

CHURCH OF THE PRESENTATION

Painting by Eve Pecchenino

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Strengthening 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 him or her feel like they belong.

Here at Church of the Presentation, one of the many ways we live out this calling is through the Hospitality Ministry. While we previously had two separate ministries with a hospitality focus – the Greeter Ministry and Welcoming Committee – this newly combined ministry is dedicated to spreading Christ’s love to each individual who walks through our church’s doors.

For Marijayne Patterson, parishioner and Director of Early Childhood Ministries, hospitality is an essential ingredient to stewardship – a direct response to Christ’s



Gaylene Kahn feels blessed to be a part of the Welcoming Committee, describing it as making her feel “much more connected to the Church.”

word, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35).

“This is where people come week after week to worship our good and gracious God,” Marijayne says. “The Church – the people of God – is the Body of Christ. We are a faith community, and being a community means we care about one another, we respect one another and, ultimately, we love one another as Christ loves us.”

The Hospitality Ministry works to embody Christ’s love in a variety of ways,

from offering a warm, friendly greeting to parishioners and visitors as they arrive for Mass, taking the time to call and welcome newly-registered members, to facilitating social gatherings designed to help parishioners meet and further support one another.

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Strengthening Our Community Through Hospitality

continued from front cover

“Our purpose is to extend the Christian community’s hospitality toward others, welcoming all parishioners, visitors, and newcomers,” Marijayne says.

Gaylene Kahn, who coordinates the Hospitality Ministry, has enjoyed serving as a greeter for the past six years. Throughout that time, the ministry has transformed her from a person who simply “went to church and then went home” to a person who is actively involved in our faith community.

“Participating in a ministry like this makes you feel so much more connected to the Church,” Gaylene says. “I have been so blessed to get to know more people. It has also pushed me to become more involved. I feel that God has blessed me a hundred times over through the Hospitality Ministry.”

Volunteers typically serve at the Mass they normally attend, wearing name tags and cheerfully greeting parishioners and guests as they enter the church. In this way, says Gaylene, Hospitality members are able to “brighten their day a bit more,” increasing that sense of family.

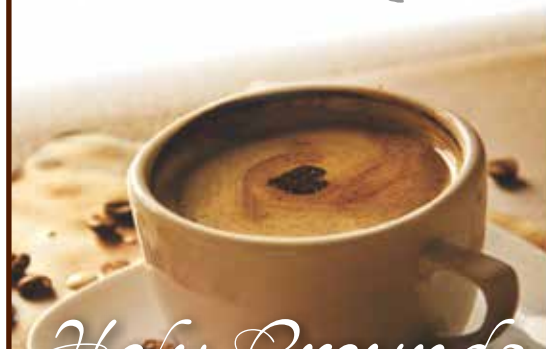
“We don’t want anyone to feel like a stranger in church,” Gaylene says. “We are all a family, all brothers and sisters in Christ. By taking the time to greet and inquire about family members, it makes them feel like they are not alone – like they are being missed when they are not at church.”

One of the big undertakings of the Hospitality Ministry has become the monthly Name Tag/Welcoming Weekend, which takes place at Masses the third weekend of each month. Designed to further connect new and old parishioners with one another, Hospitality Ministry volunteers serve coffee, juice and donuts. Additionally, all parishioners are asked to fill out and wear name tags, allowing people to learn one another’s names and to pray for each other.

“Sometimes, people sit by one another Sunday after Sunday, but they never actually talk to one another,” Gaylene says. “This gathering allows parishioners to learn each other’s name without offending one another. Then, at the end of the gathering we tell everyone to go to someone who is not a member of their family and to switch name tags, offering to pray for them over the next week.”

Currently, the Hospitality Ministry is looking for more parishioners who can commit to greeting before Sunday liturgies. Yet, even if you don’t feel called to actually join the ministry, we can all work to increase our parish’s spirit of hospitality in simple ways – offering smiles to newcomers, introducing ourselves to strangers and participating in parish social events. In this way, we each help spread the love of Christ, strengthening our parish family and the Church as a whole.

For more information on the Hospitality Ministry, please contact either Gaylene Khan, Hospitality Ministry Coordinator, at 209-957-6153, g.khan@comcast.net, or Staff Liaison Marijayne Patterson at 209-320-5718, earlychild@presentationchurch.net.



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ALL ARE WELCOME

A Letter From Our Pastor

Prayer — By Us and For Us

Dear Parishioners,

Pope Francis has certainly had an impact on our Church, and maybe even on each of us individually. Do you recall his first words to the world and to us when he appeared on the balcony following his election as pope? He said quite simply, “Pray for me.” That is a feeling I share sometimes when I consider what needs to be done, and what I personally need to do. It may be a feeling each of us has — not just now and then, but relatively consistently.

Prayer — one of the four Pillars of Stewardship — is foundational to our faith and the practice of it. It is through prayer and the sacraments that we prepare ourselves to accept God’s plentiful gifts and blessings.

Each of us needs to develop a consistent prayer life. We should set time aside each day to pray. It is through prayer that we cultivate our personal relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We provide many opportunities for prayer as part of our parish life. This includes time for us to pray as individuals and time to pray as a community.

Our prayer lives culminate at Mass in the Eucharist. The Eucharist, prayer and stewardship are interconnected. In *Lumen Gentium*, we are reminded that the Eucharist is the “Source and Summit” of our Catholic faith. With the gift of the

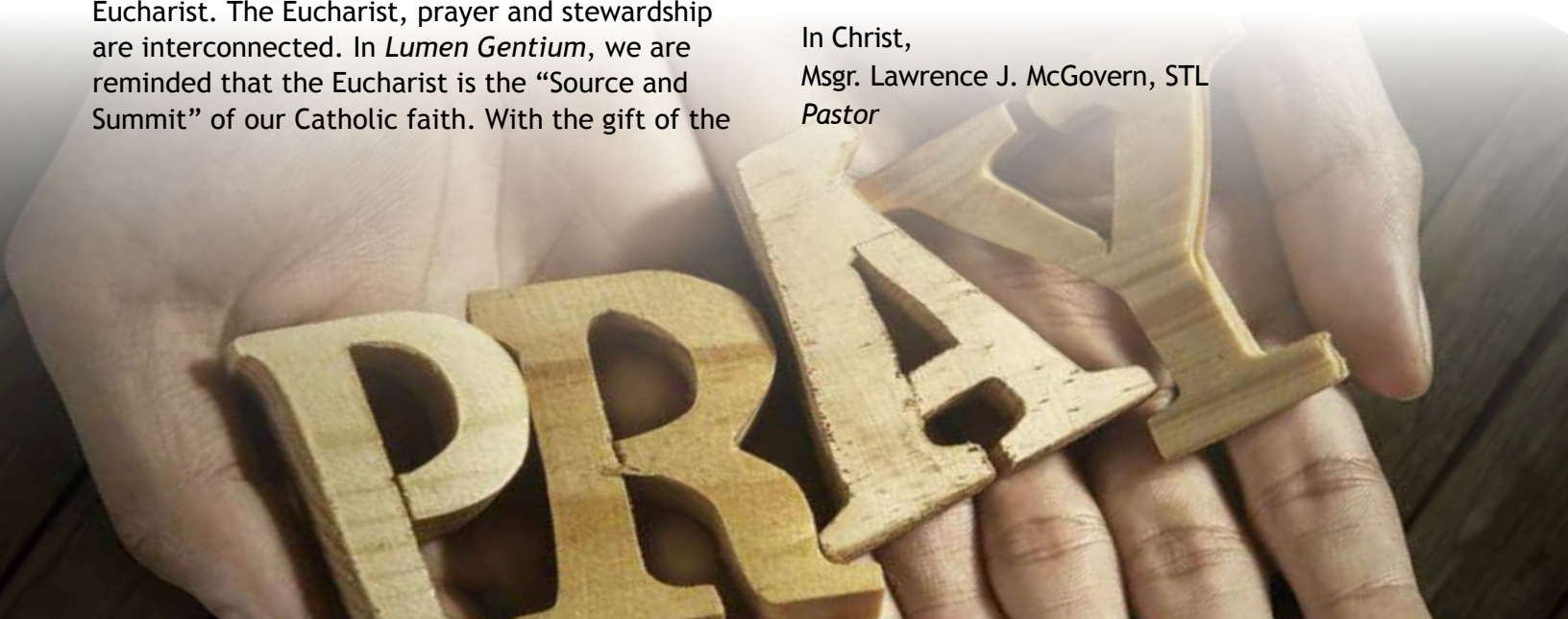
Eucharist and an active prayer life, we are better equipped to carry out the other three Pillars of Stewardship — Hospitality, Formation and Service. You might say we pray to help us seek and find how to serve the Lord and others.

This is a time of year when we enjoy numerous opportunities to kick back and relax. One of the best ways to spend time is in prayer. In both our individual and communal prayer, we turn to God to perceive our gifts and talents — and then, as stewards, we need to place those gifts at the service of one another, and especially of the Lord.

You and I are on a journey together — a journey toward holiness. That journey involves an existence of daily conversion and an awareness of how grateful we need to be. Through prayer, we can better see ourselves as God sees us, and we can seek to find who God is calling us to be.

I want to assure you of my constant and daily prayers for you. Like the Holy Father, however, I also must admit that I need you to “pray for me.” I thank you for your prayers. I am blessed to be your pastor.

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





Deacon Scott Johnson



Deacon Scott Johnson and his wife, Fabienne

If you sit down to talk to Deacon Scott Johnson about his path to the Catholic faith and the diaconate, he will tell you what a tremendous role his wife, Fabienne, played in the process. Not only was Fabienne instrumental in his conversion to the faith, but she also seemed unsurprised when her husband told her that he had been called to the diaconate.



Deacon Scott Johnson baptizes Celina Salas at the 2016 Easter Vigil

“In 2000, God called me to be a deacon,” Deacon Scott says. “I was recovering from major surgery, so I was lying in bed with no energy, and then I felt I heard the voice of God saying, ‘Scott, I want you to be a permanent deacon.’ I started to cry and my wife walked in and asked what happened, and I said, ‘God called me to be a permanent deacon.’ She said, ‘Well, of course’ – she affirmed [the call] without hesitation.”

For Deacon Scott, the journey to that life-changing moment began with his marriage to Fabienne in 1973. His wife’s years of faithful prayer are what ultimately led the deacon – who was raised in a Protestant family – to join the Catholic Church in 1985, and he was ordained a deacon 22 years later, in September 2007. With her ready acceptance of his call, unwavering support during his six years of vocational formation, and continued dedication to the parish, Fabienne has played a central role in her husband’s faith life and service to the parish.

“She has always supported me and has been an example as she juggles faith, family and work,” Deacon Scott says. “She has been at the school on the parents’ board and has worked with Religious Ed – she has been a worker bee on a lot of things. She just joined Serra Club International and has been going [to those meetings] with me. She has also joined me on the Stewardship Council.”

In addition to his wife and family – the couple has three grown children – Deacon Scott considers his vocation to the diaconate to be one of life’s greatest blessings. He strongly believes that God’s gifts also come with responsibility, and one of the many responsibilities of a deacon is to model a Christ-like life.

“I enjoy preaching – it’s a blessing to get up and talk about the good news of Jesus,” he says. “But it’s also a challenge, because people are watching you – not just in church, but also at the grocery store!”

on on Living the Faith

**“I enjoy preaching — it’s a blessing to get up and talk about the good news of Jesus. But it’s also a challenge, because people are watching you — not just in church, but also at the grocery store!”
— Deacon Scott Johnson**



Deacon Scott Johnson baptizes Maria Perez at the 2016 Easter Vigil

Deacon Scott recognizes that this responsibility to live out the faith in our daily actions is not just for those in religious vocations. He points to one of the new translations in the Mass that the Church adopted in 2011 as an example. At the closing of Mass, the celebrant may tell the congregation to “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord with your life.”

So, what does this exhortation mean for parishioners?

“When you go out the door after Mass, you’re not done,” Deacon Scott says. “We’ve prepped you, fed you and sung with you. Now, you’re going out to try to [live the Word], strengthened by the Eucharist.”

Indeed, living out the faith and using our gifts in service to others as a way to give thanks for blessings received is the true meaning of stewardship.

“Stewardship isn’t just about asking for money,” Deacon Scott says. “It’s about understanding that everything we have is a gift from God and that stewardship is a major way of living out our baptism. We received many gifts in our baptism into Christ, and we are expected to return them to God with an increase.”

Outside of Mass, Deacon Scott is passionate about using his gifts in service to the RCIA process and Social Justice Ministry. He feels blessed to be a part of all of the wonderful things happening in our parish, and we are certainly thankful to have Deacon Scott serving here with us!



Deacon Scott Johnson with his wife, Fabienne, at his ordination on Sept. 8, 2007



RCIA Prepares Candidates and Catechumens for Faithful Catholic Life

For Anthony Pruitt, becoming a Catholic was a natural progression in his faith journey – and he had his wife, Suzanne, as his sponsor to guide the way.

“I came from the Baptist faith, and my wife is a cradle Catholic,” Anthony says. “What it came down to, is that I felt like this is where God wanted me to be. I’ve been on this journey a long time, and he put me on this path to become a Catholic.”

“I’m originally from New Orleans, and Anthony is originally from Alabama,” Suzanne says. “We both lived in New Orleans and then in Atlanta before we moved here to California. When we decided to get married, we had a conversation about our faith, and we decided that we would attend both of our churches. On Sunday, we would go to his church for the service, and then after that we would go to my church for Mass.”

Once they had made the move to California, Anthony found that he began to move away from his Baptist faith, and was attending Suzanne’s church more and more.

“I came to a point where we were at Mass, and I turned to her and said, ‘I want to become a Catholic!’” he says.

This past March, Anthony – along with one other – was received into the Catholic Church on Holy Thursday at the Church of the Presentation. Both Anthony and the other candidate were baptized in another Christian tradition and were brought into Full communion with the Catholic church through a Profession of Faith and received the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. Five other Candidates were baptized and received the Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

During the RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – process, Anthony was able to learn much more than just the basics of the Catholic faith. He also had the opportunity to delve into the “why” of what Catholicism is all about.

“There was a lot of openness, which was really important for me coming from a Protestant faith,” he says. “I asked a lot of questions about the differences between the Christian faiths, and I really enjoyed the

process. I went in with an open mind, without any pre-conceived notions, and I was able to learn so much. For example, it was really profound to me to see that some perceptions of Catholics are not true, such as the perception that Catholics don’t read or know the Bible.”

“One thing that I saw that was enlightening for Anthony was learning about the rituals within the Catholic Mass,” Suzanne adds. “He and I have also had several conversations about why rituals are important, why the faith continues so many years later, and why Catholicism does certain things. Having a meaning aligned with all these rituals really helped to give him a foundation of the faith.”

In turn, Anthony notes his appreciation of how important the liturgy truly is.

“I really appreciate the solemn reverence of the Mass,” he says. “And the Eucharist – that is something really special to me now, to have Jesus physically with us, and to be able to celebrate and share in that with my brothers and sisters. I fully understand now why we as Catholics have Communion every time we have Mass.”

Suzanne, who is a Eucharistic Minister, was able to give Anthony his First Communion. This experience, as well as the experience of being Anthony’s sponsor, has been integral in their spiritual growth as a family.

“I really enjoyed the process with my wife as my sponsor,” Anthony says. “I felt like I could ask her questions about anything, and she would always be happy to explain. I enjoyed the closeness it brought us.”

“The greatest part of this experience for me has been having the opportunity for 10 months to grow



Anthony Pruitt, with his wife, Suzanne, along with Zachery, make their Profession of Faith and are Confirmed at the Holy Thursday Liturgy.

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ALL ARE WELCOME

RCIA *continued from page 6*

spiritually with my husband,” Suzanne says. “It has really been critical for our marriage and our life to be able to share our faith and belief in an open form.”

Anthony has also enjoyed growing in fellowship with others in the Presentation parish community, and has felt very welcomed by the parish as a whole.

“I had really missed having a community and fellowship and closeness with that community,” he says. “Now, I really feel like more of a part of the community here. The people in RCIA are all very nice, and I have made so many friends through this process – a lot of the sponsors and other participants, as well. By going through this process together, we’ve really been able to become good friends.”

Anthony has jumped right in and has signed up to be involved in various activities. He looks forward to joining the Knights of Columbus and to serving as an Altar Server. He has a wonderful example in his wife, who also serves as a lector, and is a member of the Daughters of Isabella. Suzanne has also decided to join the RCIA team after her experience as a sponsor to Anthony. For the Pruitts, service to others is a part of their responsibility as Christians.

“If we want to live out the values that Jesus taught, we need to emulate His life by serving others and helping people,” Suzanne says. “My parents believed the same thing, so I have always been involved at the church since I was young. It’s always been a part of who I am as a Christian, so there’s no reason for that to have changed when I became an adult.”

Going forward, Anthony plans to continue to learn about his Catholic faith. By continuing to read, educate himself and get involved in parish life, he is confident that he will only grow in faith. Both Suzanne and Anthony credit this desire to a strong foundation created by the RCIA process.

“Sr. Kathy [Littrell] did a phenomenal job, and all those that were part of the team and involved as sponsors did an excellent job, as well!” Anthony says.

“In the class, Sr. Kathy really created a sense of what it means to be a Catholic, and what it means to live and walk in the Catholic faith,” Suzanne says. “That was demonstrated from the very first to the very last class, and it was very easy to be a part of the class because you felt so welcome.”



Candidates and catechumens celebrated their full entry into the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil Mass

If you would like more information about the RCIA process at Presentation, please contact Sr. Kathy Littrell at 209-320-5713 or adultform@presentationchurch.net.



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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.

MAY/JUNE 2016

“We Are Striving to Impress Our Students With the Importance of Stewardship” *Our Presentation School Monthly Update*

As the school year winds down — the last day of school is Friday, June 3 — we have an opportunity to look back with gratitude and joy on this 2015-2016 school year. Our students have not only realized academic success, but our families have also come together in prayer, worship and thanksgiving. We will graduate our 47th eighth-grade class on Thursday, May 26, with the Eighth-Grade Graduation Mass at 5 p.m. As these students move on to high school, it is our prayer that they will carry the memories of Presentation as well as the light of Christ into all that they do.

“We are striving to impress our students with the importance of

stewardship,” says Mrs. Maria Amen, Principal. “Parents, staff and fellow parishioners understand that it is by example that stewardship is best taught. Our stewardship effort is in conjunction with the parish endeavor to make us a stewardship parish. This is reflected in our parish mission statement, which says in part, ‘Here we encounter God, challenge ourselves to be Disciples of Christ, are inspired by the Holy Spirit, and are called to use our gifts as Stewards of the Gospel Values.’

“In the midst of our school efforts, however, we acknowledge that it is the parents who are the foundation of education,” Mrs. Amen continues. “Our Catholic Catechism

makes this quite clear in #2223 which states, ‘Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity and disinterested service are the rule... Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children.’”

The school works diligently to assist the parents in the education of children in the faith and in what it means to be a good steward. Nevertheless, stewardship is indeed taught by example. Everyone in the parish is called to model stewardship and to serve as illustrations of what it means to be a good steward.