



St. Agnes Catholic Church

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Website: <https://stagnesmi.weconnect.com>

PASTOR'S *thoughts...*



A Weary World Rejoices!!!!!!

Lord Jesus Christ, we rejoice that you are present in our midst. We give you thanks and praise for your love. When our world was in need of redemption, you leapt down from the glory of the Trinity to become like us in all things but sin. May we never forget that you continue to come from heaven to earth, over and over again, on altars around the world in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Through the Eucharist we participate in Christmas right before our eyes. May we always cherish this most precious gift.

In praise and thanksgiving, we offer you our lives as gift back to you. Use us to make known the love of God in the world today. We give you our lives, that you may transform us into instruments of your peace and joy. May our deeds of kindness open the eyes of all who are looking for salvation and hope. Amen.

May the hope of the Savior born among us bring you hope, peace and joy! Merry Christmas!

~ Fr. Nate

St Agnes Catholic Church

Parish Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday from 9:00am-1:00pm. Thursday from 9:00am-4:00pm.

Weekend Mass Schedule: Saturday at 4:30pm. Sunday at 8:30am and 11:00am.

Weekday Mass Schedule: Wednesday at 6:30pm. Thursday at 10:00am. Friday at 8:30am.

Reconciliation: Tuesday at 3:00-4:00pm. Thursday at 7:00-8:00pm.

Eucharistic Adoration: Thursday at 7:00-8:00pm

Cyberspace Connections:

Website: <https://stagnesmi.weconnect.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/StAgnesCatholicChurchFowlervilleMI/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC69SJKJ2T-GPyMRrPop7mNA>

CHRISTMAS 2020—NEW YEAR 2021

Looking Forward to 2021

"The year 2020 will be remembered as a turnaround point in human history," writes Marcelo Gleiser for CNN Opinion. "Not just because many will die, but because the Covid-19 pandemic is offering us a chance to reinvent ourselves."

I have spent the last 16 years of my life as Director of Evangelization and Stewardship at St Agnes Parish bringing people together. The primary focus of my work has been to make connections with people and help them feel part of our faith community.

All this came to a screeching halt in March with the Coronavirus. My fifth grandchild was born, my youngest daughter got married, and this gave me an opportunity to reflect on what I want to do next. The Lothamer Parish Center will be paid off in July 2021 and I am eligible for retirement June 30, 2021. If that isn't a God wink, I don't know what is!

God could not have sent me a bigger sign. I will be retiring from full time employment at St. Agnes Parish on June 30, 2021 but Brian and I will continue to be a part of our wonderful faith family. It is my intention to continue to stay involved with fundraising.

I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity I have had to serve my Church. It has been a wonderful source of employment for me and I will miss the day-to-day office interactions but look forward to what God has in store for me next.

Happy New Year,
Liz Heslip

2020 - A Banner Year - Just Not the One We Planned!

We planned for this year for a very long time. And then, to quote the Thomas Rhett song, "You make your plans and you hear God laughing." We were looking forward to a year of celebrations: Karl turning 60, a big family spring break, both of us retiring, and our 40th wedding anniversary.

Then the COVID restrictions hit, and we found new ways and things to celebrate. We are so fortunate: thus far, our immediate family has all remained healthy; we have been able to have small gatherings with our adult children and grandson; we have had financial stability that others have not been able to enjoy.

And, in addition to all of these gifts, we've had time to do things we otherwise wouldn't.

- During the initial shelter-in place, we spent our one day out a week delivering soup together.
- We've supported local businesses by purchasing carry-out (or dining in within the restrictions) and doing home improvement projects that were previously put off.
- I've had the opportunity to use my "geek-wanna-be" talents to help others stay connected to St. Agnes via Facebook, YouTube, and the Parish Website.

While we are looking forward to 2021, I think we've begun to learn the importance of appreciating each day for what it is. (Matthew 6:34 Do not worry about tomorrow; it will take care of itself.)

Wishing everyone at St. Agnes a Healthy Happy Christmas and His Peace and Joy in the New Year!

Cathi LeBlanc



Dear Friends:

I am thankful for my St Agnes family. After 40 some years, this church family has helped me to feel Christmas alive in my life. We have had many lessons to learn in that time. Our Church family has helped us, and in return we help the way we can—then play it forward to others.

That is St Agnes. There are many ways to help as a part of our Church family. In times of hunger, there is the Welcome Table or the soup girls, free bread (Thank You, Ralph!). Once I was given duck eggs from someone new to me and they were good—a new thing for us.

When we were cold, wood comes. When in need of Jesus, Fr Nate and people who deliver the Eucharist are there to help. You need prayers? We have a prayer ministry. Want to show a sick person you are thinking of them? Give them hope with the Prayer Shawl ministry. Matthew 25:35.

St Agnes is not big parish but we are a loving, generous, strong, and caring family. My hope is we can keep connected in this new year through praying together or attending Adoration—a beautiful way to find peace in this crazy world. Join Bible Studies where we can share. We need to know each other to help each other. Let's keep Christmas Spirit all year. Merry Christmas and may God bless us in this new year!

With love from your sister in Christ
Susan

2021 - A Year of Hope and Blessings

2020 has been a year of challenges and blessings. In March our world was turned upside down with the Covid-19 virus. We began attending Mass electronically. What a blessing it was when we were able to watch Father Nate celebrate the Mass from St. Agnes.

I became Grand Knight of our Knights of Columbus Council at St. Agnes on July 1, 2020. Many, if not most, of our fund-raising activities were postponed or cancelled. However, we were able to hold the annual golf outing, Tootsie Roll Drive, Polish Dinner (carry-out only), Holy Cross Sweatshirt Drive and the annual food drive supporting the Fowlerville Impact Center. All of these activities were more successful than anyone would have ever thought. I cannot thank enough my Brother Knights and their spouses and families for their help and support in such an uncertain time. I believe I am truly blessed to be a part of such an unselfish group of men and women here at St. Agnes.

As Christmas approaches and we begin to prepare for the upcoming year of 2021, I believe we should all reflect on the blessings we have had this year and look forward with hope for the new year. The Knights are looking forward to the weekly Friday Fish Fry (carry out) during the Lenten season. That will be just the beginning, as we plan other activities which can be accomplished safely.

Together in Christ,

Larry J. Sheridan, Grand Knight Council 8605



FAITH FORMATION



We have been blessed with many gifts during 2020!

We are all aware that this has been a challenging year for everyone. But despite the challenges and heartaches, we have also seen many blessing gifts this year. Here are a few...

- 1. *We have been so encouraged by the amount of our parish families who have sought out continued faith formation for their children and young teens—many in person and some virtually. Our parents have attended parent sessions and have been positive about the time spent to share faith with their children.*
- 2. *We were able to celebrate sacraments safely—had three Confirmation services and two First Communions in July. Thank you Father Nate and our families for the beautiful and personal masses that we had.*

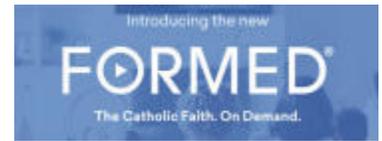


- 3. *We have seen so much generosity this year! We had teens distribute food and make laundry soap for Flint families. We had over 40 families that put together Operation Christmas Child boxes and many that provided items for senior gift boxes and have helped at Welcome Table.*



- 4. *We also seen our adult learners still desiring to come to our Bible Studies—we had over 30 participate in a scripture study on the book of Hebrews and many joined our Advent Rejoice series.*
- 5. **Greatest Gift Ever—Jesus!!**

Our parish subscription to FORMED has been a blessing this year as we have been able to access great programming for our teens, our baptism families, and adults while they are at home!



Sign up for free at formed.org/signup

If you have any difficulty getting into FORMED, please contact Marie Sheridan



Our Men's Bible Study met safely outside during the summer. Our **Women's WINE group** also meet several times outside during the summer and shifted to zoom in December!

A reflection from Bill Kenney...

Reflecting upon 2020 - in many ways our parish family members have relied upon each other and have grown closer in our parish ministries. Our faith in Christ sustains us in the ups and downs of life. We can take solace in knowing and trusting in the Lord that his will be done, for love of us all.

Our many and varied parish ministries create opportunities to activate and grow our faith. I am blessed to be associated with a few ministries:

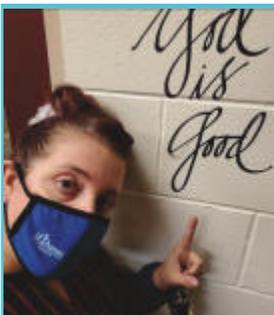
The Men's Scripture Reflection (Bible Study) is a gathering of Christ's disciples who take in and share God's Word. Our prayerful reading of Scripture raises our faith, hope, and love in the Lord now, in these trying times, and for a brighter 2021.

RCIA formation (one Candidate this year) has been progressing nicely. Dcn. Roger, Marie, and I are blessed to share our faith and guide another soul to Christ. We look forward to conferring sacraments in 2021.

Lastly, I have been humbly blessed to be called to a Diaconate vocation. In 2020 I advanced to Candidacy Formation. 2021 will continue with Formation seminars, retreats, and practicums. My wife, Melanie, Dcn. Roger and Rosemary Cahaney, Fr. Nate, and my Spiritual Director have been instrumental and supportive. God willing, I and my ten other brothers, will be ordained in May, 2023.

May the Incarnation bless and unite our lives in Him in 2021. Bill Kenney

For information regarding Faith Formation, contact Marie @msheridandre@gmail.com or Iris @winiarskiiris@gmail.com



St. Agnes Youth Group—The St. Agnes High School Youth Group was able to meet on the first and second Sunday in October and November. We were masked and distanced and outside when it was warm! We share our lives and our faith, lots of laughs and are learning different ways to pray together during a tough year. We were also blessed to take a quick moment at the end of the meetings to share our faith with the Confirmation class. In December we turned our meetings virtual but had an in person Adoration/Reconciliation night with Fr. Nate. **WE WILL KEEP MEETING!** virtually or in person in 2021 and **WE WANT YOU** to join us! If you are interested, or know a High School teen who may be, please contact Emily Crockett or Marie Sheridan to find out details about the group! In a difficult year we still remember ...



"God is good all the time and all the time GOD IS GOOD!"

CHRISTMAS 2020—NEW YEAR 2021

Oh, it feels so good to climb into bed with clean sheets, a soft pillow & warm blankets, especially as nights get colder. Thanks to you, the parishioners of St. Agnes parish, a number of our less fortunate neighbors have been able to enjoy the same experience. Because of your generosity, we can say "to all a good night" to many persons throughout our county. Thank you for your continued support of our bedding ministry.

Mary Johnson, Bedding

Dear St. Agnes Family,

Your love for others has been shown through your generosity toward helping us fill Christmas boxes for our senior citizens. Every year we fill boxes for the seniors. For some of them, this is the only gift they will receive at Christmas. It warms their hearts that someone is thinking of them during this special time of year.

Gifts from the Prayer Shawl Ministry will bring comfort. Food items from the Faith Formation Ministry will fill their tummies. Thank you for donations from Christian Service & many others who shared both items and time to help sort and fill the boxes. St. Agnes continues to share God's message of love for others.

May our Savior bring peace to all this coming year.

Jim & Charlotte Ratke

As the Welcome Table heads into its 14th year of operation I am so thankful for the many hands that have made this ministry so successful. Our first meal served 15 people and boy, were we nervous! We began with operations running September through April, but quickly realized the need didn't go away with the snow so we implemented year-round Thursday meals. The number of guests served each week ebbs and flows, depending on so many factors: economy, weather, and time of year. Looking back, I believe the most served at one meal was 105! That was the time we knew God wanted our ministry to continue because we weren't prepared for so many. But somehow the food multiplied (just like the loaves and fishes) and everyone received a delicious meal!

We continue to tweak the Welcome Table. During the lockdown this past spring, we provided weekly soup delivery to many in the community. Currently we are serving drive-through style to keep volunteers and guests safe. Guests order meals ahead of time and are served curbside. We have been averaging 55 guests a week. However we expect to see an increase this winter. With this new system of food prep and delivery, the number of volunteers needed has decreased. I miss seeing so many of our faithful volunteers! Hopefully, we'll be back in full operation sometime in 2021.

Until then, stay safe and Merry Christmas!

Colleen Pryslak



The Prayer Shawl ministry worked at home most of this year. We managed to squeeze in 5 blessings between lockdowns. We filled our bins to overflowing! Then we shared our handy-work with the Veterans' Hospital through the 4th Degree Knights of Columbus: 46 blankets, 52 lap robes, 42 wheelchair totes, 14 hats – all delivered on November 14, 2020. Still our bins were overflowing! What to do? We heard about the Livingston County Catholic Charities 'Senior Boxes', so we donated 35 men's & women's Prayer Shawls. We've worked hard, prayed a lot while crocheting for the recipients of these many items. May God bless them all!

Kathy Maresco, Prayer Shawls

Dear Friends:

We are truly blessed to have an unwavering support system in our parish. In spite of our current dilemma, we seem to do more, give more, and be more - which is phenomenal since we see less of each other right now. It is who we are, together, and I couldn't be more blessed to have St. Agnes in my life. I can only pray we have more of the same in 2021, but with hopes the Covid would no longer require us to smile behind our masks.

Vicki Buell, Landscape Artist

Upon opening the Day Spring calendar to be used in the Christian Service office, I was struck by the words on the back cover. Allow me to share them with you:

*Just think,
You're here not by chance,
But by God's choosing.
His hand formed you
And made you
the person you are.
He compares you to no one else—
You are one of a kind.
You lack nothing
that His grace can't give you.
He has allowed you to be here
at this time in history
to fulfill His special purpose
for this generation.*

*To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose
under the Heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1*

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26).

Mariann Brown, Christian Service

CHRISTMAS 2020—NEW YEAR 2021

New Year—Fresh Slate—New Beginnings



On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis ushered in the year of Saint Joseph. "Exciting" doesn't even begin to cover it. Our world and our Church need Saint Joseph's paternal intercession. Let us witness all the grace the Lord will pour out through His foster father's example and intercession. Reach out to St Joseph! Tuck yourself under his holy cloak by praying a 30-day novena. It is a thorough and breathtaking time of contemplation on Saint Joseph's virtue. In it, you will place yourself under the holy cloak of Joseph, entrusting him with your most pressing needs (Saint Joseph is a mover and a do-er, so be specific about what you need!). Here's the link: <https://youtu.be/cedSQSStH2Y> Friends, in all matters, go to Joseph. What a joyful year this will be under his special care! Protector of the Holy Family, pray for us!



Jesus said, "if you believe in me, you will do the works that I do, and greater things because I'm going to the Father" (Jn 14:12). Encounter Ministries exists to train and disciple Catholics to demonstrate the power and love of God in their sphere of influence through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Through our school of ministry and conferences, we provide the best ministry to empower disciples to love like Jesus.

<https://encounterministries.us/>



VICARIATE MEN'S NIGHT: Thursday, February 20, 6:15p

Men-on-Fire gathers monthly, bringing men together for practical strengthening and nourishment in their spiritual journey. February's speaker is February is Joe Philip, Associate Director of Encounter Ministries. Topic: "Hearing God's Voice and Speaking His Word". Prayer 5:45p, Mass 6:15p, Speaker 7:00p followed by fellowship & refreshments. Free-will offering.

LENTEN MISSION MARCH 1-3

Do you want to know more about your faith and help others? Holy Spirit Parish is hosting renowned inspirational Catholic speaker, prime-time EWTN TV host and author, Mr. Tom Peterson of *Catholicism Come Home*. Join us each evening and learn how to go deeper in your faith, and to help love more souls to heaven...especially your closest family members and friends!

Sun-Mon = Talk 7-8p with light refreshments served afterward.

Tuesday = Mass 7p, Talk 7:40-8:40p. Free-will offering.



St. Francis Retreat Center is a place of quiet for you to listen for God's voice. It provides an opportunity for both adults and young people to encounter Christ, and grow in their ongoing lived relationship with Him. Allow 95 peaceful acres of gently rolling hills and pine groves located in the heart of Michigan to be the backdrop for your spiritual renewal. Inspire—and light a fire! Register at <http://www.stfrancis.ws/retreats.html>
Women's Weekend Retreats: Jan 8-10, Mar 12-14, and April 16-18.
Men's Weekend Retreats: Jan 15-17, Jan 22-24, Feb 12-14, Mar 5-7, and Apr 9-11.





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