



# St. Peter's Currents

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## **Festivities Mark the New Year at Faithful Shepherd Catholic School**

Catholic schools are different by design, and Faithful Shepherd Catholic School will celebrate the uniqueness of Catholic education during National Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 26 to Feb. 1.

“It is a week set aside by the National Catholic Education Association where schools all over the United States celebrate the privilege of attending a Catholic school,” says Principal Terese Shimshock. “In the past, the theme changed every year, but this time we will have our theme – ‘Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service’ – for the next three years.”

Around the country, each Catholic school celebrates this week in its own unique way. At Faithful Shepherd, the celebration will include a number of fun activities and events. Every day of the week is a special out-of-uniform day — such as “Dress Your Best Day,” “Comfy Clothes Day,” a day to wear a “Kaleidoscope of Colors” and more.

The Middle School students will take a field trip to the Boy Scout Base Camp, where they will have the chance to participate in team-building activities. Faithful Shepherd students will also read the scripture readings at the Sunday Masses on Jan. 26 as well as serve after-Mass hospitality here at St. Peter's and the two other sponsoring parishes,



*Students pack meals for children in Haiti during Catholic Schools Week.*

# *Faithful Shepherd Catholic School* continued from front cover

St. John Neumann and St. Thomas Becket. During the week, the school also honors teachers with a special Teacher Appreciation Luncheon.

“It is quite a busy week,” Ms. Shimshock says.

Service is a central component of Catholic Schools Week. In fact, one of the highlights of last year’s celebration was the “Feed My Starving Children” project. The entire school was involved and packed up 64,000 meals for hungry families in Haiti.

“It was a very cool experience,” Ms. Shimshock says. “This year we are planning to do the same thing. As a school, we look to help others locally, globally and nationally. This is our way to give back nationally. We use monies that we collect from our monthly out-of-uniform days to help fund the event. The rest of the money comes from one of our annual fundraisers. It is a way for our students to actually be a part of helping those in need.”

With the end of Catholic Schools Week comes another big event for Faithful Shepherd Catholic School: the 15th Annual Gala for Giving. This yearly fundraiser takes place at the school and includes a silent auction, classroom projects, raffles, a dinner and live auction. In addition to the items up for auction, attendees can also fund the “Electric Moment,” an initiative that raises funds for special technology projects. In the past, the “Electric Moment” has provided funds to revamp the school’s computer room, buy a mobile laptop cart with 30 computers, install Wi-Fi capabilities at the school and more.

This year, the Gala for Giving is Saturday, Feb. 1, and the theme is “The Stars are Out Tonight.”

“While it is one of our big fundraisers, it also is a time for Faithful Shepherd families to get together as a community,” Ms. Shimshock says.

For more information about Catholic Schools Week, the Gala for Giving or to get involved with Faithful Shepherd Catholic School, call the school office at 651-406-4747.



*(top) Students filled boxes and bags with food items to be given to a local food pantry as part of a service project during Catholic Schools Week.*

*(above) Faithful Shepherd teachers enjoy the Gala for Giving*



*Parents of Faithful Shepherd Catholic School students enjoy each other’s company during the annual Gala for Giving event.*

## Are We Returning Our Gifts to God?

Dear Parishioners,

If we have a genuine stewardship attitude, we know that every month of the year is a wonderful month. December, with all of its joy and reflection and feelings, is behind us — but January is no less of a glorious time for us as Catholics.

Of course, we know that Christmas is not quite over. It officially ends when we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord on January 12. Good stewards realize nonetheless that every day and every month is a time to improve our stewardship efforts. We speak of the gifts we have received from the Lord. Our most precious initial gift is life itself. That gift is augmented by the gift of time.

I would like to think that we understand the importance of sharing all we have, including our time. All time is God's time. We each receive the same amount of it, although we also each have been given different responsibilities and opportunities in relation to time. The word "opportunity" is important in our understanding of stewardship. Too often we look at our response to the needs around us, including in our parish, as an obligation, a duty. It is not that we do not have obligations, but in truth we should be pursuing the opportunities we see. In their pastoral letter on stewardship, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stated through their title what stewardship should be — *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. We can conclude from this that stewardship is how we respond to the opportunities presented to us to be good stewards.

Here we are at the beginning of a new year (at least according to the calendar), a year filled with opportunities. My hope is that we recognize our gifts, see and pursue the many



ways we can share our gifts, and then put all of that into action, for stewardship requires action on all of our parts. I would call on each of you to return a portion of your gifts — time, talent and treasure — to God. Note that I said "return," not "give." Everything that we have and everything that we are is through the grace of God.

We are fond of using the term "New Year's resolutions." I would challenge you to make your primary resolution an effort to live out stewardship through love. Love really is good stewardship. Let us each resolve in this official first month of the year to share who and what we are through acts of love, which may mean returning our gifts to God in a wide variety of ways. Let us spread God's love to all we encounter and to all we know so that the light of that love shines into every dark corner of our world.

The Irish have always had interesting ways of looking at things. A traditional Irish piece of wisdom which applies to the new year is "Always remember to forget the troubles that pass away. But never forget to remember the blessings that come each day." My prayer is that your new year be filled with blessings and that you live in gratitude for them.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Joseph Gallatin".

Fr. Joseph Gallatin  
Pastor

*Let us each resolve in this official first month of the year to share who and what we are through acts of love, which may mean returning our gifts to God in a wide variety of ways. Let us spread God's love to all we encounter and to all we know so that the light of that love shines into every dark corner of our world.*

# Questions & Answers About Our

Once again, it's time for our Annual Stewardship Renewal. Every year, someone asks, as you may have asked yourself, "Didn't we just have a Stewardship Renewal? Aren't we sufficiently 'renewed' by now?" Yes, we had a Stewardship Renewal last year, and we're going to have one next year, too! This is an annual occurrence — part of the rhythm of parish life at St. Peter. Just as the Church proposes a time of spiritual renewal each Lent, we believe in the importance of a yearly examination of commitment. Is the Lord asking you to give more time, talent, or treasure to our parish this year?

## How do I use my Commitment Card?

Your commitment card allows you to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and offertory giving. It is designed to be used by the whole family.

Time Section: Except for the ill and homebound, everyone should be able to check "Come to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days." Try to check at least a few other items. Daily prayer should be a priority for every person trying to grow closer to God.

Talent Section: You can either sign up for new ministries or re-commit to your current ministries. Be sure to write your first name next to the ministry! This is especially important if the card is being used by more than one person.

Treasure Section: Clearly print how much money you plan to give each week or month to our parish. Try to take a step toward giving five percent of your income to St. Peter.

Commitment Weekend is  
**January 25-26.**  
Don't forget to bring your  
Commitment Card to Mass!

## My age or physical limitations prevent me from being active in the parish. Should I still turn in a commitment card?

Yes! The first section of the card — Stewardship of Time — is the most important because it allows you to make commitments to *prayer*. Even if you can't join a ministry or make it to Mass on Sunday, you can still pray for our parish. Your spiritual support has tremendous value in the eyes of God.

## One time I turned in a card, but no one ever called me when I signed up for a ministry.

If this happened in the past, please forgive us! And don't give up on filling out your commitment card! We have a very good plan to call every person interested in joining a new ministry. If for some reason the ministry leader does not call you within four weeks of turning in your card, let the parish office know.

## How much should I give?

Your gift is entirely dependent on how much God has given you. At St. Peter, we ask that you give five percent to our parish, one percent to the archdiocese, and four percent to other charities. Why a percentage of income? First, because the tithing (10 percent) is a scriptural benchmark that the Church has honored for centuries (see Malachi 3:10). Secondly, we give a percentage of income because it is a common-sense standard by which

CHURCH OF ST. PETER

GROWING THE FAMILY OF GOD

2014 STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL COMMITMENT CARD

First & Last Name(s) (ONE CARD PER HOUSEHOLD)

Street Address

City State ZIP

Telephone (Important)

Email

Please bring this card to Mass on **January 25th or 26th**, or mail using the envelope provided. Thanks, and may God bless you!

# *ur Annual Stewardship Renewal*

everyone can equitably support the parish, each according to his or her ability. Most of all, we give because we believe God comes first in everything, even finances.

## **What if I can't fulfill my financial pledge?**

While our pledge is not a "contract," we should all make a good-faith effort to fulfill it. Of course, if your financial circumstances change — if you lose your job, for instance — then the amount of money you give the Church will change, too. Likewise if you get a raise or bonus. The biggest reason many people don't fulfill their pledge is that they attend Mass at another parish when they go on vacation, attend a wedding, etc. If you're out of town, just make up for the missed Sunday when you write your next check to the parish. Using your envelopes is a good way to see which Sundays you missed. Signing up for electronic giving is also an easy way to make sure you are contributing what you had planned.

## **I don't even go to Mass very frequently. Why turn in a Commitment Card?**

Because this is your chance to turn over a new leaf! Why not make a commitment to God to come to Mass every Sunday, and then write down that commitment? Even if that's the only commitment you make, take a step forward. Jesus Himself is waiting for you!

## **What happens if I don't return my Commitment Card?**

We will mail you a reminder letter that includes an extra Commitment Card (in case you misplaced yours). Make every effort you can to participate. Our Stewardship Renewal is a very important annual event in the life of our parish. You and your family are part of what makes St. Peter a great community! Most importantly, your commitments are actually promises to Christ Himself. All of us are called to give back to God a portion of what He has given us.



*Every parish family receives a special "Stewardship Package" in the mail that further explains our parish's vision of stewardship. It includes a booklet that describes every ministry in the parish, as well as your commitment card.*

# *Ministry Connects New and Longtime Members of Our Parish Family*

A parish is meant to be nothing less than a spiritual family. As Community Life coordinator here at the Church of St. Peter, Sara Rogers is passionate about creating bonds among our “family members” in the parish.

Sara heads the New Parishioner Welcome Team, a ministry whose aim is to connect new members of the parish with fellow parishioners, and acquaint these new parishioners with the many ministries and groups offered at St. Peter’s. However, as Sara notes, the goal is to be open and engaging to all.

“We want every member of our community to feel at home, so that they know they are welcome to attend parish events and create a family of friends here,” she says.

The Welcome Team currently sponsors two events. Their main event is the New Parishioner Dinner, held annually for all those who have registered at the parish in the past year. The dinner, which is held after a Saturday evening Mass, provides an opportunity for the newcomers to meet other new parishioners, staff members, and some longtime parishioners. The evening also includes a presentation on the history of our parish and a tour of our historic church.

“Volunteers from the Welcome Team help cook and serve the dinner, as well as enjoy the meal while getting to know new parishioners and hopefully sharing about the ministries in which they are involved,” Sara says.

Julie Dunlop attended the dinner as a new parishioner last year and says it was an enjoyable and memorable experience.



*Newcomers learn more about St. Peter’s at the registration table after Mass.*

“We learned a lot about the history of St. Peter’s, and were introduced to several people,” Julie says. “St. Peter’s is a very welcoming and friendly church, and we are glad we decided to join!”

In fact, the event was so meaningful to Julie that she now serves as a Historic Church tour guide herself. The next Welcome Dinner is scheduled for Saturday, March 1 after the 5 p.m. Mass — all new parishioners should be receiving an invitation by early February.

The other event sponsored by the Welcome Team is the staffing of a registration table after all the Masses during the first weekend of each month.

“[The registration table] gives me a chance to meet new parishioners face-to-face, and it gives people the opportunity to learn more about the parish or register if they are ready to do that,” Sara says.

All are encouraged to consider becoming involved in this wonderful ministry.

“We would love additional volunteers!” Sara says. “We are always looking for more people to help with the dinner, and if there were enough interest, we could also begin offering a second weekend of registration help. By serving and welcoming new members, we are serving and welcoming Christ. We hope that our new parishioners see Christ through the members of this ministry, as well as our whole community and are drawn to know Him and the parish on a deeper level.”

For information on the New Parishioner Welcome Team, please contact Sara Rogers in the parish office at 651-905-4308, or email her at [srogers@stpetersmendota.org](mailto:srogers@stpetersmendota.org).

*“By serving and welcoming new members, we are serving and welcoming Christ. We hope that our new parishioners see Christ through the members of this ministry, as well as our whole community and are drawn to know Him and the parish on a deeper level.”*

*— Sara Rogers*

## *Annual Cana Dinner and Mass Strengthens Relationships and Builds Fellowship*

**I**t's never too late — or too early — to focus on the Sacrament of Marriage. In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, married couples today need support in order to continue to cultivate their marriage. St. Peter's Cana Dinner and Mass is an opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage while getting to know others in the parish.

"[My husband] Al and I had been involved with a Cana Dinner and Mass at our previous church for approximately 10 years," says parishioner Gail Barta, who started the Cana Dinner three years ago. "After becoming members of St. Peter, I asked about starting a Cana Dinner and Mass, and in 2011 we held our first event. We plan the event around Valentine's Day, starting with a Saturday night Mass. We feel Mass is an important part of the celebration."

After the Mass, the attendees move on to a social hour in Heritage Center, which includes appetizers, wine, beer and punch. Dinner then starts at 7 p.m. with a catered meal from Kane's Catering, which includes a salad, two entrees, potatoes or rice, a vegetable, assorted breads, and assorted pies for dessert. Coffee and tea is also served. After dinner, the number of years for which couples have been married are acknowledged, followed by the evening's entertainment.

"Entertainment has consisted of musicians and speakers," Gail says. "Last year, we had a gentleman bring his collection of guitars, which he played and also told interesting stories about their history."

Attendees have often brought wedding items to share with other attendees, such as wedding dresses from 40 to 60 years ago, as well as wedding photos. Although these items were previously displayed in glass cases at the dinner event, this year it is planned to have attendees display items at their tables in order to share their stories with others.

The Cana Dinner and Mass has always been a team effort, and is an event that clearly has been enjoyed by everyone.

"Over the years, many wonderful people have been involved in helping to make this annual event a success," Gail says. "We ask attendees to let us know what they thought of the evening, and if they have any suggestions or if they would be interested in joining the committee. Several high school-aged kids from St. Peter help the caterers with serving and clearing tables."

Indeed, this elegant evening is an opportunity for parishioners to socialize with one another while celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage.

"This event is not limited to married couples," Gail says. "Engaged couples, singles and the widowed are also welcome to attend."

Registration for the Cana Dinner will be held on the weekends of Jan. 18 and 19, Jan. 25 and 26, and Feb. 1 and 2. The event fee is \$25 per attendee and includes a meal, two beverages and entertainment. All are encouraged to participate! For more information, please call Gail Barta at 651-454-9552.



# Church of St. Peter

1405 Highway 13, PO Box 50679 | Mendota, MN 55150  
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## January and February Events at St. Peter's

**Solemnity of Mary,**

**Mother of God**

Tuesday, Dec. 31 at 4 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 1 at 10 a.m.

**Pastor Appreciation Luncheon**

Sunday, Jan. 12 at noon

**Youth Group Movie Night**

Friday, Jan. 17 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Ministry Fair**

Saturday, Jan. 18 and Sunday, Jan. 19

After all Masses

**Pizza Bingo**

Friday, Jan. 24 from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**Stewardship Commitment  
Weekend**

Saturday, Jan. 25 and Sunday, Jan. 26

**Workcamp Pancake Breakfast**

Sunday, Jan. 26 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Grade 2 Focus Mass**

Sunday, Jan. 26

During the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses

**Catholic Schools Week**

Jan. 26 to Feb. 1

**Cana Dinner**

Saturday, Feb. 8 at 6 p.m.

**Youth Group Snow Tubing Trip**

Sunday, Feb. 16 from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

**New Parishioner Dinner**

Saturday, March 1 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

[www.stpetersmendota.org](http://www.stpetersmendota.org)

**Weekend Mass:** Saturday, 5:00 p.m. Vigil | Sunday, 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

**Daily Mass:** Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m.

**Confession:** Saturdays, 4:00 - 4:45 p.m.; Thursdays, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. and by appointment