

ST. GABRIEL

THE ARCHANGEL ♦ CATHOLIC CHURCH

MEET LONGTIME PARISHIONERS MARY AND FRANCIS WEHNER

Living Out Stewardship and Faith with Great Joy

In a time when long-lasting marriages have become increasingly rare, couples who reach major milestones stand as witnesses to the beauty of the sacrament. Celebrating 68 years of marriage is no small feat — it represents a lifetime of shared joys, challenges, faith, and perseverance. As Valentine’s Day invites us to reflect on love rooted in sacrifice, Mary and Francis Wehner offer an example of what it means to walk together through life. They serve as examples of stewardship and joy.

The Wehners’ bond was strengthened through years spent working side by side in the grocery business in Kansas. They have six children, one of whom has passed away. They have 17 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

There is no real secret to their long marriage, says Mary, it’s just working together to make it work — and always trusting in the good Lord.

“The years go by so fast,” Mary says. “It’s here before you know it, let me tell you. We were in business most of those years, and you just learned to get along. Our children grew up in the



Mary and Francis Wehner with family

grocery store business.”

The couple moved to Colorado Springs in 1985 and were some of the earliest parishioners here. They were even part of the early meetings to establish the parish, having attended Sacred Heart and St. Patrick’s for a few years.

“It’s just family here,” Mary says. “We have a lot of really good friends. It’s been our second family. That’s it — our church family.”

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HANDING ON OUR FAITH *as Stewards of God's Goodness*

Many Catholic parents feel like they've failed — especially when their adult children no longer practice the faith or attend Mass regularly. Parents are often slow to take credit for their children's successes but quick to shoulder the blame when it comes to struggles in the spiritual life.

Yet, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to live as stewards of all God's gifts — especially the gift of our Catholic faith. Stewardship is a response of gratitude to God, and one of the greatest ways we show that gratitude is by handing on the faith to those we love. Stewardship is always about invitation, witness, and love — not pressure or guilt.

In 2005, Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, outlined the five essential marks of Catholic education — a message later published in *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*. These marks apply not only to Catholic schools, but also to Catholic families and individuals who seek to be faithful stewards of God's grace.

1. Supernatural Vision

A stewardship life begins with a supernatural vision — recognizing everything we have is a gift from God, and our ultimate goal is heaven. From an early age, we should focus our hearts on eternal life with God. Do we speak to our children and grandchildren about heaven? Do we remind ourselves that we are stewards of this earthly life, always journeying toward eternity?

2. Christian Anthropology

Stewardship flows from understanding who we are — children of God, made in His image. Is Christ at the center of our daily lives? Are we showing through our words and actions that Jesus is the heart of our families? Stewardship begins with gratitude and flourishes when we live as joyful witnesses.

3. Communion and Community

Stewardship reminds us we are not isolated individuals but part of a greater communion — the Body of Christ. In our homes and parishes, we are called to build community, sharing life and supporting each other. Do we foster this in our families? Do we encourage generosity and self-giving?

4. Catholic Worldview

A stewardship way of life shapes how we see the world. A Catholic worldview helps us see God in all things and encourages holiness in daily life. Are we helping each other recognize God's call? Are we supporting and gently challenging one another to grow as disciples?

5. Gospel Witness

At its heart, stewardship is about witness. We don't need all the answers to share our faith. What matters most is showing how Jesus and His Church have made a difference in our lives. Stewardship invites us to be living examples of God's love and generosity.

Passing on the faith is not complicated. And it's never too late. Focus on the goal of eternal life. Keep Christ at the center. Build unity and community. Encourage holiness. Witness to the joy of the Gospel. Let's help our children, grandchildren, and all our loved ones know what we're about — discipleship, holiness, and the journey to heaven.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR LENT

Dear Parishioners,

February often brings a quieter rhythm to our days. The busy pace of the holidays has passed, and winter settles in with a calm that invites reflection. Within the Church, this time of year carries a similar spirit. It is a moment of preparation — a space in which we begin turning our hearts toward the holy season of Lent.

Lent is one of the most meaningful journeys we make each year as disciples of Christ. It is a season rooted in conversion, renewal, and intentionality. The Church gives us the familiar practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving not as burdens, but as pathways to deeper freedom. When embraced with sincerity, these disciplines help us clear away the noise in our lives so we can hear the Lord more clearly and respond to His love with greater trust.

This invitation is also at the heart of Christian stewardship. Stewardship reminds us that everything we have — our time, our abilities, our financial resources, and even our very breath — is a gift from God. Lent becomes a natural moment to reflect on how we are using those gifts. Are we giving our time to the Lord in prayer? Are we offering our talents in service to our parish and to others? Are we being intentional and generous with the material blessings we have received?

Even small commitments can open our hearts in profound ways. Perhaps we set aside a few minutes each day for prayer, participate in a Lenten devotion or study when it becomes available, or return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation after some time away. Maybe this



is the season we choose to serve in a parish ministry, support our outreach efforts, or practice intentional giving to help those who are struggling. When we take these steps together as a parish family, our entire community grows stronger in faith and charity.

As we look ahead to this holy season, I encourage each of us to approach it with openness and gratitude. The Lord never fails to bless the efforts we make, even when they seem small. He simply asks that we offer our hearts with sincerity and trust.

In this issue, we highlight the many ways faith and stewardship come alive in our parish community. You will meet longtime parishioners Mary and Francis Wehner, whose 68-year marriage and decades of quiet service offer a joyful witness to lifelong faith. We also shine a light on our dedicated ushers, whose welcoming presence and servant hearts help make every Mass a reverent and hospitable experience. Finally, learn how our Young Adults Ministry is fostering faith-filled friendships, service, and spiritual growth for the next generation of parish leaders.

Please know of my prayers for you and your loved ones as we prepare for this time of grace.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Quezada".

Fr. Quezada
Pastor

MEET OUR

Offering Bulletins, Assis



Our ushers at St. Gabriel the Archangel do so much more than hand out bulletins — they play a vital role in ensuring that all who enter the parish feel at home in God’s house.

If you are interested in becoming an usher, please reach out to Luis Saenz at pi5435@outlook.com.

For both regular Mass attendees and those who step inside the church doors only a few times a year, a warm smile can go a long way in creating a welcoming environment. Ushers in particular play an important role in making worshipers feel comfortable and included in the celebration of the Eucharist.

The ushers at St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church are usually the first people visitors look to for guidance — where to sit, where to find the bathrooms, and when and where to line up for Communion. As ushers guide the crowd flow to minimize interruptions, they ensure the church upholds reverence while offering a sense of hospitality.

Luis Saenz has been in charge of the ministry at the parish for about four years. He says he became an usher following his own father’s example and soon had the opportunity to lead the whole ministry.

“My dad was an usher at his parish in Texas, and so I was thinking about becoming an usher myself,” Luis says. “Two weeks after I started, the person in charge needed to step down from the role, and I was asked to step up.”

Luis trains his team of about 60 ushers to assist parishioners with finding seats, how to choose a family to bring up the gifts, and guiding the lines for Communion efficiently. But the foremost role of the usher, according to Luis, is to greet people with a smile that reflects God’s love.

“I tell my new ushers and trainees to look at ushering as an opportunity to show God’s love to people coming through those doors,” he says. “We don’t know what they may be struggling with, and by offering a smile, we can offer them some warmth.”

Serving as an usher requires no previous experience, and training is on-the-job. Luis explains that new ushers learn how to assist during the Mass by following the example of another usher for up to three sessions. He also sends every usher a set of guidelines, which include simple rules like showing



R USHERS

tance, and Warm Smiles

up to Mass twenty minutes early, proper greeting instructions, and tips for finding a family or individual to ask to bring up the gifts.

More importantly than the logistics, however, is the opportunity to use the role as a way of bringing others closer to God, explains Luis.

“I emphasize to my team that we are given certain talents and abilities, and it is important to use those talents to promote the faith and bring others to it,” he says. “It’s important to use our ability to talk to people or lend a listening ear. I encourage the ushers to use those talents to provide a loving environment and to ultimately further the Kingdom of God.”

For many ushers, assisting during Mass has made them feel more involved with the liturgy, as they are responsible for so many behind-the-

scenes components. In his own leadership role, Luis says he has grown more in his own faith.

“It’s been an eye-opening experience for me,” he says. “I’ve learned a whole lot more about the Mass. It’s pretty amazing. And stepping up into leadership has opened up a new avenue of growth for me. Other ushers have expressed that they have felt more involved, too. We do encourage younger folks to get involved — they are the future.”

The wonderful team of ushers at St. Gabriel the Archangel does so much more than hand out bulletins — they play a vital role in ensuring that all who enter the parish feel at home in God’s house. In addition, teens in junior high or older are encouraged to consider this important ministry.

PARISHIONERS MARY AND FRANCIS WEHNER *continued from front cover*

Although their busy schedules made it difficult to be heavily involved, Mary and Francis still found ways to serve. Mary taught catechism classes, and together the couple served on the Vocations Committee, helping with various capital campaigns. Francis is a lifelong Knight in the Knights of Columbus. For years, the couple led the food collections for the food shelf. Mary has also enjoyed baking for the annual Briarfest.

Both were raised Catholic, and their faith has remained a steady presence throughout their lives. They feel fortunate that, wherever they have lived, there has always been a Catholic church — a constant source of community, prayer, and familiarity, no matter where life has taken them.

“A lot of people sacrificed their time and talent to build these churches,” Mary says.

Being that the Wehners spent many years working hard, they don’t have many hobbies —

some baking for Mary, and card and board games for Mary and Francis.

As the couple continues to live out their Sacrament of Marriage, they reflect on the past 68 years with smiles. There were ups and downs, but they walked through them together. Their parish friends, including those at St. Gabriel’s, were with them through it all.

“It just seems like after I quit working, your church becomes your second family,” Mary says. “Those are your friends, and those are the ones you are with all the time.”

“It’s just family here. We have a lot of really good friends. It’s been our second family. That’s it — our church family.” — Mary Wehner

An Inside Look at the Diocese of Colorado Springs'

DIOCESAN MINISTRY APPEAL

The work of God is truly being accomplished in the Diocese of Colorado Springs. Nothing is impossible for God. In His great love, He invites us to cooperate in His work and shares His grace with us.

The annual Diocesan Ministry Appeal (DMA) is a concrete way for us to cooperate with God's grace and steward His gifts, bringing glory to God throughout the diocese. Through the DMA, parishioners unite in a shared mission that reaches far beyond individual parishes to support ministries serving the spiritual and corporal needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Jamie Crane, Director of Stewardship and Development, reflects on the remarkable generosity seen across the Diocese of Colorado Springs. "We are extremely blessed," she says. "We have a very generous diocese."

For several years now, the DMA has successfully met its financial goal, allowing critical diocesan ministries to flourish. The appeal consistently focuses on ministries that serve everyone in the diocese — Catholic and non-Catholic alike — helping all to know God, love God, and serve God.

This year's theme, *Hope in Action: Bringing Christ to Others*, builds upon the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope and calls us to live out its message in tangible ways. Hope is not passive. It inspires and uplifts our hearts, challenging us to be sources of light, stability, and peace for those who are struggling or living in darkness.

The ministries supported by the DMA bring this hope to life each day. Ministries of formation, education, and youth ministry share the good news of God's love. Vocations ministries support men and women discerning calls to the priesthood, diaconate, and married and family life, helping them follow God's plan with confidence. Ministries of service respond to the corporal needs required for all to flourish.

Your participation in the DMA is an act of hope and trust — trust that God will bring good from every sacrifice offered in faith. Each dollar given goes directly to ministry needs, making a real and lasting impact throughout the diocese.

This year, 18 diocesan ministries will be funded through the DMA. Among them, the Seminarian and Diaconate Formation ministries continue to grow in response to the needs of our expanding diocese. We are blessed to have 21 men currently in seminary discerning a call to the priesthood. Their education and



formation are funded entirely by the DMA and the Seminarian Appeal.

The Marriage and Family Ministry also continues to expand its reach, offering additional retreats to prepare couples for the Sacrament of Marriage and to support families striving for holiness in daily life.

For the first time, the Diocese will support St. Vincent de Paul and its mission to meet the food and housing needs of our neighbors. Currently, eight parishes have St. Vincent de Paul chapters, with hope and plans to extend this vital ministry to every parish in the diocese.

Another significant initiative this year is Bishop Golka's new Mental Health Ministry, which will provide a range of emotional and therapeutic services. While its primary focus will be serving priests and deacons, avenues of support will also be available to parishioners.

The DMA's financial goal for this year remains \$3 million, the same as last year. Parish-specific goals are prayerfully and carefully set by the Stewardship and Development Office, based on average actual giving over the past three appeals.

"If every family in the diocese gave \$50, every parish goal would be far exceeded, and the overall appeal would be a success," Jamie says.

"I have heard Bishop mention how we are made to be a gift," Jamie adds. "That in giving, we become most like God."

The DMA provides an opportunity to give beyond parish boundaries, uniting the faithful in support of ministries that address both spiritual and corporal needs throughout the diocese.

The appeal officially kicks off February 7–8, with donations accepted throughout the year. Giving is easy and secure. Donations may be made online through the diocesan website or by mail using the materials sent to registered parishioners. All cash and check donations are processed through a secure location.

As the DMA begins, parishioners are invited to prayerfully consider how God may be calling them to participate. Whether through a sacrificial gift or a simple offering given in faith, each contribution becomes a tangible expression of hope in action.

Together, as one diocesan family, we can bring Christ to others — strengthening His Church, supporting those in need, and trusting that God will multiply every gift given with love. Through your generosity, God is at work in powerful and life-changing ways.



YOUNG ADULTS MINISTRY:

Offering a Place to Grow in Faith, Friendship, and Service

We often hear about how the younger generation of the Catholic Church is falling away from the faith, and it can be disheartening when someone claims that the Church is “dying.” But when we look at the active members of the Church, we see that those who are involved are truly on fire for their faith. For a number of young adults in the parish and the surrounding community, the Young Adult Ministry is a great way to form friendships built on a foundation of faith and similar values.

Mitchell Awdakimow-Stec and Seth Jenkins were encouraged to revive the ministry and to offer these events and opportunities for parishioners.

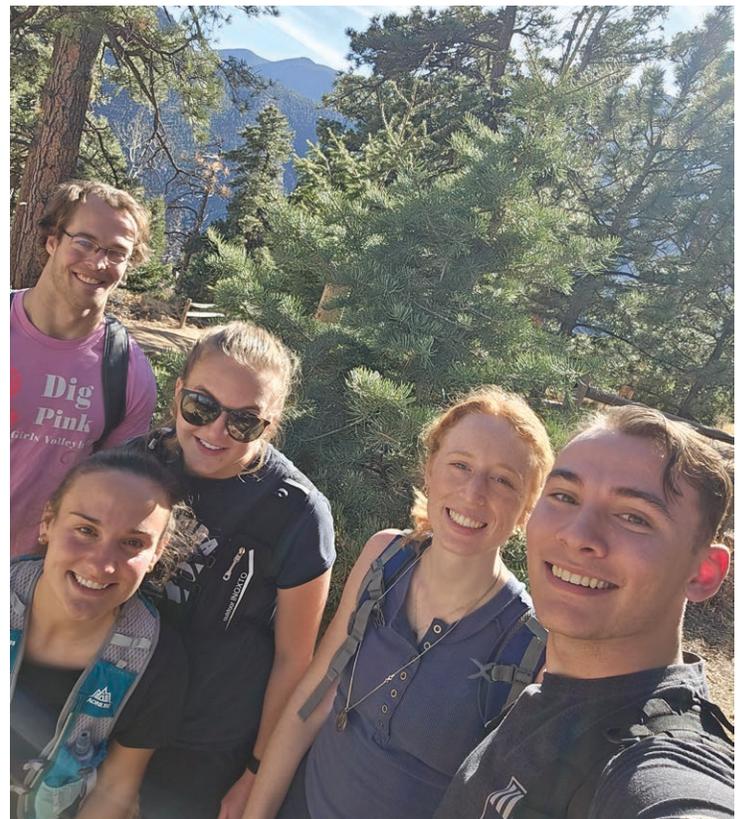
“We are really just trying to build a sense of community,” Mitchell says. “Our goal is to serve the parish and the community and to help one another grow in faith. The parish community needs to be more than just another body in the pew beside you. We want to form a group that you can reach out to, communicate with, and help draw one another into different ministries.”

The Young Adult Ministry has facilitated different events, including Rosary Hikes, potlucks, Theology on Tap, and a rosary-making event. They plan to do a parish clean-up in the spring and would like to start a Bible study for members as well. With a foundation of faith, friendship, and service, it is a special group to be a part of.

“Ultimately, we are looking for the input to see what our members are interested in,” Mitchell says. “We have a group chat, and we put out some polls to see what people want. People are willing to step up and help put things together.”

There is something special about friendships that are rooted in faith. They have the capacity to be deeper and more fulfilling when your relationship with Christ is of shared importance.

“I have felt much closer connections to those I share the faith with,” Mitchell says. “With other individuals, it’s hard to be in the same culture when we don’t have the same beliefs. Things that are accepted as standard in our culture, it feels as



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YOUNG ADULTS MINISTRY *continued from page 7*

if you are alone in the faith and against modern society. It can be challenging to maintain deep friendships when you don't see eye to eye on that. That is one way that we hope to provide a place for people within the Young Adults Ministry."

In addition to the parishioners at St. Gabriel, the Young Adults Ministry is teaming up with Our Lady of the Pines and drawing from their young adult parishioners as well.

To find out more about the events that the Young Adult Ministry has coming up and how you can get involved, email yamstg@saintgabriel.net.



LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday: 4 p.m. | **Sunday:** 8 a.m., 10 a.m., and 12 noon (Spanish) **Daily Mass:** Monday – Friday: 8 a.m.
Adoration: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Confession: Saturday: 2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. and Mercy Wednesdays (See bulletin for dates) 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.