

ST. PETER'S CURRENTS

1405 Highway 13, PO Box 50679, Mendota, MN, 55150 www.stpetersmendota.org 651-452-4550

Dear beloved in Christ,

Praying you and all your loved ones are well, and making daily progress in the faith, especially advancing in the love of God and of service to others. Please pray the same for me, that together we may eagerly await with hope the heavenly glory that is ours in Christ.

As we celebrated Holy Thursday last month and listened to the Gospel account of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, we were all reminded of the daily call to humble ourselves like Jesus and give our lives in service of others. This is not only a great blessing for marriages, families, and friendships, but this is what has allowed the Church community of St. Peter to thrive and grow.

We could not have made it through this past year if it were not for the many gestures of love, prayer, kindness, and generosity that came from you. Because of you, we were still able to help feed the poor in downtown St. Paul and Minneapolis; we were able to reach out to the greater numbers of homebound and sick; we were able to continue celebrating Mass and live-stream it into the homes of those who could not attend; special home-based programs were developed for our children and youth to grow in their faith; Sunday collections remained strong; and because of the number of committed adorers, we were able to keep our adoration chapel open for prayer. These are just a few examples of what your servant-love has made possible.

I also know it has been a difficult year for some of our volunteers, due to the suspension of certain ministries or the need to take special precautions. But your prayers and the many sacrifices you have made during this time have also contributed much toward the spiritual good of our parish community. When anything in our life is connected to Christ, it bears fruit—even though we cannot see it.

So, our deepest gratitude for all of you and our prayers that God will bless you abundantly, during this Easter Season,

In the heart of Jesus,



Fr. Steven



“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” Philippians 1:3

Thank you Volunteers!

This newsletter is dedicated to all our parishioners, from those that are able to volunteer weekly, monthly, or once a year to those that can no longer volunteer but continue to pray for our parish. We appreciate you! We have only highlighted a few of our ministries in the newsletter but know that we are grateful for all of you.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Volunteers

By Karen Cronin

I know we all think we have **the best** volunteers helping us with our ministries at St. Peter's, but the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd volunteers **are** the best! There has been a beautiful response to the needs of this work since it began in the parish in 2019. What we needed were volunteers to make materials and to help in the atrium once it opened in the fall of 2019.

We have had such a dedicated group of material makers from the outset. Levi and Tim Halbert, along with Joe Igo, have the wonderful gift of working with wood and have made a large number of works for the atrium. We needed little houses, figurines, boxes, stands for hanging vestments, geography puzzles, tabernacles, altars and sacristies made, as well as the walls and buildings for the City of Jerusalem work. These three volunteers have been instrumental in making these wooden materials for the atrium.

We needed a number of fabric items sewn including prayer table cloths, altar cloths, vestments (chasubles and stoles), aprons for the children when pouring liquids, polishing cloths. Lorraine Newton used her sewing talents to make all the fabric items in our atria. Margaret Smith spent a lot of time cutting out paper

crosses, candles, candlesticks, flames, altar cloths, patens and chalices for the altar collage work in the atrium. This work can be tedious, but Margaret did it cheerfully and quickly.

Shehan Perera painted most of the figures in the atrium, including the Good Shepherd, figures for the Annunciation, Visitation, and the Last Supper, as well as the merchant from the Pearl of Great Price parable. His artistic ability has added a beauty to the materials that the children can enjoy.

Our assistants from our atria sessions were committed, reliable, and sensitive to the needs of the children. The four assistants were Karina Avila, Melissa Newton, Rose Perera, and Barb Ruhlmann. They faithfully helped at the atrium sessions from September, until the COVID pandemic shut our on-site atria down in March 2020. They were patient and were fantastic in assisting the children and helping to clean up after the sessions were over!

Beth Halbert and I have been truly blessed with such generous volunteers!

The Bag Lunch Ministry

One of the beautiful new ministries that has grown out of the needs of the pandemic is our sandwich ministry to Sharing & Caring Hands. We started last spring in hopes of providing bagged lunches as a way to continue feeding those in most need despite the lockdown. This ministry was so popular, that we brought it back last fall as a permanent ministry.

Once a month our generous donors and volunteers collect and deliver the makings of bag lunches to Sharing & Caring Hands. Each month provides between 5-8 days of lunches for dozens of people--that's from our parish alone!

One of our volunteers recently reported that, "St. Peter's sandwiches are definitely within the top three contributors in terms of being full sandwiches and having cheese," and "their eyes light up when they see chips being offered, especially."

In this year of great challenge and distancing, St. Peter's has once again found a way to continue to reach out, to minister in love, to fill empty stomachs, and nourish spirits. Thank you, St. Peter's!

Steven Eichler, A Perissos Volunteer

By Elizabeth McCanna



Tell us about yourself! Who are you?

Hi! My name is Steven Eichler. I work as an IT professional in Eagan and have been a volunteer at St. Peter's since 2018, with Perissos and other high school youth ministry! I am engaged to be married to the amazing Abigail Kaliska at St. Peter's in July! (114 days from the time of the interview, but who's counting?)

How did you get involved at St. Peter's?

I knew the youth minister, Elizabeth when she was a new youth minister in North St. Paul, When I moved to the south metro, she approached me and asked if I would like to volunteer at St. Peter's.

What is your favorite part about working with teenagers?

When they start asking the deeper, intellectual questions, because they're in the process of trying to figure out who they are, and it brings about deeper questions that they wouldn't normally ask.

How has the pandemic changed how you volunteer?

It's gone from a very personal ministry to a very virtual ministry. It's a hurdle to connect with someone via Zoom calls versus an in-person conversation. Even though we've had to move virtual, it is still encouraging to see the teens hop on the Zoom call week after week to stay involved with the parish.

Tell us a story from your time volunteering that you won't forget!

Gosh, there's so many! Wednesday night on our Workcamp trip to Topeka is one that sticks out to me. We had an opportunity to affirm each participant and adult leader and, what was supposed to be a quick 30-minute activity, turned into a several hour meaningful group affirmation. It highlighted the close-knit community and deep friendships that the group had formed.

There are so many bonding experiences—games, overnight retreats, workcamps—times filled with laughter and joy. These memories will stay with me long after teens have graduated from high school.



What do you do when you're not volunteering?

Marriage Prep and Wedding Planning! When I'm not volunteering, I'm involved with young adult ministries in the Archdiocese, including summer and fall softball leagues. I play games with friends and fill my time with good Catholic communities.

What are you looking forward to post pandemic volunteering?

I'm really excited for Workcamp! I'm so excited to go to Grand Rapids with our teens and have that opportunity to connect with our teens face to face and do some volunteer work for people who need it. So much was shut down because of COVID—I'm excited to get back out there and help again!

Spotlight on Laurie Reding, Longtime Volunteer



Tell us how you got involved at St Peter's?

I've been involved for a long time—it has evolved over the years! Originally I was involved in religious education, because my daughter was involved and I taught. I've been on the Ugandan Mission Team since its inception. I retired 6 years ago, and at that point a couple things happened—I took over the leadership of the Uganda mission. Also, Father Steven was also looking to bring Alpha to St. Peter's and needed someone to coordinate that.

How did you get started with the Uganda Mission?

When the Uganda mission was formed in 2007, I initially was a child sponsor and then shortly thereafter joined the mission team. I spent many years as a member on the team and then once retired, eventually took over leadership from Ralph Dumond, who had led the team for more than 10 years.

Tell me more about Alpha.

Alpha is a program I've grown very passionate about. It's a beautiful program for evangelization but is also a great opportunity for anyone to grow in their relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit. It's essentially a small group program, where people share a meal, listen to a talk on the basic Gospel message, and have a discussion as a group. In addition to being a wonderful program for growing and deepening a person's faith, it's a great way to promote fellowship and build relationships with others in the parish and

the program. That might be one of my favorite parts of it! We've run 6 Alpha sessions and plan to continue post-pandemic.

How has the pandemic changed your role as a volunteer?

When the pandemic first hit, we were mid-Alpha and we had to stop. We did manage to do a small socially distanced Alpha last fall, which brought certain challenges regarding space and other things. With the Ugandan Mission, we've moved our meetings to all online but have continued to have regular meetings. Our fundraising efforts have been limited to online communication, as we've been unable to do some of the things that we ordinarily do, like the Ugandan fish dinner. We also had to postpone our mission trip to Uganda which was scheduled for this summer to (hopefully!) next summer.

What are some blessings the Lord has given you as you've volunteered at St. Peter's?

Oh there's so many! First just the opportunity to work with and get to know so many other parishioners. Alpha has been particularly fruitful from this perspective—there are people I know I would have never met if it weren't for Alpha! And, in that ministry in particular, the gift of being able to watch people grow in their love of the Lord and of each other is something that brings me great joy. As for Uganda, this is very close to my heart. The opportunity to see the Church as universal and not just as an idea. To actually experience Church in a global way is a blessing beyond words. To know your brothers and sisters halfway across the globe as a part of our church is something that's hard to describe. I'm very grateful for that opportunity and can't wait to go back to Uganda!



News from Uganda

By Laurie Reding



Life has been challenging for our brothers and sisters in Uganda this past year, due to the pandemic. They face many of the same challenges we do, with far fewer resources to deal with them, so our support has been particularly helpful and will continue to be a critical source of funding as they weather this pandemic.

The schools and students we support in the villages of Nakitoma and Kansiira have been doing the best they can, under the circumstances. For a while, there was no in-person learning, and we adjusted our sponsorship program to an at-home learning program. This is more challenging than here in the U.S., because they don't have internet to aid the learning so all tools must be copied, hand delivered and then teachers check-in with the students periodically. It has not been ideal but it is better than doing nothing at all. As time went on, select classes returned to in-person learning—what is known as candidate classes, where children “graduate” to the next level (like a child moving from middle school to high school in the U.S.). These children must pass a national exam to move on, so in-person learning becomes critical as their exams approach. The government has recently decided that all children should return to in-person learning. While certainly this is the best way for the children to learn, this is creating some difficulty in figuring out the best and safest way to get this done. For our sponsored children, financially it creates some challenges, because some of the sponsorship funds were used for at-home learning tools and now those same students have school fees. As with so many things in the pandemic, Fr. Lawrence and the schools are doing the best they can to get through these transitions. Fr. Lawrence and the children are deeply grateful to our sponsors for their support.

Life at the main parish of St. Anthony and its sub parishes also is significantly different and has been difficult for many families as their source of income

has disappeared with pandemic lockdowns, or natural disasters such as flooding has impacted their ability to grow food for consumption and for sale. In-person worship was suspended completely at the beginning of the pandemic. The restrictions have loosened somewhat, but even those who have been able to attend are unable to tithe as they might normally do, putting increasing pressure on parish finances.

Through the generosity of St. Peter's parishioners, we have been able to assist with some of these needs—most importantly providing support so that Fr. Lawrence and the other priests can continue to provide the sacraments to the faithful. We have been able to provide food for needy families, pay for utility bills for the parish and for the water pump in Migyera that serves both the parish and the surrounding families, provide masks for safety, and help Fr. Lawrence restock the parish farm so it can continue to provide food and financial support. Fr. Lawrence was even able to provide a small Christmas gift of rice, beef, and tomatoes to families particularly hard hit by flooding on the shores of Lake Kyoga earlier in 2020. This is just a few of the ways your support has helped our brothers and sisters in Uganda.

On behalf of Fr. Lawrence and the Uganda mission team thank you so much for your ongoing support of the Uganda Mission!



Our Ushers



Before Covid, our parish was bustling with volunteers. Some you saw, like the Eucharistic ministers, the choir, our faith formation teachers, etc. and some have always been behind the scenes like the volunteers who take care of the altar clothes, bulletin stuffers, those that decorate the church, etc. Every day there would be someone in church who was volunteering their time. Every day. And we are extremely grateful. One group that really had a presence after COVID was our ushers. I contacted Dave Kelly, our head usher and asked how ushering has changed, since COVID began and this is what he had to say:

Before COVID, we had 3 Masses each weekend with two ushers assigned to each, so 6 ushers were needed each weekend. We had 23 ushers on the roster, most of them volunteering once or twice a month. A few preferred to usher more frequently.

When we started having Masses again after the shutdown last spring, we increased to 4 Masses. Due to the initial requirement to seat everyone, we needed 3 ushers at each Mass, giving us a need for 12 ushers each weekend. Meanwhile, more than half of our ushers chose not to volunteer during this time, either due to medical conditions that put them at increased risk or due to concern about elderly relatives that required their assistance. In short, we doubled the number of usher slots each weekend, and cut the roster in half! Fortunately, parish staff helped fill the gap.

To help with this challenge a call was put out for more

volunteers, and the parish responded with 13 new usher volunteers. (Lisa Fontecha is a skilled recruiter.) Yvonne Gillard, who normally sings in the choir, joined her husband, Gary, and son, Josh, on the usher crew. Kirsten and Steven Miller, a wife and husband team, began ushering at 8 a.m. Mass. (They are expecting in June, so Kirsten will be taking a break from ushering). We have a few teenagers that used this situation as an opportunity to transition from altar serving to ushering (Erin Kelly, Alex Braun, Andrew Fish, and Danny Weber).

As people became used to the new seating arrangements and with the help of the ropes, we have gone back to two ushers per Mass. We would like to have three ushers per Mass, but we still don't have enough volunteers to do this on a regular basis.

Something else to note: since COVID, we have seen more women ushering. In the last year we added Kirsten Miller, Sofia Fernandez, Yvonne Gillard, Barb Schweiger, and my daughter, Erin, to the usher roster.

Seth Marek used to usher quite frequently, but he has found a new calling in the livestreaming ministry. He and Kelly Garrett have been driving this new ministry, and perhaps they would like some additional help as well.

Some of the ushers who have been inactive during this COVID time are starting to come back. I look forward to seeing everyone again and a return to normalcy!



Tables of Joy and Scavenger Hunt

The CCW and Men's Club have volunteered for years hosting our tables of joy, and we are so grateful to them for bringing us together for fellowship after our Sunday Masses. We have all missed our donuts, coffee, and conversations after Mass. On the first weekend in May we hosted a modified 'tables of joy' after Mass and did more of a "grab and go" outside. It was a success! We were so happy to see people get their donuts and stay and visit with one another outside. We could tell people missed it. We will be hosting two more "grab and go" tables of joy after Mass on Sunday, May 16 and May 23, before summer begins. So come hungry for not only the Mass but for a donut and fellowship after!

Along with the donuts on Sunday, May 23, we will have our second annual Scavenger Hunt. Several people asked if we were going to do it again this year so it must have been a success! Everyone is invited to participate. It will begin around 9:15 a.m., after the 8 a.m. Mass and go until 2 p.m. Directions will be available in the Gathering Space after Mass. The idea of the scavenger hunt is to get outside and wander around our beautiful campus. There will be a sheet of paper with pictures of what you are supposed to find on your hunt. When you get to each location, take a picture of it (or preferably, a selfie with the location in the background), then come back to the Gathering Space when you have found each location, and everyone in your group will get a prize (Father Steven's favorite treat, hint, hint)! If you do not have access to a camera, do not worry, we want you to participate anyway! We look forward to seeing you! Contact Anne O'Keefe with any questions at aokeefe@stpetersmendota.org or at 651-905-4308.

Feast of St. Peter

We are praying that our annual Feast of St. Peter's Mass and Lunch on **Sunday, June 27** will find us with the ability for all of us to congregate and celebrate together. We will have Mass, followed by a picnic. This event has always taken many hands to make light work, and it's a fun event to work at. Our volunteers are always joyful and hardworking. If you would like to volunteer for this, please contact Anne O'Keefe at 651-452-4550 or aokeefe@stpetersmendota.org. More information to come.

Fall Festival

It's time to save the date for our annual fall festival on **September 18 and 19, 2021!** Our volunteer committee is hard at work coming up with new and creative ways to gather and have fun. This specific event requires so many helping hands from our parishioners and we are so grateful.

Our tentative plans for the festival will be a two day festival for the young and old of our parish. Saturday, September 18, we will have Mass, followed by food

trucks and an outdoor movie. On Sunday we will have Mass followed by some traditional festival events and some creative new ones.

We are so grateful to all of the members of the festival committee who meet throughout the year to try and make this a successful event for all the parishioners, as well as all the other people who are able to give of their time leading up to and during the festival. It would not be possible without you!

WE  **OUR VOLUNTEERS** CLPI



1405 Highway 13
P.O. Box 50679
Mendota, MN 55150-0679

Phone: 651.452.4550
www.stpetersmendota.org

Mission Statement

St. Peter's is here to bring the good news of the Gospel to all, so that every person can have a personal, life changing, life giving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Non-profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Twin Cities MN
Permit No. 5000

Address Service Requested

Summer Events

Scavenger Hunt

Sunday, May 23, 9:15am to 2 pm

Father Steven's Talk on Grief and the Pandemic

Tuesday, May 25 at 6:30 pm

Historic Church Tours

Every Sunday from June 6 to August 29
(12 -2pm)

Work Camp Carwash

Sunday, June 6 , during Mass

Feast of St. Peter Mass & Picnic

Sunday, June 27, 10 am Mass followed by an all parish picnic

PowWow

September 10-12

Synod Small Groups

Mondays, 9/20-10/25, 6pm
Thursdays 9/23-10/28, 10am

September Fest

September 25, 26 at FSCS

Fall Festival

September 18 and 19

Saturday, September 18 - one 4pm Mass
Followed by food trucks and outdoor movie

Sunday, September 19 - one 10 am Mass
Followed by concessions, silent auction, corn hole toss tournament with cash prizes, bingo, raffle with cash prizes, kids games and inflatables, country store and raffle with cash prizes.

Currents published by Church of St. Peter
Editor: Anne O'Keefe

If you are receiving this and you no longer consider yourself a parishioner, please contact the parish office at 651-905-4302 to remove your name from our database.

Thank you to Streamworks and its president, parishioner Tony Zirnhelt, for their mailing services!