

VOLUME 5 • ISSUE NO. 1

# HEART TO HEART





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# EDITOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church Newsletter. Newsletters have often served to keep community members apprised of the activities in and around their parish. While we will still endeavor to do that, our newsletter will aspire to accomplish a little something more. We can learn all we need to about the usual goings-on of our parish from our weekly bulletin or from the announcements.

Our newsletter will strive to create a space for the education and artful expression of our parish and its members. Whether through articles about important upcoming saint feast days, highlighting new ministries and events, or short stories and poems, this newsletter will serve as a hub for the members of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church. Each issue of *Heart to Heart* will home in on an initial theme or topic. These themes might be broad, like “Personal Health and Faith” and “Gardening at Home and Through the Ages,” or narrow, like “Christ’s Message at Christmas.” Regardless, each issue will strive to feature perspectives from both in and outside of our parish.

We will begin this issue by focusing on a new ministry in our church and the saint from whom they have drawn inspiration. Saint Hildegard of Bingen will receive much attention in this issue of *Heart to Heart*.

We sincerely hope that you will enjoy reading this newsletter and look forward with eager anticipation to the issues that follow.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,  
Nick Bonds



# SAINT HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

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The Rhine Hesse stretches across the west bank of the Rhine to the Alsenz rivers and down south to the Iseach. The region borders the Rhineland to its west and Bavaria to its east. This area of Germany has long been considered fertile and tame, compared to many of the rugged mountains that surround it. It was here that Hildegard of Bingen was born in around 1098.

Her family was a lower and free branch of the nobility attached to the Count of Meginhard of Sponheim. Traditionally, Hildegard is regarded to be the youngest (and most sickly) in her family. Despite her family's relative wealth and status, they could do little to help their perpetually sick child. However, this sickness did little to hinder the young Hildegard. In her *Vita*, Hildegard was grounded by what she referred to as the "umbra viventis lucis," or the reflection of the Living Light: *"The light which I see thus is not spatial, but it is far, far brighter than a cloud which carries the sun. I can measure neither height, nor length, nor breadth in it."*



Maybe because of her intense and vivid visions or because she was simply the youngest child of her family, Hildegard was offered to the Benedictines of Disibodenberg. Her final vows were recorded on All Saints Day in 1112, along with her close friend, Jutta. These two formed the center of a growing community of women religious that formed around the monastery. It is from Jutta that Hildegard likely learned to read, write, and, garden.

Jutta died in 1136 and Hildegard was unanimously elected as the *magistra* by her community and asked to be Prioress. However, Hildegard bucked at this notion, preferring instead to start her own community in St. Rupertsberg in 1150. While her abbot was reluctant to grant permission for such a venture, Hildegard sought permission from the local bishop and was granted the right to form her own community. She fell ill shortly after this, and was healed shortly after her abbot relented to her initial request. Hildegard's endeavor was followed by a second monastery in Eibingen.

During her life, Hildegard's other-worldly visions were initially a source of suffering. At the age of 42, she received one powerful vision that she believed was an instruction from God to "write down what you see and hear." The image on the previous page depicts Hildegard's self portrait and the one to the left is the *Choir of Angels*. In her books *Scivias*, *Liber Vitae Meritorum*, and *Liber Divinorum Operum*, Saint Hildegard illustrates her sometimes strange and poignant visions and follows them with commentary. In this way, she extrapolates theological meaning from every vision.

Outside of her theological significance, Hildegard was also an accomplished scientist and naturalist. Her books *Physica* and *Causae et Curae*, explore the human body and various remedies for many common illnesses. In over 300 chapters, Hildegard covers everything from burns, animal husbandry and bleeding, as well as detailing a recipe for "good humour cookies." The recipe for which can be found on the next page.

In her own lifetime, Hildegard managed to become a remarkably educated woman. Her sheer correspondance with the outside world documents her dogged pursuit of theological truth, albeit through often creative and unorthodox methods. Yet, despite this, Hildegard still gained authorization to continue her work from Pope Eugenius.

Many abbots, bishops, and abbesses asked for her intercession and advice. She retained continued communication with several popes, statesmen, emperors, and even future saints, such as Bernard of Clairvaux. Hildegard was able, during a time many regard as oppressive toward woman, to become a prominent voice in the Catholic Church.

Hildegard of Bingen died on September 17th of 1179 at the age of 81. She was not beatified for two centuries, but popular devotion to her continued and persisted despite her lack of inclusion in the formal canon of saints. On October 7th of 2012, Pope Benedict XVI declared Hildegard a Doctor of the Church. She was, he declared "perennially relevant."

Saint Hildegard is a worthy model of the Christian life. She showed (at time reluctant) obedience, piety, and a knack for inventiveness when necessary. She remains one of the Church's greatest mystics. Most interestingly, she expressed the delicate and confluent nature of the divine and humanity in a new way and within the confines of the Catholic Church.

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## COOKIES OF JOY



### Ingredients

- 12 tablespoons butter
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/3 cup raw honey
- 4 egg yolks
- 2 1/2 cups spelt flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon cloves

### Instructions

1. Melt the butter, then add it to bowl with the sugar, honey, and egg yolks. Beat gently, then add the remaining the ingredients. Chill the dough for an hour.
2. Flour a surface and then roll out the cookie dough until roughly a 1/4 inch thick. Cut the dough into circles.
3. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper, then bake at 375 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 minutes.

# PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLNESS AT SACRED HEART

One of the most recent additions to Sacred Heart's roster of programs is Saint Hildegard's Health and Wellness Ministry. This group is focused on helping everyone, regardless of their progress towards a healthy lifestyle. Each member of the ministry brings a wholly unique and valued perspective to health and wellness.



*The Feast of St. Hildegard [was] September 17th. It is encouraged that you take the time to read about her and learn what a great person she was. We are a new group founded using her name seeking better health through prayer, activity, and improved eating habits. We meet at the Family Life Center every Monday from 10:00 – 11:00 AM unless there is a holiday that falls on Monday. You may contact the church office for further information. - Bonita Moreau*

To learn more about Saint Hildegard's Health and Wellness Ministry, call the church office at 256-237-3011.



# MUSIC CONNECTS TO MEMORIES, LIFE, AND GOD



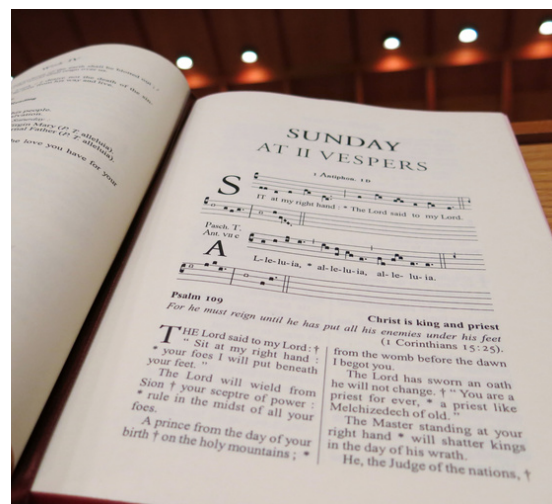
*Mary Rhodes*  
*Music Director*

Music acts as a time capsule - it allows us to revisit past experiences and relive the emotions associated with them, even if only for a moment. A song triggers an emotion that matches the emotions felt at the time the event happened. Music tends to accompany many distinctive life events, such as school events, holidays, weddings, and funerals.

When listening to music, the brain's visual cortex lights up. This causes us to associate the sound with visual and other memories almost instantly. These "sensory-snapshots" become memories and remain with us for the rest of our lives.

Throughout history, music has been used in spiritual ceremonies in the form of acapella singing, chants, and hymn singing. Music has a boundless property that can connect you to something greater than yourself and has been proven to positively affect spirituality and quality of life.

*Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;  
cry out to the rock of our salvation.<sup>a</sup>  
Let us come before him with a song of praise,  
joyfully sing out our psalms.  
For the LORD is the great God,  
the great king over all gods,  
Whose hand holds the depths of the earth;  
who owns the tops of the mountains.  
The sea and dry land belong to God,  
who made them, formed them by hand.  
Psalm 95:1-5*



God gives us music as a reflection of the goodness and beauty of His presence. The words of the hymns and psalms proclaim the story of salvation. Music has a way of piercing into the deep parts of our soul. Singing helps unite us to the Church. Hymns are expressions of praise to God for who He is and what He has done. God desires our singing.

Music, as God intended it, has been given to His creation in the form of gifts and talents to bring honor and glory to God and to praise Him. Music is a gift from our Heavenly Father and an important part of worship.

Singing is one of the two primary ways God's word richly resides in us. Music is a blessing. It moves us, inspires us, gives us courage, comforts us, connects us to God and to others.





# THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY CATECHESIS

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We often hear that the family is the building block of society. Usually, this is said in reference to the development and flourishing of civic society, but it is also true - perhaps more so, even - in regards to our Christian community. The truth is that the Church cannot grow without the family, which is why it takes such a central place in our faith. But when we talk of the family, we must recognize that we do not simply mean a unit composed of husband, wife, and children. For Catholics, the family is much more. It is, as the Catechism says, a domestic church where faith, hope and charity are taught and nurtured in a very special way.



*Matt Tyson*  
*Director of Religious*  
*Education*

Our parish recently kicked off the 2023-24 Pastoral Year, welcoming first communicants, catechumens, and candidates of all ages into sacramental preparation classes. However, these are not the only demographics served through our educational program. We also offer small groups aimed at helping the parents of our parish grow in knowledge, wisdom, and faith so that they can better assist and guide their children throughout their Christian formation.

If you were to attend one of these meetings, you might hear a commonly repeated mantra: “The parent is the child’s primary catechist.” Though Sacred Heart is blessed with a robust and successful religious education program, it cannot supplant the religious learning that is meant to happen within the family home. Each and every Christian parent has a sworn duty to raise their children in the faith, teaching and modeling the Gospel message in everyday life through prayer, instruction, quality time, and conduct. This “family catechesis” is directly connected to the promises we make to God and His church when we present our children for Holy Baptism. What the child sees and hears in Mass or during their catechetical classes takes root through the work of the parents, which in turn grows and strengthens the community of the faithful.

There are, of course, challenges in catechizing our children - whether it be finding the time, the words, or the materials. That is why Sacred Heart offers the Wednesday night parent classes, as well as other resources available through the church office. These classes and resources are open to any parent of the parish, even those without children in sacramental preparation. Therefore we invite all our parish families to take advantage of these opportunities so they can grow their domestic church at home and the Holy Catholic Church at large.

# MAKING A GOOD COMMUNION

*Father John McDonald*

*Pastor, Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church*



When I was receiving my catechesis for First Communion, Sr. Mary Christopher Foy, SSF, who was our catechist, carefully taught us the importance of receiving Holy Communion with great reverence, mindfulness, devotion, and piety. She reminded us that to make a Holy Communion should never be treated casually or routinely. It is rather the culmination of an act of worship through which the Lord wishes to dwell within us and make us the messengers of His love.

Another religious brother who taught me many good things told me that when we go to receive Holy Communion, we should pray for someone that needs healing, someone who is lost, and someone who needs to know the Lord Jesus better. That helps us remember that receiving Holy Communion is not an individualistic act. It is an act of living in profound Communion with Christ and with all who profess the same faith in Him. Holy Communion should not be understood as a prize for one's good behavior, but rather as an act of faith and devotion for the salvation of the whole world and the fulfillment of God's Kingdom.

Worry, hurry, and the many distractions of the world can take away the recollection we need to make a good Communion. Making a good Communion really starts with freeing oneself from those things which have separated us from God. A good Communion starts with a good moment of sacramental reconciliation. Even if grave mortal sins are not on our conscience, it can happen that we have many smaller sins that have blunted our sensibilities to the profound love of Jesus offered to us in the Eucharist. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, gives us an example of a person who regularly goes to confession in order to live most fully our Eucharistic communion.



Our outward signs of proper reception of Holy Communion are reflections of our inward dispositions, as with all things. This is a lesson that is often rejected in our contemporary “come as you are” society. Jesus’ every action and word towards His disciples was oriented towards inspiring change in the person.



We may start in one place with the Lord Jesus, but we should never remain static in our relationship with Him. Properly receiving Holy Communion is not a question of who is worthy and who is not, but rather is a question for a person’s conscience: “Have I responded to God’s love in the way that the Blessed Virgin Mary did? Am I able to receive Him humbly? Am I living in love and charity with all my neighbors? Do I harbor ill will against anyone? Have I made every effort to follow the teachings of the Church according to my state in life? What change have I made in my life to love Him more?”



These questions help us to make a good Communion. I ask myself these questions in every Mass I celebrate, and over the many years, Jesus still responds with challenges and graces that abound. Responding to these challenges and cherishing the graces, we can be truly thankful, which is the meaning of the Greek word “Eucharisto,” and so doing, live our Christian lives in a profound way.

# UPDATES FROM THE PASTORAL COUNCIL



The Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Pastoral Council meets quarterly. In the context of prayer and reflecting on the parish's ministerial activity, the Pastoral Council investigates current circumstances and needs, consider ways to respond, and propose concrete efforts.

We tend to slow down a little in the summer months, coming off the pastoral year and big "year end" events. However, that does not mean that July, August, and September have been idle time. July and August are great moments to pause and catch a breath before we plunge back into the Pastor Year in September.

July and August are also perfect to reflect on the work done in the previous year and decide how we might improve the experience for the upcoming year. As parishioners, it is important for us to be active in our own parish and see God working within each and every person.

While many may have been on summer break, there was still much to do at Sacred Heart:

- The formation of St. Hildegard's Health and Wellness Group, which meets on Mondays at 10:00 am in the Activity Center
- The formation of the Chrismon group, which meets on Tuesdays at 10:00 in the Activity Center
- The Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Life Center is nearing completion and scheduled to be finished by the end of this year.
- PSR and OCIA began again on September 6th.
- The Feast of the Sacred Heart was on June 26th of this year and was tremendous success. Be sure to attend next year's Feast on June 7th.





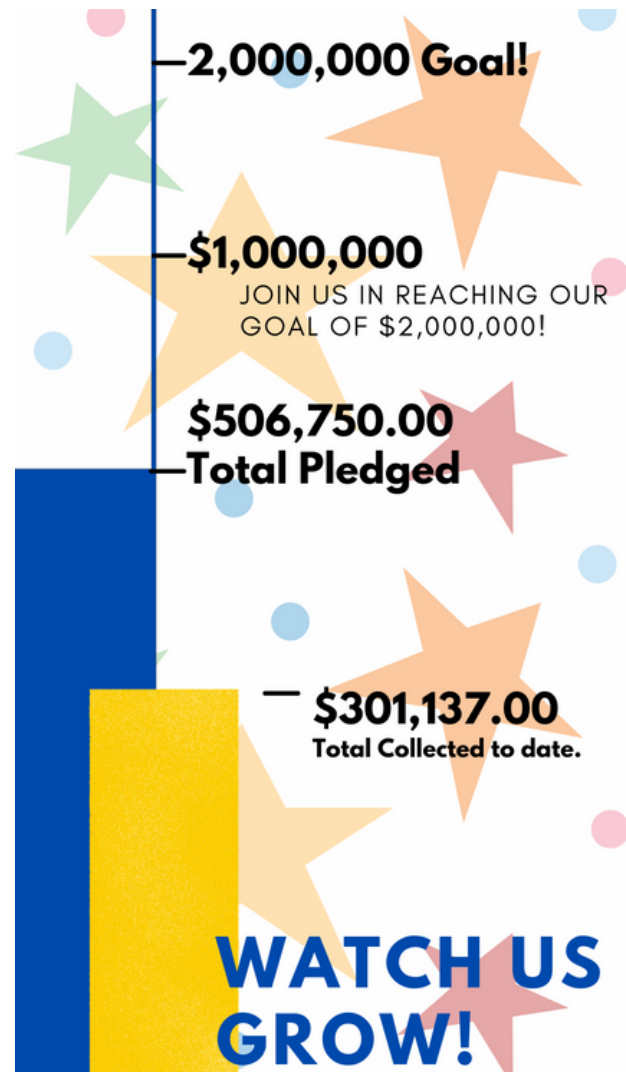
# UPDATES FROM THE FINANCE COUNCIL

A Parish Finance Council assists the pastor in the financial decisions required to run a parish. The Finance Council meets quarterly, but also as needed to discuss any major financial changes or immediate fundraising needs.

This year, we have been particularly focused on raising the funds necessary to construct our new parish life center. Fundraising and capital campaigns are multi-faceted endeavors, and involve taking the entire parish into account. Those efforts have been a rousing success for our relatively small parish. Since January of this year, we have received or had pledged over \$500,000 dollars.

Many of these donations have come in the form of cash or pledges, but we have received stock donations and even a house!

Remember to donate or fill our a pledge card! They can be found in the vestibule or by contacting the church office at 256-237-3011.



## **REMINDER**

*The next family night is October  
15th at 5:00 PM!*

Be sure to come and get a first hand  
look at our new Parish Family Life  
Center!

# UPCOMING LITURGIES



The central focus of a parish is the liturgy, the work of the people in Mass. From that effort, all of the work of the community comes to fruition. On this page, we will endeavor to highlight particular feast days of importance and list out the significant liturgy schedule for the upcoming quarter.

- Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael
  - Friday, September 29th
  - Blue Mass at 6:00 PM
- Our Lady of the Rosary
  - Saturday, October 7th
- All Saints
  - Wednesday, November 1st
  - Vigil Mass at 5:00 PM (All Saints)
  - Day Mass at 7:00 AM, 12:00 PM, and 6:30 PM
- Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
  - Friday, December 8th
  - Vigil Mass at 5:00 PM (All Saints)
  - Day Mass at 7:00 AM, 12:00 PM, and 6:30 PM
- Our Lady of Guadalupe
  - Tuesday, December 12th
  - 6:30 PM
- The Nativity of the Lord
  - Monday, December 25th
  - Sunday at 10:00 AM, 5:00 PM, 7:00 PM, and 12:00 AM
  - Monday at 9:00 AM







"GLANCE AT  
THE SUN.  
SEE THE MOON  
AND STARS.  
GAZE AT THE  
BEAUTY OF THE  
GREEN EARTH.  
NOW THINK."

SAINT HILDEGARD OF  
BINGEN

*The Redeemer* by Saint  
Hildegard of Bingen

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