

# CHURCH of ST. ALBERT



## *Meet Youth Minister Gabby Swift Excited to Share Her Passion for the Faith*

Youth ministry is in Gabby Swift's blood, given that her father, Bob Swift, worked as a youth minister for many years before coming to St. Michael's.

After two years working as a missionary with the National Evangelization Teams (or NET Ministries), interning at St. Raphael's in Crystal and working as a youth minister at St. Bonaventure in Bloomington for four years, Gabby feels right at home here at St. Albert's, having served as our Youth Minister since this past June.

Growing up in the northwest metro area, Gabby moved back to Rogers about a year and a half ago. She is so thankful to live close enough to belong to the parish where she works. Gabby looks forward to getting to know even more people in the Albertville community and surrounding area.

"I feel I am called to work in youth ministry," Gabby says. "The Lord has blessed it and solidified it for a long while now that this is what I am called to do."

Gabby has always been a practicing Catholic, but she went through a conversion in her junior and senior years of high school, which led her to NET Ministries.

"NET taught me what it means to be a disciple," she says. "It taught me how to pick up crosses daily, enter into daily prayer life, work with brothers and sisters in Christ, and how to spread the Good News together."

Gabby found through NET that she had a lot of gifts in working with people — many gifts that are needed to work



*Gabby Swift (from left), John O'Sullivan and Ruth Gladitsch enjoy a fun moment at Extreme Faith Camp. Gabby has served as our Youth Minister since this past June.*

in youth ministry. She also feels that the unique opportunity to witness her dad's work in Youth Ministry made this career decision an easy one for her.

"When I was working at St. Bonaventure, the Lord used me as a vessel," Gabby says. "I learned a lot there."

One of Gabby's first events as St. Albert's youth minister was Extreme Faith Camp last June. For the first year ever, STMA Catholic Youth (just the parishes of St. Michael and St. Albert)

*continued on back cover*



# TIME: *The Foundation of Stewardship*

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has told us that stewardship is part of discipleship and is a way of responding to God's call in every aspect of our lives. We refer to the three facets of stewardship as "Time, Talent and Treasure," and when we consider the importance of these three Ts of stewardship, the "time" component comes first by design.

When we talk about stewardship of time, we are referring to prayer time. Prayer is of the utmost importance in a disciple's life, and it serves as the fertile ground from which the gifts of talent and treasure blossom. Only by spending time in prayer each day and receiving the sacraments are we able to consistently and generously donate our talent and treasure to the Church.

When looking for examples of how to live our lives as disciples of Christ and as stewards of God's gifts, we can always turn to the great saints of our Church to guide us. And when it comes to the Stewardship of Time, the life of St. Damien is just one example of how prayer, or "Time," is the foundation for our lives of stewardship.

Shortly after being ordained a priest, St. Damien volunteered to serve a colony of lepers isolated on the island of Molokai, Hawaii. From May 1873 until his death in 1889 (at the age of 49) St. Damien worked to restore within the lepers a sense of personal worth and dignity.

Although for some time St. Damien took the necessary precautions to ensure that he did not contract leprosy, he knew that physical touch was necessary to communicate his love and concern to those afflicted with the disease. He embraced the lepers, dined with them, cared for them, and anointed them in the sacraments. With great humility and sacrifice, St. Damien offered his own life in order to save the lives of others.

From where did St. Damien draw his strength? What was the source of his inspiration? "Were it not for the constant presence of our divine Master in our humble chapel, I would not have found it possible to persevere in sharing the lot of the lepers in Molokai," St. Damien wrote. "The Eucharist is the bread that gives strength... It is at once the most eloquent proof of His love and the most powerful means of fostering His love in

us. He gives Himself every day so that our hearts as burning coals may set afire the hearts of the faithful."

St. Damien found his strength in the Mass, the greatest prayer of the Church. Prayer was the impetus behind the generosity of this faithful servant of God, and is the fuel that ignites every heart to flame in love. Without prayer, without the grace that flows from the sacraments, we are incapable of leading lives of service and responding to God's call!

How much time do you dedicate to prayer each day? One hour? Fifteen minutes? None at all? Before you consider joining a parish ministry or volunteering your talents in service, and before you discern your gifts of treasure to the Church, be sure that prayer is your foundation. Identify a prayer schedule that is manageable. This may entail arising 20 minutes early each day to offer your work to the Lord, or attending daily Mass once a week. Every prayer commitment is unique and personal. Yet, no matter what, this time offering, this dedication to prayer, is the key to serving the Lord with faithfulness, generosity and joy.

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## A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

# Start a New Life, Not Just a New Year

Dear Parishioners,

It's January and that means it's time for New Year's resolutions — at least that's the widespread perception in our culture. So, I want us to reflect on resolutions for a few minutes.

Often, New Year's resolutions are intended simply to undo the harm we did to ourselves by overindulging in food and drink between Thanksgiving and the end of the year. Some resolutions are changes we know we should make, but aren't really committed to making — thus, they don't last very long.

Reflecting on this in broader terms, when should we make a resolution to eliminate a sinful practice from our life? That question has a simple answer — the moment we realize we're engaging in a sinful practice. In other words, as soon as we realize we're doing something wrong, we should stop. It doesn't matter whether that sin is as "large" as cheating on your spouse or as "small" as sharing vicious gossip — we should stop immediately when we recognize it's a sinful behavior.

Now, I admit that making the changes we need in order to grow closer to Christ is easier said than done. All too often, we fool ourselves into thinking we can make



all the changes we need under our own strength and on a convenient timetable. For real change, we need guidance and we need help — a new life, in fact. St. Paul addressed this when he wrote to the Romans (6:4), "We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life."

In other words, we need a new life, not a new year. We find this new life in union

with Christ within His Body, the Church. The Church can provide you with guidance. She has 2,000 years of accumulated wisdom and experience, beginning with God's own revelation. The Ten Commandments provide a brief, incisive outline for ethical behavior. Help comes from God's grace, available to us in the sacraments and through prayer.

A new life means we have new priorities and a new viewpoint when we look at every aspect of the way we live. It impacts the use of the time we have, the talents God has given us, and the treasure with which He has blessed us. With God's grace and guidance, lived in union with the Church, we find that "in newness of life" we can "cease doing evil" and "learn to do good." That's a resolution worth making.

Happy New Year!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fr. Peter Richards".

Fr. Peter Richards  
Pastor

## CALLING ALL BOYS & GIRLS (*Fourth Grade and up*)

### ***Altar Server Training***

February 11 at 7:15 p.m. or February 15 at 9:30 a.m.

***Come serve Jesus through  
this awesome ministry.***



# Francis and Denise Beaudry

*“It is about priorities. We always participate in church and make the commitment to try to go every Sunday. If you aren’t going to church every week, it’s hard to feel that commitment. But if you’re active, everything kind of falls together. The more you give, the more you get out of it.” — Francis Beaudry*

Throughout their 41 years of marriage, Francis and Denise Beaudry have always made an active faith life one of their top priorities. Francis was raised here in our parish, and Denise became a member when she joined the Catholic Church at the time of the couple’s wedding. The couple has served St. Albert in many ways over the years, with their shared faith serving as the anchor of their marriage and family life.

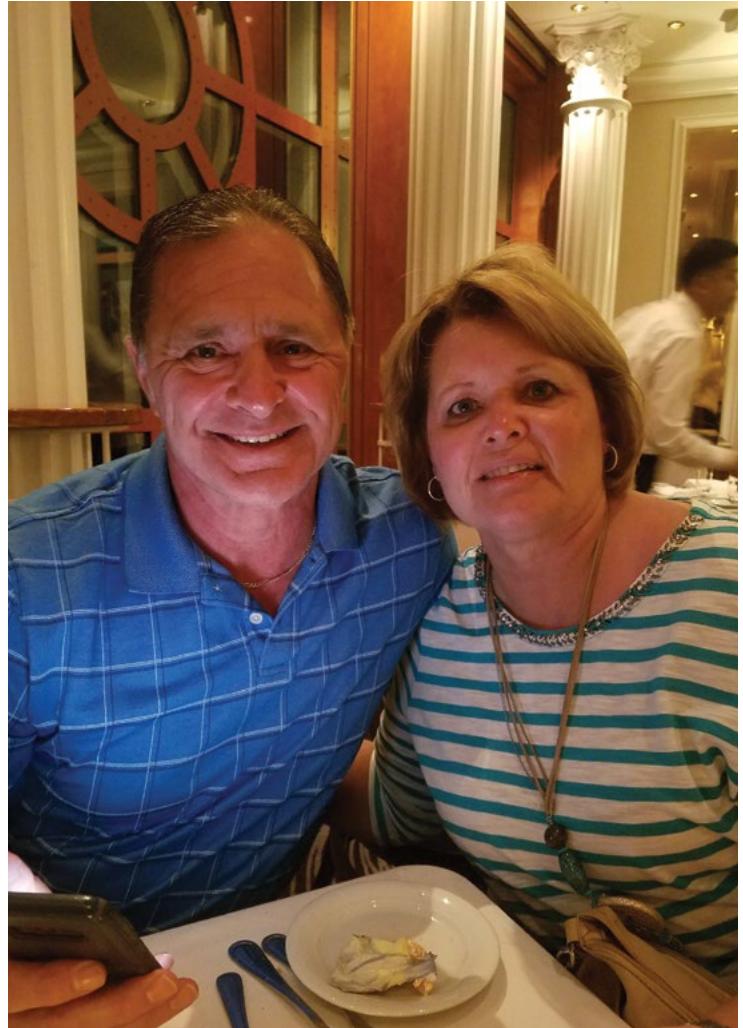
Currently, Francis serves as a lector, Denise is a church trustee and a Eucharistic Minister, and both have a weekly adoration hour. In the past, they have chaired the St. Albert Festival and served as mentors for engaged couples in the parish. Denise was the Caring and Sharing Co-Chair for several years and taught CCD when the Beaudrys’ four children were young.

For Francis and Denise, serving the parish is a natural extension of the Christian faith that was gifted to them early on by their parents.

“I was one of 11 kids, and growing up, I remember seeing my mom spend a lot of time in prayer,” Francis says. “We always went to church, and my mom had us say the Rosary together. I think that all had a good impact on me.”

Knowing firsthand the blessings of a strong faith life, the Beaudrys never questioned whether they would raise their children in the Church. Today, their grown children remain active in the Catholic Church — two are members here at St. Albert, and two are members at St. Michael.

“From day one, the Church was always an important part of our married life, so it was a natural thing for our kids to be brought up in the faith,” Denise says. “We’re very blessed that our children are adults now and still with the Church. We’ve always thought that one of the main jobs of a parent is to help



*Francis and Denise Beaudry have served St. Albert in many ways over the years, with their shared faith serving as the anchor of their marriage and family life.*

# *Try Find Many Blessings in Parish Life*

your kids get to heaven, to have faith and live their lives the way God wants them to, so we have done what we can to keep them on that faith journey.”

While life can certainly get busy and hectic, the Beaudrys find that making stewardship a priority in their life together has led to countless blessings.

“It is about priorities,” Francis says. “We always participate in church and make the commitment to go every Sunday. If you aren’t going to church every week, it’s hard to feel that commitment. But if you’re active, everything kind of falls together. The more you give, the more you get out of it.”

In addition to staying rooted in the faith, Francis and Denise also feel more connected to our faith community by

being involved in parish life. Over the years, they have formed lasting friendships with fellow parishioners.

Thankful for the strong faith family we have here at St. Albert, the Beaudrys encourage all newcomers to consider participating in a parish ministry or event.

“People that are new to our community are going to meet more people if they get involved, and then they won’t feel like strangers,” she says. “Even simply helping as a greeter is a good way to introduce themselves to others. You really end up making new friends every time you join a new committee or new ministry!”

## *A Look Back at OUR Advent PARISH MISSION*



*St. Albert hosted an Advent Parish Mission Dec. 7-9, led by acclaimed Catholic writer, speaker, evangelist, and founder of Crossroads Initiative, Dr. Marcellino D’Ambrosio — better known as Dr. Italy.*

*Thanks to all who attended.*



## *The Blessings of the Catholic Mass*

**I**t is ironic that today, with all of the freedom of religion that we enjoy in the United States, many of us wonder why we must go to Mass on Sunday.

However, if we really understood what the Mass is and how we participate in the celebration, we would instead be asking why we are, as sinful human beings, blessed with the opportunity to participate in the holy Mass. If we simply understood and recognized that God's infinite goodness allows us to do so, we would be eager to go to Mass on Sunday and every other day of the week.

It is true, however, that all Catholics are obliged to "Keep holy the Lord's Day" by sharing in the Mass. But why are we obliged?

The Eucharistic Liturgy is the center of our faith. It is "the summit toward which all activity of the Church is directed" and it is "the font from which all her power flows" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 10). It does not exhaust the activity of the Church, but is most certainly her greatest work.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is literally re-presented to the Father during Mass, and Christ allows us to join with Him

in offering that sacrifice. Imagine our Lord and Savior dying on the cross for us right up the street. Imagine knowing that Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross with St. John, witnessing her Son giving Himself to the Father for the sake of all of us. Would we not run to be there? Would we not desire to share in His sacrifice, just as Mary did?

Believe it or not, the sacrifice of Calvary is really, truly happening at our parish, every time the Mass is offered.

Our participation in Mass gives us the strength and the graces we need to live our lives as Christ's disciples. So, what does this mean for us?

This means we have a front row seat to the sacrifice of Calvary. Given such a gift, how can we not accept it?

We also have a chance to join in Jesus' sacrifice by offering our own prayers and petitions. As an example, what better gift could we give deceased loved ones than the offering of prayers for their souls in purgatory?

Most importantly, we have the opportunity to receive the Eucharist, followed by quiet time, when we offer sincere thanks and allow God's graces to fill

us. Think of all you are missing when you do not properly prepare yourself to receive the Holy Eucharist.

We ought to joyfully head to Church each Sunday, eager to give God glory in the greatest way we can! Attending and actively participating in Mass every Sunday is our obligation as Catholics. But we should not allow the fact that our attendance is "required" to stop us from going. Nor should we allow our laziness to overshadow the amazing privilege and the many blessings that lay before us in the Mass.

The pope and the bishops direct us to participate in the Eucharistic Liturgy every Sunday because they know there is no better way to keep holy the Lord's day — giving God thanks for all He has done for us in the most powerful way possible. They know that, through the Mass, we gain the graces necessary to live our lives in this world.

Our ability to participate in the Mass is a wonderful gift, not a great burden. May Christ enlighten our minds and hearts to clearly see the wonders of the celebration, and give us great enthusiasm and eagerness to participate.

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# THE WELCOMING COMMITTEE

## *Growing Our Community Through Hospitality*

We never really know the full effect of our words and actions. Something as simple as a smile or a friendly greeting can dramatically change a person's life for the better. A casual invitation can draw a person into the community, making them feel like they truly belong for the first time. Parishioner Jacci Wacker says is why St. Albert's Welcoming Committee plays such a vital role within our parish, allowing us to personally live out Christ's words, "For I was... a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35).

"I always try to look at this ministry from the perspective of how I would feel if I was new to the parish," Jacci says. "I think that welcoming aspect is so important within a parish. It's all about growing our parish family so that even more people come on board and get involved in the faith journey together. I want each new person to feel welcomed,

to feel truly a part of us so that they want to get involved."

The main way the ministry accomplished this is by hosting quarterly tours of the church building and campus. This allows committee members to share a bit about the church's history and to help newcomers become more comfortable and aware of the various church areas. It's also a time to get to know new members, learning a bit about their names and interests so as to hopefully connect them with other parish ministries.

"Our hope is to give them an introduction to our church and the history we offer here," Jacci says. "We also try to become a go-to person if they have any questions or want to get involved in some kind of parish ministry. We want them to know that we're here and available to them."

Once the tour is concluded, the group gathers in the dining area of the rectory

where participants can enjoy some light refreshments and fellowship. Welcome bags are also distributed during this time, providing additional information about parish life.

"This is meant to be a time for us to connect with one another," Jacci says. "You always meet interesting people and, as someone who has lived here my whole life, I always find it neat to hear what brought these people — many whom are from out of state — here to Albertville, and to learn what made them choose our parish."

Still relatively new to the leadership of the Welcoming Committee, Jacci is eager to continue growing and expanding this ministry so as to foster an even more welcoming environment to new parish members.

"We're really trying to grow and find ways to make this ministry even better — to continue to change in order to meet the needs of our community," Jacci says.

*If you have new ideas or are simply interested in getting involved with the Welcoming Committee, please contact Jacci Wacker at 763-238-9996.*



*Members of the Welcoming Committee — (from left) Marlene Zachman, Mary Haehn, Jacci Wacker, Pam Lindenfelser, and Joyce Plude. (Not pictured — Amy Lands.)*



## CHURCH of ST. ALBERT

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### HOLY MASS SCHEDULE

#### **Weekend:**

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.  
Sunday: 9:00 a.m.

#### **Weekdays:**

Tuesday & Wednesday: 7:30 a.m.

#### **Reconciliation times:**

Sunday: 8:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.  
Wednesday: 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.  
Saturday: 2:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.  
1st Saturdays: 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

## *Meet Gabby Swift *continued from front cover**

filled a whole week at the camp, with more than 300 youth in sixth through eighth grades.

"Camp is all about building encounters with Jesus for teens," Gabby says. "It connects them to their community, high school leaders and adults."

As Gabby continues to work within our parish and community, she is excited to get to know more people and continue the relational ministry that she believes in. She will work in conjunction with John O'Sullivan in ministry for students in the fourth through 12th grades.

"Ministry should be relational — that is the key to ministry overall," Gabby says. "What keeps people coming back is relationships, people impacting their lives in a positive way."

Gabby is so thankful that her work with NET, St. Bonaventure and the years of observing her dad have all led her to the Youth Ministry at St. Albert.

"This just happened at the right time — the Lord opened the door and I walked through it," Gabby says. "St. Albert's was on my list of parishes I would like to work with. There's a similar vision of youth ministry that I agree with, which is an encounter with Jesus for teens."

*Registration for Extreme Faith Camp (sixth to eighth grade) is now open at [stmacatholicyouth.org](http://stmacatholicyouth.org).*

*Camp runs from June 15 to 19 at Big Sandy Camp in McGregor. For more information on any upcoming Youth Ministry events, please contact Gabby Swift at 612-418-9596 or [gswift@stmacatholicyouth.org](mailto:gswift@stmacatholicyouth.org).*