



Church of Saint Cecilia

2357 Bayless Place • Saint Paul, MN 55114
651.644.4502
Fax 651.647.1445 • www.stceciliasp.org

Weekly Masses:
Saturday 4:30 & Sunday 8:15 & 10:00
Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday 3:45



WELCOME

To join the parish, please
call the office at 651.644.4502.

OFFICE HOURS

The parish office is open
Monday-Thursday
10:00am to 2:00pm

PARISH STAFF

John M. Hofstede
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pastor@stceciliasp.org

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Safe Environment Coordinator
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Marge Virnig
Pastoral Associate
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Music Coordinator/Choir Director
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Rose Ryan
Maintenance Coordinator
651.644.4502

Trustees

Matthew Tande & Mary Ellen Ryan

The Church of Saint Cecilia

Ordinary Time? Back to Normal? Not yet, and yet.....a pastor's epistle

Many of you are aware of the recent death of my sister Mary which occurred early in the morning on December 26, she had colon cancer and Parkinson's disease and during the time of her diagnosis and treatment she became widowed and had attended to her husband both at home and at a nursing home. Her 79th birthday would have been last Sunday. Until now, I have had two sisters and their families in two geographically distant parts of California. My remaining sister and her husband in southern California are approaching their 87th birthdays this month. Neither is in good health and my brother-in-law also has colon cancer that is no longer treatable. In 2019, I had tickets to travel to see them which remain unused, since I fell and required surgery a week before I was to leave. Then Covid set in. Travel now is once again not a reasonable choice and plans for Mary's funeral have been postponed, given all the above and other concerns facing each sister's extended families.

In the months ahead I will have completed 8 years as pastor at St. Cecilia, 47 years in ordained ministry and will turn 74 years of age. We are all living on borrowed time and by the grace of God and the support of our staff and faithful parishioners who have engaged in their parish ministries as they were able, we have been able to move through the seasons of these past few years living in the shadow of Covid. Given my age, energy level and Covid concerns, I am currently on parish site generally only on Wednesdays, for scheduled parish meetings and on weekends for Liturgies.

During this pandemic, we have had to suspend large gatherings, ordinary hospitality and social functions and our weekly family sessions for our faith formation programs. Nonetheless, I feel we have been able to celebrate parish Baptisms, Funerals, First Communion and Confirmations in creative ways respectful of our parish families.

Our parish staff has been able to meet and adapt to changes we could perceive, our parish Finance Committee and Parish Community Council has with a combination of zoom and in-person sessions.

Meanwhile the **Archdiocese** had prepared and put in place what was termed a "Synod" program and had asked that all parishes keep their calendars open to include their presentations. Their original timeline also required adaptation and adjustment due to Covid. Meanwhile, Pope Francis invited the universal church to engage in a Synod process that is more open-ended, ongoing and, by its nature, less programmatic than the one already undertaken in our local church. During the last half of 2021, Marge Virnig convened a series of weekly meetings using the recorded materials provided by the archdiocese. Marge recorded observations of the parishioners in the format the archdiocese provided and I and other participants also shared observations in communications with Archbishop Hebda and the archdiocesan staff that prepared the materials.

What's the unfinished business? It is clear to me that the archdiocese will use experience they have culled from the listening sessions Archbishop Hebda conducted when he first came to the archdiocese as well as information they have compiled from their recent Synod program as it begins its necessary planning for the future. There is no way yet to assess the impact of "drift" perceived in our various parish communities or the archdiocese as a result of Covid. Nonetheless, there is clear evidence that our local church cannot sustain the present clergy staffing needs in the diocese. It is not only the future of St. Cecilia that would be in question but of the present over-all organization of all parish communities. There is no plan in place at present, but our parish must be prepared to participate in any and every conversation that will affect us.

Our **Trustees, Finance Committee and Parish Community Council and Staff** will certainly be engaged in any way we can and need to be. We will also be looking for additional parishioners who can represent parish interests in any shared conversations and processes that may yet present themselves. Regarding our staff, we range in age from Theresa in her early 40's to Rosie in her upper 80's. Either our median age or our average age tips more in the direction of Rosie than Theresa—you do the math.

I need to clarify the role of each of the above named groups. The two **Trustees and I** are officers of our parish corporation, along with the Archbishop and his representative. We sign-off on an annual parish report of statistics and financial status to the archdiocese. We need to approve any financial transaction or investment or sale of parish property, specifically over the amount of \$25,000 in value. The **Trustees** are appointed by the pastor and other corporate board members, ideally with the recommendation of the **Parish Community Council/ Staff**. The **Finance Committee** develops and oversees the annual parish budget. This is the only committee required by the Canon Law of the church that selects its own members with the recommendation and approval of the pastor. The **Parish Community Council** is a deliberative and consultative body who meet with the pastor. As such, we are not a representative or legislative body and **this body does not make proclamations or other statements as a body. We are a decision making body that may recommend or approve parish policy in consultation and deliberation with each other, but we only exist when we are in session and meeting with each other. Members have no constituency or representational function outside of our meetings.** Occasionally someone has requested bringing an item of interest or concern to our attention. There may have been instances when people other than members have represented an interest at a meeting, but they are not there as members of the Council and do directly not share in the Council's deliberative process or share the Council member's responsibility to attend to the overall mission of the parish and it's corresponding ministries of worship, formation, service and community building. *(Continued)*

No other councils or committees exist formally in the structure of the parish, though we have Teams that are formed and organize around completing a shared task on either an ad hoc or more permanent basis. The Liturgy Team, for example, is a working group that coordinates the various ministries and liturgical calendar. Day to day decisions are generally made by the appropriate professional staff or volunteers who act in coordination with them or me as pastor. Other groups or individuals engage with the parish staff members in carrying out the various tasks and planning appropriate to their area of service.

In light of the above, you all need to be aware that our normal calendar of meetings as well as the manner in which we are able to safely interact has been affected by the Covid pandemic. It has been difficult to develop and maintain relationships and necessary in-person communication. That difficulty persists.

As we try to resume meetings, we have a back-log of programs, projects and concerns that need to be addressed and we need to try to arrange these in the order of importance or necessity as I, staff and various groups are able to determine. I ask you to be patient and respectful of those of us entrusted with this responsibility.

Like any organization or community, we have our share of busy-bodies, gossips, and, in our internet age, trolls. There are some among us who engage in circulating blind-copy internet messages and communication to individuals inside and outside our community. Some of this may be thought to be well-intentioned and some of the information may be deemed useful or important to the sender. Any official parish business, however, is not conducted in this manner and **people who do so do not represent any parish organization or team.** In this sense, they are **self-appointed.** I hope any of our members who receive emails would feel free to question the motive or content of such emails or inform the sender that they prefer not to receive communication in this form. I do not send blind copy (bcc) identified emails and generally don't appreciate receiving them.

There are valid concerns about behavior or conduct or painful experiences or events that impact the lives of individual members and their families. Many rightly may want to be supportive of those affected by any of these things. I hope you can respect the fact that we as staff and volunteers need to be careful stewards of information that we are not always free to communicate. When appropriate, we share what we can publicly and in a way we determine to be respectful. Decisions about what, when and with whom to communicate need to be made on an individual basis on perceived pastoral need. I may express opinions and observations in a general way, but I choose not to engage in public commendation or condemnation of individuals in the parish. I don't believe I please everybody, nor do I want to. Like everyone else, I have my share of irritations and annoyances and may well expect you do as well.

Folks at St. Cecilia, as in many other congregations, like to sing songs such as Marty Haugen's "All Are Welcome" or "Gather Us In," but we need to do so with some integrity. We are sinners all, perfect none, tolerant sometimes.

John Hofstede

COMMUNITY NEWS

Parish Directories are here!

Good news! Our parish directories have arrived! If you were photographed or submitted a photo for inclusion, please stop by the link after Mass or during office hours (M-Th 10am-2pm) and pick up your copy.



Habitat Winter Project

Tres Iglesias will participate in a Habitat for Humanity work camp on Friday January 28th and Saturday January 29th, 2022. If you would like to volunteer please register at cabrinimn.org/habitat-signup. The day will start at 8:30am and end at 3:30pm. The project is indoors at 3247 Irving Ave N, Minneapolis, MN 55412. For further information contact habitat@cabrinimn.org or go to cabrinimn.org/habitat.

Faith FORMATION

The Sandwich Project - Needs YOU!!

We have partnered with the Sandwich Project for many years now helping to provide an immediate food source for the hungry in our community, but the organization has undergone some recent changes. They no longer collect and store the sandwiches and ask that volunteers deliver directly to their food shelf partners. We are hoping to fulfill their sandwich needs for an entire week starting on January 9th. **In order to do this, we need your help!**

On Sunday, January 9th we can have up to 10 groupings in Friendship Hall to assemble our first 400 sandwiches. We then need parishioners to make some sandwiches at home and deliver them to church to round out the rest of the week. I hope to have our volunteers deliver 200 sandwiches each day. **Our goal is 800 sandwiches in 4 days and I'm confident we can do it!** If you sign up to

make sandwiches at home, we ask that you drop them in the bin outside of church only during your assigned times so that we have room for each batch of 200. Follow [this sign-up genius link](#) to get involved. Thank you for your help this winter season!

Upcoming Dates:

January 9th

Liturgy of the Word
Sacramental Prep
CGS: Group A

January 15th

Reconciliation Retreat - Sac Prep Class
9am-12pm

January 16th

CGS: Group B

January 23rd

Liturgy of the Word
Sacramental Prep
CGS: Group A


January 30th

CGS Group B

Have a plan for the ones you leave behind.
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