

Mass Intentions ~ February 4-10, 2019

Monday @ 7:30 am — Tommy Autrey (RIP)
Tuesday @ 7:30 am — Joan Goodman (RIP)
Wednesday @ 6:00 pm — Phyllis Harris (RIP)
Thursday @ 7:30 am — Patrick Hurley (RIP)
Friday @ 7:30 am — Communion Service
Saturday @ 5:30 pm — People of the Parish
Sunday @ 8:00 am — Ruth Marquez (RIP)
Sunday @ 10:30 am — Betty Benton (RIP)

New Prayer Requests

Special Intentions:

Fr. Bernie Farrell
Jasper Gamberini, father of Kristina Gamberini-Garland
Alvin Folse, father of Renee Borne
Robert Radcliff, friend of Doug & Shannon Falcon

Repose of the Soul:

Barbara Vincke, cousin of Maggie Peacock
Billie Brown, mother of Walter Brown

(see the full prayer list on our website & prayer board)

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday 4:30-5pm **Adoration this week:** Monday—Friday, 8am-12noon

*Altar Flowers this weekend are donated by Susan Weldy, in memory of Emily J. Newberry.
Blessed Mother Flowers this weekend are donated by Alice Agner, in memory of Carolyn Ann Agner.*

~ notes ~ dates ~ events ~

Catholic Service Appeal 2019 — Today our annual commitments to the Catholic Service Appeal are being offered throughout the Diocese. The CSA gives us the opportunity to act together as a diocesan family by supporting programs and services no parish alone can offer. Every gift, regardless of the size, is important to the success of the Appeal. To reach our parish goal we are asking each of you to support the Appeal for the many gifts God has given to you. For more on information about the Appeal or to donate online please visit www.jacksondiocese.org.

Women's Guild Sewing Activity — Thursday, February 7th from 10:30 am -12 noon Please join us in cutting fabric to make dresses for *Dress A Girl Around the World* in the FLC, Room 112. We will be sewing on a follow up date. The goal is to gather to sew and distribute dresses to girls in need around the world. The Women's Guild is sponsoring this activity.

Drawdown Time — February 16th, 7pm-11pm in the Family Life Center — Tickets are on sale after all weekend Masses until sold out. Stop by the table near the offices to get your ticket today.

Abbey Youth Fest — March 23, 2019 — Join our youth and thousands of other Catholic youth for a full day of fun, fellowship, and prayer. Register now! Contact Cory Head by email at youth@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com

When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child;
when I became a man, I put aside childish things.
At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face.
At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known.
So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Cor 13:11-13

Office phone: 601-992-9547 Hours: Tuesday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
www.saintpaulcatholicchurch.com



Our mission is to invite everyone into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

February 3, 2019

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Friendship Seated on the Couch

We have been reflecting a great deal on a personal relationship with Jesus — especially since we began ChristLife. We've discussed relationship with Jesus — friendship with Jesus — can we realistically picture it? Some people might find this idea puzzling — They may think, "Wait.....what? Jesus, my friend? He's my Savior. He's God. He's "up there" and I worship Him and look up to Him. Friends are people I have coffee with or go out to eat with. If I was planning to have coffee with Jesus, it would look very different than coffee with my friend!"

So, let's take a moment to look at friendship — What is friendship?

True friendship is a connection that has no barriers and no hierarchy. Friendships are formed by people spending time together, being honest with each other, and supporting one another. We miss our closest friends when they aren't around. We want them to be with us during our highest and lowest moments because their very presence enriches our lives. Time together with true friends just comes naturally — even if we've been separated for a period of time.

When I'm going to have coffee with my friend, I just invite them to my couch. We don't have to work to make each other laugh, we just do! We don't have to try to make each other feel comfortable, we just are! When I'm especially happy, I call my friend to share my joy. When I'm feeling sad, or frustrated, or betrayed, or angry, I reach out to my closest friends because I know they will help me carry the burden. Friends rejoice together, work alongside each other, cry together, laugh, lament, run, walk, sit, pray, eat, and drink together. Life is just better with them. It's love.

Our Christmas book, Into His Likeness, by Edward Sri, explores this same idea. Sri writes, "Children sometimes grow up feeling loved by their parents for what they achieve in school, on the field, and in their dozens of extracurricular activities. Young people growing up in a digital age are trained to see their value as being based on how well they artificially project themselves, on how many 'likes' and comments they get, and on how many 'friends' or followers they acquire on social media. Authentic friendship based on two people who seek what's best for each other is hard to find." Jesus' love is authentic. We can't earn His love. His is freely given and unconditional.

Can I begin to view Jesus as my true friend? Start by claiming the relationship. Say, "Jesus, be my friend. I want to live in friendship with you." Connect with Jesus. Be honest with Jesus. When feeling happy, share the joy with Him. When feeling sad or mad or afraid, turn to Him. Spend time with Jesus. Invite Him to be with you when you sit with a cup of coffee.

The Small Group setting is friendship with Jesus multiplied! It's fresh perspectives, shared experiences, and time with other friends of Jesus. We all have different gifts that are meant to be shared in order to flourish. Meeting in our homes keeps it casual and comfortable. Jesus sat with His friends, in their homes, casual and comfortable. Invite Him and others to your couch!

Life's Better Together



Join a Small Group

Our Parish currently has 30 active Small Groups. Last weekend, we asked everyone to fill out a short pew card in order to gather feedback from everyone in a group, and just as importantly, from everyone who is not in a group. Thank you to the 100+ people who responded. Of those, 76 are currently in a group, 6 are not in a group, and 31 are joining a group.

We would love to hear from the rest of you! The Small Group cards are on the back counter and information table. Thank you! Registration for Small Groups is also on our website. Let us pray more hearts are opened to the Small Group experience!

Thank you for sharing your
Small Group experiences!

SMALL
groups

JESUS WAS
IN A SMALL GROUP.
I'M JUST SAYIN'...

In 2017, I decided that I wanted to be Catholic, and I wanted to join St. Paul Parish. I searched for where I would fit, in addition to attending Mass, and joining a small group seemed to be a good place to start. So, I signed up for the 2018 Lenten Small Group study.

As a person who has struggled with social anxiety, I have often felt emotionally crippled in my life. I quickly learned there are so many benefits to being "plugged in" and being in a more personal setting with my fellow parishioners. My Small Groups (current and past) have gently ushered me away from my 'comfort zone.' I use the word "comfort" very loosely because hiding in my apartment from almost all human interaction is not really a comfortable place to be at all. I often didn't feel emotionally safe outside my apartment, so it was the closest thing to a comfort zone that I had at the time.

Although being in a Small Group did not cure my social anxiety, I believe that God is using it as part of my healing process. I still feel extremely vulnerable in unfamiliar places and around unfamiliar people, but Small Groups give me a safe place to practice *becoming* familiar with new people and new places. It's not always easy. There are times that I would rather remain isolated, but I am getting better. It is getting easier with practice.

Thanks be to God for loving me too much to leave me the way I am. Thanks be to God and all who have welcomed me with open arms. Thank God that I found St. Paul Church which has offered me strengthening and healing that I wouldn't have found in most other places. —Elizabeth Lee

My Small Group experience has been incomparable to any other adventure in my life so far. My Small Group family provides me with a supportive environment where I can escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and surrender to the One Who is more precious to me than anyone else, and more vital than anything in the world. In discussions with my Small Group members, we delve ever more deeply into the mysteries of the Catholic faith, the overarching truths of Christianity, and the valuable connection that my fellow members and I share with each other and with Jesus, our Savior.

In a world in which so much violence and hatred proliferates, Small Groups create a positive, resolute response to evil by strengthening the members of the body of Christ through allowing us to encounter the Christ every week. In these special, priceless encounters each week, we forge ourselves anew as ever more, self-actualized defenders of the Faith and recipients of God's love. As we all grow together, we are continuously inspired to spread the Gospel message to all whom we encounter and, in those encounters with others, to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).

I can honestly say that my Small Group meetings are the best part of my week every week. These brothers and sisters in Christ have undoubtedly made me a better person and a better Christian as their passion in faith inspires me every day. —Edgar R. Meyer

A few years ago, I was widowed quite suddenly and unexpectedly. I felt lost. At times, I even felt his death was my fault for not getting him to the hospital sooner than I did. The grief and guilt felt unbearable. I thought I didn't deserve to live when my husband was gone. I decided to gather up strength, make a plan to commit suicide, and carry it out when the time was right. I tucked away my plan and the means to do it.

Last year, I signed up to be a Small Group Leader for our Parish Lenten Study. We wound up with an interesting group made of women I had never met before, and some I have known for about 30 years. But, we all bonded over our study. We decided to stay a group, continue with more studies, and socialize as friends.

The Holy Spirit brought these women into my life, and through their friendship I was able to find the strength to dispose of the plan to take my own life. I truly love these women. We support each other with prayers, companionship, food, and love. —Donna Lee Reiss

I love the results of good gardening – bright, vibrant flowers, and maybe a good tomato once in a while. But I do not like the work/commitment it takes on a regular basis to achieve those results. It wasn't until ChristLife that I began to see that my attitude regarding my spiritual life was a lot like my attitude about gardening. The experience literally opened my eyes to what it means to have a deep personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The seeds of my spiritual life were now planted in richer, more fertile soil. ChristLife was truly amazing!

Next, along came my Small Group and more fruitful results:

- More opportunity to find our way to Jesus.
- Materials that foster communication with God and with each other.
- Sharing faith and support with each other in a comfortable, safe, familiar environment.
- Sharing the group with my spouse has actually strengthened our marriage.
- The opportunity to serve our community as a group - to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

With my commitment to my Small Group, I am less neglectful of my spiritual life. It means that I intentionally carve out time for my faith in what is an otherwise hectic, worldly life. Our particular group is about 50% Catholic, 50% other Christians. This brings new perspectives and a chance to teach others about our Catholic faith. I see life-long, faith-filled friendships being formed as we grow together. My prayer for everyone is that you consider joining a Small Group, so you, too, can nurture and grow the seeds that have been planted in you, and love the results!

Thanks – Jayne Welch

When we completed ChristLife a few years ago, we were given the opportunity to join a Small Group Study and to consider being a facilitator or host. I became a host, thinking I would stick with my familiar, comfortable circle of friends. Well, our group wound up including new people and — What a blessing, is all I can say!

We quickly realized that God had brought us together for a reason. The bond we have formed, and our love and respect for each other is unbelievable! We are like family to each other! Our group includes 2 young couples, 2 older couples, and 2 very sweet ladies! I think the most edifying and beautiful blessings that come from being in this Small Group are the love we share for God and each other, our desire to grow each day in our faith through Scripture study and valuable teaching series, and to be part of St. Paul's mission outreach ministry.

We meet in our home every 2 weeks, and occasionally we have a night out together at a restaurant. Our time together begins with prayer, then we discuss our lesson for the week and how it applies to our life. We end with fellowship and refreshments.

I do not take my role of Small Group host lightly, and I constantly ask God to lead me to new opportunities for our group! I am so blessed to do this...

Matthew 18:20 tells us...Where two or three are gathered together in my name I am there among them.....What a powerful Scripture, and a beautiful description of the Small Group experience.

I believe that God is calling each of us to deepen our faith walk. Being part of a Small Group has certainly done that for me, and the same is possible for you! It will be an experience you will never regret.

—Kate Medlock