

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. Mt 28:19, 20

April 3, 2016 Divine Mercy Sunday

Dear St. Bernard and Ascension Parishioners and Faith Formation Families,

The peace of the risen Christ be with you.

In this joy-filled season of Easter I write to update you on our Formation Program. As I previously communicated, we will combine our Faith Formation Programs beginning in 2016-17. I want to acknowledge and thank Julie Kleindl and Kara Wickenhauser and Carol Symanitz for all they have done to strengthen Ascension and St. Bernard's programs, respectively. I also acknowledge the challenge this will be for some of you and thank you for your willingness to work with this change. I believe that this change will enable us to better fulfill Jesus' command to *"make disciples of all nations....teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."*

I write today to inform you of a few important details.

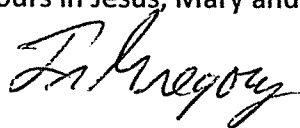
- Kara Wickenhauser will continue to be the Director of Religious Education for pre K-5th grade with Julie Kleindl continuing as the DRE for 6-10th grade.
- It is with sadness that Carol Symanitz has decided not return to be part of faith formation next year due to the change in the faith formation programming. She states: *"I will miss working with all our families and the wonderful staff I have had over the years and especially this past year. What a phenomenal group of people doing God's work. I appreciate all each of you have done throughout the year. I do wish all involved the best of luck to next year."*
- I have heard many and varying comments on which location we should use. Thank your valuable input. I have decided, with support from Kara and Julie that for the 2016-17 year, Ascension will host classes from September through December and St. Bernard host classes January through April. Throughout the year we will be assessing what options might work best for future years.
- We are striving to help all of our families to make this transition as smooth as possible by making two significant changes--
 - We are going to offer simple/affordable meals for students/catechists/parents on Wednesday before class. The proposed time for this is 5:30-6:20 pm.
 - We are making plans to offer ALL GRADE levels at one time. The proposed time for this is 6:30-7:45pm. The only exception will be the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Program (CGS) which will have an early session at 4:15pm to 5:45pm and a second session at 6:15pm to 7:45pm.

- There have been some questions regarding transportation of students. Families could arrange for carpooling, but this would need to be done exclusively by the families outside of class time, without any parish involvement. Those who serve as catechists or assist with Faith Formation can give rides but, once again, it must be arranged strictly by the families, outside of class time without any parish involvement.
- We continue to make changes to improve our program. We will continue with the “Chosen” Confirmation Program for 9 & 10th graders. Our CGS will be adding Level II for grades 1 & 2 and will continue with Level I for Preschool & Kindergarten. These programs have been well-received by students, parents and catechists alike as effective means of handing on the life-changing gift of our Catholic Faith. In 2016-17 we will add the *Edge* Middle School Faith Formation Program which is designed to help Middle Schoolers unleash who they were created to be, in Christ.
- I am happy to inform you that we have formed a Faith Formation Committee composed of parishioner from both parishes. In addition to Kara, Julie, and me, Fran Terfehr, Nellie Hennen and Doris Mielke from St. Bernard and Steve Lemmer and Rita Fahey from Ascension comprise the committee.* This committee will assist with the discernment of God’s will for our program, help with planning, evaluation and communication.

I offer thanks to all catechists and faith formation assistants who give their time and talent in order to hand on our Catholic Faith to our students and families.

Please join me in asking the intercession of our Blessed Mother for our 2016-17 faith formation year by praying a Hail Mary: *Hail Mary, full of grace the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among woman and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hours of our death. Amen.*

Yours in Jesus, Mary and Joseph,



Fr. Gregory

*Steve, Rita and Doris have received ongoing Catholic faith formation at the Archbishop Harry J. Flynn Catechetical Institute. They now enrich our parishes by investing what they have learned in our faith formation program.

St. Bernard Volunteer Minister Spotlight:



Submitted by: Sherry Monsen

What is your volunteer ministry? I cantor for Saturday night Mass.

How long have you been a member of St. Bernard? Two years.

How long have you been a Volunteer at St. Bernard? A little over a year.

Did you volunteer at another parish before St. Bernard? Yes.

Why do you like being a volunteer at St. Bernard? God gave me the gift of a good voice, so it only seems right to use it for His glory. And singing is my favorite form of prayer. It makes me happy...hopefully it does the same for other people, and helps them lift their souls up to the Lord.

What is your favorite place or event at St. Bernard and why? Definitely Mass. Mass is the high point of my entire week.

Do you volunteer at any other organization and why? Yes, I am a catechist for 8th grade at Ascension. It is an awesome thing to teach people about our faith, and to watch as they grow in their spiritual journey. Also, it is a spiritual work of mercy!



Submitted by: Judy Jenkins

What is your volunteer ministry? My ministries are music and money. I play the piano and organ for Mass, and count the Sunday collection for deposit. (“What do you want of me Lord?”)

How long have you been a member of St. Bernard? I have been a member since we moved to Cologne, in September 2005. (“Where do you want me to serve you?”)

How long have you been a Volunteer at St. Bernard? I joined the choir in September 2008, so 7 & ½ years. (“Where can I sing your praises?”)

Did you volunteer at another parish before St. Bernard? Yes. For about 14 years, I was on a team of ‘money counters’ at Assumption Parish, in Richfield. (“I hear you call my name, Lord.”)

Why do you like being a volunteer at St. Bernard? I like it because of the people! Good people, Holy people, Welcoming people.....and so many extraordinary volunteers! I remember how gratefully the choir welcomed me, and they didn’t even ask if I could sing!
 (“Your Spirit stirs my deepest self. Sing your songs in me.”)

What is your favorite place or event at St. Bernard and why? I love the church Sanctuary! St. Bernard reminds me of the churches of my childhood, so for me it is a comfort, it is home. The view from the big, new windows in the narthex isn’t bad either! From there we can see the beauty of God’s world. (“Jesus, You are the way.”)

Do you volunteer at any other organization and why? No, I do not.