

St. Leo's

PARISH COMMUNITY



A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT THE LADIES OF ST. LEO'S

A longtime tradition, the Ladies of St. Leo's has existed for essentially as long as the parish. This group of women seeks to serve the parish in a variety of ways, from helping with funeral dinners and receptions for First Communion and Confirmation, to serving coffee and donuts after Mass, making a meal for those who volunteer to serve with Habitat for Humanity each year, and occasionally providing snacks for our choir. The Ladies of St. Leo's also collects toiletry items for "Tickle Your Tootsies," an event that helps provide personal care items for the Salvation Army, veterans in need, and others.

"We used to call it the Altar Society," says Ruth Armatys, a charter member of St. Leo's Parish. "I grew up with my mom working and doing jobs for the Altar Society, so when I got married and became a member of the church, I just assumed that I would be a member of the altar society."

All women of the parish are members of the Ladies of St. Leo's, by virtue of being parishioners; however, some take a more active role, serving as committee heads, attending monthly meetings, and more. Ruth recently began serving as the coordinator of the Ladies of St. Leo's.

"We just do a lot of little things behind the scenes," she says, "I get a lot of satisfaction just knowing that I've helped."

Being part of the Ladies of St. Leo's has been a great way for Ruth to meet friends and feel a sense of connection and community within the parish. The ladies meet once a month on a Sunday afternoon, to play Bunko or other social events throughout the year.

"I have developed so many wonderful relationships just by being there, helping out," says Ruth, "It's such an uplifting warm feeling, when you go to church you feel like you belong more. I've just gotten so much out of it."



SEPTEMBER 2018

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DEVELOPING OUR YOUNG PARISHIONERS'



RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND THE FAITH

With our Religious Education classes slated to start this month, the lessons they will offer our preschool to fifth grade students will supplement the lessons in faith learned at home.

“Parents should be the first teachers in our faith,” says Jodi Stauffer, Director of Children and Family Ministries. “We’re supplementing what children are learning about our faith at home, and we’re developing the relationship I hope they will have with God, the Holy Spirit and Jesus for the rest of their lives.”

Parents may enroll their children in either the Sunday classes, beginning Sept. 9, or in the Wednesday classes, beginning Sept. 19. The Sunday classes run from 9:20-10:20 a.m. and the Wednesday classes run from 5:30-6:45 p.m. Generally, there are no classes held the first Sunday and Wednesday of the month. The Sunday classes generally are smaller, so if more than four children are not registered for a certain class, that class will not be offered on Sunday for that grade.

Our catechists all are parishioners — in most cases, he or she is a parent of a current student. Several are retired teachers, and others are young adults.

“We’ve also had high school seniors who have been confirmed serving as catechists,” Jodi says. “That is wonderful to have young people in that role. There is a need for teachers. We’re losing some to college and some have moved away. We will need to fill some spots. We can have multiple teachers per class, with co-catechists who can team teach. The catechists really appreciate having that.”

The catechists will be focused on helping the students develop an understanding of their faith.

“They will learn what it means to be Catholic

Christians,” Jodi says. “We’re all called to be Christians, but the lessons will cover what it means to be Catholic.”

The classes for the children in preschool, kindergarten and first grade are important as they prepare for First Communion and Reconciliation in second grade.

“By attending Religious Education on a regular basis, these young children develop a foundation in their faith,” Jodi says. “I encourage parents to continue Faith Formation classes after the initial sacraments so the children can have a good foundation when they are studying for Confirmation. Receiving the sacraments in the second grade is one part of our journey to be the Catholics we’re meant to be.”

During the Religious Education classes, the students take part in different service projects to engage them in stewardship. At Christmastime, the students help with Project Hunger as they are encouraged to bring in loose change from Advent to Christmas to fill up “Toodles the Giraffe.” The class bringing in the most change earns a treat.

“We talk about the Works of Mercy, taking care of others and how we can be Christians,” Jodi says. “During Vacation Bible School, we collect change that goes to the Humane Society. During the Vacation Bible School crafts, they make Blessing Bags that are given to the homeless. Throughout the year we talk about using their time and talents, explaining that God works through them to help one another. Through Religious Education, they get reinforcement about what it means to be a Christian, to use the talents God gives us. That is ageless. Young people can have a purpose and they learn how it can be manifested.”

Interested in serving as a catechist? Contact Jodi Stauffer at jodi@saintleos.org or 308-382-4753, ext. 14. Parents may register their children at www.saintleos.org, clicking on “Faith Formation,” and scrolling down to the registration form. If online registration is not possible, please call Jodi at 308-382-4753, ext. 14.

A Letter From Our Pastor

Save Room on Your Busy Schedules for Stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

I don't know about you, but I still get a surge of adrenalin as the beginning of September approaches. Even though I'm no longer in school, I feel a sense of anticipation when I see the shelves filled with brand-new notebooks, composition books, and all the assorted items students use. I'm aware once again of the great hopes, exciting dreams, and good intentions that a new school year holds.

Even for those parishioners not directly involved in school, September marks new beginnings. Labor Day traditionally marks the unofficial end of the season, and our calendars may reflect that. Many of you have calendars a lot like mine — they're full year-round with appointments and obligations. But even for us, things get busier in September as various organizations begin their regular round of meetings again.

Nevertheless, I have a request for you as you put together your upcoming schedules. First thing, please put in some time to share the talents God has given you. As you are aware, as Christian disciples — as stewards — we are called to return to God a portion of the Time, Talent, and Treasure He has entrusted to us. We should make our commitments to God when we begin our planning, so that we don't offer Him just the scraps of time and energy left over after everything else.

Make this September the month you make a



commitment to sing in the choir, including attending rehearsals. Or begin working with our parish religious education in one way or another. Or decide to launder altar linens once a month. Or volunteer to help in the parish office one morning a week. Or help care for the parish grounds. Or join a social service ministry. Or... well, you get the idea.

There are many ministries and groups within the parish where you can serve, and you'll find that you receive even as you give. Most everyone in the parish can find at least one activity in which they can participate and which fits their schedule. If you aren't involved,

make this September the month to change that.

Thinking about commitments, some people say they don't have Time for prayer. Again, it's a matter of priorities, and I challenge any one of you to demonstrate to me that you can't pray at least one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be during the course of the day. That's at least a beginning.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Donald A. Buhrman
Pastor



BASIC QUESTIONS ABOUT O

What is a Stewardship Renewal?

This isn't a parish fundraiser – far from it. Our annual Stewardship Renewal is the time when we ask each other to re-prioritize the way we use God's gifts in the Church. It is the time we write down how we will support St. Leo's.

Why should I fill out a commitment card?

Your Commitment Card allows you to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and offertory giving, or what we at St. Leo's call "time, talent, and treasure." There's a two-fold reason to complete your card. First, it is an excellent opportunity to move forward spiritually and personally. Second, when you fill out a card, our parish is much better able to manage our many volunteers and make budgeting decisions.

How many parish ministries are there at St. Leo's?

"Ministry" is a general term for any parish group, organization, or regular activity. There are dozens of ministries in our parish. You can sign up for certain ministries, or re-commit yourself if you're already involved.

What if I sign up for a ministry, but later find I'm not very interested?

You are not making a solemn promise to participate in a particular ministry when you mark it on your commitment card. If you find that the parish group is different than you thought, or simply that their meeting time doesn't fit your schedule, you can change your mind. There are plenty of other ministries to consider.

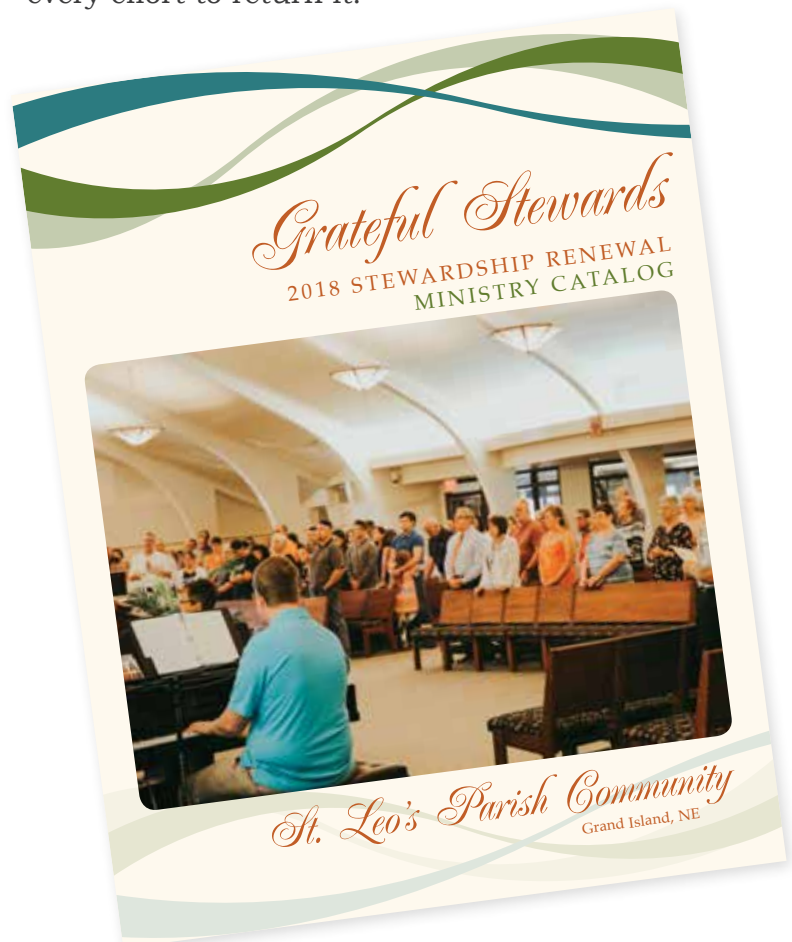
I'm hesitant to make a firm financial pledge. What if I lose my job?

Your commitment card isn't a legal contract. If your circumstances change, your gift will change.

In Scripture, we are asked to "give according to our means." So if you lose your job, you may be unable to give at the level you pledged. Likewise, if you get a promotion, you may be able to give more. That is why at St. Leo's, our standard of giving is based upon a percentage of income.

What happens if I don't fill out a commitment card?

Returning a card is an important part of being an active member of St. Leo's. If for some reason you lose your card, we'll send you a reminder letter with an extra commitment card. Please make every effort to return it!



OUR STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL

TIME, TALENT & TREASURE

Please bring your Commitment Card to Mass on **Commitment Sunday, September 22-23**. How will you use your time, talent & treasure in our parish?

Stewardship of Time

Our definition of Stewardship of Time: Using my time on earth wisely; making time for personal prayer, family prayer, and quality time with friends and loved ones.

The bottom line about prayer: Without prayer, we cannot thrive spiritually. As Catholic Christians, it is a necessity to spend time each day speaking to God. This includes reading Scripture and saying prayers such as the Our Father and Hail Mary, but even more importantly, it should include a heart-to-heart conversation with Jesus. He wants us to bring him all our fears, longings, needs, and desires.

What kind of Time commitments should I make? Your commitment card lists several suggestions for how to spend time with God in prayer. Review your current prayer life and take a step forward. For instance, start having daily prayers with your children or spouse. Commit to praying the rosary on the way to work or reading scripture before bed each night.

Stewardship of Talent

Our definition of Stewardship of Talent: Using my God-given abilities to strengthen the Church and help others, especially through parish ministries and activities.

The bottom line about parish ministry: No Catholic Christian exists in a vacuum. Scripture makes it clear that we must function within the wider faith community, putting our gifts in the service of others. It's not enough to go to Sunday Mass; we need to be involved in parish life and ministry.

What kind of Talent commitments should I make? If you're not involved in anything in our parish, now is the perfect opportunity to take a step forward. Check out our commitment card for a list of ministries. If you're already involved, re-commit yourself to the important work you do. And if you feel God is calling you forward – sign up for something new!

Stewardship of Treasure

Our definition of Stewardship of Treasure: The wise and just management of my financial resources; giving a proportionate amount of my income to the parish.

The bottom line about financial support: We need to take seriously the Biblical concept of the tithe, and start giving based on a percentage of income. It's our responsibility to support the Church with our personal involvement *and* our financial support.

What kind of Treasure commitments should I make? Our goal at St. Leo's is to give five percent of income to the offertory. Grab a calculator and figure out your target gift based on your total household income. Then make a plan for increasing your gift incrementally to reach five percent. During our Stewardship Renewal, choose a weekly or monthly gift to the parish, and be faithful to it for the next year.

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

At its heart, Confirmation is all about discipleship. It's the sacrament where an individual chooses the faith for himself, taking up the banner of Christianity and spreading God's truth to the world. "That's why," says Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry Rita Hemmer, "Confirmation preparation is much more than a mere program for our youth. It's a process, inviting parish youth to more actively enter into the faith they were baptized in as a child."



Teens participating in a team building activity during the annual Confirmation retreat.

"The celebration of this sacrament is never a passive thing," Rita says. "It requires active participation, allowing an individual to receive an outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It gives people the strength to go out there and defend the faith. You need this to go out and carry the mission and message of Jesus."

This begins with Baptism and is perfected through participation in family life, the liturgy, and religious education programs over the years. "These early experiences lay the foundation," Rita says, "allowing parish youth to truly dig into the faith as they begin formal Confirmation preparation during fall of their junior year in high school."

"Our preparation is always with our junior class, which is great because developmentally they're at a point where they really want to understand the why behind what we do," Rita says. "It allows us to intensively explore the faith... We do a lot of small group work where they are more in charge of digging in and teaching each other."

Confirmation candidates typically meet two or three times a month during the school year, gathering on Sunday evenings from 6:30-8:30

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— DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY RITA HEMMER

— *A Process at the Heart of Discipleship*



St. Leo's 2017 Confirmation group.

p.m. Sessions pull from a wide variety of Catholic sources and are intentionally designed to be interactive. This often includes a brief whole group presentation, small group discussions, and opportunities for prayer and reflection. All of this is done with a focus on discipleship, seeking to prepare and empower youth to embrace the mission of Catholicism.

“We want to empower our youth to be disciples and to go out and live the Christian life,” Rita says. “I think Confirmation prep helps the teens realize that we are the Body of Christ and they are a part of it.”

Youth also perform works of service and

participate in an annual retreat, before finally receiving the sacrament in August just before their senior year. “This falls at a great time in their life,” Rita says, “because it allows teens to fully step into their faith as they’re entering their final year of high school — making plans for college and their eventual career paths.” Her hope is that through this sacrament our parish youth will choose to become active disciples within our community.

“We want these teens to truly participate in the life and mission of our Church,” Rita says. “We want them to actually enter into the community and to draw closer to Christ.”

All parish juniors and their parents are invited to attend an introductory meeting on Sunday, Sept. 9 at 7 p.m. Important information about the Confirmation preparation process and registration will be given during this time. For more information please contact Rita Hemmer at 308-382-4753, ext. 18 or rita@saintleos.org



THE LADIES OF ST. LEO'S *continued from front cover*

Regardless of the ways they are serving, Ruth believes that the heart of their mission is simple, to share God's love with those around them, both inside and outside of the parish.

"Jesus said we need to take care of people and I think that when we look at people in need, we need to see the face of Jesus in them. I think that's what we need to be doing is taking care of people," says Ruth, "I think I've become more compassionate."

Ruth recalls the influence of her own mother's involvement in the parish, and hopes that more women of the parish, especially younger women, will consider becoming active and involved in the Ladies of St. Leo's.

"(My mother) had a huge impact on me, though

I probably didn't realize it at the time," says Ruth, "I think religion is so important for families and we're losing that and becoming more secular. I think if you want to be a Catholic family, you need to be involved in your parish. My hope is that we get younger families involved sooner, so the younger generation realizes how important religion is in their life."

"The best place to start is to come to the monthly meeting," Ruth adds, "Find out what your interests are and where you'd like to help out. It doesn't take a lot of time, you just put a little time in here or there and that's all it takes. Come and get to meet people. You don't have to do it every month, just do it whenever you can. I think that anytime you give something, I always think you get back more."

For more information about the Ladies of St. Leo's, please contact Ruth Armatys at 308-384-9884. Meetings are every second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m., in the church community room.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Daily Mass: 9 a.m., **Saturday:** 5 p.m., **Sunday:** 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Confession: Saturday 4 - 4:30 p.m. **Adoration:** First Friday of the Month, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Abide Adoration: Fourth Sunday of the Month, 7 - 8 p.m.