

We are **guided** by Christ, **growing** in Christ, and **giving** as Christ.

What does it mean to be...?

### **Guided by Christ**

We are open to be formed by Christ, through his Gospel and the Holy Catholic Church, to become intentional disciples as we journey with each other.

### **Growing in Christ**

We are dedicated to engage and accompany everyone into the graces of the sacramental life of the Church by loving abundantly in everything we do.

### Giving as Christ

We are committed to a profound spirit of hospitality to all and seek to discover everyone's inherent gifts from God.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 2 Go Make Disciples
Formed.org
Page 3 Faith Formation
Page 4 St. Victor School
Page 5 First Communion
Livestream services
Page 6 Financial report
Page 7 Letter from Fr. Tim
Bias during pandemic
Page 8 Advent calendar
Page 9 St. Clare protocols
Page 10 Christmas Masses

St. Clare of Assisi Parish
1760 14th Street
Monroe, WI 53566
(608) 325-9506
www.stclaregreencounty.org
secretary@stclaregreencounty.org

### ST. CLARE OF ASSISI PARISH **NEWSLETTER**

Fall 2020

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

My greeting to you is expressed so well in the words of St. Paul to the Thessalonians: "We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers, unceasingly, calling to mind your work of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father" (Thessalonians 1: 2-3).

What a gift it is to be among you in this wonderful faith community of St. Clare of Assisi! The month of November in our Church's calendar is devoted to our remembrance of loved ones who have died, and those of our parish. Certainly, because of Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection, we hold the promise of eternal life for all of them. With gratitude for their lives among us, we entrust them to God's loving embrace.

In that spirit of gratitude for our love and commitment for the life of our parish, we now enjoy the wonderful gathering space, expanded parking, accessibility to our church, and new parish offices. As we enter into Phase 2 of the Holy Ground Project, fully aware of the consequences of COVID-19, we hope to complete the project in a timely manner. Please join me in praying for the guidance and courage of the Holy Spirit during this sacred time in our lives, in the life of our parish. What a gift to know that this is Holy Ground!

~Msgr. Larry Bakke, Pastor



**Providing Spaces to Grow in Christ** 

A HUGE THANK YOU to all those that made 2-year pledge commitments or gave one-time gifts at the kick-off. We are well on our way to eliminating the debt and finishing the lower level. If you would like to make a contribution, there is still time. Go to www.stclaregreencounty.org/parish/holyground or see Marci Boss in the parish office.



### **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN GOALS**

GOAL I: Retire Phase I Building Debt (\$500,000)

**GOAL 2:** Finish Lower Level (\$300,000-\$400,000)

**GOAL 3:** Cover Future Maintenance (\$100,000)



"I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the mission ad gentes. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples."

~ Pope St. John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio

Bishop Hying has launched an initiative across the diocese that "is intended to light a fire within us that will not only change what we do but who we are." Go Make Disciples calls each of us to commit to four basic practices guaranteed to help us grow in our personal holiness:

- I. Prioritize Sunday as the Lord's Day.
- 2. Commit to spending at least 15 minutes per day in prayer, ideally with the Sacred Scriptures.
- 3. Make voluntary practices of self-denial a regular part of our daily lives, beginning with at least the mandatory observance of Fridays as penitential days throughout the year.
- 4. Develop or strengthen a habit of going to confession regularly, ideally at least once per month.

How is our parish responding to Bishop Hying's call? We have gathered a team of eight parishioners who have been meeting monthly with Msgr. Larry and Ann O'Leary. This team ranges in age from 15 to 73. They come from Brodhead, Monticello, and Monroe. Our team includes men and women, bilingual members, parents of young children (including some in our parish school), and retired members. Some are familiar volunteers in our parish, and some have newly arrived from other parishes. This team is charged with growing in personal holiness for a time, and then crafting a plan to renew the call to discipleship for our entire parish. Please pray for this team as they grow and sacrifice together! Our school staff, parish staff, and members of our finance and pastoral councils have also been called to study together and pray together to become even more intentional disciples of Jesus in their work and personal commitments.

**How can you learn more?** The Go Make Disciples initiative is regularly covered in the Catholic Herald. Contact Tara at the parish office to subscribe. You can also access great information and resources at the Diocese of Madison website. Search there for 'Go Make Disciples.'

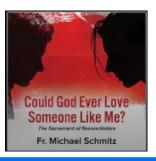


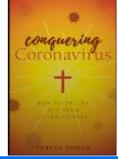
### **FORMED**

Sign up (it's free for you because of our parish subscription!) at Formed.org to access these beautiful videos and deepen your understanding of the faith.

















### **FAITH FORMATION**



This year, our theme is Micah 6:8. Through the monthly activities, we want the kids to continue to reflect on these three questions: How can you... Act with justice? Love tenderly? Walk humbly?







PRAYER "A gift of grace & a determined response on our part."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC 2558:

"Great is the mystery of the faith!" The Church professes this mystery in the Apostles' Creed (Part One) and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy (Part Two), so that the life of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father (Part Three). This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.







Our program has been different this year, but it's been so fruitful. The Church teaches that parents are the primary catechists for their children. This year, we are holding that as the standard. Our Faith Formation program consists of packets we prepare for them, consisting of crafts, activities, games, video links, and more each month. Parents lead their own children through these activities as families are encouraged to participate in as much as they can. Each month, they can fill out an accountability form and turn it in to get points. At the end of the year, those points can be redeemed for fun prizes. It's been beautiful to see how God is moving in the lives of our families.

For the month of September, we focused on the theme of prayer. One of the activities the families were asked to do was to make a special prayer space in their homes. They were each given a candle that they could 'light' while enjoying time in prayer with God.







For the month of October, our theme was the saints! We learned that they are great leaders and examples to us on how to act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly. One of the activities to celebrate Saint Francis was to use the birdseed we included in the packets and make a bird feeder. This month, our families got to make their own Litany of Saints prayer and to make saint posters to put in their prayer space. Families were encouraged to head to a pumpkin patch and celebrate St. Rose of Lima, who is the patron saint of gardeners. Many kids shared their pumpkins on our monthly Zoom chat.



### 136 Youth

272 twizzlers
45 pounds of bird seed

73 families

6 Zoom sessions
3 reams of Cardstock
9 bags of pretzels

1 Incredible Family Faith Program







Every month, the parent letter includes some resources. Check these out!

Children's Books to Check out: Jacob's Gift by Max Lucado Sister Anne's Hands by Marybeth Lorbiecki

Songs to check out:

"The Prayer" by Josh Groban & Charlotte Church
"How Great Thou Art" by Hillsong United
"Open the Eyes of my Heart" by Michael W. Smith
"I Can Only Imagine" by Mercy Me





### ST. VICTOR SCHOOL NEWS

Nurturing a faith-filled Catholic environment for spiritual and educational growth

### Back to School 2020!

We welcomed back students for full-time, face-to-face instruction on Tuesday, Sept. I! We have had a great start to the school year. We are so glad to have students back in our building. Their joy and love of

learning is what keeps us all going during these uncertain times.



We celebrate Fantastically Fun Fridays each and every Friday during the school year! Some of our topics we have done this year include: Red/White/Blue day on Sept. 11, Cheese Days Dress-Up on Sept. 18 (Cheese Days weekend), Ice Cream Friday-sponsored by our Mardi Gras donors, Crazy Sock and Mismatch Days, Hat and Gum Day, Halloween, Grandparents' Day Drive-Thru, Flannel, and Neon and Camouflage Day! We do all these to celebrate being in person on Fridays and enjoying our school community together!

We welcomed the NED Show virtually to St. Victor School on Friday, October 2. NED

stands for Never give up, Encourage others, and Do your best! NED taught us through the use of yo-yos, and the students were able to purchase the NED yo-yos to learn new tricks.



To honor the saints, our 4th graders again participated in the Saints Fair. They were able to research and learn about a saint of their choice. They created pillows in art class, researched saints in technology class, wrote comparisons in ELA (English/Language Arts) class, and presented their information at school Mass on Thursday, Oct. 29. Their display boards were then available for students to look at throughout the day!



In October, we participated in the Baby Bottle Drive sponsored by CareNet. The money used will benefit new mothers and babies during their first months of life. It is a great way to help out and respect all life!



As we approach the end of the first trimester of school, I would like to thank the dedicated teachers and staff of St. Victor School who continue to rise above and beyond, providing an outstanding educational and safe learning environment for their students. These are trying times for all, but these teachers continue to do an incredible job! Please continue to pray for all of our students and staff.









Congratulations to the twenty-seven children who received Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time in 2020! We celebrated the first of our 27 First Communions on July 9, 2020 with Noah Kruse and then wrapped up with Landen Shippy on October 29. What a season of joy! It was not what we planned, but God's plan for grace prevailed. Thank you to these families for persevering in completing your children's preparation this year. Thank you for bringing them to the church for baptism and for continuing to foster their faith as they grew into the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. We ask that God will bless them, and bless us all, to bring the much-needed grace of the sacraments into our world.

### Providing to the "Mass" es with Livestream Services

When an emergency order was declared to prohibit in-person Mass services last March, we were forced to think fast on our feet and figure out a way to bring Mass into the homes of our parishioners. Using an iPhone and a \$25 microphone, Fr. Tim Mergen started up our first series of daily Mass livestream services via Facebook, and using their professional equipment, the Tomasiewicz family provided our Sunday Masses. The response from those watching was so great that, by June, we were able to collect enough donations to purchase a professional streaming camera that tied directly into our sound system and allowed us to bring all of our in-church services to the online world. We now have a YouTube channel (with over 270 subscribers!) that features livestream video of both our daily and weekend Masses and a full library of past services and talks. It has been so rewarding to hear from both parishioners at home and people from across the country that enjoy our Mass.

Parishioner Joe Tomasiewicz continues to operate the now permanent livestream camera on Sunday mornings. We are looking for a few others that would like to help. If you've had a desire to help our church, but are the type that prefers a behind-the-scenes job, please reach out to Ann O'Leary or Marci Boss in the parish office at 608-325-9506. Must be confident with technology. Training can be accomplished over a couple of weekends.





### 2020-21 PARISH ANNUAL FISCAL REPORT

2016-17

2015-16

St. Clare of Assisi Parish has a long tradition of fiscal strength and responsibility. It is no surprise to us that, even in the face of a global pandemic that shut down our church services and

school, we continued at offertory levels that mirrored our prior year. To end the year 2019-20 fiscal year at only 1% below prior year levels is simply awesome!

Considering that our current fiscal year will continue to see uncertain times for many families and businesses within our parish, we are asking that our members maintain their current giving levels. We will not be asking for an increase in offertory this year, and we will be maintaining or cutting expenses to offset any offertory increase that would normally be requested. Please continue to support our parish by your presence, your service, and your generosity.

OITLIIIOIII DI ILAII					
2021 BUDGET GOAL	\$720,000				
2019-20	\$715,864	-1%			
2018-19	\$725,120	3%			
2017-18	\$704,883	6%			

ULLEDLUDA DA ALVD

Our parish fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

\$664,929

\$699,399

-5%

### 5 Year Parish Financial Picture

Fiscal Year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19*	2019-20	2020-21**
Total Income	\$1,307,543	\$1,342,172	\$1,433,456	\$1,389,672	\$1,298,040 or \$1,528,040 including PPP loan
Total Expenses	(\$1,342,190)	\$1,406,147	\$1,360,727	\$1,418,092	\$1,375,747
Net Effect to Parish	(\$34,647)	(\$63,975)	\$72,729	(\$28,420)	(\$77,707) or \$152,293 including PPP

\*Net income for Fiscal Year 2018-19 consisted of 2 one-time transactions that greatly impacted our final numbers: 1)\$35,000 loan forgiveness gift 2) \$45,000 Priest for our Future rebated from the Diocese (this rebate program ended 12/19).

\*\*Net income Budgeted for 2020-21 includes the Paycheck Protection Loan forgiveness from the SBA, a temporary (non-operational) income of \$230,000. During shutdown this past year, we funded employee salaries with this loan.

### KEEP OUR PARISH STRONG. GIVE ONLINE.

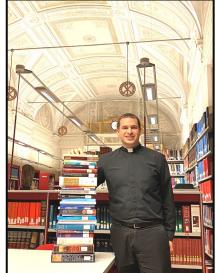
These times are uncertain. It's comforting to know that we have a vibrant parish to provide us faith-based support and to provide services to our most at-risk. The majority of our funds used to provide this support and maintain the life and operations of our parish comes from your offertory dollars.

The easiest way to submit your offertory if you aren't able to join us at church is to sign up for online giving.

### TO GIVE ONLINE:

Go to www.stclaregreencounty.org and select the "Charitable Giving" icon to set up your profile. You choose how much, how often, and for how long.

CONTACT MARCI BOSS AT BUSINESS@STCLAREGREENCOUNTY.ORG OR 608-325-9506 FOR ASSISTANCE OR QUESTIONS.





### A LETTER FROM FR.TIM

Dear St. Clare of Assisi Parishioners.

Greetings from the Eternal City! This note finds me healthy and doing well amid a beautiful fall Roman day! After finishing up last spring at the Pontifical North American College (the American Seminary in Rome) it has been great to move across town near the Trevi Fountain to the Casa Santa Maria which is the house for American priests who are asked by their Bishops to get advanced degrees in service of the Church. The "Casa" as it is usually called features small individual apartments within a community living facility that features a shared dining room, a spacious library, two beautiful courtyards, and several small Chapels for each priest to offer Mass. This year there are 45 other priests from all across the United States (and even a few from Australia) that live here so it truly is a great place to grow and learn from my brother priests what it means to live as a priest of Jesus Christ.

At this point I am just under halfway through the first semester (unlike the U.S. schedule the semester does not end until the beginning of February). It is a busier semester than usual with 8 full in person classes alongside initial research to prepare and defend a lengthy academic thesis next spring. My research proposal was just approved to write about the sufferings of St. Paul in the Letters to the Corinthians. Since the Cross is our only path to salvation and a part of each and every one of our lives, I am confident this research topic will be fruitful on many levels. Certainly, this year the cross struck Italy particularly hard and the people here are on edge with Covid-19 cases much higher than the spring (6,500 cases/day in March 2020 compared to 37,000+ cases/day and rising as I write) and greatly affecting the livelihoods of many in a largely tourist run economy. While many national restrictions are in place, my school has remained opened, our house has remained healthy, and I have even been able to regularly travel to northern Italy to offer Mass on various weekends for families stationed at the U.S. Air Force base in Aviano, Italy. The priests I live with are men of great faith and we have all entrusted ourselves to Our Lady for safety and protection this year, for which she has not disappointed.

I will remain here over the Christmas season and plan to return to the U.S. at the end of June 2021. Though I am often occupied with my academic studies and unable to keep in touch as often I as I would like, I assure you that you are all thought of and prayed for daily from the heart of the Church in Rome.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Tim Mergen

### Understanding Bias Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

Many of us are frustrated in our attempt to become amateur public health officials or epidemiologists in order to make sense of the news avalanche related to Covid-19. We keep looking for definitive answers to help us decide if we can safely return to church, work, school, etc. The virus has taught us that few answers are definitive, and most answers will change as scientists continue to learn more.

Understanding how bias plays a part in the information that we seek when making decisions. Narinder Kapur, a neuropsychologist, explains some bias types:

- Confirmation bias- the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information in a way that confirms or supports one's prior beliefs or values while ignoring other, non-supportive data.
- Common practice bias- reasoning that because something is common, it is also valid.
- Loss aversion bias- the pain of suffering a loss is outweighed by an equivalent gain.
- Framing bias- reactions to information may depend and numbers in relation to context.
  on how the data is presented (highlighting its benefits vs. risks).

  St. Clare of Assisi is confident that the safety protocols we have in

Practice these steps when reading/listening to information and before sharing:



- I. Take a deep breath and acknowledge triggered emotions.
- 2. Recognize and reflect on your bias.
- 3. Confirm the information by checking the credentials of the author and corroborate evidence by utilizing primary resources such as the CDC, local and state health departments, and medical/scientific journals.
- 4. Be wary of screenshots, viral memes, cut-and-pasted text and numbers in relation to context.

St. Clare of Assisi is confident that the safety protocols we have in place to minimize health risks under the guidance of the Madison Diocese, Green County Health Department and CDC are based on mitigated bias and reliable primary sources.



# 2020 Advent

Use this Advent calendar to prepare yourself for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. "Pray" includes a suggested focus for your personal prayer that day. "Action" items are ideas for Advent and can be done on any day during Advent. We hope you enjoy getting in the true spirit of Christmas!!

every Sunday until Christmas. Some families also add one decoration per day during Advent. Other families hang Jesse Tree ornaments on their Advent Tree. This year, try waiting to fully decorate your tree until Christmas Eve. Instead, let your bare tree be an "Advent Tree," a symbol of our waiting for the coming of Christ. This doesn't mean you have to leave the tree completely bare. You can put on a single string of lights during the first week of Advent, then add another string of lights

Sunday, December 20 4th Sunday of Advent Attend: Mass Light: the fourth candle on your Advent wreath Pray: for peace Action: "Pay it forward" - an act of kindness	Sunday, December 13 3rd Sunday of Advent Attend: Mass Light: the third candle on your Advent wreath Pray: that all find joy Action: Make a homemade treat and give to a neighbor	Sunday, December 6 2nd Sunday of Advent St. Nicholas Day Attend: Mass Light: the second candle on your Advent wreath Pray: for your family Action: Do something nice for someone else	Sunday, November 29 Ist Sunday of Advent Attend: Mass Light: the first candle on your Advent wreath Pray: for our parish Action: Buy or make an Advent wreath (3 purple, I pink candle or all white)
20 Monday, December 21 ent Pray: those affected by COVID-19 dle Action: Reflect on your favorite Christmas memory and share it with someone	13   Monday, December 14	ent Pray: by name for those who have accompanied and mentored you in faith Action: Read/Check out a Christ-centered Christmas book	29 Monday, November 30 Pray: the Our Father Action: Pick one habit that is keeping you from holiness. Resolve to conquer it during ple, ple, ple, n Advent.
Tuesday, December 22 Pray: for those struggling financially Action: Sing or listen to O Come O Come Emmanuel	Hamber 15 Ing Pray: the Come Holy Spirit Action: Write down five things you are grateful for today	Inmaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary (Holy Day of Obligation) Attend: Mass Proy: a Hail Mary (or the entire Rosary) Action: Enjoy a candlelight dinner in honor of Mary	Tuesday, December 1 Pray: for a unified country Action: Put out a nativity set.
Wednesday, Dec. 23 Pray: for all those traveling Action: Watch The Nativity Story or The Star (animated movie) or It's a Wonderful Life or A Charlie Brown Christmas	Wednesday, Dec. 16 Pray: for migrants, immigrants, and refugees seeking shelter Action: Read/Learn about Las Posadas	Wednesday, Dec. 9 Pray: the Apostles' Creed Action: Send a card, letter, email, or message to someone you haven't seen in a while	Wednesday Dec. 2 Pray: for the sick Action: Make your plans for attending Christmas Mass. Reservations are required. Sign-up begins tom. at 10 am (link on our website or call the parish office).
Thursday, Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Attend: Mass at St. Victor Church (4/6/8:30 pm today or 9 am tom.) Proy: for all to love Jesus Action: Read the Christmas Story (Luke 2:1-20)	Thursday, Dec. 17 Pray: the first of the "O Antiphons" (recited/ sang the last 7 days of Advent) Action: If you have not signed up for Christmas Mass, go to our website or call the parish office	Thursday, Dec. 10 Pray: for people who are incarcerated Action: Go to confession from 5:45-6:15 pm (other times in the yellow box below)	Thursday, Dec. 3 Pray: for Pope Francis Action: Sign up for the Christmas Mass you are planning to attend at St. Victor Church (link on our website or call the parish office).
Christmas Day Attend: Mass (9 am today or 4/6/8:30 pm on Christmas Eve) Pray: for good health Action: Make a birthday cake for Jesus, sing Happy Birthday	Friday, December 18 Pray: for those that struggle with their faith Action: Drive around town and look at lights and Christmas scenes	Friday, December 11 Pray: the Glory Be Action: Watch "Guadalupe: The Miracle and the Message" on formed.org	Friday, December 4 Pray: for all who are homeless Action: Watch a video on formed.org.
Advent Confession times Every Sat. 3:45-4:10 pm Dec. 5 @ 9-9:30 am Dec. 10 @ 5:45-6:15 pm Dec. 17 @ 4:30-5 pm Dec. 19 @ 9-9:30 am Dec. 19 @ 9-9:30 am Dec. 22 @ 4:30-5 pm	Saturday, December 19 Pray: for life Action: Shop at a local vendor	Saturday, December 12 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe Pray: for our Hispanic brothers/sisters Action: Make a Mexican feast.	Saturday, December 5 Pray: for those struggling w/ addictions Action: Donate to the food pantry collection at church (the first full weekend of each month) today or tomorrow

## ARRIVE HEALTHY. LEAVE HEALTHY.

While we have made every effort to maintain a healthy environment for you, we ask for your support.

Each of us plays a role through mask wearing, social distancing, staying home when ill, hand washing, and staying informed of the current guidelines.



Our commitment to you: Ensuring your health and safety is our top priority, and to do so, we will continue to implement enhanced measures in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in five key "C.L.A.R.E." areas:

The church (pews in the sanctuary and chairs in the gathering space) is sanitized, emphasizing high-touch surfaces, after every Mass.



We are limiting the capacity of the church to 25%. We limit the seating by taping off every other pew. We are limiting the singing to the cantor only. We have limited entry to only the south and west doors.



You have access to the church to pray from 6:30am - 4:30 or 6 pm daily. You have access to weekend and daily Mass.

Even if you are high-risk or feel sick, we provide access to Mass via the livestream. We provide access to the bulletin via a weekly email. Even if the church itself is full, chairs are set up in the gathering space along with a TV and sound system for participation in the Mass.



The holy water has been removed.

The missalettes/hymnals have been removed. (They are available for purchase if you would like to keep one to bring to Mass or to use during the livestream.)



We encourage using hand sanitizer, staying home if you are sick or high-risk, receiving Communion on the hand, social distancing, arriving early for Mass, not gathering/socializing after Mass, and notifying the parish if you test positive and were at Mass recently.

\*\*Mask wearing is REQUIRED.





Non-Profit Org. U.S. POSTAGE PAID Monroe, WI 53566 Permit No. 177

# CHRISTMAS ASSES of St. Victor Church

Thursday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)
4:00 pm 6:00 pm 8:30 pm
Friday, December 25 (Christmas Day)



9:00 am

\*\*\*Space is limited, and reservations are required to attend Christmas Mass.

Sign-up opens at 10 am on Thursday, December 3.

To sign up:
Go to our website: www.stclaregreencounty.org
or call the parish office at (608) 325-9506.