

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2021

# DISCIPLE

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL



Our Newest Priest: Fr. Josh Salonek  
StMCS Welcomes New Principal and Staff  
Supporting Moms Through Pregnancy and Loss  
Installation and Groundbreaking Highlights  
New Praise and Worship Music Leader



# PRAY FOR OUR SCHOOL

As I think back on my first year here, I continue to be amazed at the love and dedication this community has for our school and for one another. I think back on how much was done this past year by so many people to make sure that in-person learning took place. However, we must always remember that the success of our school is not solely up to us. St. Michael Catholic School is fundamentally a work of our Heavenly Father, an instrument that God uses and works through in order to bring many people, young and old, closer to Himself. Our faith tells us that God is ultimately in charge of our school, and as long as we keep our eyes fixed on him, we will never be led astray.

The universal mission of the Church is to make disciples. Our Catholic school is one of the most important ministries of our parish—one we're called to support whether we have students there or not. To this end, I am inviting all of us to renew our commitment to pray daily for our school—to pray for our students, parents, teachers, and staff; to pray for our financial needs; to pray for our enrollment, that our school would continue to be filled to capacity; to pray that St. Michael would be a place where many young people grow in faith and wisdom.

In the Gospel of Luke, we hear these words of Jesus: "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened" (Luke 11:9-10). Do we believe Jesus' words? Do we believe that our Heavenly Father wants to give us, His children, good things? If so, let's take Jesus up on His word and humbly ask Him for the things that we need and for the things that our school and parish need.

To help us in our prayer for St. Michael Catholic School we have created a holy card that is inserted in this issue of DISCIPLE. On the front of the holy card is an image of a statue of St. Michael—this statue is on Tepeyac Hill in Mexico City, where Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to St. Juan Diego. On the back of the holy card is a prayer that was composed for our school. I encourage you to pray this prayer every day, and when possible, to pray it as a family. During our school Masses, we will pray this prayer at the end of the petitions.

If there is one thing I have learned in my life, it is the power of prayer. Please join me and many others in praying for our community. God is so faithful and He loves us so much. I truly believe God has great things in store for St. Michael. I cannot wait to see what happens next!

*Fr. Brian Park*

**Fr. Brian Park**  
Pastor

# For Fr. Josh, Community Key to Hearing God's Call

This spring, St. Michael native Josh Salonek became the 32nd priest ordained from our parish and the third in seven years. Growing up in a solidly Catholic family and attending St. Michael Catholic School was a great start—but hearing and heeding God's call took the support of the entire community.

"I went to Mass with my family every Sunday and every Friday with the Catholic school," Fr. Josh recalls. "Mom had a weekly hour of Adoration; Dad was devoted to the Rosary and the Stations of the Cross. That and attending Catholic grade school provided a good base—but it was at Extreme Faith Camp in 2006, where I encountered Jesus in the Eucharist, that I began to think about priesthood."

The theme that year—"You are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation'" (1 Peter 2:9)—resonated with him, providing one of the first hints that God was calling. Two other things that influenced his response to the call were the strong parish leadership at St. Michael and the friendships he made in Youth Ministry.

"At that time, Fr. Michael Becker had more dark hair than gray—having a young, joyful priest at our parish was big," Fr. Josh says. "I'm not sure people realize how blessed we were to have such solid priests for so long—Fr. Becker, Fr. Peter Richards, now Fr. Brian Park. Many parishes cycle through pastors much more quickly.

"The parish's investment in youth is also amazing. ...The lifespan of most youth ministers is like two years, so to have John O'Sullivan's vision and leadership for so long, and bringing a NET Ministries team here in the early days, has made a huge impact."

Fr. Josh recalls his family hosting two NET missionaries and realizing they were "normal, and loved Jesus." The NET Team and growing Youth Ministry program meant he grew up surrounded by good



St. Michael native Fr. Josh Salonek expresses his gratitude following his Mass of Thanksgiving last spring. Photo courtesy of Gabby Ilkka.

young men who wanted to be holy and to seek God's will.

"My older brothers started getting into their faith more; men like Fr. Paul Shovelain and Fr. Andrew Zipp were pursuing priesthood, and other guys were discerning, too: Tyler Ferry, Nick Welter, and more. Growing up in this community, going to seminary wasn't that weird!"

When lifelong friend John Delozier (also a former seminarian from St. Michael) was preparing to leave to be a NET missionary, he asked Fr. Josh to do two things before graduation: visit Saint John Vianney College Seminary (SJV) and attend a NET Interview Retreat.

"I liked my visit to SJV, but still wasn't excited to go," he recalls. "But the idea of living out of a suitcase as a NET missionary—living pretty radically for the Lord—appealed to me. During the NET interview retreat it became clear: I really want to do this."

With NET he grew much deeper in prayer and saw the joys of priesthood as they travelled from parish to parish. One priest, in particular, made an impact, telling Fr. Josh in the confessional that he saw priesthood "written all over you."

Now, he is experiencing the joy firsthand.

"I love it," he says. "There are plenty of surprises...for example, I knew I was going to hear confessions, but I didn't know how good it was going to be."

## WANT TO GO DEEPER?

Interested in traveling the country and sharing the gospel with teens? Learn more about NET Ministries: [netusa.org](http://netusa.org)

Think God may be calling you to priesthood or religious life? Explore your vocation: [10000vocations.org](http://10000vocations.org)

Going, going, gone: Fr. Brian Park gets wet at the Fall Festival. On the cover: Fr. Park is excited to break ground on the facilities expansion at St. Michael Catholic Church. Photos courtesy of Patty Washatka and Michelle Zahler.

# INSTALLATION & GROUNDBREAKING

On Sunday, August 22, Archbishop Bernard Hebda installed Fr. Brian Park as pastor and blessed our land for the ceremonial groundbreaking of our facilities expansion. We were joined by Fr. Park's family, as well as former pastor Fr. Peter Richards. Special thanks to everyone who worked hard to make the day special. We have a **BOLD FUTURE** ahead!

Photos courtesy of Patty Washatka and Michelle Zahler.



# NEW PRINCIPAL, NEW STAFF JUMP INTO A NEW YEAR

It's safe to say this summer unfolded differently than Heidi Gallus anticipated.

At the end of a challenging school year, the entire staff at St. Michael Catholic School (StMCS) was ready for some downtime. Then Fr. Brian Park announced that our principal was leaving, and everything shifted for Gallus. In just a few short weeks, she emerged as the clear choice as the new principal and was tasked with hiring a new assistant principal, rounding out the staff for the fall, and working with a public school system facing huge budget challenges due to the pandemic.

Within days of taking the position, she hosted a family fun event at the school—in the gym, due to rainy weather. The turnout was modest, but she seemed very much at home in her new role, greeting parents and students, answering questions, and serving donuts and refreshments.

"It's been a whirlwind," Gallus says. "I had been planning to go on my first silent retreat this summer, and suddenly there were all these reasons not to go. But I could feel the Lord speaking to me. He wanted me there *because* of this new role."

Gallus is a 24-year veteran of Catholic education, with the past eight here at StMCS. She has taught at most levels from preschool through eighth grade and has served our school as a fourth-grade teacher, enrichment specialist, dean of students, and assistant principal. She attended K-12 Catholic school and has her bachelor's degree from the College of St. Benedict (Elementary Education major/Theology minor), a master's in Catholic School Leadership from St. Mary's University, an Education Specialist degree from University of St. Thomas, and her principal licensure.

Gallus credits her upbringing in rural Winsted, Minnesota, for her work ethic, her desire to serve, and more specifically, her desire to teach.

"I learned about dedication and hard work through many years pouring coffee and preparing and serving meals at my parents' restaurant," she says.

"My mom returned to college to become a teacher—her perseverance and my parents' shared example of generous service continue to inspire me today."

"I've been truly blessed to be a part of this community the past several years, and I'm grateful for—and humbled by—this new opportunity."



St. Michael Catholic School Principal Heidi Gallus dismisses students after the first school Mass of the year.

Of course, every new school year has its challenges, but at the end of the first week of classes, Gallus was upbeat and smiling.

"I'm tired," she says, "but it's been good. What really sticks out to me is the faces of our teachers and staff. We had a staff meeting just to share a bit about how things are going. I could see their smiles, and there was so much laughter. That wasn't often the case last year—it's good to hear it again!"



BRANDON PAPENFUSS



BEN SARTORI



LAURA KUKER



ONE BODY

## NEW FACES AT STMCS

### Brandon Papenfuss, assistant principal

Mr. Papenfuss is married to his wife Bethany, and has a son, Everett (2), and a black lab named Clyde. He loves hunting and fishing, and is looking forward to meeting all the students, staff and families!

### Katie Fisher, first grade teacher

Mrs. Fisher is married to her husband Stephen and has a baby, William, and a puppy named Oliver. She enjoys sleep, baking cookies, and planning gatherings, and is looking forward to seeing everyone's smiling faces, having her own classroom, and making school fun!

### Ben Sartori, second grade teacher

Mr. Sartori is married to his wife Theresa and has six kids: Grace (10), Ella (8), Kate (7), Hannah (5), Luke (1) and baby Lily. He enjoys sports, fishing, and games, and is looking forward to his first year teaching in a Catholic school and preparing kids for First Reconciliation and First Communion!

### Maria Carpenter, music teacher

Ms. Carpenter has three children: Noah (23), Isabella (20), and Emma (9). She enjoys puzzles and watching her favorite TV shows, and is looking forward to worshipping at school Masses with everyone singing and making music together!

### Laura Kuker, reading specialist

Mrs. Kuker is married to her husband Brian. She enjoys walking, cross country skiing, watching movies, and reading good books. She is looking forward to learning and teaching the Groves method and seeing growth in the students she works with—plus working along with the terrific and warm staff at StMCS!

### Lisa Brauer, paraprofessional

Mrs. Brauer is married to her husband Brandon and has two daughters, Cecilia (11) and Nova (8), and a hairless Sphynx cat named Petunia. She enjoys visiting friends and family, crafting, reading, puzzles, and games. She looks forward to meeting everyone and being a positive influence in the lives of students!

### Stephanie Carbone, paraprofessional

Mrs. Carbone is married to her husband Mike, and has three children: Nealeigh (20), Brandon (17), and Ava (10). She enjoys spending time with family and is looking forward to getting to know the families better in this wonderful community!



KATIE FISHER



MARIA CARPENTER



LISA BRAUER



STEPHANIE CARBONE

#StMCS Proud

# The Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

*Let us see whether his words be true; let us find out what will happen to him in the end. For if the righteous one is the son of God, God will help him and deliver him from the hand of his foes. With violence and torture let us put him to the test that we may have proof of his gentleness and try his patience. Let us condemn him to a shameful death; for according to his own words, God will take care of him. – Wisdom 2: 17-20*

At the Third Station, our Lord falls to the ground under the weight of his Cross. Tradition holds that He fell three times along the way to Calvary, underscoring the very real, human limitations of his strength as He suffered on our behalf. Certainly the tortures he suffered prior to his condemnation—the long night’s agony and sleepless prayer, the accusations and blows of Jewish leaders and guards, the brutal scourging that left his body in painful tatters—would have sapped his strength. But Jesus’s burden was not limited to his time only: He carried the burden of sin for all mankind as well as the weight of many centuries of prophecy and expectation. Faithful Jews would have known the scripture passage above and the other prophetic writings that foretold the coming of Christ and his suffering—but in their blindness few, if any, understood that those words were being fulfilled before their eyes.

Our station portrays a weakened Christ, struggling under the weight of his Cross, taking notice of a dandelion growing along the path. Today we regard dandelions primarily as an inconvenient and persistent weed to be eradicated—but in truth, it is a “bitter herb,” an edible plant like those consumed at the Passover seder, the flavor of which recalls suffering and injustice. In this way, it is symbolic of Jesus’s Passion and calls to mind his role as the perfect Passover sacrifice, the Lamb of God, without blemish, whose blood protects us and flesh strengthens us to carry our own earthly burdens.



The Stations of the Cross begin on the back wall of the worship space, on the choir side of the main doors.

With violence and torture let us put him to the test that we may have proof of his gentleness and try his patience. – Wisdom 2:19

**Appalachia Christmas and Shoebox Mission**  
September 26 – October 17

The Council of Catholic Women is again collecting shoeboxes of gift items for families in need in eastern Kentucky. Watch the bulletin or visit the collection area in the gathering space for details. Donations are due by October 17 to be shipped and distributed by Christmas.

# ELIZABETH MINISTRIES SUPPORTS WOMEN THROUGH PREGNANCY AND ADOPTION, LOSS AND INFERTILITY



Anita Lang and Anna Mrdutt (pronounced mir-DOOT) are the new leaders of Elizabeth Ministries, which provides prayer and support to pregnant women and mothers.

Mothers helping mothers—that’s the inspiration behind Elizabeth Ministries. In Luke’s gospel, after the Virgin Mary’s yes to the angel Gabriel, the young mother of Jesus rushed to the hill country to support her cousin Elizabeth, who is well along in her own unlikely pregnancy.

“Both women were in similar situations, but at very different stages in life,” says parishioner Anna Mrdutt. “They were there to support each, and we try to do the same thing.”

Elizabeth Ministry International is a Catholic movement founded 30 years ago in Wisconsin to offer hope, help, and healing on issues related to relationships, sexuality, and childbearing. Terry Moran brought it to St. Michael in 2006, and for the past decade, Angela Lenneman and Sue Berning have led the ministry. In that time, Elizabeth Ministries has served hundreds of area women experiencing pregnancy, infertility, miscarriage, and infant loss.

Anna and co-leader Anita Lang have recently taken over Elizabeth Ministries in the parish, and both have been richly rewarded. Anna and her husband Matt

have four children, ages 10 to 2, and a baby on the way.

“Being a minister allowed me to help others in a meaningful way with a commitment I could handle,” says Anna. “Now, as a ministry facilitator, I’m gaining a better understanding of all of the joys and struggles that other mothers go through that are different than my own.”

Anita and her husband David have two young children, Louis (5) and Emmett (3). She didn’t know about Elizabeth Ministries until she was asked to help lead it. Now she is connected to a community of women with deep experience and a shared love for the vocation of motherhood.

“Motherhood is such an amazing and unique gift, but it also comes with many trials and can be a very lonely path,” she says. “I think fostering relationships and supporting each other is a crucial part of our Christian calling. Sometimes, we just need someone to hold our hand.”

“So many beautiful, holy women are praying for each

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 11**

# MORE THAN JUST A SCORE

## For Alex Schindler, music is an essential element of worship, prayer, and healing



Aside from the homily, no element of the Mass attracts as much feedback as music. It's tempting to regard it like the soundtrack to a movie: good music adds to the action; a poor performance distracts.

But sacred music is more than a score. It's an essential part of the liturgy, meant to help the faithful enter into worship. Just as church architecture is meant to raise our gaze to heaven, the best church music lifts our hearts along with our voices to give fitting praise to God.

"I'm very particular with song selection," says Alex Schindler, St. Michael's new Sunday evening Mass and worship music leader. "I always start in prayer, and practice so I'm prepared to sing without music in front of me. That way I can respond to the Holy Spirit in the moment, with the song He wants me to sing."

Schindler, a self-described "band geek," played saxophone and trumpet in her Louisville, Kentucky, high school. She didn't pick up guitar or start singing until she was college.

"I never thought I could sing," she says. "Ironically now that's what I do the most. ... I consider myself solidly 'tradismatic' [traditional and charismatic combined]—I'm comfortable doing chant and traditional hymns, but if there's a song that came out yesterday that will move people to praise and worship the Lord, I'll use it!"

Alex studied biology at Murray State University and worked in environmental education for a year before answering a call to missionary work. She joined Saint

Paul's Outreach (SPO) in 2013, living in community and sharing the gospel at the University of Minnesota. At the U, she realized she had a particular gift for leading people to Christ through music.

Since then, she has worked throughout the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, in youth ministry, music ministry, marriage and family life, and discipleship and evangelization. Alex's musical network now spans the region thanks to personal connections with archdiocesan and parish staff and numerous priests, including Fr. Brian Park.

"I met Fr. Park at a wedding where I was singing at Charles Borromeo, then worked with him at Annunciation, leading worship at Awakening retreats and Sunday evening Masses, like I'll be doing here at St. Michael," she says.

In addition, Alex recently became the music specialist at St. Jude of the Lake Catholic School in Mahtomedi. She is also exploring a possible healing charism, contributing her musical gifts to our monthly Mercy Nights and to the work of the John Paul II Healing Center in Florida.

Her family still resides in Kentucky, but she has found a spiritual home in Minnesota.

"The Lord has definitely kept me here," Alex says. "I've had opportunities to leave, but He always provides a reason to stay."

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

other through their hopes and dreams and trials," she adds. "I think prayer is truly the most important part."

Elizabeth Ministries needs volunteers, but knowing who in the parish needs ministry support is just as important.

"Nothing is expected of the moms we're ministering to," says Anna. "If we know who you are we will pray for you—and maybe drop a gift off on your porch—if that's what you prefer."

"For volunteers, there are no regular meetings; we just need women willing to reach out: a phone call, dropping off a gift or a meal, maybe meeting for coffee if a mother is open to it," she says. "We also need women willing to minister to mothers experiencing infertility, miscarriage, or loss—but that initial connection is the biggest part. If you can be a friend to a mom, that's all it takes!"

"This is Elizabeth Ministries," says Anita. "It is Mary visiting Elizabeth, two women in very different circumstances, but finding a connection and supporting each other through their trials."

## MERCY NIGHT LIFTS HEARTS AND VOICES

Approximately 150 worshippers from area parishes gathered for an hour of Eucharistic Adoration, Confession, praise and worship music by Alex Schindler, and prayer ministry at our first Mercy Night on September 2.

Mercy Nights are monthly opportunities to encounter the love and mercy of God firsthand. You do not need to be Catholic; parishioners are encouraged to invite anyone in need of prayer or healing, or to bring their needs and intentions and pray on their behalf.

Mercy Nights are 7:00-8:00 PM the first Thursday of the month, September through May. **Our next Mercy Night is October 7.**

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

If you or someone you know is pregnant, struggling to become pregnant, or suffering from miscarriage or infant loss, please contact Elizabeth Ministries. They would love to support you and your family with prayers, gifts, and resources on behalf of the parish community.

To request prayers or learn more about how you can help Elizabeth Ministries, email [elizabethministries@stmccatholicchurch.org](mailto:elizabethministries@stmccatholicchurch.org) or call Anita Lang at 763-607-8737 or Anna Mrdutt at 612-816-4256.



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**SUNDAY MASS**

**Saturday** Vigil 5:00 PM

**Sunday** 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM, 6:00 PM

**WEEKDAY MASS**

**Monday** 7:30 AM

**Tuesday** 6:30 PM

**Wednesday** 7:45 AM (School Mass)

**Thursday** 7:30 AM

**Friday** 7:30 AM

**First Saturday** 8:00 AM

**RECONCILIATION**

**Saturday** 7:30-9:00 AM, 3:30-4:45 PM

(not during First Saturday Mass from 7:45 to 8:30 AM)

**Tuesday** 5:15-6:15 PM

**Thursday** 8:00-8:30 AM

The DISCIPLE newsletter is created by St. Michael Catholic Church and School and Archangel Stomp, LLC, unless otherwise noted. For more information, call 763-497-2745 ext. 245 or email [jthorp@stmccatholicchurch.org](mailto:jthorp@stmccatholicchurch.org).

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# SERVE THE LORD AT SUNDAY MASS

**JOIN US FOR LITURGICAL MINISTER TRAINING**

**Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:**  
8:30 AM, Saturday, October 9

**Altar Server Training:**  
9:00 AM, Saturday, October 16

**Reader Training:**  
7:00 PM, Monday, October 25

**Usher Training:**  
8:00 PM, Monday, October 25