

# THE JOURNEY

Photo Credit  
David Swenson

Fall  
2022

Pelican Valley Catholic Community Newsletter  
*Our Lady of Victory, St. Elizabeth, St. Leonard*

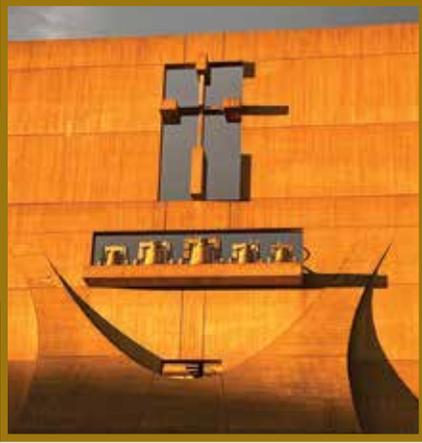


## FROM FATHER ALAN:

We begin our third year growing and praying together as the Pelican Valley Area Catholic Community. This is our first year with a pastor, and instead of a parochial vicar, a team of "weekend assistant priests". We appreciate so much the ministries of Fathers Jeff Ethen, Stan Wieser, Bob Kieffer, and Joe Korf. The role of our deacons and lay pastoral leaders also is ever more vital for our community of faith. This is the first year of our parishes being served by one ACC pastoral council. In this first year of the Eucharistic Revival, let us remember the significance of the mother pelican, a symbol of Christ. She feeds her young with her flesh and blood, just as Christ gives us His very flesh and blood to nourish our faith and love at every Eucharist!

# Taking Co-Responsibility of Church Life and Mission: A Staff Retreat

By Deb Forstner



St. John's Abbey Church Bell Banner

On August 10-11, staff members of the Pelican Valley Area Catholic Community joined together for a retreat experience hosted through a Lilly Foundation grant entitled *Bridge Builders for a Thriving Mission*. The author and coordinator of this grant, Barbara Sutton, was our retreat leader. Attendees stayed and met at the Episcopal House of Prayer on the St. John's University,



Pelican Valley ACC Retreatants

Collegetville campus. This setting gave us the opportunity to join in prayer and Mass at the Abbey Church with the Benedictine monks. One of the themes of the sessions was ministering across differences. Retreatants took part in journaling, and sharing on a 1:1, small group, and full group basis. These experiences helped us to reflect on who we are, and to get to know each other

better. We shared about some of the joys and challenges of ministering and growing together in our three parish ACC. Overall, whether on staff or not, we all have a part in taking responsibility for the life and mission of our Area Catholic Community, and we pray that the many Fruits of the Spirit active in our parish come together for good and the love of God and neighbor.

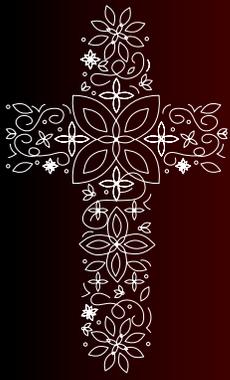
## **Presentation on Ukraine related to Orphans and Refugees: Open to all in our ACC and Beyond**

By Deb Forstner

It started with an invitation through a program in Ukraine for an orphan to come and stay with a RN and her family for a summer outside of Pelican Rapids. Where the story leads from there, especially in light of the current war raging in Ukraine, is a riveting tale. Gerry Leonard and Deb Forstner heard this speaker, Gina Nelson, at the Grace United Methodist Church's Salad Luncheon this summer. Gina is now scheduled to speak at Our Lady of Victory's Fellowship Hall at 7 PM on Thursday November 3. This event is open to all, and youth and their parents are especially encouraged to attend. Gina has been significantly inspired by Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and based upon Mother Teresa's writing, she titles her talk, "Do It Anyway."

For more information regarding one of Gina's significant contacts in Ukraine, Pastor Gennadiy Moknenko, go to [www.republicpilgrim.org](http://www.republicpilgrim.org). While the website will first appear in Ukranian, it has a translate link that change the contents to English. Hope to see you on the evening of November 3rd!





# BAPTISMS

## OUR LADY OF VICTORY

**RORY JAMES KOEP**  
Steve & Amber Koep  
6/11/2022

**BELLAMIE ELOWEN LIEN**  
Cory & Taylor Lien  
7/23/2022

**CREW JOSEPH DIRKMAN**  
Dave & Charity Dirkman  
6/22/2022

**RACHEL MARIN WEISS**  
Dylan Umlauf & Andrea  
Loegering  
8/7/2022

**ANSON PALMER ADAMS**  
Cain & Megan Adams  
7/23/2022

## ST. LEONARD

**LEANDRO SAAVADRA**  
Luis Zavala & Claudia Gastelum  
6/4/2022

**VALENTINA SAAVEDRA**  
Axel Bustos & Alicia Saavedra  
6/25/2022

**RYAN CAIRO**  
Anthony Cairo III & Samantha Greenwood  
6/19/2022

**EMILIO CAMPOS**  
Luis Campos & Adriana Robles  
7/2/2022

**EMILIA MARTINEZ**  
Nelson Martinez & Maria Martinez-Escobar  
6/26/2022

**ADRIEL CHAVEZ**  
Martin Chavez & Cristina Franco  
8/14/2022



On Saturday August 20,  
parishioners gathered outside  
St. Leonard Church  
around a bonfire,  
and prayed the Rosary.

Watch for plans to  
do this again!

## NEW MEMBERS OF ST LEONARD - Summer 2022

Leon & Arlette Osowski | Gareth & Linda Klimek  
Miquel & Guadalupe Ledesma-Rosiles | Maria Ledesma Family

**DELICIOUS  
GUATEMALAN  
COFFEE  
FOR SALE**  
in the OLV Office  
and in the back of  
St. Leonard Church

Comes in beans and ground, with many roasting varieties

**PICK UP A PACK  
AND ENJOY  
REALLY GOOD  
COFFEE!**

NET WT 16 OZ (454 g)  
**Support A Student  
Support a Family**  
Coffee from the Antigua Highlands Guatemala  
**French Roast - Ground**  
Cadena de Fe (Chain of Faith)  
Distributed by Church of St. Andrew (763) 441-1483

# WHAT IS THE NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL?

By Tom Hintgen

The Eucharistic Revival in the United States is a three-year initiative that aims to inspire, educate and unite, while reminding Catholics about the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Through a carefully planned timeline of events. Every three years, the U.S. bishops hope to change the lives of many Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Some people may ask the question, "Why are the U.S. bishops doing this?"

The Pew Research Center shows that less than half of Catholics throughout the United States believe in the True Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Says Bishop Andrew Cozzens, currently Bishop of the Diocese of Crookston and the chair of the Eucharistic Revival, "Many of us are separated from the very source of our strength. Jesus Christ invites us to return to the source and summit of our faith, that being his Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist."

The bishop reminds us, "Jesus in the Eucharist is an incredible gift. Our goal is to bring together Catholics from all over the United States to reaffirm their commitment to the Eucharist in the Mass." Adds Bishop Cozzens, "The Eucharistic Revival will strengthen foundational beliefs of the Eucharist by providing resources to dioceses and parishes."

The three-year process will include events throughout the Diocese of St. Cloud, parish activities

REGIONAL MINISTRY GATHERING

## LIVING THE Eucharistic Revival IN OUR LIVES

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5 | 6:00 P.M.

OUR LADY OF VICTORY  
207 N. Vine Street  
Fergus Falls, MN

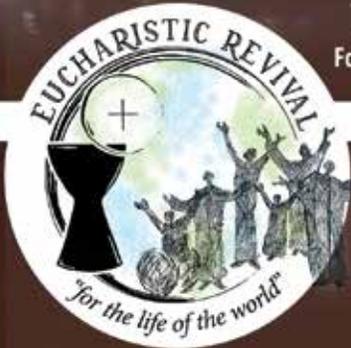


Bishop Andrew Cozzens  
Diocese of Crookston



This talk is a hybrid event: attend in person or via livestream.  
For more information and to register, visit [stcdio.org/eucharistic-revival](http://stcdio.org/eucharistic-revival)

**OTHER OPPORTUNITIES**



**PILGRIMAGE OF Prayer**  
Oct. 5 | 3 - 5:00 p.m.  
OUR LADY OF VICTORY PARISH  
FERGUS FALLS

**Eucharistic Revival RELIC TOUR**  
Oct. 5 | 3 - 8:00 p.m.  
OUR LADY OF VICTORY PARISH  
FERGUS FALLS



BLESSED CARLOS ACUTIS  
ST. MANUEL GONZALEZ GARCIA

and revival processions. Revive Parishes courses, offered free through the Augustine Institute, are convenient, short, and high quality, offered in person and online.

"Educators and lay ministers will find dynamic ways to help their parish communities grow in faith," Bishop Cozzens says. "Each session is packed with meaningful reflection and practical ways to reflect on our personal relationships with Jesus."

From now through June of 2023, each diocese will offer events to promote and inspire understanding of the Eucharist. Trained Eucharistic Missionaries will teach through online and in-person resources about Christ and the real presence in the Holy Eucharist.

If you have questions or would like to participate in the planning process for the October 5th event, please contact Diane Aschnewitz at Our Lady of Victory.

# Carlo Acutis: The First Beatified Millennial

By Deb Forstner

Carlo Acutis was born May 3, 1991, in London, and a few months later, he moved with his parents to Milan, Italy. From a young age, Carlo seemed to have a special love for God, even though his parents weren't especially religious. His mom said that before her son Carlo, she went to Mass only for her First Communion, Confirmation, and wedding. But after Carlo made his First Communion, he went to Mass as often as he could, and he made Holy Hours before or after Mass. He also went to Confession weekly. He asked his parents to take him on pilgrimages — to the places of the saints, and to the sites of Eucharistic miracles.

Because of Carlo's devotion in his life and his witness of faith, the priest promoting Carlo's cause for sainthood noted, "It was not his parents bringing the little boy to Mass, but it was he who managed to get himself to Mass and to convince

others to receive Communion daily."

Carlo was known for defending kids at school who were picked on, especially disabled kids. When a friend's parents divorced, Carlo made a special effort to include his friend in the Acutis family life.

As a hobby, Carlo loved playing video games. His console of choice was a Playstation, or possibly a PS2, which was released in 2000, when Carlo was nine. He only allowed himself to play games for an hour a week, as a penance and a spiritual discipline, but he wanted to play much more. Using his computer skills, Carlo built a website which documented 163 true stories of Eucharistic miracles in order to educate people about them. On the site, he told people that "the



more often we receive the Eucharist, the more we will become like Jesus, so that on this earth we will have a foretaste of heaven."

As a teenager, Carlo was diagnosed with leukemia. He offered his sufferings for Pope Benedict XVI and for the Church. He died on Oct. 12, 2006, and was buried in Assisi, at his request, because of his love for St. Francis. He was buried in jeans and a pair of Nikes, the casual clothes he preferred in life. His heart, which is now considered a relic, is displayed in the reliquary in the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. His cause for canonization began in 2013.

Blessed Carlo is one of the patrons of the Eucharistic Revival. Traveling relics of Blessed Carlo will be displayed and can be honored/venerated in prayer as part of the Eucharistic Revival Regional Meeting at OLV on October 5th.

## Tips for Eucharistic Adoration or Prayer Time in Front of the Tabernacle

Source: *Brick House by the City*

**1. TAKE IT SLOW.** There is no "correct" way to go to adoration. Allow yourself to ease into it. It's okay if you feel uncomfortable – Jesus is just glad you're there.

**2. START WITH PRAISE.** This one fits the name – Adoration. You've come here to adore, so it's the perfect time to praise Him and tell Him who He is and what He means to you.

**3. ENJOY THE SILENCE.** We aren't used to silence. It may be hard to sit in the silence at first, but in time you'll be able to hear your thoughts and prayers, and you might be able to hear Him speak to you too.

**4. PRACTICE GRATITUDE.** The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith and worthy of deep gratitude. Practice thanking God for all the beauty in your life – big and little things.

**5. BE YOURSELF WITH HIM.** You don't have to do anything fancy in adoration. Bring a book, write in your journal, read about a saint, or just sit and daydream about what heaven might be like. He just wants you to show up as YOU.

Please watch the bulletin for opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration in our parishes of the Pelican Valley ACC.

## Eucharistic Revival Regional Ministry Gathering October 5, 2022

*"My Flesh for the Life of the World" - John 6:51*

Members of Pelican Valley Area Catholic Community as well as surrounding parishes are invited to learn more about the National Eucharistic Revival on Wednesday, Oct. 5 at Our Lady of Victory Parish.

The purpose of the National Eucharistic Revival is to teach and remind fellow Catholics that God is with us and is fully present in the Holy Eucharist. When receiving Holy Communion, we touch and receive Jesus, and come in contact with Him, His saving passion, and His Death and Resurrection, which is the source of all healing.

**On October 5, all are invited to join in a three-prong event.**

- 1** Pilgrimage of Prayer (mini retreat) hosted by the Diocese of St Cloud from 3-5 pm
- 2** Regional Ministry Gathering with speaker, Bishop Andrew Cozzens of the Diocese of Crookston who is heading up the National Eucharistic Revival for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops at 6 pm
- 3** First Class Relics of St. Manual Gonzalez Garcia and Blessed Carlo Acutis will be available for veneration from 3 – 8 pm. The relics are on tour as part of the National Eucharist Revival. OLV is the third and final opportunity to venerate the relics within the Diocese.

A light lunch will be served at 5 pm in the Fellowship Hall. To ensure an accurate count, please register for this event at <https://stcdio.org/eucharistic-revival/>

# Deacon (Pete) Peter Bellavance Transferring to Crookston Diocese Oct. 1<sup>ST</sup>

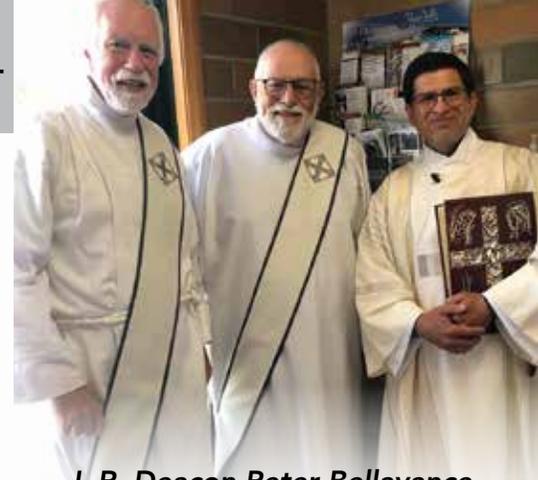
Change is a never-ending process that affects us every day of our lives and is the way we grow. Sometimes, it is exciting and challenging. Sometimes it brings sadness, but whatever the effect, it does help us grow. When we look at the change in the light of a loving Father who through His Divine providence brings all things to good for those who love Him, it is up to us to look for the positive aspect. The last several years have taught us a lot and we are still learning. We have learned how fast things can change and the things we take for granted can be gone the next day. All we need to do is remember one day we were at Mass as a community receiving the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Savior, and the next day we could not. Many realized how important that was for them, having not fully realized that before.

As things continue to change daily, the question we need to ask ourselves is how do we respond? Do we put our head in the sand or do we seek guidance from the Lord? I believe that it is more important than

ever that we must pray, fast, and spend time in the presence of our Lord; praying for our families, our church, and our country. We clearly need the Holy Spirit's guidance as we make our day-to-day decisions in our lives. As I looked at where I was personally, how things had changed and by seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance, I had to make some changes that would not be easy, but necessary to meet my responsibilities and serve the Lord in what I felt He was calling me to do during the present time.

The result of that prayer for me was to simplify what I was doing and ensuring Mass, prayer and the sacraments remain the foundation of my life as a husband, father, and deacon. The result was to transfer from active ministry at the parishes of Pelican Valley ACC. I still hope to stop in periodically and to see the homebound as I can, and meet some of you for coffee or lunch.

St Elizabeth and St Leonard have taught me much. My family (people of our ACC), has grown, my prayer has grown, and I have found a deeper



**L-R, Deacon Peter Bellavance,  
Deacon Joe Hilber, and  
Deacon Mario Mancilla**

commitment to my Lord and my family. Though difficult at times, I have learned much that will help me to continue to live my life for the Lord. Please know you will continue to be in my daily prayer, and I hope to see you in my daily activities. I pray I helped you grow in your love for the Lord and His Blessed Mother. If I have hurt anyone, I ask for your forgiveness. Please pray that I do better in the future,

Blessings and Prayers,  
Deacon Pete

## PARISHIONER PROFILE: Elizabeth Helen Wedll

By Susan Ward



A resident of Pioneer Home, Inc. of Fergus Falls since April 1991, Elizabeth Wedll was born in Elizabeth Township, Otter Tail County, Minnesota over 103 years ago, to Bernard and Catherine (Diedrich) Schroeder. The youngest of eight children, Elizabeth attended the Elizabeth, Minnesota grade school and the Sacred Heart Academy of

Fargo, North Dakota.

On October 14, 1913, Elizabeth married George Wedll, and to that union was born seven children. Elizabeth maintained a strong Roman Catholic faith which enabled her to always hold a most positive attitude. It also provided her with the desire and ability to teach catechism for 65 years, for which she received the Bishop's Merit of Honor Award at age 96.

Elizabeth enjoyed numerous hobbies over the years, including crossword puzzles, for which she developed her own 300-word dictionary. Her most rewarding hobby, however, was her painting which she "revived" at age 101 when entering the resident art class at Pioneer Home of Fergus Falls. She had done this more for the therapeutic benefit to a recently

broken shoulder and right hand than for the artistic pleasure. However, after the healing, she continued to paint.

"Modern Farm 1930's" is Elizabeth's more widely known painting which earned her an honorable mention award in an April 1993 Sister Kenney International Art Show by Disabled Artists. Snyder Drugs chose the picture for their 1994 calendar. It also helped earn her the distinction of Pioneer's own "Grandma Moses." Elizabeth died at the age of 103.



# AND ON TO A NEW CHAPTER

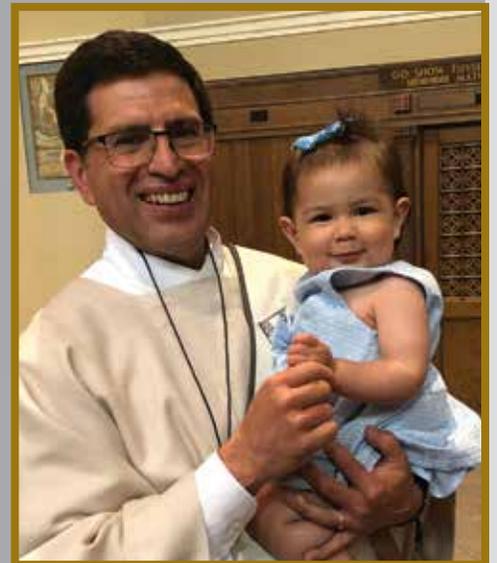
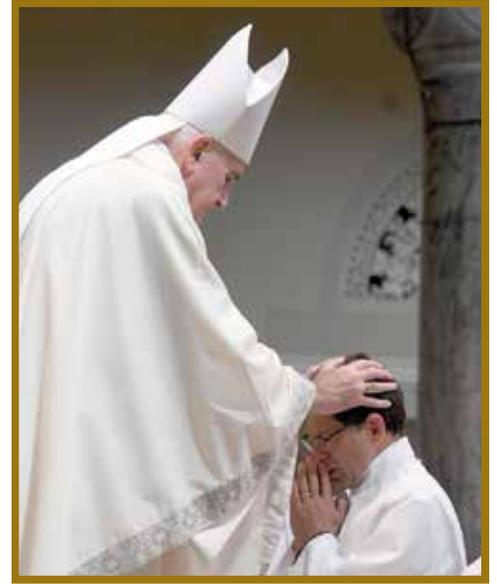
By Nancy Hilber

On Saturday June 11, Mario Mancilla finally achieved a cherished goal: he was ordained a deacon in the Diocese of St. Cloud.

When he and his wife Alejandra moved here from California years ago, they had no idea of the impact they would have on the community in general and the Catholic community in particular. They were asked by the late Fr. Richard Walz, St. Leonard's pastor at the time, to become leaders in the Latino community of worshipers. This was not without many hardships, one of which was that Mario spoke no English. It involved much studying and sharing with their community

and eventually also sharing with the English part of the St. Leonard community. They became so busy and sought after that Mario gave up his full time job to facilitate their leadership and teaching role, which led to Mario studying to be a deacon. Even this was delayed, mostly by the pandemic. Many sacrifices were made by both Mario and Alejandra, who were not deterred. Finally on June 11th, Mario was one of five Latino candidates who were ordained as deacons at St. Mary's Cathedral in St. Cloud, starting an important new chapter in his and Alejandra's lives.

And by the way, Mario's English is now excellent.



# Perpetual Light

By Connie Graff



*Stan & Elaine Kidder*

Just beyond the lovely little Catholic Church in Elizabeth, you'll find St. Elizabeth's Cemetery. It's the resting spot for many loved ones from this tight-knit community and is beautifully maintained by parish volunteers. Featured in this "Perpetual Light" column is the story of Stan and Elaine Kidder, who are buried there and were beloved not only by their family, but by church and community members as well.

During the summer of 1926, Ernest and Louise Mary (Harles) Kidder welcomed a son they named Stanley to their family. Stan was baptized and confirmed at St. Elizabeth Church and years later, this was where his own family worshipped as well. Stan served his country in the Army from 1950-1952 and saw combat during the Korean War. It was during a particularly dangerous situation that Stan, along with several other soldiers, saw distinctly the very face of God in the clouds in the Korean sky. Stan described this experience as very comforting and reassuring to him and his comrades. The incident was featured in the military publication, "The Stars and Stripes." Stan was a lifelong member of the VFW, keeping in contact with army buddies and attending army reunions.

After his discharge from the army and after attending agricultural school, Stan met Elaine Fiedler, who hailed from Perham, at a dance. They were married at OLV on June 4th, 1953. Their love of dancing continued throughout their marriage. Stan and Elaine farmed together 8 miles north and

2 miles east of Fergus Falls where they raised their children: June, Byron, Wanda and Judy. Stan also worked in Fergus Falls at the packing plant and for the Great Northern Railroad. Besides working alongside Stan with chores and growing a big garden, Elaine worked at The Ranch House, Norby's Department Store and was the bookkeeper/secretary at St. Elizabeth during Father Alan Wielinski's and Father Dick McGuire's assignments. June and Wanda recall their parents raising their children in a strict Catholic household that also made time for fun, which sometimes included a drive to Jewett Lake for a swim after chores were done. Stan and Elaine taught their children lifelong lessons, including the value of hard work, of volunteering in the community and church, and of welcoming friends and family to their home for, more than likely, a game of cards, quite possibly a beverage and for sure, good food. The traditional "After Midnight Mass Party" held on Christmas Eve at the Kidder home included lots of Christmas goodies and was attended not only by parishioners, but the priest as well.

Stan and Elaine loved being grandparents to 13 and great-grandparents to 15. As their life allowed more time, they were adored by their grandkids who were never turned down for an overnight stay. They both attended many school activities and sporting events, but it was Grandma who was most interested in following the game and its outcome. Grandpa Stan was a "get down on the floor to play" kind of Grandpa. He had a real soft spot for all children and was a good-natured teaser. If there was any discipline to

be done, it would have to come from Grandma. As the first grandchild moved to Boston for college, that unwavering support continued in the form of weekly letters.

When the time came to leave the farm and move to town, the transition was made easier by the new friendships made at Red River Apartments. Stan and Elaine both enjoyed the opportunities for socializing with new friends and Elaine had new neighbors to share her baked goodies with. Stan was called home to Jesus gently, while sitting in his chair at home. Elaine followed her husband two years later, due to cancer and a stroke. While hospitalized at St. Mary's in Rochester, Elaine received great care and although she was receiving pain medication, she was comforted the most when given her rosary and a crucifix that was a gift from her granddaughter.

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"The Greatest Generation" is often used to describe those who lived through the challenges of the Great Depression and WWII. They were resourceful and thrifty, and had an impressive work ethic. When this writer's family were parishioners at St. Elizabeth parish decades ago, I observed "St. E's Greatest Generation" firsthand. Their example of faith in action was evident by how they worshipped, had fun together and stepped-up countless times to accomplish whatever needed to be done. This was all done without fanfare or expectation of praise. From the building of Brenny Hall, to maintaining the parish grounds and cemetery, to countless church dinners and Pork Outs, these folks got 'er done. I vividly remember helping in the Brenny Hall kitchen and running out of mashed potatoes and gravy while there were still people waiting in line to be served. I was amazed at how none of the women were rattled and miraculously (in my eyes), whipped up more potatoes and gravy without missing a beat! Along with many others, Stan and Elaine were one of the lay pillars of "St. E's Greatest Generation" (I hesitate to name additional families in fear

**Continued on Pg 9.**

# VIETNAMESE FAMILIES IN OUR FAITH COMMUNITY

By Missy Hermes

The Big Read is a program sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). It encourages communities to read a book and engage in discussions. This year, Fergus Falls read The Best We Could Do, a graphic novel by Thi Bui. It tells the story of a family of Vietnamese refugees who come to America. Organizations like the Public Library, Kaddatz Gallery, and OTC Historical Society hosted book-related activities.

The story of Thi Bui's family might sound familiar to longtime members of OLV Church. In 1975, the parish and sister parishes like Elbow Lake and Maine sponsored

four Vietnamese families. Many of the families left Vietnam by boat and were rescued at sea before arriving at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. From there, they flew to Fargo before coming to Fergus.

The family of Vu Dinh Thuan and his wife Thi Hong Nguyen included three children and a grandmother. They stayed with Agnes and George Jaros on their farm. Then, on August 10, 1975, Baby Marie Tanya Vu was born, the first Vietnamese-American baby in Fergus Falls. She was baptized with the Jaroses as Godparents. Her eldest brother attended OLV School.

Catholic parishes also sponsored Hien Thi Vu and her husband Hoan Dinh Vu. Mrs. Vu had brought her sewing machine from Vietnam and worked as a seamstress at Clausen's Tailor Shop for Mr. and Mrs. Alfred (Tina) DeLorenzo. The DeLorenzos remembered what it was like to come to a new country and learn a new language.

These new Catholic parishioners made history as the first people of Vietnamese heritage to live here. Today our Pelican Valley Catholic Community continues to welcome Vietnamese-American parishioners.

## MagnifiKids!

By Deb Forstner,  
Faith Formation Facilitator

For three months, beginning in July, all students who participated in Elementary Faith Formation last school year received a gift subscription to the MagnifiKids! Magazine, due to the suggestion and contribution of a generous donor. MagnifiKids is an off-shoot of the adult devotional magazine called The Magnificat. With each month's mailing, there's an issue for each week of that month. Presented in an attractive and kid-friendly way, the MagnifiKid makes it easy for children to learn more about the Catholic faith, participate in Mass, and live their faith throughout the liturgical year. Each issue offers all the readings and prayers of the Sunday Mass with explanations of the difficult words and the meaning of Mass rituals. It also includes a suggested prayer for morning and evening, many ideas on how to live the week with the Lord, various games, a comic, and activities to help children learn about Christian life and culture, and a page intended for parents with suggestions for family prayers. It has been rewarding to see some children bringing their MagnifiKid issue to Mass and follow along, as seen in this photo of parent



Laura Jones and her children on either side.

If you want more information on how to subscribe for a child in your life (suggested ages 6-12), go to [us.magnificat.net/home/Magnifikid](http://us.magnificat.net/home/Magnifikid). Subscriptions are also available through Amazon and the EWTN website.

## Perpetual Light

Continued from Pg 8.

of leaving someone out). Many of their children and grandchildren continue to follow the example set years ago as they walk their faith journey today. Remember their level of commitment the next time you're asked to help at a church function or ministry. Father Alan had the opportunity to be the Kidder family's pastor through two assignments and sees the same wonderful qualities he remembers seeing in Stan and Elaine in their children. "Stan and Elaine attended daily Mass at St. Elizabeth and after Mass, we enjoyed breakfast with the rest of the gang at the Skelly Truck Stop," Fr. Alan recalls. He described Elaine as "a very spiritual woman whose prayer life was a priority in her life; and how she loved the rosary."

What an inspiring legacy Stan and Elaine left for their family! As June described at her Mom's wake service, "The greatest gift she left us was the gift of faith, knowing that someday we as a family will all be together again." Rest In peace, Stan and Elaine; well done good and faithful servants.

**NOTE: If you are interested in featuring your loved one's story in this column, please email me at [connie.graff1206@gmail.com](mailto:connie.graff1206@gmail.com)**

# STEPHEN MINISTERS: THE "AFTER PEOPLE"

By: Peggy Rezac

People often ask, "What exactly is a Stephen Minister?" One way to put it is that Stephen Ministers are the **After People!**

- **After** the phone call you hoped you'd never get
- **After** the funeral, when everyone has left and you find yourself alone and hurting.
- **After** the relationship falls apart and so does your life.
- **After** the doctor says, "I'm sorry, there's nothing more we can do."
- **After** the nursing home director says, "Welcome to your new home."
- **After** the last child waves good bye and the house suddenly seems empty.
- **After** your loved one is incarcerated.
- **After** the baby arrives, demanding more than you ever dreamed possible.
- **After** you find a pink slip with your final paycheck.
- **After** you move to town and you feel so alone.
- **After** your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.
- **After** the miscarriage

**Stephen Ministers** walk along side of you, pray for you, and pray with you. They do not give advice, but are there to listen and support. They are confidential so you can speak freely and not worry that others will hear your story.

**Written by a Care Receiver:** After my brain surgery and stroke I sat in the gathering area during Mass due to the noise and my weakness. I watched this beautiful woman go up to serve Communion. She looked so sad. Gail Welle, a Stephen Leader, called me to see if I wanted a Stephen Minister. I did! My Stephen Minister turned out to be the lady I noticed in church. She had just lost her husband. We have laughed and cried through many joys and sorrows, including the death of my husband.

**Stephen Ministers** receive 50 hours of training and have the support of Stephen Leaders and Ministers. They are considered Care Givers, and those they meet with Care Receivers.

**Written By a Care Receiver:** Hearing the doctor say you have cancer is devastating. My husband called Father Alan and he was so kind to come over to anoint me. During his visit he suggested that I receive a Stephen Minister. I had no idea what that meant. Stephen Ministry

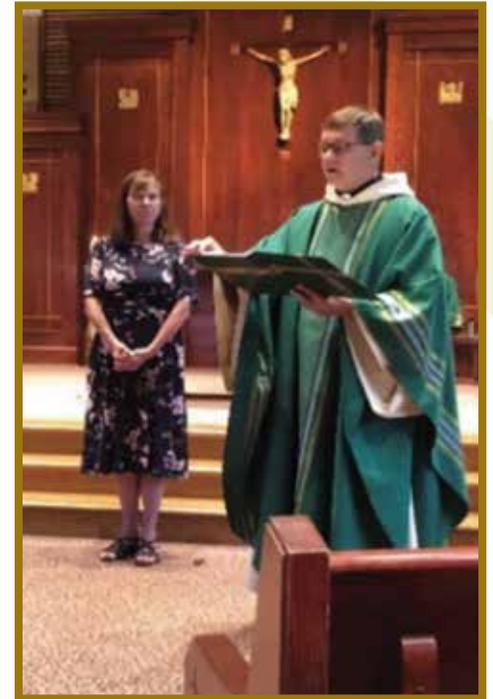
has been invaluable to me. When I was going through cancer it helped having someone to listen and to lean on through the hard times.

## Becoming a Stephen Minister

If you feel God calling you to become a Stephen Minister or would like to find out more about the program please call one of our Stephen Leaders. **Our training is only offered yearly and will begin on October 3.** "Encourage one another and build each other up." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

## Want a Stephen Minister?

When you feel like you need someone to walk beside you or if you know of



Fr. Alan commissioning Jennifer Dummer as Stephen Leader

someone else who is in need, please call one of our Stephen Leaders. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" Galatians 6:2

## STEPHEN LEADERS

Gail Welle 218-739-3648

Peggy Rezac 218-731-5528

Jennifer Dummer 218-736-2429

\*Stephen Ministries St. Louis

"Pray for each other"  
James 5:16



Peggy Rezac, Jennifer Dummer, Dean Capouch

# A New Year and New Teachers

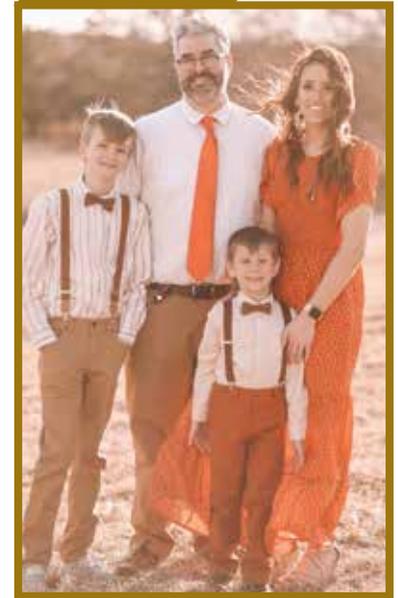
By Rachel Cox

The 2022-23 school year began at Our Lady of Victory School on Tuesday, September 6th. There will be plenty of familiar faces amongst the faculty, staff, and students. Like every year, new preschool and K-6 students are welcomed into our school, and this year we are blessed to welcome two new teachers as well: Amanda Harig and Sasha Parker.

Mrs. Harig has been hired to teach 2nd grade at Our Lady of Victory. She comes to us from the Campbell-Tintah school district where she taught for 9 years. Amanda and her husband, Chris, live in Fergus Falls with their two daughters, Amelia and Hazel. Her daughter Amelia will also be joining our school family as a first-grader. When she isn't teaching 2nd grade, Amanda and her family enjoy spending time together camping and fishing. She is excited to join the teaching staff at OLV and looks forward to guiding her 2nd graders toward their First Reconciliation and First Communion.

Mrs. Parker is our new 6th grade teacher. Sasha recently completed her education degree at Bemidji State University after working as a paraprofessional in the Battle Lake school district. She lives north of Underwood with her husband, Heath, and their two sons, Drae and Kai. Drae and Kai will also be attending OLV School this year as 6th and 1st graders. Sasha and her family also enjoy camping and are busy with youth sports including football, basketball, and baseball. She looks forward to building strong relationships with her 6th graders and incorporating small group projects in the classroom, especially STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) projects.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new teachers and their families. We pray for a smooth start to the school year and for the continued success of Our Lady of Victory School.



Sasha Parker & Family



Amanda Harig & Family

**OLV School also welcomes Jake Rath as the new principal!  
A profile about Mr. Rath will be in the next Journey.**

## Spirituality and Mental Health Corner

BY DEB FORSTNER

A very wise prayer for mental health and recovery from addiction is the Serenity Prayer. Here are the traditional opening words, as written by theologian Reinhold Niebuhr:

**God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.**

Alternate versions of the Serenity Prayer are also worth consideration:

**God, grant me the serenity to accept people I cannot change, the courage to change the ONE I can, and the wisdom to know that's me.**

**And finally: God, grant me the serenity to accept things in myself I can not change, the courage to improve myself in ways I can, and the wisdom to know that I am beautifully made and loved by God.**



**PELICAN VALLEY AREA  
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

**Our Lady of Victory, St. Elizabeth, St. Leonard**

**C/O 207 North Vine Street  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537**



**WEEKEND MASSES**

Saturday 4:30 pm Our Lady of Victory  
Sunday 8:30 am St. Elizabeth  
Sunday 8:30 am Our Lady of Victory  
Sunday 10:30 am St. Leonard  
Sunday 10:30 am Our Lady of Victory  
Sunday 12:00 pm St. Leonard Spanish Mass

**BEGINNING IN JULY**

**Sunday 9:30 am Our Lady of Victory**  
(REPLACING 8:30 am & 10:30 am  
Masses at OLV)

Our Lady of Victory School  
(K-6th grade)  
Learning Ladder Preschool  
(3-5 year olds, full  
and half day)  
218/736-6661  
[www.ffolvschool.org](http://www.ffolvschool.org)

## Reflections of an Old Man

### The Holy Spirit is Alive and Well at OLV!

***No! I did not tell a lie. I fully intended to hang it up. But YOU (you know who you are) said and wrote things that made me change my mind. It's your fault. So there!***

\*

More than two years ago COVID, advanced age and a close family member with an immune deficiency made us decide to attend Sunday Mass via television.

From a practical standpoint, the televised Mass had several obvious advantages. There is no need to change clothes or get out in below zero weather, ninety-degree heat, rain, sleet, wind or snow. And the fact that the Mass was only 29 minutes long left us about an hour and a half more to enjoy our morning coffee and peruse the Sunday paper. However, inability to receive the Eucharist (except spiritually) and the lack of community totally negated those "advantages".

Thankfully, by early spring the COVID threat had subsided, and always well-masked, we began attending Mass at OLV again. What a treat! Once again we heard Father Alan deliver one of his well-reasoned, well-delivered homilies. We heard the choir and congregation give full-throated meaning to the music and responses. We had the long-lost opportunity of sharing in the Eucharist with our fellow parishioners. And we saw the warm, broad smiles and heard the sincere "How are you", "So nice to see you again!", "Glad to see you back!," and "Anything I can do to help?", of friendly, familiar faces we hadn't seen for more than two years!

It's no exaggeration to say that we were elated as we drove home from that wonderful experience. Over the past several months, that feeling has not diminished in the least. Yes, we're grateful for having had the ability to see the televised Mass each Sunday. But we're much more grateful for the privilege of once again being a part of a congregation that, in every way—leadership, volunteerism, activity participation and financial support—make Sunday mornings an even more important part of our lives.

Indeed, we continue to marvel at the many ways it can be seen that the Holy Spirit is alive and well at OLV!  
PS: Thanks! It wasn't ALL your fault. Lee Krogh