

Summa

St. Thomas Aquinas Newsletter

September - December 2020

Hospitality



Prayer



Formation



Service



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Pastor's Corner

My sister, Nancy, was telling me she had been keeping her daughter's dog for ten days while her daughter had been doing some traveling. The dog is a golden lab crossed with a poodle, weighs about 40 pounds, and is seven months old. It seems like a smart dog. Whenever the dog encounters something new it sits down on its butt and watches how things unfold. Nothing will make it move while that happens. It has amazing curiosity. If somebody comes down the sidewalk on a bike, it sits down to watch. If the train goes down the tracks, it quickly sits down to watch. It kind of makes you wonder how much we do something similar. I used to be a master of the obvious. I would watch with curiosity while obvious things happen and point them out. I'd say, "Look what that is." I always did learn by seeing. It made sense to me.

During this time of covid-19 pandemic we have been stuck in fear, forced to pause, put things on hold, wear our masks, slow down, stay home, and be socially distant from others. Maybe we see how that's been a break from the busyness of life and the things we do sometimes, but still most of us can't wait to get back to a more normal life again. We want to be doing again the behaviors and the ways and the patterns and the habits we travel with back into gear. Where have you been at with all this?

Someone once said, "Change is painful, but nothing is as painful as staying stuck somewhere you don't want to belong." Fr. David Bonnar puts it, "Change saves us from becoming stuck in our lives and ministry."

The parish has started phase one of our renovation of the Church, school, and parish center. Changes are starting to happen there also. Sept. 12-13 was our "Announcement Weekend" and our "Campaign Kickoff Event" is Sept. 27.

We've been struggling to keep our balance with recent changes. Without all the stress of worrying, without all the hours of the hectic get it done pace, without the everyday to do lists, without being so mobile, without all that motion that goes on with life, we've had more time for other things. We take time to face deeper issues, to reassess our values, to look at being with God who brings us peace. We have time to see what's truly important. Faith and gratitude and prayer can help us keep our balance. While the world likes being driven by productivity, deadlines, multitasking, and pressures, we can't overlook rest and self-care. Walter Brueggemann wisely notes, "Sabbath becomes a decisive, concrete, visible way of opting for and aligning with the God



"Change saves us from becoming stuck in our lives and ministry."

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of rest" (Sabbath as Resistance). We look for a space in time that's sacred. Even change can be the way to find it.

Fr. Stephen Meyer



that will help us still experience our unity as the Body of Christ. A good way to begin is to create an environment that is conducive to prayer as we focus on the Mass that we see on our screens. Assemble a special space with items such as the crucifix, candles, a large sacred picture or icon, and your family Bible.

We have been taught that Christ's presence in the Eucharist is just as real in his Word. Silence all other household technology; do the same physical gestures as if you were at Mass, such as standing, kneeling, and joining in the prayer for Spiritual Communion led at each Mass by Deacon Dan Hurt. Respond verbally - out loud- with your family, just as you would when you are present in the Church at Mass. If anyone would like to have an issue of the missalette, Breaking Bread, that we use for hymns and readings, we do have extra copies in the church office. A family member could read the readings right along with the virtual Mass.

In the history of Sunday Mass, others have heard me share that in Iowa during the early 1900s people from rural areas certainly did not have the opportunity of Mass every weekend, but they fervently practiced their prayer life in their homes and kept the faith alive for themselves and generations to follow. We gather together in our homes with today's visual and audio availability far different than from those past times. We need to remember, "Where two or three are gathered, there is Jesus in our midst." That says it all for our souls, minds, and hearts in this historic time. **Keep the faith!**



Where Two or Three are Gathered in My Name...

by Marty Doerning, Director of Liturgy & Music

Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matthew 18:20

The celebration of Mass, our Eucharistic liturgy, calls for full, conscious, active participation. During this historic pandemic there are innovative ways in which we can participate. After several weeks into the necessary closings and interruptions, most parishes are having at least one Mass on the weekend.

The obligation to be at Mass is still lifted. Daily Mass is celebrated with social distancing, masks, Communion under the form of bread only, and all safety precautions in place. Our weekend Masses at both St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Mary have smaller than usual congregations. The daily Masses have average participation. Church pews and gym chairs are all cleaned after each Mass.

With the gift of today's technology, Mass can be seen on TV and on Facebook. All weekend Masses at St. Thomas Aquinas are live-streamed. The average number who are participating is 150. Worshiping in this way still gives us a sense of belonging to our community. We can enhance that participation in various ways





A Better Normal

By Deacon Dan Hurt

These comments, “Welcome to the new normal,” or “this is the new norm,” seem to continuously pop up and rightfully so. Covid-19 has changed a lot of things in the world we live. We are not under our normal obligation to attend Mass; children have to wear face shields or masks in school; many stores require masks; Zoom and other video conferencing services have become part of life as a way to stay connected; and Masses around the world are live streamed. So many things could be added to this list, but this short list shows some of the changes that have taken place since this pandemic began. Dwelling on the negatives can be easy, but this would be a huge mistake. Instead of looking at this as the new norm or wishing things could go back to the way things were is not healthy or good. This is not the new norm; it is the transitional period leading us to a better normal.

This period is leading us to a stronger faith. Even though the obligation to attend Mass has temporarily been lifted, people are beginning to come back on their own. They are choosing this under their own freewill. For many, live streaming has been a blessing. Many elderly who could not attend due to health reasons, now have the opportunity to listen to the Word of God and participate through a live stream. Some viewers were not in the habit of coming each week, and live stream has provided them with an opportunity to form this habit. Live streaming Mass has also allowed all of our parishioners to stay connected with the Church while keeping them safe. I truly believe that this will lead to full pews in the near future. Children and adults wearing masks will also be a great benefit. The masks will not stay. Someday soon, they will no longer be required. Currently, we wear masks to protect others, and we realize that when another person is wearing a mask, we too are protected. This is respecting the lives of others, and this respect will continue to grow long after the pandemic is gone. Having meetings over Zoom (or other video conferencing services) and reaching out to

others for Faith Formation opportunities should not go away. Not all meetings need to be in person. It saves time and money. Offering a Bible Study over Zoom is a great way to join with others in the comfort of your own home. You do not have to worry as much about the weather, health, or any other outside factors. This will all lead to a better tomorrow.

Youth Faith Formation and Sacramental Preparation were cut short in March when we could no longer meet in person. Instead, the remaining material for the year was sent to parents in emails, and many teachers still chose to stay in contact with their classes through emails or Zoom meetings, but we were still learning. We also had no way of knowing that the pandemic would stick around for so long. We are now looking at a new season of Youth Faith Formation! It is planned that we will begin meeting in person on Wednesday, October 07. Youth Faith Formation (Religious Education for grades K-12) will run from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM. We will do our best to keep the children safe throughout the year, so some changes have been made. All students are asked to wear a mask, and we will social distance as much as the guidelines recommend. More Prayer Services and opportunities for Mass will be offered! An at-home curriculum has been developed to assist any parents who do not feel safe or comfortable sending their child to Youth Faith Formation this year.

It is planned that we will begin meeting in person on Wednesday, October 07. Youth Faith Formation (Religious Education for grades K-12) will run from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM.

As baptized Christians and members of the Body of Christ, it is our duty to form and build disciples, to evangelize, to teach and strengthen the knowledge of our Catholic Faith, to share the Gospel, and to help children and adults build a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. As a Church, it is our responsibility to assist the parents with these tasks through Youth Faith Formation. We will also offer different Adult Faith Formation opportunities throughout the year. As the world moves forward, the Church will continue to move forward, adjust to the needs of the people, and build up the Kingdom of God. May God bless and protect you as we continue to push through this pandemic toward a better normal.



St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church



From the Desk of the Principal

By Theresa Schleisman, Principal,
St. Thomas Aquinas School

St. Thomas Aquinas School Daily Prayer
*O God, Merciful Healer,
We pray for your help. Keep us from illness,
heal those who are sick. Protect those who care
for others. May your love be seen
as we pray for those in need.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Staffing Changes for 2020/2021

We graciously welcome 4 new teachers to our school family this year:

Mrs. Janet Mitchell (2nd grade) - Janet joins St. Thomas Aquinas after serving as a teacher for the past 12 years at the Webster City Head Start.

Ms. McKenzi Faul (4-6 Math and Science) - McKenzi joins us after working at the Stratford Preschool during the 2019/2020 school year. She is a recent graduate of Minot College in North Dakota.

Mrs. Jan Reisetter (4-6 Reading/Language Arts and Social Studies) - Jan served as a teacher at STA 8 years ago. Due to a late resignation, she has graciously agreed to serve as a long-term sub until this position is filled permanently.

Mrs. Melissa Hindt (PS - 6 Music and 4-6 Religion) - Melissa is not necessarily new to STA as she has served as a para-educator in our Preschool program. She brings 14 years of experience to this position and most recently served in the St. Edmond Catholic Schools located in Fort Dodge, Iowa.

A Fond Farewell

We would like to officially congratulate Judy Wagner, a 29 year veteran teacher at STA, on her new position as a 5th grade teacher at Carroll Kuemper Middle School. This move is bittersweet for Judy as she graduated from Kuemper High School and still has family who reside in Carroll. However, in her own words, "My heart will always be with the St. Thomas Aquinas School staff and families."

New Mission and Vision Statements

In working with the Archdiocesan School System as well as the St. Thomas staff and strategic planning committee, we would like to share our newly created Mission and Vision statements for St. Thomas School:



Mission

St. Thomas Aquinas School serves Webster City and surrounding communities by offering a Preschool - 6th grade education. Our school incorporates faith and values through daily learning in a safe and nurturing environment. With support from parents and families St. Thomas develops the spiritual, academic, physical and emotional growth of students who will be the future leaders in our ever-changing world.

Vision

In a Christ-centered environment, St. Thomas empowers young people to build their personal foundation for lifelong learning, leadership and service to others.

A PRAYER FOR OUR TEACHERS

DEAR GOD,
THANK YOU FOR THE AMAZING TEACHERS
WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES
TO SERVE OUR CHILDREN.
AS THEY PREPARE FOR THE NEW YEAR,
FILL THEM WITH STRENGTH TO LEAD,
GRACE TO GUIDE AND HOPE TO THRIVE
IN THEIR CLASSROOM.
BLESS THEM BEYOND MEASURE
FOR THEIR WILLINGNESS
TO POUR INTO THE NEXT
GENERATION THROUGH EDUCATION. AMEN



St. Thomas Aquinas School Clean-Up Day

A Special Thank You to the Following Individuals who made this Clean-Up Day a HUGE Success:

Bryan, Jess, Aiden, Bryce & Carsten Hrnicek
 Patrick, Erin, Gavin, Liam & Jovi Majewski
 Brian, Will & Max Engstler
 Jason, Erin, Abram & Adrie Ribbens
 Rilee, Jan & Harrison Scheuermann
 Kurt, Anne & Grant Arends
 Melissa, Jonah & Aaron Hindt
 Ryan, Jody & Rilyn Pruismann
 Scott & Chance Grimm
 Heidi & Addie Tesdahl
 Jessica & Camden Schultz
 John Bock
 Greg Pruismann
 Jamie Staley
 Rita Wolfgram
 Teresa Sigafoose

*"Teamwork
 divides the task
 and multiplies the
 success"*

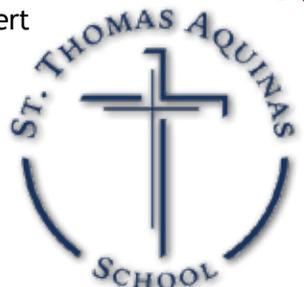
Your hard work is a testament to your dedication to this wonderful school, the teachers, staff, and our children

An extra heartfelt "Thank You" to Rilee Scheuermann and Scott Grimm for working each night after work the entire week leading up to this event trimming trees, rebuilding a bench, painting, spraying, and weeding. Also, a special "Thank You" to Jason Ribbens and his family for removing the old yellow playground equipment!

Important Dates:

- September 7 - No school; Labor Day
- September 21 - No school; Professional Development
- October 27 and 29 - 2 hour early out; Parent-Teacher Conferences
- October 30 - No School
- November 25 - 2 hour early out; Thanksgiving Break
- November 26 and 27 - No school; Thanksgiving Break

- December 7 - PS Christmas Concert
- December 14 - K-6 Christmas Concert
- December 23 - 2 hour early out; Christmas Break
- December 24-January 3 - Christmas Break
- January 4 - Classes resume



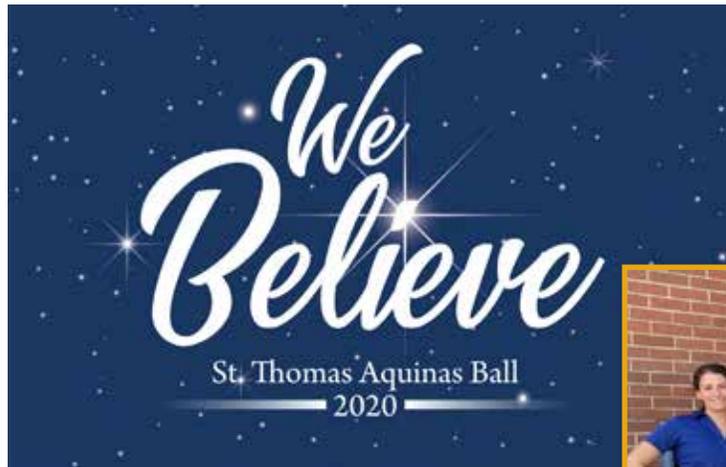
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church



Update from the Development Director

by Heidi Tesdahl,
Development Director

A Big Thank You to All of You!



St. Thomas Catholic School would like to thank all those who contributed time, talents, and treasure to make the 2020 Virtual Ball such a successful event. A special thank you to the committee for all the time and efforts put forth to make this event one to remember. None of this would be possible without you. Our event was unique this year and looked much different than our normal gathering in the Parish Center Gymnasium with a live auction, dinner, entertainment, and socialization. Instead, we asked our supporters to host small cocktail

parties in their homes and join us virtually via Facebook Live. We prayed, shared a video of our school, and hosted a scaled back “live” auction. Our event raised \$218,000 for our parish school. Our sponsors, donors and supporters all played a part in this success.

Thank you again. Your support this year and every year is utterly amazing. We will continue to do great things at St. Thomas School! We look forward to seeing everyone in person for our 2021 event.



Representatives of the Friends of St. Thomas Ball Committee presenting a check to the teachers and staff of the school from the fundraising efforts of this year's event. We are excited to announce that the total raised for this event was \$218,000! Thank you to all of our supporters!!

Campaign Kick-Off!



St. Thomas Aquinas is pleased to announce the commencement of our Capital Campaign, Faith in Our Future. After much discussion, years of planning and prayer amongst parish leadership and the Archdiocese of Dubuque, it has been decided to begin our campaign to raise the

necessary funds for the projects identified and supported by the parish community. Our goal is to raise \$2,000,000 to make improvements to our church, parish center and school.

Over the next two months, you will receive updates and important details about the Faith in Our Future Campaign from the pulpit, through the mail, in the bulletin, on the website and Facebook page and at campaign receptions. We ask that

everyone give their fullest attention and cooperation to the efforts of the campaign. All parishioners will be asked to get involved to the best of their ability to ensure a successful campaign.

The campaign will officially begin with a special Kick-Off Celebration scheduled for Sunday, **September 27 at 7:00 PM** in the Parish Center Gymnasium or virtually on the church Facebook page: www.facebook.com/stthomaswc/ Enjoy food and fellowship with other members, listen to inspirational talks and view our newly produced campaign brochure and video. We hope you join us to learn first-hand of our needs, our hopes, and our progress to date. We are looking forward to sharing some exciting news with everyone. Make plans to join us!

With the Lord guiding us and our church, our efforts will be abundantly blessed.



Church Office Update

By Rita Wolfgram, Secretary/Bookkeeper
- St. Thomas & St. Mary

St. Thomas Aquinas Financial Report

July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020 Actual	
RECEIPTS	
Stewardship	\$405,916.75
Cluster & Maintenance	\$ 21,655.56
Donations, Memorial, Fund Raising, Other Receipts	\$ 60,608.35
Religious Ed/Youth Programs	\$ 13,960.45
Diocesan & Other Collections	\$ 15,784.09
Capital Campaign/Renovation	\$ 23,700.96
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$541,626.16
EXPENSES	
Wages & Salaries	\$160,589.71
Parish Life/Administration	\$ 65,526.63
Religious Ed/Youth Programs, School Subsidy	\$143,405.48
Maintenance of Facilities/Rectory	\$ 81,524.34
Diocesan & Other Collections	\$ 17,324.54
Capital Campaign/Architects	\$ 48,743.90
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$517,114.60

July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021 Budget	
RECEIPTS	
Stewardship	\$457,030.00
Cluster & Maintenance	\$ 23,100.00
Donations, Memorial, Fund Raising, Other Receipts	\$ 46,550.00
Religious Ed/Youth Programs	\$ 17,700.00
Diocesan & Other Collections	\$ 10,000.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$554,380.00
EXPENSES	
Wages & Salaries	\$161,673.00
Parish Life/Administration	\$ 63,670.00
Religious Ed/Youth Programs, School Subsidy	\$257,855.00
Maintenance of Facilities/Rectory	\$ 60,975.00
Diocesan & Other Collections	\$ 10,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$554,173.00

*COVID-19 Payroll Protection Program Grant
STA received \$148,480 of which \$117, 655.39
has been used through 6-30-20*

Contribution amount needed weekly \$10,665.00

St. Thomas Aquinas Financial Update

July 2020	Income	Expense	Income/Loss
Month to Date	\$64,940.74	\$50,284.40	\$14,656.34
Year to Date	\$64,940.74	\$50,284.40	\$14,656.34
August 2020			
Month to Date	61,717.48	\$59,567.97	\$2,149.51
Year to Date	\$126,658.22	\$109,852.37	\$16,805.85

Notes to Financial Update:

July Income includes \$21,749.00 of PPP grant money.
August Income includes \$42,260.00 of campaign funds.
August Expenses include \$18,028.00 of campaign funds.

New Parishioners

We are glad to have you as members of the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church family.

Bernadin & Detchine Ducezil and son, Jaidon Ducezil

Nadezhda Witzke and daughters, Genevieve Galecki & Adrianna Witzke

We welcome all to our Parish Family!

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

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Upcoming Events

September

- Capital Campaign meetings have started with the Cabinet members and first phase of volunteers
- Sept 12/13 Campaign Announcement Weekend
- Sept 27 Campaign Kickoff Event - 7pm
- Sept 28 Creative Giving Seminar - 7pm

October

- Oct 7 Youth Faith Formation begins
- Oct 8 Cluster Committee Meeting 6:30 at St Mary
- Oct 15 Pastoral Leadership Study Day 9am-3pm
- Oct 24/25 Campaign Witness Weekend
- Oct 26 Creative Giving Seminar - 7pm
- Oct 31/Nov 1 Commitment Weekend

November

- Nov 1 St Mary Fall Festival
- Nov 5 Lifeserve Blood Drive
- Nov 7/8 Campaign Celebration Weekend
- Nov 8 St Thomas Harvest Raffle & Dinner

December

- Dec 7 Preschool Christmas Program
- Dec 14 K-6 Christmas Program

It's all on-line!
Calendars-News & MORE!
www.stthomaswc.org