

# CHURCH OF THE PRESENTATION

Painting by Eve Pecchenino

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### A Letter From Our Pastor

## Bishop’s Ministry Appeal

Dear Parishioners,

We celebrate a special “Holy Year of Mercy” proclaimed by Pope Francis to help us better appreciate the mercy of God. Pope Francis describes this special time as “the bridge that connects God and [people], opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 2).

“Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy.... Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth.... The Father, ‘rich in mercy’ (Eph 2:4), after having revealed his name to Moses as ‘a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness’ (Ex 34:6), has never ceased to show, in various ways throughout history, his divine nature.... Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person (cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum*, 4) reveals the mercy of God” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 1).

In this “Holy Year of Mercy,” Bishop Blaire, Jackie Flowers, Kathy Hendrickson, and I ask you to continue to make God’s

mercy concrete through your support of the Bishop’s Ministry Appeal (BMA), which helps fund the many ministries and activities offered by the diocese. This year’s BMA theme is “As One, Being the Heart of Mercy.” We are truly one in this “Holy Year of Mercy” as we are all called to share what God gives us. Year after year, our parish and parishes across the diocese are offered and receive support in maintaining and enhancing various ministries for the benefit of every parishioner. We need to continue this tradition by helping fund these much-needed services and activities.

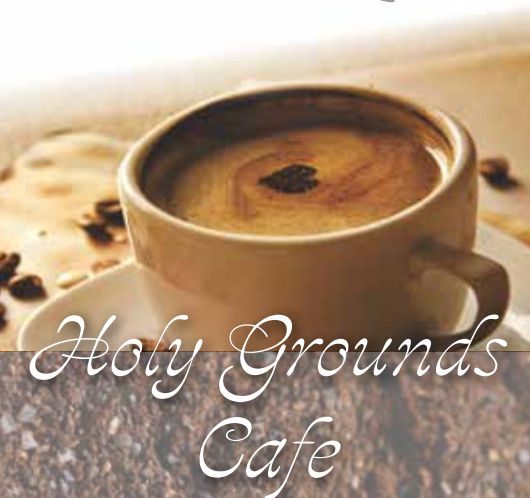
BMA is the main reason our parish and diocese can continue to provide quality liturgies, faith formation and fellowship opportunities for our parishioners. As a strong faith community we need to continue to support these services and ministries. Seminarians, permanent diaconate, religious education, faith formation, and youth ministry are among the many ministries that benefit from the BMA.

This year’s BMA will begin at the end of January and run through October for

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## Raising the Greater Church up to God The Adult Formation Ministry

Faith formation is just for kids, right? According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), it's for everyone – especially adults. It's also one of the most beautiful ways to raise the greater Church up to God.

“The Church’s catechetical mission aims to help the faithful of all ages to grow in both human and Christian maturity, enriching the whole of life with the leaven of the Gospel,” the USCCB’s website says.

This being said, we are grateful to have the Adult Formation Ministry at our parish to heed the bishops’ call to action.

“Adult Formation opportunities help to facilitate opportunities for spiritual growth for adults,” says Sr. Kathy Littrell, SHF, who directs the Adult Formation Ministry. “These opportunities are in an environment that encourages a deeper relationship with God in Jesus Christ. It enables the individual to live out Gospel values and bring the presence and love of Christ to others.”

Through various offerings, the vibrant faith of our parishioners is edified and enriched in countless ways. Currently, the ongoing Adult Formation opportunities at our parish include programs such as Bible Study, Share the Word (reflection on the Sunday Mass Scriptures), Small Faith Communities (in-home faith community gatherings), YAM FAM (a young adult ministry for adults ages 18 to 30 and above), and MOMS (Ministry of Mothers Sharing).

Given that prayer is ultimately the source of all spiritual growth, the ministry also offers a Charismatic Prayer Group, a Contemplative Prayer Group and Rosary groups.

“For most adults, the liturgy is the primary source of ongoing faith formation,” Sr. Kathy says. “We hope that other opportunities available to adults will help to enhance this faith formation based on the individual’s interest and availability.”

In addition, RCIA – the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – is an ongoing ministry for adults who wish to become Catholic or complete the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) in the Catholic Church. Our parish also offers Landings, a nine-week process that provides opportunities for inactive Catholics to have a faith-sharing experience that welcomes them back to the parish family. Last but not least, a marriage course is available for those



*Fr. Ron Hoyer, a Vincentian priest, will provide an opportunity for people of all ages to be drawn into a deeper relationship with Jesus during our upcoming Parish Mission, from January 25 to 27.*

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## Adult Formation Ministry

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wishing to enrich their marriage. It is an annual seven-week program that features a date night experience. The date night includes dinner and facilitates personal sharing time for the couples.

Besides these ongoing Adult Formation ministries, our Parochial Vicar, Fr. Joe Maghinay, offers a summer adult formation and fellowship series with varying themes.

Our Adult Formation Ministry includes other one-time events such as days of reflection, parish retreat days, and parish missions. Our upcoming Parish Mission will take place January 25 to 27, from 7 to 8 p.m. Fr. Ron Hoye, a Vincentian priest, will provide an opportunity for people of all ages to be drawn into a deeper relationship with Jesus, and to enjoy doing so.

“Not only do the Adult Formation ministries help us to understand our faith and grow in it – they also allow us to develop a relationship with God that enables us to live our faith in our everyday life and parish community,” Sr. Kathy says. “These opportunities also allow adults to enrich the faith of their families and engage their children in new ways to live out the Catholic faith.”

All are invited to pray about their desires, their interests and the time they have to offer. In order to determine where you might be invited to participate, please take a look at the Ministry Catalog at [www.presentationchurch.net](http://www.presentationchurch.net), in the Bulletin and/or contact Sr. Kathy at [adultform@presentationchurch.net](mailto:adultform@presentationchurch.net).



**Today is the day to seek Christ — not tomorrow! For more information on Adult Formation, please contact Sr. Kathy Littrell, SHF, at [adultform@presentationchurch.net](mailto:adultform@presentationchurch.net).**

## Bishop's Ministry Appeal *continued from front cover*

donors who choose to pledge their donations over the eight-month period. The appeal involves every parish in the diocese, with 100 percent of the funds raised going directly to this designated account. Any funds over our parish expectation are given back to Presentation and set aside to upgrade our technology throughout all of our facilities.

Your efforts, as generous donors, allow the diocese to continue the important mission entrusted to us by Jesus: to serve our people here in the Diocese of Stockton. Please prayerfully reflect on the gifts God has given you when making your decision about our Bishop's Ministry Appeal. Our families, our

homes, our health, and all we possess are gifts from God. Your pledge and donation of financial support should be in recognition of God's supreme generosity and in the spirit of true Christian Stewardship.

I ask that you pledge to the best of your financial ability. Thank you for your sincere consideration of this most important appeal. Please keep this effort in your prayers as we seek to serve all God's people in compassionate mercy.

In Christ,  
Msgr. Lawrence J. McGovern, STL  
Pastor



## “Recover the Sense of Being Called Presentation’s

Though ordained to the permanent diaconate in 1981, Deacon Dr. William Brennan traces the origins of his call to his years in Minnesota, a time when God did a “radical intervention” in his life.

“I was absolutely called and am convinced that one of the greatest needs in the Church is to help people recover the sense of being called and being sent,” Deacon Bill says. “Most people never think of themselves in those terms, but we are sent to build up the Body of Christ and to work for the salvation of the world.”

The inklings of Deacon Bill’s call surfaced when all doors seemed to slam in his face.

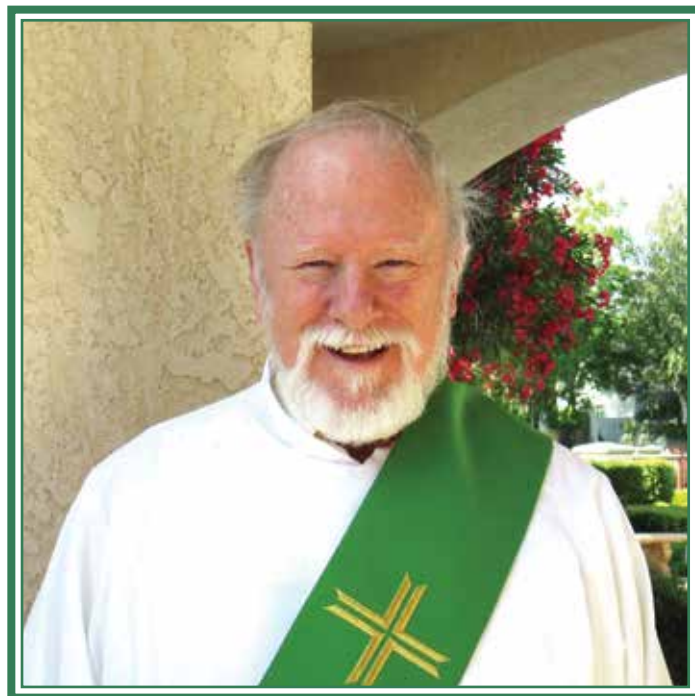
He had completed his doctorate in Russian history from the University of Oregon and relocated his family to Minnesota to take a faculty position at Mankato State University. Then, the university’s president announced they were in a financial crisis. All non-tenure track faculty would be terminated.

“I went on the job market, but the doors in the academic world kept closing,” Deacon Bill says. “I was in despair. I had lost my career and didn’t know how was I going to support my family. We were stranded in southern Minnesota.”

That night, Deacon Bill prayed something he never had before.

“I said, ‘Lord, you are the only one I have left – show me what to do,’” Deacon Bill says. “I would like to say I went to bed with an overwhelming sense of peace, but I didn’t hear a response. I tossed and turned all night long.”

While he had been teaching at the university, Deacon Bill had also been on the Parish Council at the campus Newman Center. The day after his prayer, Deacon Bill met with a priest from the center, and they discussed a job opening at the center for a religious education coordinator.



*Deacon William Brennan*

“The priest told me to ‘throw my hat in the ring’ for the position,” Deacon Bill says. “Then he pushed across the table a pamphlet titled *Permanent Diaconate in the Catholic Church*. Something in my heart clicked. I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was called.”

For the next three years, Deacon Bill served in that role, but God was about to reveal another facet of His plan. In the spring of 1976, the Newman Center eliminated the position due to budget constraints, so he went back on the job market.

“Our coming to Stockton is all part of a deeper story,” Deacon Bill says. “My wife, Regina, and I were both raised in California, and in 1976, I was

## and Being Sent”

### Deacon William Brennan

interviewed and hired by the University of the Pacific, which brought us to Stockton.”

A friend recommended Presentation to Deacon Bill and Regina shortly after they arrived. They met with the assistant pastor, and soon discovered that he and Deacon Bill had been in class together while in seminary in high school.

Deacon Bill also connected with the chancellor at the time, Fr. Larry McGovern, and was accepted into a diaconate program. He was ordained in 1981 and assigned to Presentation for the first 10 years. He then did campus ministry for the next eight years.

“Around 2000, Msgr. McGovern invited me back to Presentation,” Deacon Bill says. “My greatest thrill comes from teaching and preaching. I like proclaiming the Word of the Lord, speaking at conferences, giving retreats and doing counseling.”

When the parish first started discussing “stewardship,” Deacon Bill and Regina assessed what they had and what they were giving.

“If we are authentically disciples of Jesus, then that discipleship must impact every single aspect of our lives,” Deacon Bill says. “Adopting a stewardship lifestyle means the focus is on the community of God and serving in whatever capacity one can.”

Deacon Bill would encourage anyone who feels called to live stewardship to consider going on a retreat and listening for the Lord’s call. Then, become familiar with the many avenues for involvement offered through Presentation.

“Spending oneself for others seems to be one of the key dynamics of an active spiritual life,” Deacon Bill says. “We don’t pay so much attention to ourselves as to those for whom we are laying down our lives.”

After decades of teaching, Deacon Bill retired in 2006. Today he and his wife have been blessed with seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Deacon Bill is thankful to the entire Presentation community for being supportive of the diaconate ministry and to the over 1,300 parishioner volunteers who give to build up the Body of Christ.

“Everyone has a gift,” Deacon Bill says. “Many don’t think they do, but that is because they haven’t found out what it is yet. Seek the direction of the Lord, and recover that sense of being called and being sent.”

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**— Deacon William Brennan**



## A History of Lent and Lenten Practices

When we approach the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday, we look toward a season of preparation, sacrifice and penance, culminating in Holy Week and the joyous celebrations of Easter. And while the liturgical season of Lent offers us a time for solemn reflection; it is also widely welcomed each year as an opportunity to be drawn ever closer to our faith.

But just how did this penitential season come to be? And how did the reverent hallmarks of Lent - such as fasting and prayer - become so deeply ingrained in our observance of this season?

To understand the Lenten season, it is important to understand the word "Lent" itself, which is derived from two Anglo-Saxon terms; *lencten*, meaning "spring," and *lenctentid*, which is the term for both "springtide" and "March." Of course, Lent often falls throughout most of the month of March and during the transition into (and renewal of) the spring season. In Latin, the corresponding term for "Lent," *quadragesima*, refers to its dating from the 40th day before Easter.

This brings us to another hallmark of the Lenten season - its length of 40 days. However, Lent was not originally observed for this length of time. During the first three centuries of the Christian era, Easter preparations consisted of three days of fasting and prayer. In some places, this preparation was extended into the entire week prior to Easter, which we now observe as Holy Week. There is also some evidence that, in Rome, Easter preparation was as long as three weeks.

In its early form, Lent was an intense period of spiritual and liturgical preparation for catechumens who were to be baptized at Easter. At the time, many members of the community observed this period of preparation alongside the catechumens. But, as time passed and more people were baptized as infants, the connection between catechumens and Lenten preparation gave way to a focus on the themes of repentance and fasting during Lent for *all* Christians.

It was not until the fourth century - upon the legalization of Christianity - that Lent developed into its current length of 40 days, which mirrored the length of Jesus' fast and temptation in the desert, as chronicled in Luke 4:1-13.

Yet, interestingly, the Lenten observations of fasting and prayer did not always take place for 40 *consecutive* days. For instance, in Jerusalem, fasting was observed for 40 days, Monday through Friday, but not on Saturday or Sunday - thus, Lent lasted for a total of *eight* weeks. In Rome and the West, fasting took place for six weeks, Monday through Saturday, with Lent being observed over six weeks. The practice of fasting for six days over the course of six weeks eventually prevailed, with Ash Wednesday being instituted to account for 40 fasting days prior to Easter.

And as the length of Lenten observance developed over time, so did the observance of fasting itself. At first, some areas of the Church abstained from all meat and animal products, while others made exceptions for certain foods, like fish. Also while a person was to only have one meal a day; a smaller repast would be allowed, so that manual laborers could maintain their strength throughout the day. Eventually, eating meat was allowed throughout the week, save for Ash Wednesday and on Fridays.

In fact, two of our most common and beloved Lenten and Easter traditions - the Shrove Tuesday meal and Easter eggs - developed from these early Lenten observations. Initially, abstinence from dairy products was observed during Lent, with dispensations given if pious works had taken place. Eventually, this particular rule of abstinence was relaxed entirely. Today, pre-Lenten pancake breakfasts, Easter egg decoration and egg hunts remain as enjoyable seasonal opportunities for fellowship and fun within our parish families!

# ALL ARE WELCOME

## Program Provides Opportunity For Parishioners to Help Those in Need Year-Round

Stewardship isn't simply about "going to church." As faithful disciples of Christ, there is a lot more we can do. In fact, the very concept of "doing something" is at the root of the Giving Tree Ministry.

"The idea of the Giving Tree is to take people out of the pews and into the community," says Giving Tree ministry founder Susan Loyko, "It's not enough to just come to Mass; you need to take your faith out into the community, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for the sick."

For Susan, this is the vision with which she and her husband, Bill, began the Giving Tree Ministry, nearly 15 years ago. Although they stepped down from coordinating the ministry three years ago, they continue to oversee the Angel Tree program, which gives parishioners the opportunity to buy gifts for the children of incarcerated parents and grandparents; and more recently, children of families served by our food pantry, at Christmas time.

"Some of these kids wouldn't have a gift if it weren't for what we are bringing them," says John Tucker, the Chairperson for our Social Justice Committee.

However, this ministry isn't limited to the holiday season – it provides opportunities for parishioners to give to those less fortunate all year long. In March, the Giving Tree donates to Respect Life Ministries – this year, giving aid to victims of human trafficking. Every year in June, a different ministry is chosen to be the recipient of the resources given through the program. Catholic Charities and deployed troops are among the many who have already benefited from the June Giving Tree. Additionally, St. Mary's Dining Hall is the beneficiary of the September Giving Tree, with people donating clothing, towels, and other necessities for those served at St. Mary's.

According to John, the Giving Tree is an opportunity for parishioners to learn about, and fulfill various needs within the community.

"We choose different [charities], so people can be exposed to them and get a better understanding of what they do," John says.

The Giving Tree offers parishioners an easy way to make a difference. The ornaments on the trees detail the need – parishioners simply have to pick one, go shopping and bring the donations back to the parish.

For Dolores Shelton, who coordinates the Giving Tree with her husband, Larry, it is an opportunity for parishioners to be generous and share from the blessings they have received.

"It's a way that parishioners can share a little bit of themselves with people who are in need," Dolores says. "You're sharing and helping others get to know [God] too."

Participating in the Giving Tree Program is also a chance to see the generosity of fellow parishioners. "Our donations are not something we are going to get thanked for – it's a very selfless way to give," Dolores says. "It opens your heart to know that there's still goodness and kindness in the world."

The donations from parishioners have the ability to make a huge difference in the lives of those who receive them, not only by helping to meet their physical needs, but also giving them tangible reminders of God's love.

"We can let the recipients know that they're not alone and people care about them," John says. "Their lives and existence are important to us."

The Giving Tree is an excellent way to live out Matthew 25:40 – "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

"We couldn't do any of this without a church full of people willing to do it – it's a church effort," Susan says. "Ours is a very loving, giving, active parish."

**There are many ways that parishioners can get involved in this ministry, from taking an ornament whenever the trees go up, to helping deliver gifts to children in the Angel Tree Program. If you're interested in learning more about how you can get involved, please contact Dolores Shelton for the Giving Tree at 209-474-8578, or Susan Loyko for the Angel Tree at 209-943-1575. In addition, all are invited to attend the Social Justice Committee meetings on the second Monday of the month, at 7 p.m. in the St. Joachim Room.**



# CHURCH OF THE PRESENTATION

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## Liturgy Schedule

**Weekdays (Mon-Fri):** 7:00 a.m.

**Saturday:** 5:00 p.m. (Vigil)

**Sunday:** 7:00 a.m., 8:45 a.m.\*\*, 10:30 a.m.\*\*,  
12:15 p.m., 2:15 p.m. (Spanish),  
5:00 p.m. (Life Teen)

*\*\*Toddler Time Parent Co-Op Child Care is available during the Sunday 8:45 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Masses in the Preschool. Signing Ministry for the deaf is available at the Sunday 8:45 a.m. Mass.*

**Confessions:** Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. to  
7:30 p.m. and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to  
10:00 a.m., or by appointment.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016

## “We Are Fortunate to Have This Strong Base of Support” Update on Our Presentation Parish School

On any given school day, parents – even grandparents – can be found on campus volunteering at our school. They are in the classrooms assisting teachers, helping with a project, reading or teaching an art lesson. In the cafeteria, they help to serve lunch to students. Some of them serve as Eucharistic Ministers at our school Masses. They even drive students to local field trip destinations. These are just a few examples of how our families give of their time and talent to our school.

“One of the great strengths of our school community is the involvement, participation and dedication of our parents,” says our Principal, Mrs. Maria Amen. “With their support, our school ministry continues to thrive and succeed. We recognize that our school mission is an important part of the parish mission. We further realize that it is the parents of our students who are the primary educators of their children.”

Our Presentation Parent Boosters, or PPB, sponsor many events and activities that our parents organize to not only support the school, but also to build and maintain the strong sense of community that permeates throughout the school. These events also produce funds that are used to sponsor spiritual, educational and cultural activities.

Another parent group is our School Advisory Council, or SAC, which serves as a consultative body to the Pastor, School President, and the Principal. This 12-member council meets monthly under the guidance and leadership of Msgr. McGovern and Mr. Fred Medina, School President.

“Without the caring and involved parents, we would not and could not be what we are,” Mr. Medina says. “We are fortunate to have this strong base of support both for the school and as an example to our children of what stewardship really means.”