

RE-IMAGINING

Turning our attention to the interior of our church

That headline could certainly have two meanings. Lord knows our Church needs some internal assessment. As individuals we all need to look within, but our institutional Church is in dire need of such review and conversion as we continue to address ramifications of decades of clergy abuse and cover-up.



Fr. Tom's Note

But what this headline is referencing is the physical interior of the church in which we gather for Mass. The capital campaign of two years ago identified a need to “update and repair” the church interior, but there were few specifics as to what that renovation would entail. While other capital improvements involving windows and roofs were being completed, a team of parishioners went to work studying the needs of our church’s interior and considering what might be best for the long-term future of our parish and its worship.

That committee made a tentative recommendation to the Pastoral Council in May, and that plan was accepted. I say “tentative” in that what the committee has proposed now needs to be analyzed and possibly tweaked by design professionals before it is presented to the larger parish. We want to be clear on what we are presenting, whether it is feasible in

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FORMING INTRODUCING A NEW, STRONGER FOCUS ON DISCIPLESHIP

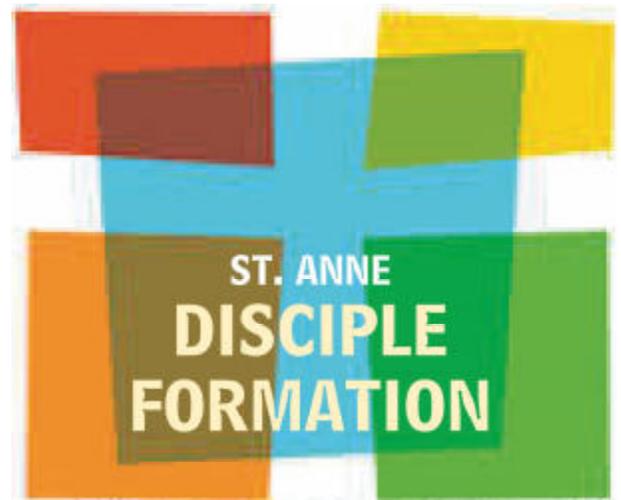
A new focus, a new name and a new staff person are part of a concerted effort to emphasize an essential aspect of the Christian life that isn’t new at all: Discipleship!

Jesus, of course, called disciples and began to form those men and women — yes, there were women among them! — in understanding who he was, his teaching, what it meant to follow his way.

Pope Francis has preached and written often about a renewal of discipleship within the Church, centered upon Christ and coming to know him more deeply, and then responding with a greater commitment to sacrifice and service.

It’s a matter of returning to the basics as St. Anne Parish emphasizes DISCIPLE FORMATION as the title and mission of all catechetical, initiation, faith development, youth ministry and adult education programming. Everything related to learning about Jesus and the faith, anticipating encounters with Jesus in the sacraments, responding to the Gospel call in service — all of that will be known as DISCIPLE FORMATION.

This is not merely a matter of re-branding, but rather restoring the foundation of who we are meant to be as a result of “faith



formation” or “religious education,” to use two prior labels for such programming. They were far more narrow in scope. We are not just about forming “faith,” but more importantly forming the disciples who will live as people of faith.

Significantly, DISCIPLE FORMATION is not merely for young people. While our Wednesday night program — now called Young Disciple Formation — will continue to be a major component of our program, efforts to engage disciples of all ages will be promoted, including the introduction of Dis-

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HEALING

Gaining new awareness and grace of a long-misunderstood sacrament

It's probably the most unknown and misunderstood of the sacraments. And, regrettably, one of the least celebrated.

Most of us have had no experience of nor exposure to this sacrament. It's wrongly perceived as something associated with death rather than life, with desperation rather than hope. It's too often seen as something private, hasty and minimal that's experienced amid the clamor of a hospital emergency room or the stark darkness of a bedroom.

We're hoping to change some of those impressions and experiences as we celebrate Anointing of the Sick at our Lord's Day liturgies at 4 p.m. Aug. 17, 8:30 a.m. Aug. 18 and 10:30 a.m. Aug. 18. Most significantly, we're hoping to give all who are present an opportunity to experience the grace of this sacrament, regardless of whether we are anointed.

Where do we begin in coming to understand and possibly celebrate this sacrament? As with all of the sacraments we begin with Jesus himself. And it's not hard to find in the gospel occasions of Jesus encountering, showing care for, and often healing the sick. The most clear instruction regarding this sacrament, inspired by Jesus' ministry, is found in the letter of

James: *Are any among you sick? They should call for the priests of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed any sins will be forgiven them.*

Over time, the focus of this sacrament shifted dramatically from the communal understanding described by James. It became a ritual viewed almost exclusively with death. It was called *Extreme Unction*, "last rites."

For about 50 years the Church has tried to move beyond those labels and to restore an understanding of the sacrament as a means to healing and hope. The sacrament is intended for anyone who is in need of healing. That might be serious bodily illness or injury, but the sacrament also would be valuable for people experiencing addiction, fear and anxiety; people of advanced years; those uncertain about upcoming medical tests and procedures; people who've experienced the anguish and uncertainty of loss; family members realizing the burden and despair of care-giving.

There also has been an ongoing effort to experience the sacrament beyond the confines of hospitals or private homes —



ANOINTING OF THE SICK

The parish will celebrate this sacrament during Mass at 4 p.m. Aug. 17, 8:30 a.m. Aug. 18 and 10:30 a.m. Aug. 18.

Who should celebrate?

Anyone in need of healing. Afflicted with illness or injury. Confronting addiction, fear, anxiety. Advanced years. Awaiting medical tests and procedures. Dealing with considerable loss and anguish. Experiencing the burden and despair of care-giving. Whoever believes they need to be healed.

What will happen?

Those who seek the sacrament are asked to sit in pews and chairs reserved for you and whoever is accompanying you. After the homily, those seeking anointing will be asked to stand, if they are able.

Fr. Tom and Fr. Bill Grevatch, who will be assisting at all liturgies, will go to each person, laying hands upon them, calling upon the Spirit's gift of healing.

Individuals are then anointed with the Oil of the Sick blessed by the bishop at the Chrism Mass and accepted by the community on Holy Thursday.

First, the forehead is anointed and the priest says, *Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit.* The person being anointed and the entire assembly respond: *Amen.*

As the hands are anointed, the priest says, *May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.* Again, the person and the assembly respond: *Amen.*

Mass will continue as usual.

Extending an invitation, offering a ride

If you know someone who might appreciate participating in this celebration but who is unable to drive, please consider extending an invitation and offering to drive them.

within the church where the community normally gathers for worship and

sacramental celebrations. That's what we'll do Aug. 17/18.

DISCIPLE FORMATION

All parishioners are invited to discover *The Joy of the Gospel*

One of Pope Francis' most compelling teachings, *The Joy of the Gospel*, will be the focus of conversation for gatherings of parishioners being organized for this fall.

Small groups will gather at various days and times over six weeks to pray and to consider how to respond more eagerly to the call of Jesus to live the gospel with greater joy and love. While groups will consider Pope Francis' writing, the small groups are not book clubs, and reading and other "homework" is not an expecta-

tion.

Small group goals include: encountering Christ more deeply; sharing a stronger, inter-generational experience of community; finding the language and familiarity to talk about faith; becoming more deeply engaged through service and ministry.

The small group philoso-



phy has been described in terms of a swimming pool — moving from the shallow end and into the deep. That

doesn't happen all at once and, as Christians, our experience is that it doesn't happen alone. We share the experience, guiding and encouraging one another.

Small group days and times will be announced in early September. They will begin the week of Oct. 1 and conclude the week of Nov. 4. Parishioners are invited to attend the small group gathering that is most convenient to your schedule. You may not know anyone in your small group when you begin, but after a week or two you will.

In his introduction to *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis writes of beginning a new chapter in living the Christian life. Here's our chance to begin a new chapter together.

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Disciple Small Groups this fall.

To assist with this renewed effort of Disciple Formation, Lee Ann Lella has joined our staff and will collaborate with John Schmitt as co-directors of DISCIPLE FORMATION. An additional staff person will allow both John and Lee Ann to exert greater effort and creativity in their particular areas of responsibility, which will be delineated over the next few months.

While what we embark upon is necessary and exciting, and while there are "new" people and components, this venture is not "new," as indicated at the outset. Rather, we're attempting to focus much more clearly and intentionally on what Jesus intended of those who believe in him. He didn't want mere *followers*, but rather *disciples*.

Together we'll come to better appreciate the distinction and, hopefully, become more dedicated, generous and courageous disciples.

— Fr. Tom Lindner

DISCIPLE FORMATION

Welcoming a new person to our staff

The addition of a new staff person coincides with a renewed emphasis upon discipleship.

Lee Ann Lella will join John Schmitt as co-directors of DISCIPLE FORMATION. Lee Ann brings 20 years of parish ministry experience, including seven years as faith formation director at St. Michael and Resurrection parishes in Wausau. John is beginning his 12th year at St. Anne.

Lee Ann's responsibilities will include the K-5 program, first communion and reconciliation preparation, Christian initiation for adults and children, parent and catechist formation, and vacation bible school. John will continue to oversee middle school and high school formation, youth ministry, confirmation preparation, mission trips and baptism preparation.

The addition of a staff person is of considerable importance. Over several years the size of the parish staff has declined from nine, includ-

ing four who worked with what we might identify as DISCIPLE FORMATION, to essentially three paid staff members. That's a pretty sparse staff for a parish of 1,000 families, especially if we hope to expand programming, and to strengthen what's already in place.

Lee Ann has served as a pastoral minister, youth minister, parish catechetical leader, catholic school educator and school administrator in the dioceses of La Crosse and Green Bay. She worked with Fr. Tom for one year in the early 2000s while he was administrator of St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish in Stevens Point, and she was faith formation director. Most recently she worked as an associate manager with the Catholic publishing company, RLC Benziger.

Lee Ann has a master's degree in theology from St. Norbert College. Her husband, Tom, is music director at Wausau's Eastside Parishes; they have a teen-age son, Michael.





REFLECTION

Service, fun and faith on mission trip

Megan McDonald, pictured in the Warriors shirt above, participated in the recent trip to Topeka, Kan. She prepared this reflection on the long drive home.

There are three components when talking about my experience with mission trips: serving the residents, growing in my faith, and having fun with my new friends. I go for all three. I get to help those in need, which always feels good to do. Not only that, but I also deepened my faith with all of the programs, devotionals, and friends to help support me through tough times. Along with making friends, I made amazing memories that will never be forgotten.

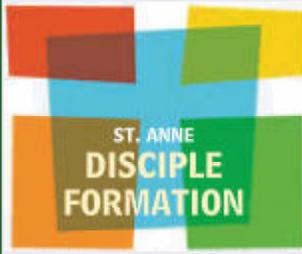
When we go out to help the communities we visit, we change our resident's lives. For example, this year my resident was a grandmother who went to church every week and tried to be a good person. Unfortunately, she lost both her eldest grandson and husband in the same year. All she wondered

ST. ANNE PARISH

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< **Becoming Catholic Christians & Being Confirmed:** If you're interested in learning more about Jesus, the Church and becoming a Catholic Christian, we'd love to talk with you. Please contact Lee Ann Lella at leeannl@stanneswausau.org. Or if you know someone who is interested, please extend an invitation and encouragement to contact Lee Ann.
< **Forming Young Disciples** begins Sept. 18. Read more inside this newsletter. Register at www.StAnnesWausau.org.

was why this was happening to her. She had kind of lost faith in God. When we showed up to paint her house, she said we were a Godsend that helped to bring her back to God. So we not only fixed up her house, but we also brought her closer to God.

While working on our resident's house, we were sorted into crews with a total of 5-6 people from all over the country. Since it's the same people working closely and opening up to each other during lunch devotionals, we become close friends. Making great, close and faithful friends is a great reason that many people keep on

coming back.

This was my second year going on the mission trip. Going on these trips is very transformative for me. Because I went on the trip last year, I knew what to expect emotionally. Even with that information, I still changed a lot. After last year's trip, I felt clean and holy. I wanted to keep that momentum going, but over the year that feeling has gone away from being distracted by the world around me. It felt good to rejuvenate my soul on this trip; it was exactly what I needed. Now I feel clean, holy, and filled with God's love. MM



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terms of structural realities, and we need to know what our proposed renovation will cost.

Five firms have been invited to submit proposals to complete the designing and building of our re-imagined church interior. We hope to issue a contract for the initial design phase by the end of September. With that we'll have a sense

of when a detailed proposal is ready to be introduced to the parish.

What we know now is that with a new roof covering the church and school and new school windows in place — THANKS to the generous campaign contributions of our parishioners — it's time to turn our attention to where we gather for worship. TL