatherings seek to become that "safe place"



A recent BoB and WoW gathering where youth engaged in a discussion on the existence of God

by providing an informal environment where teens can grow in relationship with one another, ask the tough questions, and receive both honest and thought-provoking responses. Occurring Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8 p.m., teens are able to come together in a more intimate setting for what Brad describes as a "roundtable discussion."

"Our goal is to provide a safe place for the teens to come and present any questions that they have," Brad says. "It doesn't

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Stewardship

Hannah, the Good Steward

What should we do when our prayers are answered?

Is there anything left to do after we have sincerely thanked God for His favors? If God were a human peer, we would probably try to reciprocate by granting Him a favor in return. But the truth is that God cannot be made greater by anything that

we do for Him. Instead, God receives our thanks and tells us to “go and do likewise.” That is, He tells us to share with others the good that He has bestowed on us. And in doing so, we are really sharing God Himself. That is the definition of stewardship!

The Old Testament Book of Samuel contains one of the most

poignant examples of stewardship in the entire Bible. The first chapter teaches us of an unhappy, barren woman named Hannah. Desperate in her barrenness, Hannah prays that God will give her a son, vowing that she will raise him to be a man of God.

Imagine Hannah’s elation when she was granted her prayer! When Samuel was born, her heart’s desire had come true! Imagine further the pang of motherly sorrow, as Hannah kept her promise to God by taking Samuel at a young age to be the servant of Eli, the high priest. The Book of Samuel tells us that once Samuel became Eli’s servant, Hannah saw her young son just once a year.

Indeed, Hannah knew that Samuel was truly a gift from God – an answered prayer. Hannah’s response is that of the Good Steward – with an attitude of both gratitude and sacrifice, she gave up her son to honor God. One imagines that Hannah probably struggled with this sacrifice during those first years. She probably did not know what God had in store for her son. Yet, through her faithfulness, God used him as a gift to an entire nation. Samuel would, in time, become one of the greatest prophets of Jewish history.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand the sacrifices we make in the name of stewardship, while the results may just be impossible to miss! However, He asks that we continue to be faithful in either case. God has undoubtedly bestowed gifts on all of us – at whatever the cost, we are to “go and do likewise.”



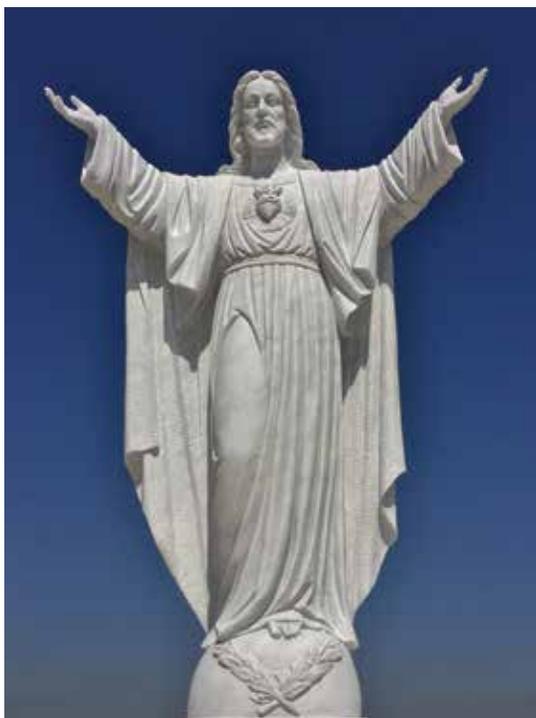
Preparing for Our Lenten Journey and Prioritizing the Gift of Time

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Lent begins on Wednesday, Feb. 14, Ash Wednesday. Most of us are aware that Lent is a time of prayer, penance and giving alms. So, it would seem that Lent is a perfect time for stewardship. As we examine our lives and try to find ways to deepen our relationship with God, it is good to remember that whenever we give our time, talent, or treasure, we are living as better stewards.

For each of us, our relationship with God should be the first priority. God has given us the precious gift of time, so we need to thank Him for this gift by using it wisely. Stewardship of time is about how we spend every minute of every day. Most of us probably feel that we do not have enough time for all the things we hope to accomplish or achieve. However, each of us is given the same amount of time — 24 hours in a day, seven days in a week. So, how do we choose to use our time? We need to prioritize this gift of time, which means putting the most important things first.

If deepening our relationship with God is our first priority, then time spent in prayer, at Mass, in our personal lives through reading Holy Scriptures, and meditating on God's Holy Word should be paramount. Our second priority might be our relationship to our family. We need to spend time building a strong family unit filled with respect and love for life. And perhaps our third priority should be our relationship with our parish



and our community of faith. Finally, we must spend time supporting others in their faith journeys and ministering to those in need.

We must remember that first requirement for our Lenten journey — prayer. Our Catholic faith is full of prayer forms and traditions that are available to us all. Find a prayer form that works for you, and truly cultivate your prayer life in order to connect and build a real, personal relationship with the Lord. We all need to carve out time during Lent by dedicating time to prayer. Perhaps it is only 10 minutes each day for quiet reflection on Holy Scripture. Or it may be something more substantial — perhaps a reflective weekend retreat.

We might consider Lent our own personal Stewardship Renewal season. Fasting, prayer and almsgiving should be what we try to do the entire year. But we must make an intentional effort to practice these during the 40 days of Lent. After all, 40 days comprises just over 10 percent of the year — and that is remarkably close to our stewardship tithe of 10 percent, isn't it?

God bless you in all you do, and especially during this holy time of Lent.

In Christ,

Fr. George
Pastor

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A LOOK BACK ON OUR PARTY

We thank all who celebrated faith, stewardship and fellowship in



Helen Fairchild awarded Volunteer of the year 2017

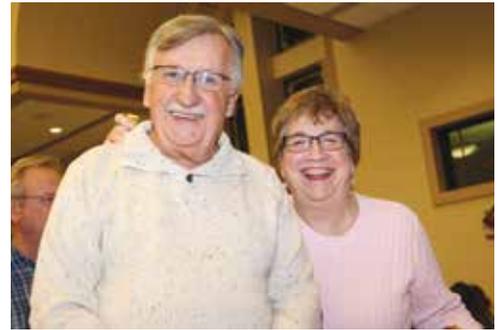


FISH APPRECIATION DINNER

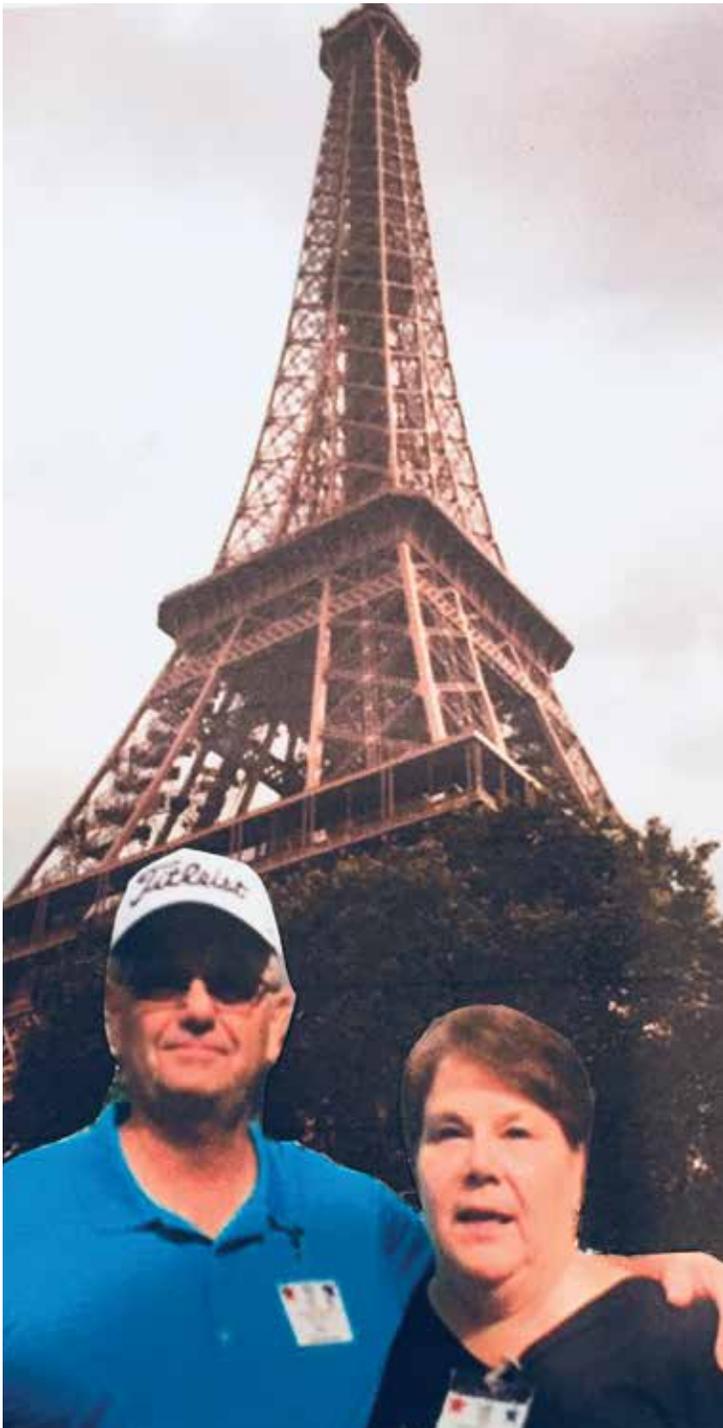
the St. Mark community during our Parish Appreciation Dinner.



Knights of Columbus were awarded Ministry of the year 2017.



The Christofersons Through



Bill and Kathy Christoferson renewed their wedding vows last year at the Eiffle Tower. Officiating was Deacon Jim, who was traveling with them.

For Bill Christoferson, going to church just used to mean “going to church.”

“I wasn’t thinking about what was going on in church — I was thinking about what was going on in the rest of my life, at work,” Bill admits. “I was a workaholic, I’d go sunup to sunset. I’ve realized now that, without God, none of that meant anything.”

Originally hailing from Duluth, Minn., Bill and his wife, Kathy, moved to Denton in 1995, after a stint in Houston. They joined St. Mark shortly afterwards.

Although Kathy was initially unsure about whether or not she wanted to work upon arriving in the area, God made it clear that He had plans for her.

“I prayed and I told God, ‘If You want me to work, You bring a job to me,’” she says, recalling with a smile. “I was volunteering at the church and Father asked if I would consider being the bookkeeper.”

Kathy has now served as our bookkeeper for almost 20 years, and both Bill and Kathy serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Kathy is a sacristan and lector, as well. They both try to jump in whenever there is a need in the parish.

“We just volunteer wherever there is a need,” Kathy says. “If they put out a plea, we just try to do whatever we can, where we can.”

But it wasn’t always that way for the Christofersons. Both raised Catholic, they weren’t initially very involved in service in the church. Bill, who worked in the grocery business for most of his career, credits his transformation to a priest at their parish in Houston, and his wife’s faithful prayers.

“Back when we were in Houston, I was always working constantly,” Bill recalls, smiling. “One day we were in church, and there was an activity fair and Father dragged me over to the sign-up table. He wanted me to be on the Finance Council.”

For Bill, what was initially a two-year commitment quickly turned into seven years.

“I think he’s the one who really pushed me in that direction,” he says. “And without Kathy praying for me, I probably

Find Faith

Sharing Service

wouldn't have become a strong Catholic like I am now. She kept on persistently praying — not nagging, but praying.”

Becoming more actively involved in his parish has truly impacted Bill's faith and relationship with God.

“Now when I go to church, I pray,” he says. “I listen to what Father is saying. I try to hear the Mass and all the prayers. When I went to Communion, before I was an EMHC, I just walked up, walked back to my seat. Now, I know that I'm fortunate to serve the Body and Blood of Christ and I don't look at it like I used to. It's an honor, and before I had no idea what I was even doing. But now I do.”

Kathy has also found that her faith and trust in God has been transformed the more she has become involved at the parish.

“I find that I'm a lot more tolerant of the things that happen,” Kathy says. “I'm not the one in control. God is guiding me through life, showing me what I need to do. I feel like we're filled with a lot of grace and God gives us the ability to handle all the stuff that comes our way. I don't trouble and worry over some of the things that happen — things happen for a reason and you have to let God handle it.”

The Christofersons — who have been married 47 years, and have one daughter and two grandchildren — still make time not only to serve, but also to continue learning about their faith. They're currently involved in the Epic Study, going deeper into their understanding of Church history.

“Going to a lot of these different seminars and trying to learn more and more about the Church, it's very helpful,” Bill says.

“I don't think we have any idea what we don't know, there's so much out there,” Kathy adds.

They have also found that surrounding themselves with good friends has been a crucial part of their faith journey. Whether it was through the Knights of Columbus, an ACTS retreat, or the group of people they go out to dinner with every Saturday night after Mass, having friends to support them has made all the difference.

“That probably brought my faith a lot stronger than it had been,” Bill says. “Once you get close to these other people, you get close to God.”

Bill and Kathy encourage their fellow parishioners to consider becoming more involved in the parish, meeting people and giving back through stewardship.

“That's how you feel like you're a member of the community, by getting involved and meeting the parishioners,” Kathy says. “Jump in there — just do it. When you do things like that, you become part of the church and you take ownership of the church and you feel like you really belong.”

Kathy and Bill, we're certainly glad that you “belong” to our family at St. Mark's!

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— Kathy Christoferson

Saint Mark

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Youth Ministry Opportunities Provide a Safe Place to Grow and Discover continued from front cover

even have to be exclusively relating to Catholic theology. It can also be about things like peer interaction and how to relate with their friends at school. We've talked about, for example, things like how to talk to Protestant friends about things like the Eucharist, recent mass shootings, homosexuality, and recently St. Thomas Aquinas' five proofs of God's existence."

Chosen by the teens themselves, topics are varied. Yet, the discussion always remains grounded firmly in the teachings of the Catholic Church, drawing from both the Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The goal is simply to allow the teens to be heard, honestly receiving their questions, and then to lead them to the truth they so earnestly seek. And in the process, Brad says, those "daily disciplines" and "good habits" are formed as teens learn to appreciate the wellspring of knowledge from Mother Church.

"It makes Christ more tangible to them, showing that He's not just some superficial, far-off being," Brad says. "It shows them that they can have an actual relationship with Him, learning more about who He is and in turn discovering more about themselves. It creates that space for intimacy, building upon their natural curiosity and desire for truth. A lot of these teens ask questions about the why or how of things. They want arguments that are logical, scientific and something that they can put down on paper. So, helping them understand Scripture, the Church, and Jesus in this way is so very important."

Having been an established part of our parish Youth Ministry program for some time now, Brad has personally witnessed many blessings from the BoB and WoW gatherings. It continues to break down barriers, allowing teens to draw closer to one another and to ultimately find their place within the Church.

We invite all parish high school-age youth to consider taking advantage of this unique opportunity. For more information, please contact Brad Horn at either bhorn@stmarkdenton.org or 940-222-6703.

Saint Mark