# St. Luke
# St. Teresa

## PARISH NEWSLETTER

APRIL/MAY 2026

*A Letter From Our Pastor*

# Introducing Our New Parish Stewardship Newsletter

My Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I am pleased to present our new parish newsletter! This newsletter is designed to help us grow in understanding that stewardship as a way of life is a disciple's response to the call to know, love, and follow our Lord Jesus Christ. Each month, we'll share stories that reveal more about who we are as Catholics and as members of God's family. Through these stories, we'll gain insight into how the stewardship way of life helps us grow closer to Christ and to each other.

Each issue will feature activities and events happening within the St. Teresa and St. Luke communities. These moments will help us to see how our hearts, minds, and lives are transformed when we intentionally engage in stewardship. In every article, we will witness how Christ is working within us and our community as we embrace this way of life more deeply.

I hope this newsletter will be a meaningful tool for ongoing faith development. As we learn more about how our fellow parishioners are living their faith within our community, I pray it inspires each of us to consider our own calling to stewardship and how we might become more involved in the life of our parishes — perhaps even trying new things.

This newsletter will also help improve communication by featuring upcoming events and sharing information. But I also want to hear from you! This spring, we will be conducting a comprehensive parish survey. The survey will be mailed to each home — I ask you to take the time to complete the survey and return it as soon as possible. Your feedback is important to me and will help me and parish leadership better understand your thoughts about our parishes. This survey will enable us to pave the way for our future.

Another important event — perhaps the most important — as we develop stewardship here at St. Teresa and St. Luke will be our Annual Stewardship Renewal this fall. The Renewal provides a dedicated time each year to reflect on how we use God's gifts in service to the Church. During this time, we'll make written commitments to God and ourselves, pledging to be intentional in our use of time, talent, and treasure:

**Time:** Using our time wisely and making space for personal and family prayer, as well as quality time with friends and loved ones.

**Talent:** Sharing our unique gifts to strengthen the

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# What Does *Stewardship* Really Mean?

What crosses your mind when the word "stewardship" comes up? Do you think of it solely in terms of money? Do you quickly brush it off as something unrelated to our Catholic Faith?

Stewardship is deeply rooted in Scripture and is significant in our lives as Catholics. In the very first book of the Old Testament, God instructs us, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

So, what does this mean for us today? It's essentially God saying, "This world is in your hands, so take good care of it." Right off the bat, God entrusts us with the responsibility of being good stewards of the gifts He's given us.

This is not just an Old Testament concept. In fact, of the 36 parables in the New Testament, more than half touch on topics like time, talent, possessions, or money. If Jesus talked about stewardship that much, it should be a cornerstone of our lives today!

As Catholics, we often talk about stewardship in terms of "time, talent, and treasure." While these are tangible ways to express and evaluate stewardship, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops reminds us that stewardship is deeply intertwined with discipleship. It's about how we respond to God's call in every aspect of our lives.

Here's a key point the Scriptures and Church traditions emphasize — stewardship isn't about the Church needing our resources; it's about our need to show gratitude. Sure, the Church and our parish will always have financial needs, but our focus shouldn't solely be on meeting those needs. Instead, we should gratefully give back a portion of our time, talent, and treasure to God, acknowledging all that He's blessed us with.

Remember, stewardship isn't just a one-time thing or a checklist to complete. It's a way of life — a continuous call to live as followers of Christ. It takes time to set personal goals and define what stewardship means for each of us.

So, let's start by reflecting on our commitments to the parish. How do we live out our faith daily with our families and friends? How much time do we devote to prayer, Mass attendance, or participating in parish ministries and activities? And when it comes to finances, what percentage of our income should we dedicate to God each week? How can we use our talents to enrich our parish community?

In the months ahead, we will ramp up our efforts to educate and communicate about stewardship. Together, we'll gain a deeper understanding of how stewardship is our response to God's call to discipleship. With God's guidance, our hearts will be transformed as we wholeheartedly embrace a renewal of stewardship within our parish.

Take a moment to examine how you're currently responding to God's call to stewardship. If He were to call you home tomorrow, would He say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant"?

# The Soup Kitchen at St. Luke

## *Serving the Community One Quart at a Time*

The Men's Group at St. Luke gets together once a month to serve those in need who are seniors or otherwise homebound. The Soup Kitchen was founded by Earl Hasenstab in 1982. Alan Pressey is one of the volunteers.

"I was retired back in March 2013 and was approached by some people," Alan says. "The whole idea was getting out and helping people, helping supplement what people need, and also the visits, that kind of thing. It's a good group of guys."

The Men's Group is a mix of St. Teresa and St. Luke parishioners.

"It's a group of about eight or nine men that put the soup together," Alan says. "Steve Dietrich does the purchasing for the containers, the vegetables, and all the stuff. It's not one person in charge. We get together and make the beef vegetable soup — it's low-sodium. There are at least four groups of people who take the soup out."

While the Men's Group makes the soup, other volunteers are involved in driving and delivering the quart containers. Their routes serve about 90 to 95 folks here in the Belleville area.

"It's mostly older seniors, but we have a couple of individuals who are homebound," Alan says. "It doesn't matter if you're Catholic or not. I had a neighbor who moved to Iowa, but I would deliver to her. She belonged to the Lutheran church. If we get a name and address, we deliver to them."

Outreach to those in need doesn't have a requirement. That's how the St. Luke Soup Kitchen works. They serve as stewards to those in need in their community.

"It brings us together in a fellowship," Alan says. "It's an outreach to deliver and talk to people that may not have too big a connection with other people, and with coming to church sometimes. They're housebound."

The group gets together early on the last Tuesday of every month, around 7:30 to 8 a.m. in the kitchen at St. Luke.

"It gives us time to visit and talk about stuff,"

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# A Visit to St. Teres

## *Encouraging Students to Li*

Many parents choose a Catholic education for their children because of the school's commitment to educating the whole child in mind, body, and spirit. At St. Teresa Catholic School, the faculty, parents, and pastor all play a vital role in encouraging students to realize both the academic and spiritual gifts God has given them. Whether in the classroom, through leadership opportunities, athletics, or the arts, students are challenged to develop those gifts and use them in ways that serve others.

Principal Nicole Green explains that the goal of St. Teresa Catholic School is to help students grow not only in reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also in their relationship with Christ.

"At our school, faith is not something that happens during just one part of the day — it is part of the rhythm of everyday life," Mrs. Green says. "Walk through the halls, and you will hear students praying together, preparing for Mass, and learning how their faith connects to the world around them."

As the Church teaches that parents serve as the primary educators of their children, the relationship between school and home should reflect a robust faith that is upheld by both teachers and parents. Mrs. Green explains that when both teachers and parents live out their faith, they serve as examples to the students.

"They see their teachers living their faith each day," she says. "That witness is powerful, and it often extends beyond the classroom as families grow in faith alongside their children."

The connection between the school, the parish, and the pastor also plays an important role in the students' formation. Fr. Joseph is present in the life of the school — celebrating Mass with our students, visiting classrooms, and helping guide the spiritual direction of our community.

'Because of that presence, students understand that the school and parish are not separate, but part of the same faith family," Mrs. Green says.

St. Teresa Catholic School offers many opportunities for the students to engage in service, as they grow to understand that helping others is another way students are called to live out their faith.

"At St. Teresa, we talk often about being the hands and feet of Jesus, and our students take that message seriously," Mrs. Green says. "Our active Junior St. Vincent de Paul organization gives students the opportunity to

# sa Catholic School

## *ve out the Faith Every Day*

put their faith into action by responding to the needs of others and supporting those in our community. Time and again, our students show an eagerness to give back and to help others in meaningful ways."

Finally, the school plays an important role in preparing students for the sacramental life of the Church. Working closely with the parish and individual families, students are guided as they prepare for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.

"These moments are important milestones in their faith journey, and we strive to help students understand both the meaning of the sacraments and the grace they bring to their lives," Mrs. Green says.

While St. Teresa Catholic School once served a much larger student body, today the enrollment numbers offer something many families seek — a close-knit community where every child is known, valued, and supported. Mrs. Green compares the school culture to a large family.

"Our school has truly become a family rooted in faith and dedicated to the mission of Christ," she says. "Each day we work to form students who know their faith, care deeply for others, and are prepared to use their God-given gifts to make a difference in the world."

To learn more about St. Teresa Catholic School, visit www.stteresatigers.org or call 618-235-4066.

# The Soup Kitchen at St. Luke

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Alan says. "We get the soup all put together. We start filling containers from 11 to 11:30. People are going out, running their routes. Most of them go out with somebody. Peggy Determan shows up at 11, and we go out on the route. I drive, and she'll go up, ring the doorbells, deliver the soup, and stay a few minutes to talk to people. We spend time talking to the individual. They get a visit, we benefit too."

Service like this only takes place once a month, but it's very valuable to the community and to those who do the serving.

"From my own standpoint, it's something very tangible," Alan says. "You see people and talk to people, they're grateful. There are two gentlemen who deliver soup to the St. Clair apartments over on Church Street. They take at least 15 to 20 soups. On my route, Peggy and I deliver to the women's crisis center. They have their kids there, too, in some cases. We take 12 quarts of soup over there. All the organizations have had their funding cut back, and so they're very appreciative of it."

Forty-four years and going strong, the Soup Kitchen continues to serve the community every month.

"It's just an easy way to get out and help someone," Alan says.

If anyone would like to add themselves or someone they know in need to the list, or to help volunteer, call the office at 618-233-3500.

# Living the *Resurrection* After Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday is one of the most joyful celebrations of the year. Churches are filled, music lifts our hearts, and we rejoice in Christ's victory over sin and death. Yet once Easter Sunday passes, it can be easy to slip back into familiar routines, as though the celebration has ended. The Church reminds us that Easter is not simply a day we observe — it is a reality meant to shape how we live.

The Resurrection changes how we see everything.

When Jesus rose from the dead, fear no longer had the final word. Death was defeated, hope was restored, and God's faithfulness was revealed in a new and definitive way. For the first disciples, encountering the risen Christ transformed ordinary lives into lives filled with purpose. They began to live differently — praying together, caring for one another, and sharing generously so that no one was in need.

Their response was not driven by obligation. It flowed from gratitude.

This same invitation is extended to us. Easter faith is not meant to remain within the walls of the church building. The risen Christ meets us in the ordinary moments of daily life — in our homes, our work, our relationships, and our parish community. Living the Resurrection means recognizing that every day is a gift entrusted to us by God.

Gratitude naturally changes how we live. When we begin to see our lives as gifts rather than possessions, prayer becomes less of a duty and more of a relationship we desire. Serving others becomes an opportunity rather than an interruption. Generosity becomes a response of trust, acknowledging that all we have ultimately comes from God.

In this way, the Easter season invites us to live as Christian stewards. We are not simply recipients of God's blessings; we are caretakers of them. The time we are given, the abilities we possess, and the resources entrusted to us become ways of participating in God's ongoing work in the world.

Often, living the Resurrection looks quiet and ordinary. It is choosing patience when frustration would be easier. It is offering encouragement to someone who is struggling. It is remaining faithful to prayer even during busy seasons. It is supporting the mission of the Church so that others may encounter Christ as we have.

These small, faithful responses reflect a heart shaped by Easter hope.

The Church celebrates the Easter season for fifty days because learning to live the Resurrection takes time. Joy deepens gradually as we grow in trust and gratitude. Each day becomes another opportunity to recognize Christ alive and present among us.

Long after the Easter decorations are put away, the message remains the same: Christ is risen, and our lives are different because of it. As grateful stewards, we are invited to carry the hope of the Resurrection into our daily lives, allowing its joy to shape how we pray, how we serve, and how we give — not only during Easter, but throughout the entire year.

# Parish Community Looks Forward to Host of Joyful Centennial Celebrations

There are never enough reasons in life to celebrate. A life in Christ is meant to be lived with joy, gratitude, and community. Milestones like a centennial remind us not only of the past, but also of the faith, families, and friendships that continue to shape the present. This year, be part of the celebration at St. Teresa as the parish marks 100 years of faith, fellowship, and joyful witness. The school is also celebrating 100 years.

While the parish community has existed for a century, the current church building was constructed in 1967. Another fun fact — the church was built on the site of an old brewery, a nod to the area's strong German roots.

So far, there have already been celebrations, with more to come, says business manager Nancy Furlow. The festivities kicked off on Feb. 15 with a centennial Mass and chicken dinner.

St. Teresa's is a special place for Nancy and her family. She looks forward to celebrating this milestone year with everyone and hopes to see many parishioners and former parishioners return.

"I'm looking forward to seeing people reconnect — seeing alumni come back, hearing their memories, and just celebrating everything the parish has been for 100 years," she says. "It's exciting to see all of this come together."

Because a tornado last April took down many trees on campus, plans are underway to plant a commemorative tree for the centennial, possibly with a garden surrounding it. To celebrate 100 years with acts of service, the parish will host four blood drives with a goal of collecting 100 pints — 25 pints per drive.

On July 5, the parish will host a patriotic organ concert along with a presentation explaining the church's stained-glass windows. The annual church picnic is on Aug. 29 and will be celebrated as a homecoming, inviting alumni to return and reconnect.

In September, the parish will host Fr. Ron Hoye of *The God Minute*. More details on that event will be announced soon.

In October, around the feast of St. Teresa, the parish will celebrate its brewery-site history with a polka Mass followed by a German-style meal.

The year of celebrations will conclude in January 2027 with a closing Mass and gala.

A book of saints and reflections, called *Be Still and Know Love*, was written by Fr. Joseph with input from parishioners and friends of our St. Teresa family. It will be available for purchase. In addition, alumni are invited to sign a commemorative memory book at parish events.

"We really want people to come back," Nancy says. "We want to reconnect with parishioners and alumni, and to celebrate what this parish has meant to so many families over the years."

*This year, be part of the celebration at St. Teresa as the parish marks 100 years of faith, fellowship, and joyful witness.*

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St. Luke | St. Teresa

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Church through service in parish ministries and other activities.

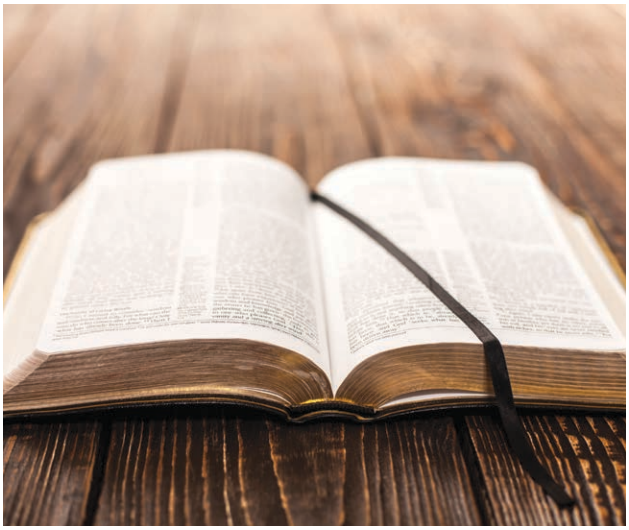
**Treasure:** Practicing wise and just stewardship of our financial resources, contributing a proportionate amount of income to your parish.

As we journey together to develop stewardship as a way of life at St. Teresa and St. Luke, the support and active involvement of every parishioner are essential. Each of you has a vital place here and a role to play as we live our lives as disciples of Christ.

May the Holy Spirit renew and refresh us as we grow in faith and service through the use of our time, talent, and treasure.

In Christ,

Fr. Joseph Oganda, *Pastor*



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