

# St. Patrick

## CATHOLIC CHURCH

Apr/May 2024

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## MEET PARISHIONER MARIE NICOLE STRAHAN

*Living Out Gratitude for God's Blessings Every Day*

When Marie Nicole Strahan and her family first joined St. Patrick, they received a warm welcome that left a positive impression on them.

"I'm someone that likes to welcome people and make them feel comfortable," Marie Nicole says. "So when I received that, I think that was an extra blessing."

With both her husband and son named Patrick, they also felt it was a natural fit to join a parish with their same namesake.

That was 15 years ago when the Strahans moved from California. Since then, Marie Nicole has served as an active member of many different ministries in our parish community and now serves on staff as the Executive Assistant to the Pastor and Safe Environment Coordinator.

Marie Nicole first started volunteering as a catechist for the second-grade students preparing for Holy Communion and First Reconciliation. She has also been a faith formation catechist for the middle school Edge program, high school Life Teen program, and adult faith formation programs. During the Mass, she has served as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, including to the homebound, sacristan, altar server, and wedding coordinator.

In 2015, Marie Nicole was hired as a staff member, and she has performed



*Since her family came to the area 15 years ago, Marie Nicole Strahan has served as an active member of many ministries in our parish community, and now serves on staff as the Executive Assistant to the pastor.*

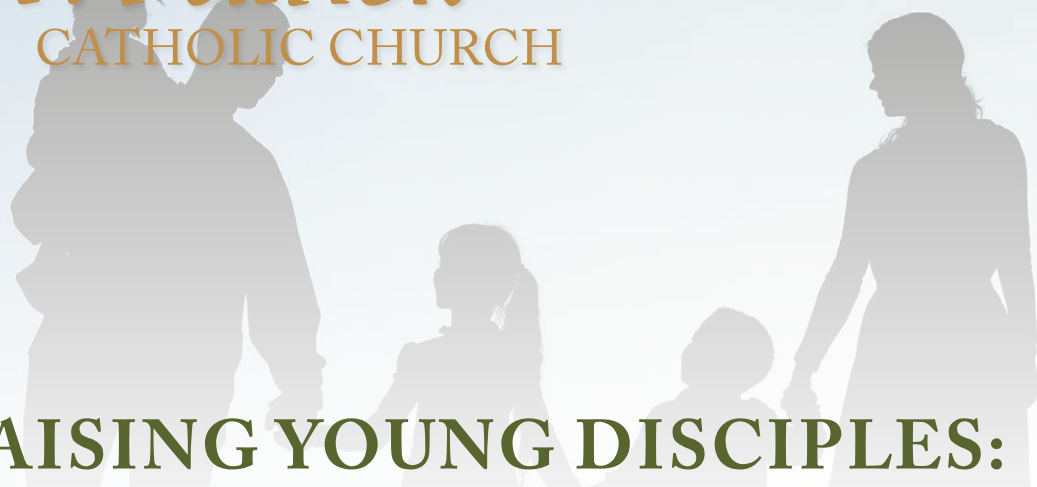
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# St. Patrick

## CATHOLIC CHURCH



## RAISING YOUNG DISCIPLES: *Instilling Stewardship Values in Our Children*

Parents play a vital role in weaving threads of love, compassion, and service into the lives of their children. As stewards of God's gifts, it becomes imperative for parents to guide their kids toward active participation in the life of the parish, fostering a culture of stewardship that goes beyond mere obligation. Embracing stewardship as a way of life involves sharing time, talent, and treasure, instilling values that resonate with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Encourage your children to actively engage in parish activities, forming connections with fellow parishioners. This sense of community enhances their understanding of stewardship as a shared responsibility within the larger family of faith.

Children learn best by observing. Demonstrate a commitment to stewardship by volunteering your time and talents in various parish ministries. When they witness your dedication, they are more likely to emulate it in their own lives. Help your children identify their unique talents and interests. Encourage them to explore ministries that align with their passions, whether it's singing in the choir, assisting in youth groups, or participating in outreach programs.

When it comes to Stewardship of Time, to help our kids become more active in parish life and foster a prayer life within them, attend parish workshops or seminars together as a family to deepen your understanding of stewardship. This shared learning experience reinforces the importance of dedicating time to spiritual growth and community service.

Parents also can cultivate a habit of family prayer, incorporating gratitude for the blessings received. Emphasize the importance of praying not only for personal needs

but also for the well-being of the parish community.

In terms of talent, dedicate specific days to family service, where everyone participates in activities that benefit the parish or the wider community. This could involve cleaning the parish grounds, organizing charity events, or visiting the elderly.

Another way to engage our children is to empower them to take the lead in organizing youth events or services. This not only nurtures their leadership skills but also fosters a sense of responsibility towards the parish community.

Parents can also encourage artistic or musical talents by involving your children in parish activities. Whether it's contributing artwork for church events or performing during liturgical celebrations, such expressions of talent become meaningful contributions to the parish.

When it comes to treasure, even children can fulfill this stewardship tenet. Instill the practice of regular financial contributions to the parish. Involve your children in this process, explaining the significance of supporting the Church financially to sustain its ministries and outreach programs.

Encourage children to allocate a portion of their allowances or earnings to charitable causes. This instills the importance of sharing resources with those in need and reinforces the principles of stewardship in the context of financial responsibility.

In nurturing the seeds of stewardship within the hearts of Catholic children, parents contribute to the flourishing of a vibrant and engaged parish community. Through shared time, talent, and treasure, families weave a beautiful tapestry of faith, embodying the essence of Christian stewardship as a way of life.



A Letter From Our Pastor

# GROWING DEEPER IN DISCIPLESHIP DURING THIS *Sacred Easter Season*

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

**W**ishing you grace and peace this Easter season. I am filled with joy and gratitude as we come together to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Easter isn't just a single day but a 50-day season, symbolizing the profound joy in Christ's triumph over death. During this time, let's reflect on living stewardship as a way of life — a commitment core to our identity as Jesus' disciples.

Stewardship goes beyond financial support; it's a transformative way of life. As we commemorate the resurrection, let's remember that true discipleship extends into every aspect of our daily lives. It's about generously sharing the gifts God has bestowed upon us.

As we celebrate the Easter season, stewardship lets us actively participate in Christ's resurrection life. Like Jesus sacrificed for us, Stewardship calls us to selflessly give, love, serve, and build a community rooted in faith, hope, and charity. Through faithful stewardship, we grow closer to Jesus, especially in this sacred season.

Reflect on the early Christian community described in Acts of the Apostles — they held all things in common, supporting one another in love and unity. In our stewardship, let's emulate this spirit, fostering belonging and support that mirrors Christ's love.

In this edition of our newsletter, we have a wonderful story about one of our parishioners, Marie Nicole Strahan, who in many ways exemplifies living the disciple's way of life through stewardship. I hope her story inspires us all to become better stewards.

We also have a feature story on our Kairos Prison Ministry, which incorporates three programs that minister to the

incarcerated and their loved ones. Parishioner Ann Weida coordinates this ministry and needs more volunteers to step forward to serve, so be sure to read this informative piece and, hopefully, you will feel called to serve in this way.

Finally, our parish is committed to giving parishioners opportunities to encounter God's Word and listen to the story of His salvation through our Bible Study groups. Currently, there are four different Bible Study groups available to parishioners, so I hope you will read this article to find out all about these groups and how you can grow closer to Christ by participating.

As the Easter season continues through Pentecost in early May, I encourage you to prayerfully reflect on deepening your commitment to stewardship. Engage in acts of kindness, embrace gratitude, and share your time and resources generously. This enriches our spiritual journey and contributes to our parish community's flourishing.

May this Easter season bring renewal and transformation. Let the seeds of stewardship planted in our hearts blossom into a vibrant and enduring way of life. Together, let's walk in the footsteps of our resurrected Lord, growing in faith and embodying the love that defines us as His disciples.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Quezada, *Pastor*





# St. Patrick

## CATHOLIC CHURCH

# BIBLE STUDY COMING TO KNOW CHRIST



*Melissa Anderson serves as Facilitator of the Tuesday morning Bible Study.*



*Adults gather to study the Bible, with facilitators Melissa Anderson and Andy Ziny leading at the front of the classroom.*

Our Catholic faith is based on both Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture. It is through Scripture that we encounter God's Word and are able to listen to the story of His salvation for us. It is incredibly important that we take the time to dive into the Scriptures — to read them, and understand them. One way that St. Patrick's encourages parishioners to encounter the Bible is through joining together as a group and participating in a Bible study.

Currently, there are four different Bible study groups available to parishioners — Mondays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Tuesdays from 9:30 to 11 a.m., the men's group on Thursdays from 6:30 to 7:30 a.m., and the Face-to-Face Encounter With Jesus group that meets on the third Thursday evening of the month. The Monday evening and Tuesday morning groups are both currently studying *The Bible Timeline* from Ascension Press.

"It is a 24-session program that explores our salvation history through the historical books of the Bible," says Melissa Anderson, facilitator of the Tuesday morning Bible Study. "It ties all the individual books into one long story that shows us God's plan for salvation. Most of the time our studies have a three-pronged approach to the topic. We answer questions in the workbook before coming to class. At the beginning of class, everyone discusses their answers to the questions with their small group.

"Those are very enlightening times, and lead to so many deep discussions of various aspects of our faith," she adds. "Finally, we watch the video presentation on that same topic."

Bible studies are a great way to join together to learn more about the Catholic faith. It is so important that we are always studying the Scriptures because it is through Scripture study that we come to know God. It is also important to study using a Catholic program, alongside other like-minded Catholics. It can be easy for us to lose some of the meaning and miss some of the important parts because of our English translations or references that we do not understand — so Catholic commentaries and Bible studies provide tools for overcoming many of the challeng-



# TUDIES: ST BY STUDYING HIS *Word*

es that we face when reading Scripture on our own.

“Another reason for providing Bible studies is to provide a defense against the lures and trappings of the world,” says Andy Ziny, facilitator of the Monday evening Bible study. “So much of our society wants to lead us on a path to the destruction of our souls. Bible studies are the place to find the truth. We need that truth to guide our lives rather than the media, the entertainment industry, and ‘influences’ on social media.”

*“So much of our society wants to lead us on a path to the destruction of our souls. Bible studies are the place to find the truth. We need that truth to guide our lives rather than the media, the entertainment industry, and ‘influences’ on social media.”*

— Andy Ziny

*If you are interested in joining a Bible Study and learning more about the Word of God, contact Melissa Anderson at [maanderson401@icloud.com](mailto:maanderson401@icloud.com) or Donna James at [jamesdonna50@gmail.com](mailto:jamesdonna50@gmail.com).*

## MEET PARISHIONER MARIE NICOLE STRAHAN

*continued from front cover*

a variety of roles in the years since. The position in the church office is different from the pace of her previous professional experience, which included work as a paralegal involving high-profile cases in California, and working as a dispatcher and jailer in the police department.

“You meet some of the same challenges in the corporate world, but a lot of different challenges too, because you’re doing God’s work,” Marie Nicole says. “The way that you handle a situation or the way you respond is very important because you’re doing God’s work. I have taken all my jobs very seriously. I receive a lot of rewards working for the Church.”

Marie Nicole has a very strong faith, which she says has grown through her roles and service to our church. She appreciates the learning experiences, both good and bad, of life as a Catholic.

“The world is not perfect and we’re not perfect,” she says. “God gives us different challenges, but He is always there to get us through them. You have to trust in Him.”

Having faced a cancer diagnosis — now in remission —

Marie Nicole sees how God’s strength got her through all the treatments and challenges.

“From the moment I got diagnosed to being in remission now, it’s been a very hard challenge, but God has always had me in the palm of His hand,” she says. “I’ve always felt that way.”

On a daily basis, Marie Nicole asks God in the morning to help her to do His will for the day. Throughout the day, she prays to Him and asks for His assistance in everyday tasks. At the end of the day, she reflects and looks at where she could improve and further seek His will. She also prioritizes daily gratitude for the blessings God gives her.

“I always, throughout the day, look at all the blessings God gives us,” Marie Nicole says. “I’m relatively a positive person. The police department helped me to compartmentalize — you’re exposed to a lot of tragedy and high-stress situations. It taught me that being able to wake up in the morning, that’s a blessing. Having a roof over my head, food to eat — those seem like little things that are, for a lot of people, actually really big things they don’t have.”



## CELEBRATING THE *Easter Season*

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**E**aster Sunday fell on the final day of March in 2024, but even when the glorious day comes to a close and the calendar turns to April, remember that Easter is far from over – the celebration of the greatest feast day of the Church year continues for the next 50 days.

On Easter Sunday, we celebrate Christ rising from the dead, following His gruesome passion and death. On that glorious Sunday – three days after He died – Christ fulfilled His promise, “Destroy this temple and I will rebuild it in three days” (Jn. 2:19) and the promises of the Old Covenant, “I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers. They will strike at your head while you strike at their heel” (Gen. 3:15).

Through His resurrection, Jesus broke the chains of sin and death, opening for us the way to eternal life. Yet, His mission was not yet over. He was back with His disciples, showing them that what had been promised to their fathers had been fulfilled.

“Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.” (Lk. 24:46-48).

Yet, again, there is still more.

After all, Jesus is not still walking the earth, showing us Himself, is He?

Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus Ascended to His Father’s right hand. That day falls on May 9 this year, but the Feast of the Ascension is a moveable feast and will be celebrated this year on May 12. And 50 days after Easter, the Father sent His Spirit, just as Christ promised He would.

And with that (the feast we now celebrate as Pentecost, which falls on May 19 this year), Christ’s salvific mission was accomplished, and it is with the celebration of that great feast that we conclude the Easter season – a season of joyful recognition of the salvation Christ won for us.

Having been beaten and killed for our sins, Christ rose from the dead breaking the bonds of sin. Then, after He ascended to His rightful place in heavenly glory, the Lord sent the Spirit, and now, armed with the power of the Spirit, the Church serves as the sacrament of salvation on Earth – offering us sanctifying grace (a share in the life of Christ Himself) through the sacraments.

As you can see, the Easter season offers us a time to commemorate some of the most important events in the history of salvation. In fact, it can rightly be called the most important season of the Church year, for it is now – during these 50 days – that we celebrate the fruits of Christ’s sacrifice.

Today, though Christ has won the victory over sin, we are all still living in a tainted world. We still feel the effects of sin because we do not yet fully partake of the fruits of Christ’s victory. That we will only know when (and if) we, by the grace of God, enter eternal glory in the heavenly kingdom.

Let us all take the time this Easter season to thank God for the gift of salvation. Spend time reflecting on how much we have opened our hearts to the grace He pours upon us. May we all be more aware of the glory Christ has won for us, and, in so doing, willingly detach ourselves from the fruits of this world so that we may be more receptive to the fruits of His grace.



## KAIROS PRISON MINISTRY

### *Impacting Lives and Bringing Christ to the Incarcerated*

**A**s a longtime member of the Kairos Prison Ministry, Ann Weida has witnessed firsthand the great impact that the ministry has on the lives of the incarcerated.

“One of the biggest miracles I have seen happened with a man who was in prison for life,” says Ann. “After attending the four-day retreat, he experienced a large conversion and was able to reduce his sentence to 18 years. Once he got out, he started working for a heating and air conditioning company.

“He was such an exemplary employee that the owner of the company eventually sold the company to the man,” she adds. “Now, he is doing very well for himself and uses much of his financial resources and extra time to minister to others.”

A non-denominational Christian ministry, Kairos ministers to thousands of people in over 400 correctional institutions across 37 states and nine countries. The ministry incorporates three programs that minister to the incarcerated and their loved ones. The Kairos Inside program is the original prison ministry that ministers to inmates — or residents, as they are referred to by the ministry. In 1989, Kairos Outside was created to support the wives and mothers of incarcerated men. Finally, in 1997, Kairos Torch was created to reach young people who are at risk of getting in trouble with the law and direct them down a better path toward Christ.

“Kairos is the most successful, worldwide prison ministry,” Ann says. “When we first meet the offenders, we introduce ourselves and tell them, ‘We aren’t here to change you.’ The purpose of the ministry is to give them tools to help them if they do want to grow.”

As much as the ministry is focused on evangelizing and bringing Christ to the residents, it is also about helping those in prison create lasting and positive relationships

with each other so they can support each other in faith.

The ministry starts with a four-day retreat.

“On retreat, we provide all the food, which is a large draw for the residents to attend,” Ann says. “More importantly, there are a series of talks given by clergymen and lay people that are focused on helping the offenders accept themselves, open up to Christ, forgive, and move forward by living a Christian life through accepting God’s grace.

“At the end of the retreat, we have a graduation ceremony at which the offenders are invited to give witness to what they got from the program,” she adds. “This is a powerful moment and one that is extremely rewarding to us volunteers.”

After the retreat, the roughly 65 participants are invited to weekly Sunday meetings with the volunteers, called Prayers and Shares, where the bonds that were formed at the retreat are strengthened as the inmates continue to pray together and support each other in their faith.

Additionally, every fourth Sunday, the Kairos volunteers return to the prison for a larger reunion, where they continue to listen to the inmates and witness to the love of Christ.

“The reunions are other times for the offenders to socialize and build Christ-centered relationships,” Ann says. “They are less formal and include a meal.”

There is a need for more volunteers. Unfortunately, many correctional facilities in the state of Colorado do not have access to Kairos because of the lack of volunteers. To volunteer, you will have to pass a background check and attend state-sponsored and Kairos trainings. But, as Ann notes, the reward of sharing Christ with others in this way is much greater than the sacrifice.

*For more information about Kairos, or if you would like to inquire about serving, contact Ann Weida at 719-548-9102.*

# St. Patrick

## CATHOLIC CHURCH



6455 Brook Park Dr.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80918  
719-598-3595  
<https://stpatscs.org/>

### Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil: 4:30pm  
Sunday: 7:45am, 9:30am, 11:30am

### Weekday Masses

Wednesday, Friday: 7:00am  
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 12:00pm

## STEWARDSHIP RETREAT

*St. Joseph the Good Steward*



All parishioners are invited to attend this upcoming spiritual retreat, which will be a powerful opportunity to pull away from the demands of everyday life and spend time with God and with one another. During our retreat, discern how God is calling you to use your gifts for His people, right here, right now. The retreat will include inspiring talks about St. Joseph, the Good Steward, by Msgr. Robert Tucker from Seward, Neb. There will be time for quiet reflection and brief small-group discussion.

SATURDAY,  
APRIL 27  
8:00 A.M. - 2 P.M.

ST. PATRICK  
CATHOLIC  
CHURCH  
6455 Brook Park Drive

Please RSVP by April 14  
to 719-598-3595 or  
[mstrahan@stpatscs.org](mailto:mstrahan@stpatscs.org)

Continental Breakfast & Lunch will be served | No Cost To Attend