

Spirit of Life

Roman Catholic Church

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE WORKING TO FOSTER DISCIPLESHIP AT SPIRIT OF LIFE

Some time ago, after meetings and discussions among parishioners and parish groups and leadership, Spirit of Life chose to embrace stewardship and renew the pursuit of stewardship as a way of life. Almost everything we have done since that point is based upon this stewardship commitment.

One of our first acts after we made the stewardship commitment was the formation of a Stewardship Committee to oversee the effort. This committee is responsible for developing stewardship as a way of life at the parish. In addition, its members evaluate the stewardship efforts of the parish, assist with our annual Stewardship Renewal, and communicate with leaders regarding ministry participation.

“By committing to Christ through stewardship, we surrender ourselves to becoming Christ to our world,” Msgr. Chad Gion says. “Being a good steward is an essential part of being a disciple of Jesus, and it impacts every part of our lives. At Spirit of Life, we have undertaken a goal of being a stewardship parish filled with stewardship people. The Stewardship Committee is one of the steps in that process. In many ways, we are still in the progression of organizing and formulating exactly what needs to be done.”

As a faith community Spirit of Life strives to be a community based on what are termed the



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Four Pillars of Stewardship – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. Through hospitality, we try to extend a warm, hospitable and loving welcome to all who may join us to worship, study or attend a social event. Prayer calls each of us to be disciples committed to both individual and communal prayer, public and private. In formation, we educate in our Catholic faith and in a stewardship way of life, a way of sharing what we are and what we have with a loving, generous

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STEWARDSHIP'S "SUPREME TEACHER" FOLLOWING CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

Former President and Five-Star General Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, "You don't lead by hitting people over the head – that's assault, not leadership." President Eisenhower's words are both blunt and humorous, but he makes a great point. Almost any successful endeavor in life requires the benefit of strong leadership. And a truly effective leader does not lead by simply telling others what to do, but by providing a strong example of how to carry oneself on a daily basis.

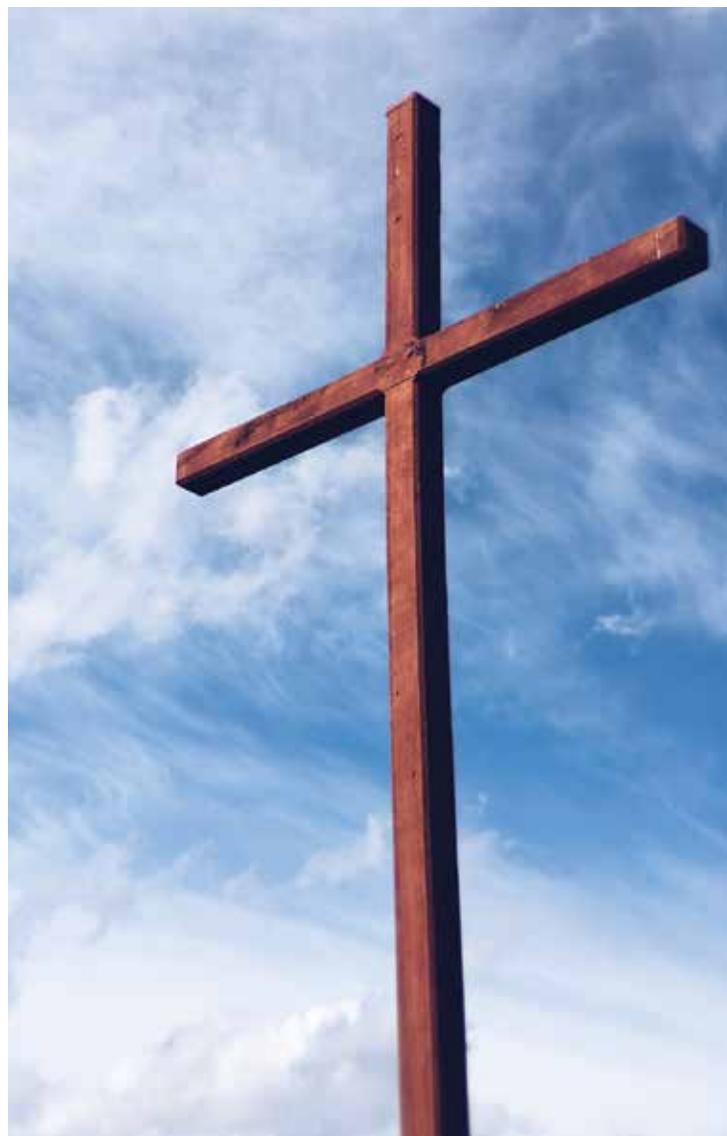
This is no different for us in our lives as Catholic Christians. As individuals who face numerous difficult choices every day, we require a leader who, through word *and* example, can show us the path to living according to God's will. For us, Jesus is the supreme teacher of every aspect of Christian life, and His life as documented in the Gospels is a model that we should strive to imitate in living as good Christians. And as we have learned, stewardship – the sharing of the gifts that God has given to us – is a big part of Christian life, and one for which Jesus left many examples of successful living.

Jesus' nature of selfless service, documented many times throughout the New Testament and culminating with His death for our sins, is an underlying aspect of living the stewardship way of life. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops points out in its pastoral document *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, "In Jesus' teaching and life self-emptying is fundamental. Now, it might seem that self-emptying has little to do with stewardship, but in Jesus' case that is not so. His self-emptying is not sterile self-denial for its own sake; rather, in setting aside self, he is filled with the Father's will, and he is fulfilled in just this way" (19).

Jesus points out to Peter in Mark's Gospel that this "self-emptying" requires sacrifice, but ultimately leads to "eternal life in the age to come" (Mk 10:30). But the Christian steward's ultimate reward is not his or her only benefit from living the stewardship way of life. By sharing of our time, talent, and treasure, and living in imitation of Christ, we can relate more closely to Him in sharing, in a small way, in His sacrifice. "To be a Christian disciple is a rewarding way of life, a way of

companionship with Jesus, and the practice of stewardship as a part of it is itself a source of deep joy. Those who live this way are happy people who have found the meaning and purpose of living" (*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, 21).

The next time you are frustrated or unsure of how to best respond to God's gifts in stewardship, take a moment to open up the Bible. Jesus may not "hit us over the head" in His leadership, but He does provide numerous examples through His actions and teachings of how to live as one of His disciples.



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

SUMMER VACATIONS ARE COMING TO AN END... NOW WHAT?

Dear Parishioners,

The month of August really does seem to return us to reality, doesn't it? Summer is coming to an end – maybe not officially on the calendar, but in terms of our lives and the life of the Church, it does. The children may view it as the end of something appealing – the start of summer vacation seems like a long time ago – and their parents may be breathing sighs of relief. For those involved in parish ministries, it might be a time when we say, “Now, it's time to work.”



Perhaps this is a time when we get back into the routine of things. However, we all know the truth – that faith and the Church are not seasonal. For that matter, stewardship is not seasonal, and it's not something that is done a few times a year. Rather, stewardship is something we should be thinking about each and every day.

There are many definitions of stewardship, but at its very basis, it means using the gifts God has given us to do the things God asks – calls, expects – us to do. Stewardship is discipleship. We may tend to think of stewardship as a question: “What is mine and what is God's?” The truth is that all that we have and all that we are belongs to and comes from God – absolutely everything!

We may hear that stewardship is using and sharing our time, our talent, and our treasure. In terms of time, the secret is not learning how to

use it or how to get more of it – the secret is knowing how best to use it. Talent and treasure are given to each of us in different amounts. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that we have to trust God before we really share those things. Relying on God and living a God-centered life are fundamental to a relationship with Him – and, for that matter, with one another. Being contented is not the fulfillment of what you may want. Rather, it is the realization of what you already have.

So, we are back to the reality of this time of year. You may have heard the statement that stewardship people are grateful people. Perhaps this is a time to be grateful for the summer that has passed. But it is a time for us to recommit ourselves to doing better, especially as we enter a time of year that provides a return to routine. Importantly, it is also a time filled with celebrations, thanksgiving, hope, and maybe even better stewardship on each of our parts.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Msgr. Chad Gion". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Msgr. Chad Gion,
Pastor

MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH THE G



With the presence of the Holy Spirit and the love of faithful stewards of God's gifts, it's astonishing how far a little money can go. The income earned by the Carmelite Sisters who serve at our parish and at Fort Yates is given to the leaders of their religious community, which in turn uses it to fund apostolates that bring God's mercy to the poor in beautiful ways, all around the world. One of these apostolates is the Mission Hospital in Maradu Municipality in the state of Kerala in India.

"The Mission Hospital takes care of patients from about 306 villages and 62,000 families," says Dr. Sr. Annie Sheela, MD, a member of the Congregation of Teresian Carmelites who serves as the hospital's Director and Chief Cardiologist. "The majority of the persons we serve are poor and marginalized. Many live in rural areas and are casual manual workers in need of health care."

Furthermore, the Mission Hospital offers many other charitable services, such as dialysis, medical camps, outreach programs, a lifestyle clinic, and a highly impressive free cardiac care program featuring a "Cardiac Check-up Camp." It also has a Maternity Care program that offers classes on topics such as care during pregnancy, exercises, role of the husband, and good parenting. The program distributes free medicines and nutritional supplements for pregnant women, as well.

"Spirit of Life is full of life, alive with the Holy Spirit. Eucharistic Adoration, which takes places 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at our parish, is a great example of this, and gives life to everyone. Our pastors are always available to help us and the parish community is very helpful. They give so generously. May God bless them!"

– Sr. Mary Michael

GENEROUS STEWARDS OF SPIRIT OF LIFE

And, thanks to divine providence, the hospital offers their services at a nominal charge – they give out substantial concessions, major discounts for senior citizens, and even free treatments.

Sr. Mary Michael, whom we are privileged to have among us at Spirit of Life, is truly grateful for her vocation as a religious sister in the Congregation of Teresian Carmelites, and sees God's hand at work daily.

"I enjoy my contemplative vocation to the Carmelite sisters," she says. "Our congregation really emphasizes the importance of having a good prayer life. I love it! Through prayer, we do all of our apostolates, such as our ministry in and with education, medicine, social work, the empowerment of women, orphanages, the mentally challenged, job orientation, and Christian formation. I love working among poor and underprivileged people. Thanks be to God the Almighty!"

Sr. Mary Michael is also grateful for the opportunity to be an integral part of our faith community. She continually witnesses how wholeheartedly our parish family supports the work of her sisters, and sees the tremendous impact that this support makes.

"Spirit of Life is full of life, alive with the Holy Spirit," Sr. Mary Michael says. "Eucharistic Adoration, which takes place 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at our parish, is a great example of this, and gives life to everyone. Our pastors are always available to help us and the parish community is very helpful. They give so generously. May God bless them! As Jesus said, 'Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren, you do unto me.'"



This spring, Business and Finance Manager Cheryl Hansen visited the generalate of the Congregation of Teresian Carmelites in India, and witnessed how great of a help our contributions are to their work. For more information on how to get involved in the work of the Carmelite sisters, please contact Cheryl at 701-663-1660, ext. 103.

A LOOK BACK ON OUR 2017 STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL AT SPIRIT OF LIFE

Our parish leadership at Spirit of Life recently conducted the 2017 Stewardship Renewal. The results of this renewal demonstrate that our parish is continuing to flourish as a stewardship community! We are very happy to share the results of the renewal in this month's parish newsletter.

- There were **206 Commitment Cards** received, with a return rate of 32 percent from active households.
- There were **1,046 commitments to prayer** (the Stewardship of Time). This was 89 percent of participating households.
- The top prayer commitments included: Attend Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days, **179 commitments**; Spend at least 15 minutes a day in personal prayer, **143 commitments**; Pray for the sick of our parish, **116 commitments**; Pray the Rosary at least weekly, **107 commitments**; Adore the Eucharist at least once a week, **103 commitments**.
- There were **820 ministry commitments** (Stewardship of Talent). Of these, 292 were new commitments to ministries, and 528 were re-commitments to ministries.
- Some of the top ministry commitments included: Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, **118 commitments**; Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, **79 commitments**; Funeral Luncheon Ministry, **78 commitments**; Spirit of Life Angel Tree Ministry, **55 commitments**; Mother Teresa Food Pantry/Outreach Meals, **50 commitments**.
- There were **141 offertory commitments** (Stewardship of Treasure), 68 percent of participating households. The average annual pledge was \$2,202.

If you did not participate in the 2017 Stewardship Renewal, we encourage you to find ways to become involved here at Spirit of Life – there is something for everyone!

We thank all who took part in the Stewardship Renewal, and we thank all members of our parish family for making Spirit of Life such a strong community of faith!

THE FOUR PILLARS of a STEWARDSHIP PARISH

"HE HAS SHOWED YOU, O MAN, WHAT IS GOOD; AND WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU BUT TO DO JUSTICE, AND TO LOVE KINDNESS, AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD?" MICAH 6:8



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Roman Catholic Church

TALENT (CONT.)

= Currently Involved = Interested in Joining
↓ Clearly write the first name of family member on the line.

PARISH LIFE

- Hospitality Sunday

SPIRITUAL LIFE

- Intercessory Prayer Ministry
- Prayer Line Prayer
- Rosary Guild

OUTREACH

- Funeral Luncheon Ministry
- Funeral & Grief Ministry
- Holiday Food Baskets
- Holy Communion to the Homebound Ministry
- Hospital & Care Center Visitation Ministry
- Mother Teresa Food Pantry/Outreach Meals
- Prayer Blanket Ministry
- Soup Kitchen/Fellowship Luncheon Ministry
- The Spirit of Life Advent Angel Tree Ministry

PARISH COMMITTEES

- Finance Council
- Parish Council
- Stewardship Committee

ADMINISTRATION

- Building and Grounds Helpers
- Office Helpers
- Other Occupational Talents

THE FOUR PILLARS of a STEWARDSHIP PARISH

SPIRIT OF LIFE
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

2017 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT CARD

First & Last Name (one card per family) _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone (Important) _____

Email Address _____

Please bring this card to Mass on March 25/26, or mail using the envelope provided. Thanks and God bless you!

Spirit of Life
Roman Catholic Church
801 1ST STREET SE | MANDAN, ND 58554
701-663-1660 | MYSPIRITOFLIFE.COM

FORMATION STUDIES HELPING ADULTS ANSWER QUESTIONS OF FAITH

The story of King David is a story of ups and downs. A story of wrongs set right by reliance on God's comfort and hope. A story of a man charged with many responsibilities, who sometimes feels uncertain about his choices, but never lacks in faith. A story that many adults could relate to in some ways, and certainly one that all of us can learn from.

Bishop Barron's *David the King* will be the focus of this fall's Adult Faith Formation study program. Karen Eggers, Director of Religious Education, says the study represents a great opportunity for parish adults to explore their own faith through the lens of one of the Bible's greatest figures.

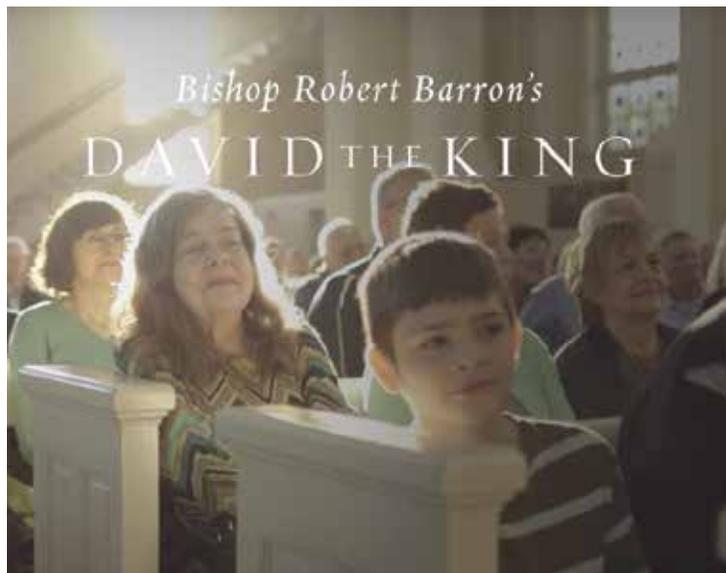
"It's all about David and the Psalms and the connection between King David and Jesus," she explains.

The Adult Faith Formation program is hosting studies such as this one in response to a survey of Spirit of Life parishioners that indicated many in our church would like to learn more about Scripture outside of Sunday Masses. Karen says the program strives to fulfill a need within our parish community to continually educate adults on the vast richness of our beliefs.

"Chances are, when one person has a question about their faith, five others are thinking it as well," she says.

Past studies have followed the Church calendar, but the most recent, the *Great Adventure Catholic Bible Study*, has been the most popular to date. Karen says the video-based series helped answer a great many of those scriptural questions.

"The *Great Adventure* focused a lot on the Old Testament and some people who joined us had felt intimidated by it or didn't have an appreciation for it," Karen explains, saying that many Catholics have a better understanding of the New Testament because of the Gospels. "The two testaments go to-



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gether, and a study like this is giving you those tools to help you fall deeper in love with God and to be able to defend and understand your faith."

While the website FORMED.org has been a popular choice for busy parishioners looking to stay tapped into their faith from home, Karen says attending a formation study at church can go together with the online resource.

"We really encourage people to use that as a tool, as well, but of course it's nice to have large group discussions," she says. "It's also important to be well catechized and to appreciate Scripture. If you have children, to have that model of loving your faith and helping when they have questions as well, this can also be good for that."

David the King will become available in September. Watch the bulletin for updates on when the study will begin here at Spirit of Life! Karen Eggers says parishioners can reach out to her at karen@myspiritoflife.com or 701-663-1660 with questions or to talk about ideas for future Adult Faith Formation studies.

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Change Service Requested

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Spirit of Life

Monday: 8 a.m.

Tuesday - Thursday: 7 a.m., 9 a.m.

Friday: 7 a.m., 9 a.m.,

Saturday: 9 a.m., 5 p.m.

Sunday: 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m.

CONFESSIONS: Sunday: 8-8:30 a.m.

Saturday: 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 7-8:30 p.m., and 20 min. before
weekday Masses except Mondays

St. Martin's Parish

Even Months: 9 a.m.

Odd Months: 11 a.m.

St. Anthony's Parish

Even Months: 11 a.m.

Odd Months: 9 a.m.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE *continued from front cover*

and grateful heart. Service calls each of us to be servant ministers to the needs of our parish, our parish members, the wider community, and the Universal Church.

“It is the Stewardship Committee which oversees, guides, and provides examples of what it means to live out the Four Pillars,” Monsignor says. “Currently, we have six members on the committee, but I would like to see it grow. There is so much more we can do, but we need dedicated people to assist us in putting those efforts in motion. I sincerely hope that the people of Spirit of Life consider becoming part of our Stewardship Committee.”

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter on stewardship titled *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*.

The title itself reflects what Msgr. Gion and the members of the Stewardship Committee firmly believe. As indicated in the title of their pastoral letter, the U.S. Bishops closely associate discipleship and stewardship:

“As members of the Church, Jesus calls us to be disciples. This has astonishing implications: Mature disciples make a conscious decision to follow Jesus, no matter what the cost; Christian disciples experience conversion — life-shaping changes of mind and heart; Christian stewards respond in a particular way to the call to be a disciple. Stewardship has the power to shape and mold our understanding of our lives and the way in which we live” (42).

At Spirit of Life we endeavor to be a community of hospitality, prayer, formation, and service.

If you would like more information on stewardship, or are interested in learning more about the Stewardship Committee, please contact Msgr. Chad Gion at 701-663-1660 or email him at frgion@gmail.com.