



Ascension

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Stations of the Cross and Fish Fry Events

*Sharing in Reflection and Fellowship
as Part of Our Lenten Journey*

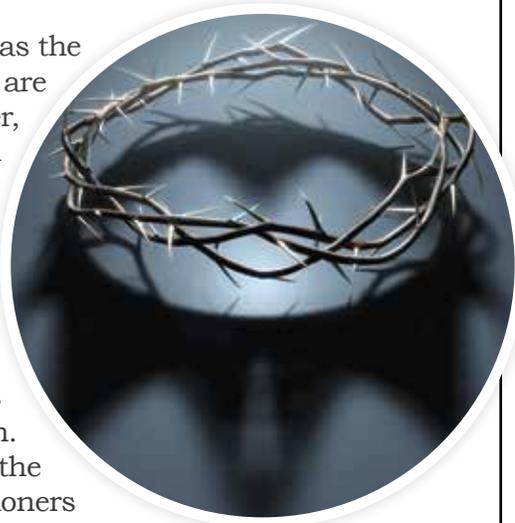
Lent offers us a time to truly come together as the family of God, and here at Ascension, we are given an opportunity to join not only in prayer, but also in the fellowship of sharing a meal appropriate to the season.

The Stations of the Cross are typically scheduled for late Friday afternoons before the Knights of Columbus fish fries that are held in conjunction with the Stations.

“Historically, the Knights of Columbus Council 7602 at Ascension Parish hosts the fish fries,” says Deacon Tony Finneman. “Usually, those who attend the Stations of the Cross, attend the fish fries. Since adult parishioners are asked to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and on Fridays during Lent, the Friday fish fries become a very popular choice. The Knights provide an excellent meal for a reasonable price.”

“The Ascension Friday fish fries are a Lenten tradition,” says Carl Ness, council member. “It has been sponsored by the Knights of Columbus for about 30 years, even before the parish built the church. A group of members plan and prepare the fish [cod] meal, including baked potato, homemade mac and cheese, corn, coleslaw and dessert. The desserts are furnished by the Ladies of Ascension.

“Faith formation students also volunteer to help for community service hours,” Carl adds. “Preparation begins weeks in advance — reviewing last year’s notes and comments, ordering the supplies and organizing the volunteer schedule for adults and youth. We don’t use the fish fries as a fundraiser, but as a social event to get



March 2019

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CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
6 MONTH FINANCIAL REPORT
 As of December 31, 2018

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Liquid Assets: | \$ 392,581.44 |
| Cash in Bank | \$ 134,235.36 |
| Investment-Expansion Fund | \$ 254,074.40 |
| Accounts Receivable | \$ 4,140.00 |
| Pre-paid Expense | \$ 131.68 |
| Fixed Assets: | \$ 2,125,921.12 |
| Building | \$ 1,718,817.74 |
| Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment | \$ 407,103.38 |
| TOTAL ASSETS: | \$ 2,518,502.56 |
| Accounts Payable | (\$ 1,638.96) |
| TOTAL NET ASSETS: | \$ 2,516,863.60 |

For where your
Treasure is,
 there will your
Heart
 be also.
 ~Matthew 6:21

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Income: | | Expenses: | |
| Sunday Contributions | \$ 374,202.90 | Payroll & Benefits (3 FT/6 PT) | \$ 155,927.71 |
| BACEF | \$ 22,832.36 | Parochial School Support | \$ 135,140.04 |
| Special Donations | \$ 18,579.30 | Office Operations | \$ 26,902.31 |
| Faith Formation Income | \$ 14,535.81 | Building/Grounds Operations | \$ 24,418.15 |
| Interest Income | \$ 5,156.15 | Faith Formation | \$ 17,459.68 |
| Votive Candles | \$ 2,529.03 | Property Insurance | \$ 17,138.00 |
| Facility Income | \$ 2,500.00 | Stewardship | \$ 16,728.00 |
| Flower Donations | \$ 1,370.00 | Liturgy & Outreach | \$ 14,868.89 |
| SMCHS Carnival | TBD | City Special Assessment | \$ 12,828.47 |
| Parish Spring Dinner | TBD | St. Mary's Cemetery Support | \$ 5,604.00 |
| Operating Income | \$ 441,705.55 | Parish Events | \$ 4,658.29 |
| Holdback Insurance Proceeds-Roof | \$ 17,415.00 | Operating Expense | \$ 431,673.54 |
| Offerings for the Poor | \$ 26,016.21 | Poor Fund Distributions | \$ 25,947.54 |
| Offerings for Maintenance | \$ 48,989.25 | Maintenance Fund Expenses | \$ 28,909.16 |
| TOTAL INCOME | \$ 534,126.01 | TOTAL EXPENSES | \$ 486,530.24 |

TOTAL INCOME—TOTAL EXPENSES = \$ 47,595.77

REPAIR & MAINTENANCE FUND EXPENSES

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Community Rm. Kitchen Ovens | \$ 11,300.33 |
| Parking Lot Patchwork | \$ 7,675.00 |
| Rectory Improvements | \$ 7,092.27 |
| Hot Water Heater Ed. Bldg. | \$ 2,195.00 |
| Other Repairs | \$ 646.56 |
| TOTAL EXPENSE | \$ 28,909.16 |

*Keep using your gold "Repair & Maintenance"
 Envelopes!*

LOCAL POOR FUND DISTRIBUTIONS

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| AID, Inc. | \$ 4,976.00 |
| Community Action | \$ 4,976.00 |
| Ministry on the Margins | \$ 4,976.00 |
| Salvation Army | \$ 3,732.00 |
| Abused Adult Resource Center | \$ 2,488.00 |
| Welcome House | \$ 2,488.00 |
| Meals on Wheels | \$ 1,244.00 |
| The Banquet | \$ 721.39 |
| Prayer Blanket Ministry | \$ 232.15 |
| Rides to Mass | \$ 114.00 |

TOTAL PARISH DONATIONS **\$ 25,947.54**



A Letter from our Pastor

ANSWERING THE CALL FOR LENT

Dear Parishioners,

This month, as we proceed on our Lenten journey to Easter, every one of us should ask ourselves, “What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ and how well am I living that out each day?”

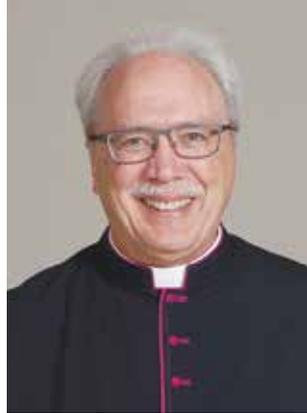
The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops addressed what it means to be a disciple when they wrote their pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*. “Who is a Christian disciple?” the USCCB asked and, in turn, they also provided the answer, “One who responds to Christ’s call, follows Jesus, and shapes his or her life in imitation of Christ’s” (9). So, as disciples of Jesus Christ, it is essential that we consider the true meaning of that answer.

The first step in the Christian life is responding to Jesus’ call. Jesus invites every person to develop a relationship with Him. But obviously, not every person is a Christian disciple. Some people are too busy to even hear that invitation or don’t make the effort to recognize it. Others make a conscious decision to reject the call because it demands that they can no longer place themselves at the center of their lives.

On the other hand, for those of us who make an affirmative response to Christ’s call, the most meaningful life possible awaits us, both now and into eternity. However, saying “yes” to Jesus has consequences that affect the rest of our lives.

The first consequence of becoming a disciple is that we now follow Jesus. The Gospel accounts record that when He called His disciples, they left what they were doing and followed Him. The same is true for us today. Becoming a Christian disciple does not necessarily mean that all of us will leave our present job, or enter into the consecrated life, or serve as a missionary in another country — although that might be where the journey leads you. But it does mean that we offer our work — whether as a doctor, homemaker, mechanic, farmer or teacher — to build up the Kingdom of God.

In following Jesus as His disciples, we should strive to more fully absorb His teaching and then



apply it to our daily lives. As we do, we find that we attempt to imitate Him, treating others with the same welcoming and generous spirit. St. Peter was direct when he described how Jesus acted: “He went about doing good... for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). That’s the model for how we must live.

Discipleship leads naturally to stewardship as a way of life. The time we offer in prayer and worship will give us the strength and guidance for serving Christ. Using the skills and gifts we have

to build the Kingdom will direct our offering of talent. The support of all these endeavors with our treasure will ensure that our lives as disciples and stewards are genuine.

As a Christian steward this Lent, I encourage you to reflect on the changes you can make in growing as a disciple of Jesus.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Jim Braaten
Pastor



Church OF THE Ascension

THE BANQUET

Ministry Overflowing with Generosity

When people talk about heaven, they sometimes describe it as a banquet, a never-ending feast of God's goodness where all are welcome. As Christians here on earth, we're meant to serve as representatives of Jesus, people who point the way to that feast and sometimes literally feed those in need.

The Banquet is a local outreach ministry that provides a meal for needy families three times a week at Trinity Lutheran Church. Ascension has become part of this mission by helping serve meals at the Banquet a few times each year.

Volunteers from Ascension will help serve as many as 450 people this coming March 21. Clients at the Banquet include those who struggle with hunger, the homeless, disabled, and anyone who could use a hot meal. Volunteer coordinator Mary Neigum says the meal provides an opportunity to step outside of our proverbial comfort zones and become the hands and feet of Christ to others.

"It's very good for people to see there is an underlying tone of community for the lonely," Mary says.

Each meal begins and ends with prayer on the part of those who have come to give of their time. When Ascension sponsors the event, the parish picks up the tab for dinner and provides help from as many as 40 volunteers



Volunteers with the Banquet prepare to serve a meal to the many needy who visit Trinity Lutheran Church for a hot meal each week. Volunteers from Ascension will serve that meal on March 21.

from our youth, Confirmation students, and others.

"We usually do a Thursday night, which is a sit-down meal served at the table," Mary says. "The students come and help serve and mingle with the people. It's very good for the youth to see what life can be like for other people. The goal of everyone there is to be non-judgmental of

the people who come to eat."

Mary says Ascension currently has the kind of problem all organizations dream of — they have too many volunteers for the Banquet.

"We have so many people that have signed up to work it that I can't use them all," she says. "They don't want so many volunteers that they're overrun



BANQUET

Parish Thanks to Ascension Volunteers

with them there and we don't want people coming that won't have a place to work."

Those that don't get to serve at the meal on March 21 will get a chance to serve at a future meal hosted by Ascension. In the meantime, parishioners who wish to learn more can visit the Banquet's website at thebanquetnd.com. Under the "Donation" menu, you can help by purchasing items on the Banquet's grocery list via Amazon or by making a monetary contribution.

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If you would like to learn more about the parish's relationship with the Banquet and to volunteer at a later date, contact the parish office at 701-223-3606

Stations of the Cross and Fish Fry Events continued from front cover

together and share our faith and fellowship."

The abstention from eating meat on Fridays in Lent comes from the Catholic tradition of abstaining from eating red meat on all Fridays as part of a penance to mark the day of Christ's death.

The 40 days of Lent mark the time when Catholics and other Christians recall the time when Jesus went to the desert to fast and pray before his sacrifice on the cross. Lent offers a time to spend being extra aware of this sacrifice. During Holy Week, we have a special opportunity to reflect on the days leading up to Christ's crucifixion and death.

"Lent is a time to spend in devotion, reverence and prayer," Deacon Tony says.

During Lent, we can, as a parish, come closer

together as a family through taking part in the Stations of the Cross.

"The Stations of the Cross, or the Way of the Cross, also known as the Way of Sorrows, depicts Jesus Christ on the day of His crucifixion," Deacon Tony says. "The 14 stations walk us through the crucifixion and death of Our Lord. Some prefer to include a 15th station which speaks to Christ's resurrection from the dead. The Stations of the Cross involve Jesus enduring suffering and insults, and relay the intense sacrifice that Christians believe Jesus undertook for human salvation. It is most important for Catholics of all ages to understand and appreciate the tremendous sacrifice that Our Lord endured so that we may have forgiveness of sins and a pathway to eternal life."

If you would like more information about the Stations of the Cross and the fish fries, please call the parish office at 701-223-3606.

Church OF THE Ascension

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ash Wednesday

March 6 – Mass Times at 8 a.m., 5 p.m., 7 p.m.

Fish Frys

Fridays starting March 8 from 5-7 p.m. in the Community Room, Sponsored by KC Council 7602

Stations of the Cross

Fridays starting March 8 at 5:30 p.m. in the Church

Faith Formation Stations of the Cross

Wednesday, March 13 during all FF Sessions at 4 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 7 p.m. in the Church

Ascension Parish Serves The Banquet

Thursday, March 21 from 5-7 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church

Lenten Parish Mission

“Illuminating Christ’s Light through the Saints: A spiritual and musical reflection on the stained glass windows of Ascension Church.” Sunday, March 24 at 3 p.m. in the Church with a Meatball Dinner (free-will offering) in the Community Room

A LOOK BACK AT OUR ST. VALENTINE'S DANCE

More than 90 people attended our St. Valentine's Dance and Party on Feb. 10, and everyone enjoyed an evening of heart-shaped pizza, a chocolate fondue bar, swing dance lessons, and crafts for the kids. We thank all parishioners who attended and especially thank those who shared their time and talents putting this event together.





THE SIGN OF THE CROSS:

A Powerful Prayer Tradition in the Catholic Church

As Catholics, we are blessed to be part of a faith tradition that stretches back over 2,000 years to its founding by Jesus Christ. Along with the history of our faith come many customs and sacred rituals that become even more beautiful when we delve a little deeper into their origins and meanings. Certainly, such is the case with one of the most visible outward signs of our Catholic faith — the Sign of the Cross.

Since we say and make the Sign of the Cross so often, it may easily become a rote, perhaps even thoughtless, action. However, it is important to remember that the Sign of the Cross is much more than a simple gesture. Even in its most basic form, the Sign of the Cross — accompanied by the spoken or unspoken words “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” — is a prayer, a creed stating our belief in the Holy Trinity, the dual nature of Jesus Christ, and the dependence of our salvation on His crucifixion and resurrection.

In addition, making the Sign of the Cross is an indication of a willingness to take up our own cross and suffering for the sake of Christ. The prayer is considered one of the greatest weapons against Satan and all demons, and an added strength against the temptations of the flesh.

In the Roman Catholic Church today, the Sign of the Cross is typically made with either three fingers or an open hand touching first the forehead, then the chest, followed by the

left shoulder and then the right (in the Eastern Church, the right shoulder is touched before the left). The concept of making a sign, or “setting a seal,” upon the forehead of those who place their faith in the Lord appears in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible — see Ezek. 9:4 and Rev. 7:3, 9:4, and 14:1.

Early versions of the Sign of the Cross were traced on just the forehead, using the thumb and forefinger held together in the shape of a tiny cross. We still see this version of the blessing performed during Baptisms (with the cross traced on the infant’s forehead) and on Ash Wednesday (with the cross traced in ashes on the foreheads of the faithful). Similarly, when the Gospel is read during the Liturgy of the Word, the priest or deacon leads the congregation in forming this small cross on the forehead, mouth, and chest, indicating a willingness to keep the Word of the Lord in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts.

There is no doubt that our early Church fathers were strong believers in the sanctifying power of the Sign of the Cross. A second-century ecclesiastical scholar, Tertullian, and a third century saint, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, both wrote about the necessity of performing the Sign of the Cross at one’s waking and one’s lying down, at entering and leaving a room, at mealtimes, and more. St. Augustine also referenced the importance of marking

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The Sign of the Cross *continued from page 7*

the cross on the faithful's forehead during the administration of the sacraments.

It is likely that the sign transformed from the tiny cross on the forehead to the larger, full-body cross used today sometime in the fifth century, when heretics began questioning both the dual nature of Jesus Christ — fully human and fully divine — and the unity of the Holy Trinity. Believers in these crucial Church doctrines began forming the cross with three extended fingers (representing the Trinity), keeping the ring finger and little finger pressed down into the palm (representing Christ's dual nature), and tracing a cross on their entire upper body so there could be no mistaking the gesture.

Today, the Sign of the Cross still figures predominantly in our prayer life as Roman Catholics. We commonly perform it upon entering

a church (with the holy water as a reminder of our Baptism); at the beginning and end of the Catholic Mass, a Benediction, or the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; when opening and closing our personal prayers; at mealtimes; and when passing by a Catholic Church (in recognition of Christ, present in the tabernacle). As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, the frequent, intentional use of the Sign of the Cross can help the faithful dedicate each day to the glory of God and provide strength in the face of trial and temptation (2157).

Now, each time we cross ourselves and proclaim, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," let us do so with an increased awareness of the rich history of the Sign of the Cross and the abundant graces that come to us through this powerful prayer tradition!

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday, 5:00 p.m. | **Sunday**, 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m.

Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. | **Holy Days**: 8:00 a.m., 7:00 p.m.

Stewardship is the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes and receives God's gifts and shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor.