

Maneline

ST. MARK Catholic Community

ST. MARK Girl Scouts

By Megan Meyers



Girl Scout Troops have been an active part of the *ST. MARK* Community since the *ST. MARK* Catholic School opened 20 years ago! The Troops fall under the Girl Scout Council of the National Capital region (GSCNC); they work to connect young women with unique programs to help them explore, learn, succeed, and take action to make a difference in their community.

The Girl Scout program focuses on four badge pillars: STEM, Outdoors, Entrepreneurial Skills, and Life Skills, which encourage girls to be Go-getters, Innovators, Risk-takers, and Leaders (GIRL). This year the *ST. MARK* Girl Scout community is made up of four different troops.

■ **Troop 50254 is the newest crop of Girl Scouts, the Daisies.** So far this year, this group of 9 Kindergarteners and 1st Graders has enthusiastically participated in discussions and activities focused on topics like being honest and fair, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, friendly and helpful, and respectful of themselves and others. They visited a local police station for a lesson on safety and authority, celebrated the diversity of different nations by participating in World Thinking Day, and enjoyed a group outing to the "Nutcracker" ballet. Finally, they worked tirelessly and creatively to sell



Troop 50254 selling cookies to help fund troop activities

nearly 600 boxes of Girl Scout cookies, and they will soon decide on how to use the proceeds both to better their community and to celebrate their hard work this year. The Troop meets once or twice a month, typically on Sunday afternoons.

■ **Troop 50224 is the Brownies Troop. Girls in 2nd and 3rd Grades are called Brownies.** This Troop has 6 Brownies, who meet monthly on Sundays. Some highlights from this year have been learning about the history of the Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon

Low, exploring nature, creating art from nature, and helping the community. This year, the Troop represented The Bahamas at World Thinking Day. The girls also worked hard to earn their first-aid badges from a visiting emergency room doctor, who presented an interactive demonstration to teach the girls all about first aid and what to do in an emergency.

■ **Troop 50102 is made up of 4th Grade Juniors and 6th Grade Cadettes.** The 12 girls in this group love all things outdoors! They have gone hiking, camping, climbing, horseback riding, star gazing, and have even learned how to cook meals over a camp fire. Their motto is always to leave the outdoors better than they found it! The girls



Troop 50021 representing Poland at World Thinking Day

also have been focused on earning their Bronze and Silver awards, which are the highest awards that girls in Grades 4 and 5, and 6-8, can achieve, respectively. The Bronze and Silver awards focus on large projects taking 20 to 50 hours per girl to complete; these give back to the community. When not earning badges and awards, the girls also love volunteering. The Troop started by backing up the biannual *ST. MARK* Blood Drives that take place during ADVENT and LENT, donating cookies to U.S. troops and local firefighters, raising money to support numerous charitable causes, and planting a new tree for the priests in front of the Rectory. The Troop meets twice a month on Sunday afternoons at the Girl Scout Camp in Oakton or at *ST. MARK*.

■ **Troop 50021 is made up of 5th Grade Juniors and one 3rd Grade Brownie.** The 5 girls represented Poland during this year's World Thinking Day. Over 150 girls came together to learn about other countries, their cultures, Girl Scouts/Girl Guides in those countries, and how Girl Scouting groups are positively impacting the environment. The Troop also enjoys learning about managing money and running a business

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ST. MARK Girl Scouts

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during Girl Scout cookie season and camping in Northern Virginia and the Pocono Mountains.

The Girl Scout year typically follows the school year calendar for Troop meetings, and summers are spent attending camps and special events. *ST. MARK* is only a few miles away from GSCNC Camp Crowell, which gives the girls plenty of opportunities for adventure in nature including archery, rope courses, zip lines, slingshots, campfires, sing-alongs, outdoor STEM activities, and more!

Anyone interested in joining a *ST. MARK* Girl Scout troop can contact Catherine Wykoff at CWykoff@stmark.org. There are always openings for both girls and volunteers! The Troops are all designed to be girl-led, and the girls are advised by a wonderful set of volunteers made up of *ST.*



Girl Scout Juniors and Cadettes are regular Altar Servers for the 5:30 p.m. Vigil Mass on Saturdays



MARK Catholic School teachers, Parish parents, and Girl Scout high schoolers (called *Seniors* or *Ambassadors*) who are past graduates of *ST. MARK* Catholic School. All of these volunteers believe in investing in the lives of others and giving back to the community.



Troop 50102 on their winter campout



Troop 50102 representing Japan at World Thinking Day in the Cassidy Activities Center

Adult Religious Formation Offered on Sunday Morning

■ April 16: The Science and Significance of Eucharistic Miracles, 9:30-10:45a.m. in the CFC Gym

This presentation provides an overview of some of the more than 100 Eucharistic miracles that have occurred worldwide over centuries, especially five that have been scientifically studied. Most Eucharistic miracles involve incidences in which the host has “turned into human flesh and blood.” The teaching of the Catholic Church, since the beginning, is that the consecrated host and wine are really and truly the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine. This teaching is based on the testimony of Jesus himself who said, “Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day” (John 6:54).

Most people today, even many Catholics, doubt this teaching. Therefore, Jesus, through Eucharistic miracles, provides a more tangible way to help dispel doubts about his Real Presence in the EUCHARIST. These scientific studies provide compelling evidence that Eucharistic miracles are indeed Divine interventions that manifest the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy EUCHARIST.

■ April 23: Faith, Screens, and Our Families, 9:30-10:45 a.m. in the CFC Gym

Peter Ryan is founder of LookUp4Life, a nonprofit organization focused on spreading awareness regarding the negative impact of excess screen-based personal technology use (smart phones, video games, social media, and pornography), particularly on the youngest generations. He authored *Technology, the New Addiction*, which was published in the

September 2018 edition of the *U.S. Navy Journal Proceedings*. Based on his research, experience, and engagement on this topic with professionals in the community, parents, and youth, he will be sharing the impacts of screen addiction (to include impacts on faith) and offering practical advice for more safely implementing technology use in families and best practices for protecting yourself, your children, and your students from its harmful effects. This is a practical and spiritual call to action.

Peter is a Catholic husband, father of four, and retired Navy Captain who currently serves in the Pentagon as a Navy civilian. Following graduation from Virginia Tech in 1986, Peter was commissioned an officer in the U.S. Navy. He eventually became a Naval Flight Officer in the E-2C Hawkeye. Following flight training, he was assigned to various locations and flew off aircraft carriers to join combat missions in Operation Desert Storm.

■ April 30: The Catechist and the Church, 9:30-10:45 a.m. in the CFC Gym

ST. MARK Director of Religious Education, Joe Flaherty, will speak on the significance of being a Catechist. Many do not realize how seriously the Church takes the role of Catechist. The Diocese of Arlington has multiple resources to help form them. In this talk, you will learn What is a Catechist? What is the history of Catechists and Catechesis? Are there any Catechist saints? What resources are there for Catechists at *ST. MARK*? In the Diocese of Arlington? How do I become a certified Catechist in the Diocese? How can I tell if I am called to be a Catechist?

Praying the *Liturgy of the Hours*

By Deacon John Allen

“**P**ray without ceasing” (1 Th 5:17). With these words, St. Paul echoes Jesus’s command to the 12 Apostles to “pray always” (Luke 18:1) and extends it to all Christians. It is especially through the *Liturgy of the Hours* the Church prays constantly.

Like the Mass, the *Liturgy of the Hours* is the official prayer of the Church. “Liturgy” differs from personal prayer—such as the Rosary or a Novena or a visit to the Blessed Sacrament—because it is offered in the name of and by the whole Christian community. In the *Liturgy of the Hours*, we unite with Christians across time and around the world in consecrating our day to God. Even if we are not praying in the physical presence of others, we are, in fact, praying together as members of the entire Church with Jesus as our Head.

The *Liturgy of the Hours* consists of Psalms, readings from Sacred Scripture, hymns, canticles, and intercessions. These change according to the time of day, the day of the week, the cycle in a series of four consecutive weeks, and the day’s liturgical season or feast. The time to pray an “hour” is as short as 5 minutes in the case of Compline to around 15 minutes for Morning or Evening Prayer.

The three most important of the hours are Morning Prayer (Lauds), Evening Prayer (Vespers), and the Office of Readings, which can be prayed at any time during the day. In addition to these major hours, there are three “little hours” for during the day and Compline (Night Prayer) before going to bed.

Some History

For centuries before Jesus’s time, the Jews had been praying in set ways and at specified times of the day in the Temple and at home. *The Acts of the Apostles* mentions that the Apostles continued this tradition. Ancient Church documents, such as the *Didache*, possibly written as early as the year 90 AD, and the *Apostolic Traditions*, written in 215, reflect the practice of the Church in saying recurrent prayers throughout day and night.

Once Christians were allowed to worship openly in the Roman Empire

(313 AD), two forms were developed for the *Liturgy of the Hours*—the *Cathedral* form and the *Monastic* form. In the Cathedral form, people of a Diocese would gather with their Bishop in the morning and in the evening to sing Psalms, read the Bible, and pray as a group for their various intentions.

The Monastic form was more structured. The Psalms played a larger role. The Bible was read systematically. One

Pray without ceasing

monk would lead the prayers and readings, and the others would listen and give short responses. During the prayer, the other monks often continued their work. Since books were rare and costly, groups of monks would share a single large book rather than each have a personal text. Eventually, the two forms were merged. By the end of the 6th century, the format was well established, although Compline was added later.

St. Benedict played a significant role in the development of the *Liturgy of the Hours*. In the *Holy Rule* he encouraged use of hymns and organized the Psalms around themes. (This is continued today with Morning Prayer, which focused mainly on praise and Evening Prayer, which focused more on thanksgiving.) The Book of Psalms (Psalter) was covered in a week. (Today we cover the Psalms over a period of four weeks.)

A later, important development in the *Liturgy of the Hours* was the creation of the *Breviary*, a single manageable volume that contained all of the texts. By having breviaries, the religious Orders that traveled, such as the Franciscans and Dominicans, were able to pray it wherever they were and even if they were alone.

Vatican II made several significant changes to the *Liturgy of the Hours*, establishing the Office of Readings with a very wide variety of texts, including some from non-Scriptural sources. The Council also emphasized that praying the *Liturgy of the Hours* was in no way limited to priests and religious. All were invited to join in this great prayer.

Accessing the Prayer

The text for the *Liturgy of the Hours* can be bought as a four-volume set, entitled: *The Liturgy of the Hours* or as a single volume called: *Christian Prayer*. (The two editions differ somewhat. Most notably, the one-volume version does not include the Office of Readings)

Many people find that the easiest way to pray the *Liturgy of the Hours* is to download a free or low-cost app to your computer, iPad, or cell phone. There are several apps available. They are compared and contrasted at: <https://catholicappitude.org/2017/01/03/best-liturgy-of-the-hours-apps-for-your-phone-or-tablet/amp/>.

Several of these programs include languages in addition to English. (I have a slight preference for I Breviary because the translation is straightforward and in American English.)

Recommendations

Although it would likely be daunting to start to pray immediately the entire *Liturgy of the Hours* every day, it is feasible to begin by saying one of the hours each day. For example, you could make Morning Prayer your own prayer on rising or include it with your usual prayers. If this seems helpful to you in appreciating God’s Presence in your life, you could add other hours in the future. Another feasible option would be to say Compline each day as part of night prayer. Compline is a beautiful prayer and includes an examination of conscience for the day. It ends with the words of our fondest: “*The Lord grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.*”

Praying the *Liturgy of the Hours* to the extent possible at the same time and place each day may help you to form a wonderful habit.

Although usually the *Liturgy of the Hours* is prayed alone, it is communal in nature and ideally would be said with other members of the Christian Community. *ST. MARK* offers an opportunity for praying Vespers together with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament every Sunday evening at 5:00 p.m. Please join us!

Candle Ministries: Sharing the Light

By Walter Gawlak

“Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand where it gives light to all in the house” (Matt: 5:15).

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam! Even since experiencing the Ignatian way of prayer, I have admired this powerful Jesuit message, “For the greater glory of God.” Yet, here at *ST. MARK*, I have had the privilege to see it acted out in its simplest measure, namely, in the tireless and often invisible work of the many volunteers who work in lesser and greater ways for the glory of God. In the last issue of *Maneline*, I reflected on the expressive use of candles in adding depth and meaning to our liturgical celebrations, especially during ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, and EASTER seasons. This month, I would like to recognize those who design, arrange, and, yes, clean and trim those candles, all behind the scenes.

In Leviticus, God told Moses to instruct his priests in the proper tending of the menorah before the Holy of Holies. During the great Feast of Tabernacles, the priests lit the menorah and many other lamps and danced in celebration. Before they could dance, the priests had to tend and trim the lamps. As we proceed through LENT and the TRIDUUM to the celebration of EASTER, let us see how those who tend our lamps minister to our Parish. Here we recognize the work of the Candle Team and the Liturgical Arts Committee (LAC).

Wax is a pure and useful substance manufactured by the honeybee, but it drips and pools on the brass candle holders (chargers), the saucer-like “catchers” (bobeches) at the base of the processional candleholders and on bare hands if an Altar Server is not careful. At least once each week, one of five members of the candle-team melt and scrape the excess wax from the brass chargers and bobeches, trimming the surfaces to free the wicks and assuring that candles are of comparable height and look visible at the Altar and Ambo. Years ago, a single Parishioner tended all the candles each week, including those

in the Chapel. With his passing, many hands have come forward to take up the work. Pedestrian, unimportant? Yes and no. The reading of Scripture and the Sacrifice on the Altar should be a source of light and not of distraction to the eye. *Ad Marjorem Dei Gloriam.*

The Paschal Candle

From this “little” candle service, let us proceed to the crowning symbolic event at the EASTER Vigil, the preparation and lighting of the Paschal Candle—actually two Paschal Candles, because the Altar in the Chapel requires its own illumination for Masses and Adoration. A decade ago, a Parishioner hand-made these candles annually as her ministry to the Parish. When she retired, the Parish found a vendor who makes Paschal Candles by hand, thereby continuing the personal touch. This stout candle is not only used during EASTER season Masses but also at BAPTISM and funerals. It must be constantly leveled so that the flame is always visible above the brass rim. As we watch the brass collar slowly descend over time toward the five rosettes that represent the five wounds of Christ on the Paschal Candle, we can think about the hands that smoothed the way. These hands are from members of the LAC.

The ADVENT Wreath

The other large-diameter purple and rose wreath candles that decorate the Altar during ADVENT and the white at CHRISTMAS require their own time-consuming and meticulous trimming and tending. This trimming is often required after only five or six burnings, requiring close monitoring. Without this wax surgery, the wick would disappear, hardly the proper real lighting or symbolic message. During *Pentecost* and CONFIRMATION, the LAC provides seven red candles. A small tea light is placed within the large candle to provide the flame.

“Brick” Candles

Finally, we cannot forget the “brick” candles scattered about the Church during ADVENT and the EASTER Season



that also need tending. These candles on the ledges are lit throughout the entire CHRISTMAS and EASTER seasons, that is, from CHRISTMAS Day

through the *BAPTISM of the Lord* for the Christmas season, and from the EASTER Vigil through *Pentecost* for the EASTER season,

The various candles and their holders, and the accompanying cloths and floral arrangements, do not arrive on their own. They are also the handiwork of the LAC. While the LAC brings an artist’s eye to the decoration, tending to the candles is labor of dedication rather than specialized skills. Please discern whether you might be called to turn your hands to this behind-the-scenes ministry whose product is so highly visible to the Assembly and for the greater glory. Call the Parish Office or LAC Leads for more information.

New Adult Scripture Study Scheduled for May and June

The study of the Gospel of John made available via Ascension Press successfully concluded in March. The next Scripture study, “Fulfilled: Understanding the Biblical Foundations of Catholicism, Part One” by Sonja Corbit has been scheduled for seven weeks in May and June. This new study is also from Ascension Press.

There will be two groups meeting via Zoom:

- Wednesday evenings from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Thursday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Registered participants will receive a book, a workbook, and access to a 30-minute video that will be discussed at each weekly session.

The course will run from May 10/11 to June 21/22. The cost for the book, the workbook, and the online videos is \$30 through the *ST. MARK RE* Office.

Anyone who is interested can contact the course facilitator, Mark Morneau at markmorneau@outlook.com.

Rite of Christian Initiation: Becoming Catholic

By Joe Flaherty, Director of Religious Education

Most Catholics are at least somewhat familiar with the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). Those who attend Mass regularly know that around LENT, those seeking Initiation in the Church go through Rites in preparation for being initiated at the EASTER Vigil. There is a lot to this process and, despite four years in seminary, I have never learned more about RCIA in such a short span of time than I did in the past few months at *ST. MARK*.

Jean Lupinacci, my predecessor, had a lot of experience with RCIA and has been incredibly helpful in showing me the ropes. She introduced me to a great resource called TeamRCIA, which offers excellent resources to learn about the liturgical, catechetical, pedagogical, and human aspects of RCIA.

I was glad to have the help of Henri Johnson, who volunteered for RCIA at my home parish of *ST. CHARLES BORROMEO* in Arlington and who has since moved to *ST. MARK*. She has a wealth of experience with these Rites and loves working with RCIA. Also, I received a request from a *ST. MARK* RCIA alumna named Katie Gruters; she felt called to help with RCIA and is in a great position to let the Catechumens know what the experience is like.

EASTER Vigil 2023

On EASTER, April Alexandrow and Jennifer Gmerek are scheduled to be initiated into the Church; they will receive all three Sacraments of Initiation at the EASTER Vigil, BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, and Holy EUCHARIST.

Although the Church has a strong desire that Catechumens enter the Church through BAPTISM at the EASTER Vigil, doing so is not a requirement, or even necessarily a preference, for someone who is already Baptized. Jeff Siems, who had been Baptized, entered the Church on February 19, the last weekend before LENT. Different people are at different stages of their Faith journey, and the Church generally does not want either to rush or to impede the process by which people enter the Church and start receiving the Sacraments.

RCIA: A Year-Round Process

This way of thinking is indicative of a year-round model for RCIA. Many people think of RCIA as a class that starts in the fall and ends with a sort of “graduation” whenever EASTER happens. The sort of model that I experienced at my home Parish and that is encouraged by TeamRCIA is a year-round model that meets people where they are at and prepares them to receive the Sacraments when they are ready. By and large, one can expect the process to enter into the Church to last about a year, but multiple factors can affect it. Some individuals who have no knowledge of Christianity may need three years before being Baptized. For others, it might take years of infrequent communication with the Parish before they feel like they can enter the Church.

A year-round model recognizes all these different situations to adapt to the individual persons and their unique relationships with God. Certainly, the Liturgical Calendar does have an effect on the timeline, but it does not have to be absolute. That being said, changing the timeline could be quite involved. For instance, the Elect go through three Scrutinies that are tied to the Liturgy on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of LENT. If someone wanted to come into the Church in October, and had not gone through the Scrutinies, the Church would actually have these liturgies from LENT take over Masses during ORDINARY TIME to conduct the Scrutinies before that person was finally Baptized. This is because the Scrutinies are in the context of the proper readings and prayers from these Masses in LENT.

Another thing that I learned is that there is an optional Rite for handing on the Creed to Catechumens and another for handing on the Lord’s Prayer. Also, while I knew that those who are already Baptized had Rites that were different than those for Catechumens to prepare them to enter the Church, I learned through TeamRCIA that there was a distinction between Baptized-uncatechized and Baptized-catechized. Those who know they are Baptized, yet were never taught the Faith at all, have Rites for them that are meant to be analogous to

what their Catechumen counterparts are experiencing.

However, if someone is Baptized but has been catechized, even in a non-Catholic Christian tradition, they do not go through these Rites. Since Jeff Siems went through Lutheran Sunday School as a child, he is considered “Catechized”. Accordingly, while he did a lot of reading and went through many Catechism studies with the weekday RCIA group, he did not go through any RCIA Rites before he entered the Church in February. These are just a few examples to show that I still have a lot to learn about the revival of these initiation Rites.

You can learn more about RCIA through this the TeamRCIA website <https://teamrcia.com/>. If you are interested in making initial contact to enter the Church, please contact Joe Flaherty at (703) 938-1948.

“Man threw away everything he had—his right to speak freely, his communion with God, his time in Paradise, his unclouded life—and went out naked, like a survivor from a shipwreck. But God received him and immediately clothed him, and taking him by the hand gradually led him to heaven. And yet the shipwreck was quite unforgivable. For this tempest was entirely due, not to the force of the winds, but to the carelessness of the sailor.

Yet God did not look at this, but had compassion for such a great disaster. ... Why? Because, when no sadness or care or labor or toil or countless waves of desire assaulted our nature, it was overturned and fell. And just as criminals who sail the sea often drill through the ship with a small iron tool, and let the whole sea into the ship from below, so when the devil saw the ship of Adam (by which I mean his soul) filled with many good things, he came and drilled through it with his voice alone, as if it were an iron tool, and stole all his wealth and sank the ship itself.

But God made the gain greater than the loss, and brought our nature to the royal throne.”

—St. John Chrysostom

Spotlight on Stacey Ashman, ST. MARK Parish Secretary

By Lynne Finta

I recently sat down with Stacey Ashman, Parish Receptionist/Secretary at ST. MARK. Stacey was delightful to speak with and talked freely about her background, job responsibilities, and family.

About Stacey

Stacey was born in the Philippines, living there just one year before moving to Vienna with her family. At the age of 10, Stacey again moved with her family, this time to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Following graduation from East Stroudsburg University, she came back to Virginia, settling in Reston where her siblings all lived.

Wearing two hats as both receptionist and secretary, Stacey has a big job! She fields all calls to the Parish and greets visitors to the Parish Office. Her secretarial duties include editing the Weekly Bulletin, scheduling Mass Intentions, overseeing the mailing of *Maneline*, maintaining the Parish Data

System, registering new members to the Parish, preparing Sacrament Certificates, updating Sacrament Registers, preparing Sponsor Letter Requests, and sending out the “5 Things” monthly email. For Parishioners who are social media inclined, Stacey is the guru behind the Parish Facebook posts!

Stacey is also a loving and devoted mom, spending as much time as she can with her family. She has three grown sons, two of whom live together in Richmond, while the youngest is still at home. Blessedly, both of Stacey’s parents are still living. She is one of five children, often spending quality time with her three sisters and a brother.

Finally, I asked Stacey to share three “fun facts” about herself people might not know.



Stacey Ashman

- Fun Fact (1) Raised Lutheran, Stacey went through RCIA beginning in September of 2018 and joined the Catholic Church at the EASTER Vigil in 2019.

- Fun Fact (2) She worked in accounting before being hired at ST. MARK Catholic School.

- Fun Fact (3) Stacey transferred from the School Office to the Parish Office in June 2019.

Why ST. MARK?

To quote Stacey about what led her to ST. MARK, “Nine years ago, I was going through an extremely difficult time in my life. As I was finally moving forward (as a single mom), I did not know where I was headed. Little did I know that God had plans for me. He is the one who brought me to ST. MARK. First, the School, where I started my faith journey, and now at the Parish Office. I am so blessed and grateful to be where I am today, and I cannot imagine being anywhere else. God is good!”

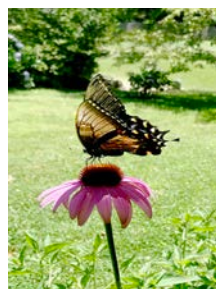
Mary Garden: Provides a Sacred Haven

By Betsy Zolper

A season of renewal and growth is upon us! There is news to share about our Native Plant Mary Garden and its designation as a *St. Kateri Habitat*.

The presence of Our Lady in our Mary Garden creates a sacred space where one can go for contemplation and rest. Our Garden is also a sacred space because its native plants provide a haven and sources of food for some of God’s creatures. Pope Francis affirms this: “Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness” (*Laudato-Si*,69).

Because of these attributes, our Mary Garden was recently approved as a Saint Kateri Habitat by The Saint Kateri Conservation Center, <https://www.kateri.org>. The goal of the Saint Kateri Habitats Ministry is to encourage the restoration of habitats with reverence and gratitude to our Creator and to draw people closer to God while protecting the integrity of Creation. Our Parish Garden is one of 238 registered habitats. Each habitat is located on a map and includes pictures



and a description. You can tour Saint Kateri Habitats by visiting <https://www.kateri.org/saint-kateri-habitat-2/> and selecting “Explore Habitats”.

Why Is This Important?

A habitat provides what an animal needs to survive, including food and shelter. Native plants create this haven, or habitat, because our local insects and birds have adapted to these plants over thousands of years. The most valuable native plants provide multiple “services”, such as producing nectar, having leaves that are the preferred food for caterpillars, and producing seeds that feed birds and turtles. In our Parish Garden, blue false indigo flowers provide nectar for bees and hummingbirds. For many butterflies, this plant is a one-stop shop, where they feed, lay their eggs, and where their larvae (caterpillars) feed.

How Can You Help?

Plant Nova Natives <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/> explains that it is in our suburban areas—right here in Northern Virginia—where we have personal control of our properties—that we can plant



native to reverse the declines of pollinators, fireflies, bats, and frogs—the web of life that surrounds us.

Many of our native bees also require specific native plants for their food. We can each do our part by adding native plants to our yard or even to pots on our balconies. Kateri.org and plantnovanatives.org have many resources to help you get started. Better yet, volunteers are needed to work in the garden this spring and summer! To get a hands-on introduction to native plants, sign up for an in the garden information session and volunteer with our garden caretakers at stmark_cch@gmail.com.

What Are Your Rewards?

Planting native plants and installing Mary Gardens is one of the actions that our Diocese supports as part of its participation in Pope Francis’s Seven-Year Action Plan. As your plants bloom and thrive, you experience the circle of life and protect the creatures God made to accompany us. Butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds will visit you! You can join the chorus: “To sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God’s love and hope” (*Laudato Si*,56).

Parish Roster Update: Your Participation Needed

By Tom Brownell, Chair, Pastoral Council

ST. MARK needs your help in updating its database of registered Parishioners. The Parish Office recently sent out letters and emails requesting updates, and it is important that all Parishioners (and those who wish to be Parishioners) respond. The Parish needs accurate information on Parishioners for official reports; forgoing the needs for pastoral care, including education; and for ease and efficiency in communicating with Parish members. Information in the database has gotten particularly outdated in recent years with changes in email and cell phone usage.

The information needed includes the names and ages of current family

members, as well as mailing addresses and preferred cell or land-line telephone numbers and email addresses. The Office also needs to know if you are no longer a member of the Parish, due to a move or other reason or, conversely, if you have been attending *ST. MARK* and would like to register officially.

If you received a letter or an email, please respond as soon as possible. If you did not receive a notice, please call the Office at 703-281-9100 or email Stacey Ashman at sashman@stmark.org. While you are updating your information, ask to be added to the monthly *ST. MARK 5 Things* email to be in the “know” about special Masses, events, and activities!

THE M&M'S HAVE BEEN BUSY:

In March, the M&Ms held an After-Mass Coffee and Planning Meeting, hosted the Donut Social Sunday, and gathered for the annual St. Patrick's Day luncheon at the Auld Shabben in Fairfax.

April

■ **April 5:** They had a breakfast in the Cassidy Activities Center after the 9:15 a.m. Daily Mass.

■ **April 19:** They are planning a luncheon in the Cassidy Activities Center at 11:30 a.m. Please bring a dish to share.

May

■ **May 9:** The M&Ms are scheduling a bus trip to tour the Library of Congress and the Capitol and enjoy lunch at the Capitol Cafe afterwards. The bus will leave *ST. MARK* at 9:30 a.m. and will return at 3:45 p.m. The bus fare depends on the number attending; it should be between \$21 and \$28. Seating is limited to the first 30 who register. Please contact Mike Battaglia if interested: mikebattaglia@cox.net

M&Ms is Maturing Matters, the 55+ Group of *ST. MARK*. For more information, please contact Joyce Kerrigan at 703-262-0148 or Anne Shea 703-938-9049.



Milestones

BAPTISM

ST. MARK welcomes the following new Parishioners to our Parish family:

Iris Maria Andreuccetti
Charlotte Grace Redshaw

DEATHS

The following Parishioners entered into eternal life:

Joan Barnes
Sebastian DiMeglio
Elias Dishek
Wanda J. Klajbor
Olga Lloyd
Art Pearsall
John Pinik
Mark Riddell
Joette Russo

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“Christ is the spring of living water—the crucified Lord is the spring that makes the world fruitful. The source of the Spirit is the crucified Christ. Yet from him every Christian also becomes a spring of water.”

—Joseph Ratzinger
(Benedict XVI) from his
book, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*

Blood Drive Success

Thank you!

We registered **57 donors** and collected **45 blood products** during the Blood Drive in March. **That is enough blood to save up to 135 lives**, thanks in part to all the time, effort, and dedication from our donors, volunteers, and the *ST. MARK* Girl Scouts!

Maneline

ST. MARK Catholic Church
9970 Vale Road
Vienna, VA 22181

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Non-profit Organization

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Merrifield, Va.

Mark Your Calendar

April 2023

- 12 Christians in Commerce 7:00 a.m.
Catholic Youth Community 7:30 p.m.
- 16 Divine Mercy Sunday
High School CONFIRMATION Field Trip 11:00 a.m.
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 1:00 p.m.
Evening Prayer and Benediction 5:00 p.m.
- 19 Christians in Commerce 7:00 a.m.
Catholic Youth Community 7:30 p.m.
- 20 High School WorkCamp Meeting 7:00 p.m.
- 22 Middle School Bash 3:00 p.m.
- 23 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 1:00 p.m.
Evening Prayer and Benediction 5:00 p.m.
High School Sunday Night 6:30 p.m.
- 25 Feast of St. Mark, the Evangelist
- 26 Christians in Commerce 7:00 a.m.
Catholic Youth Community 7:30 p.m.
- 30 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 1:00 p.m.
Evening Prayer and Benediction 5:00 p.m.

May 2023

- 5 First Friday Eucharistic Adoration 10:00 a.m.
- 6 First EUCHARIST at Mass 5:30 p.m.
- 7 First EUCHARIST at Masses 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 1:00 p.m.
Evening Prayer and Benediction 5:00 p.m.
Youth and Family Mass 6:00 p.m.
- 9 Prayer Shawl Meeting 1:00 p.m.
- 10 Christians in Commerce 7:00 a.m.
Catholic Youth Community 7:30 p.m.
- 13 First EUCHARIST at Mass 5:30 p.m.
- 14 First EUCHARIST at Masses 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
- 13-14 High School WorkCamp Mother's Day Fundraiser,
all Masses
- 17 CONFIRMATION Practice 7:00 p.m.
- 18 CONFIRMATION Mass 7:00 p.m.

