

Monthly Newsletter

✦ SAINT SEBASTIAN
CATHOLIC CHURCH



From the desk of Fr. Peter Patrick:

Thanks to God

As we approach the end of the calendar year, it is a time to reflect on the many blessings God has bestowed upon us and to appreciate how far He has brought us. Our achievements are not due to our worthiness, hard work, or deserving nature, but to God's mercy and forgiveness. As Psalm 86:15 reminds us, "But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in mercy and truth."

The holidays also bring a mix of memories—both joyful and sorrowful. It is a time that may remind us of those missing from our dinner tables, some due to illness, and others because they have been called back to God. May their memories continue to live with us. Someone once said, "When we lose someone we love, we must learn not to live without them, but to live the love they left behind."

A couple of months ago, I shared in my weekly bulletin reflection about those who are absent. That weekend, we read the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. As part of this story, the tradition of leaving an empty chair at the dining table has various meanings—honoring ancestors, remembering fallen military members, commemorating absent or deceased loved ones, or symbolizing hope for the return of those facing hardship. This gesture can represent grief, hope for a reunion, or a welcome for unexpected guests.

I first learned about the custom of leaving an empty chair at the table from our Jewish brothers and sisters during their Passover

Seder: an empty chair, or even a whole place setting, is reserved for Elijah the Prophet, symbolizing hope for the coming of the Messiah and the redemption of the world. This tradition touched me and made me think about those who are missing from the dining table every time I share a meal. It has been transformed into a Christian custom, echoing the story of the Holy Family searching for shelter and being turned away by inns, reminding us to be open to unexpected guests.

Overall, we thank God for everything we have achieved as a parish. Our accomplishments would not have happened without your faithful commitment—your time, talent, and treasure. At the Mass of the Solemnity of Christ the King of the Universe, I mentioned that Christ is a King who serves others. I encouraged those who haven't yet become involved in any ministry to consider doing so as we move into the next year. We are all called to serve one another. As we have made St. Sebastian our home, let's all get involved.

Thank you for your flexibility and patience as we held Mass in the church hall to accommodate the installation of the new sound system. We are grateful for the generosity of the anonymous donors who made this dream a reality. We also want to express our gratitude for the extraordinary gift of \$597,773 in support of the Love One Another Capital Campaign. This remarkable donation will enable the parish to move forward with replacing the rooftop units that provide heating and air conditioning for the church, as well as the roofing underneath

Continued on next page.

In this newsletter you will find information about:

- An Extraordinary Gift to the Parish
- SCRIP for Holiday Shopping
- St. Nick at St. Seb's
- December's Senior Lunch
- Open Gym for K3-5th Graders
- A Call to Accompany
- 3rd Grade Fish Fry
- Gifting a Hymnal
- Moms Group Advent Cookie Exchange & Reflection
- Volunteer Opportunity for Advent
- A Farewell Message from Deacon Jim
- Opportunities to Volunteer to St. Vincent de Paul's Meal Program
- 2026 Emmaus 90 Program
- Milwaukee Festival Brass Concert
- Faith Formation Family Events
- Advent Fun Day
- Welcome Group Presentation on a Theology of Inclusion
- News from the El Salvador Committee, Including Christmas Craft Sale and Las Posadas
- Our Newest Parishioners
- The Gift of Presence
- The Parish Advent Giving Tree
- Opportunities for Service with the Stewardship Committee
- The Holly Berry Boutique
- Finance Committee Update
- Buildings and Grounds Updates
- Spiritual Direction Opportunity

those units. We are truly blessed to have such exceptional support within our parish family. Please keep these donors and everyone who has contributed to the Love One Another campaign in your prayers.

As we continue caring for our buildings, let us remember our mission as Christians: to grow closer to Christ, love God, and love our neighbors. This can only happen through regular attendance at Mass, receiving the sacraments, participating in retreats or spiritual workshops, reading the Scriptures, attending parish-organized seminars, and engaging in various activities. If you have any suggestions for improvements, please let me know or reach out to our staff or leaders.

This Christmas, each family is encouraged to pick a book as a gift from the parish. It is from Matthew Kelly's series titled, *The Seven Pillars of Catholic Spirituality*, which outlines seven practical spiritual habits: Confession, daily prayer, the Mass, the Bible, fasting, spiritual reading, and the Rosary. The synopsis explains that these pillars are timeless practices from saints that can renew a person's faith and help them experience the "abundant life" promised by Catholicism. The book provides a practical path to a vibrant spiritual life suitable for the modern world. Stay tuned; our Adult Formation Director, Jessica Quintanilla, will announce an invitation for people to share their thoughts on the book.

May this season be a time for deep reflection and renewed dedication to practicing our faith in all aspects of our daily lives. I encourage you to keep supporting our church and each other through prayer as we pursue Christ together, love one another, and depend fully on God. Remember that God can use you in powerful ways. I am excited about the year ahead for us. Let's carry the lessons and love from this year into the next as we continue our journey together. May God bless you and your families with abundant grace in the coming year. As Philippians 1:6 says, "He who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." So, hold onto hope.

~ Fr. Peter Patrick

EXTRAORDINARY GIFT TO SAINT SEBASTIAN'S LOVE ONE ANOTHER CAMPAIGN

Extraordinary Gift to Saint Sebastian's Love One Another Campaign

Saint Sebastian has received an **extraordinary gift of \$597,773** in support of the Love One Another Capital Campaign. This directed gift will enable the parish to proceed with replacing the rooftop units that provide heating and air conditioning for the church, as well as the roofing areas beneath these units.

This generous gift comes from donors who wish to remain anonymous. We are truly blessed to have such extraordinary support within our parish family. Please keep these donors, as well as everyone who has contributed to the Love One Another campaign, in your prayers.

The total pledges to date to the Love One Another campaign now total \$3,968,950. We are closing in on \$4 million. Pledges PAID to date (including the latest gift) total \$3,012,420.

May God bless them and their families. God is good all the time, all the time God is good.
Fr. Peter Patrick Kimani

SCRIP: PERFECT FOR ALL YOUR HOLIDAY PURCHASES!

SCRIP ("substitute money" in the form of prepaid gift cards) are for sale and are perfect for your holiday purchases. Sign up with the Raise Right app and see the daily deals. Or check out this Holiday Gift Guide found here: <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/86885998/>

Parish staff will be selling SCRIP after all Sunday Masses in the gathering space. Drop by and see how SCRIP can benefit you and the parish!

See below for additional information.



TURN SHOPPING INTO EARNING



EARN
\$1,000+
per year

Experience the right way to fundraise

Gift card fundraising is the best way to raise money. Buy gift cards from your favorite brands to earn on your daily purchases. It's never been easier to create opportunities for what matters most to you. No extra money spent. No extra time wasted.

How it works



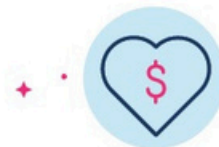
You buy a gift card

You get the full value.



The brand gives back

No extra money comes
out of your pocket.



Your organization earns

Impacting what
matters most to you.

Shop 750+ popular brands

Getting your morning coffee. Doing DIY projects around the house.
Ordering takeout. Conveniently raise money by doing everyday things.



"It's super convenient. All I need to go shopping is my phone—I don't even need credit cards or my purse. I'm going to pay for these things anyway, I love being able to use gift cards so we get something in return."

Jen H., earns for hockey

Get started by downloading the [RaiseRight™ app](#) on your phone or go to [RaiseRight.com](#) on your computer.

For step-by-step instructions, visit [RaiseRight.com/m/StartEarning](#).

Our enrollment code is 733AE7EC8LL.

Orders placed on the app for delivery to the Parish House are sent on Tuesday and usually available for pick-up by Friday and at this time, must be picked up at the Parish House.

Questions? Contact Joann Perleberg at 414-453-1061 x 113 or joann@saintsebs.org



The merchants represented are not sponsors or otherwise affiliated with RaiseRight™. The logos and other identifying marks used are trademarks of and owned by each represented company and/or its affiliates. Please visit the company's website for additional terms and conditions. © 2024 RaiseRight

Several ways to take part

1. Order E-Cards through the Raise Right App (see reverse side) and pay with a bank account (less expensive) or credit card. Then when you want to use it, just go to your "wallet" in the app.
2. Order physical cards and have them delivered to the parish house for pick-up. We send orders on Tuesday and get them usually by Thursday. If you want to save the transaction fees, pick "Pay Coordinator" and then pay when you pick-up.
3. Some cards ordered through the Raise Right App are available for ship-to-home at a cost.
4. Shop what cards we have in our To-Go Inventory (see below). Those you can pay and pick-up after Sunday Mass (if we have someone to sell) or at the Parish House during regular business hours (M-Th 9 am to 4:30 pm, F 9 am to 3:30 pm)

*Currently Available in To-Go Inventory (available after Sunday Mass or at the Parish House)

Category	Product	Denomination	Rebate
Grocery	Festival Foods	\$100	3.00%
Grocery	Metcalfe's	\$25	4.00%
Grocery	Metcalfe's	\$50	4.00%
Grocery	Metcalfe's	\$100	4.00%
Grocery	Metcalfe's	\$200	4.00%
Grocery	Pick n Save	\$25	4.00%
Grocery	Pick n Save	\$50	4.00%
Grocery	Pick n Save	\$100	4.00%
Grocery	Piggly Wiggly	\$100	3.00%
Grocery	Sendik's Food Market	\$50	4.00%
Food	Cousins Subs	\$10	9.00%
Food	Culvers	\$10	10.00%
Food	Noodles & Company	\$10	8.00%
Food	Panera Bread	\$10	8.00%
Food	Panera Bread	\$25	8.00%
Food	Starbucks	\$10	4.50%
Food	SUBWAY	\$10	6.00%
Food	Yo Mama	\$5	10.00%
Gas	BP Gas Stations	\$50	1.50%
Gas	Exxon/Mobil	\$50	1.00%
Gas	Kwik Trip	\$25	4.00%
Gas	Kwik Trip	\$100	4.00%
Gas	Shell	\$25	1.50%
Gas	Speedway	\$25	4.00%
Gas	Speedway	\$100	4.00%
Retail	Amazon.com	\$25	1.50%
Retail	CVS Pharmacy	\$25	7.00%
Retail	Kohls	\$10	5.00%
Retail	Kohls	\$25	5.00%
Retail	Kohls	\$50	5.00%
Retail	Kohls	\$100	5.00%
Retail	Menards	\$25	3.00%
Retail	Target	\$25	2.50%
Retail	Target	\$100	2.50%
Retail	Walmart/Sam's Club	\$25	2.50%
Retail	Walmart/Sam's Club	\$100	2.50%



ST. NICK IS COMING TO ST. SEBS!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH, 9 AM – 12:30 PM
IN THE CHURCH HALL

unlimited!

pancake + sausage breakfast
includes coffee or orange juice

adults: \$10 | seniors: \$8 | kids (2 – 14) \$5 | under two: free
cash, card, or venmo accepted!

Holiday Shopping!

YOUR ONE-STOP SHOP FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS!

8th-grade coffee sales
choir bake sale + jewelry table
Teosinte handmade gifts
New to You

christmas floral
crafts + knits
St. Catherine raffle



FREE FAITH FORMATION
CRAFTS AND COOKIE
DECORATING FOR KIDS!

Seniors Lunch December 9th!!

Join us in the Seb's Church Hall from noon until 2pm.

**We will have lunch,
followed by a presentation from
Fr. Reed Mungovan!**



He will share his knowledge of Religious
Icon Paintings & guide participants in
creating one of their own!

Please RSVP with this code or by contacting
Margaret Lee

mlee@saintsebs.org or 414-998-4785



Open Gym

Drop off your K3-5th grader(s) for a **Christmas** themed night of games, cookies, and a movie!

St. Sebastian gym



***\$15/per child or \$40 per family**

Hot cocoa and Christmas cookies will be provided.

*Proceeds benefit 8th grade trip to Washington D.C.

Adult supervision will be provided the entire evening.



Scam Warning Reminder

If you get an email or text that looks like it's from Fr Peter Patrick BEWARE. He will **never** send you an email or text asking for money or gift cards or making the request URGENT. Scammers are praying on your good intentions. **Do not hesitate to contact the parish house for verification, 414-453-1061 or email jperleberg@saintsebs.org** first before taking any action. Protect yourself from these unscrupulous people.

A CALL TO ACCOMPANY

Did you know that the Catholic parish is responsible for sponsoring catechumens preparing to join the Church? We also receive requests from families who may not have an active Catholic network as they seek baptism for their children. If you would be open to walking alongside an individual seeking to join the parish or being added to an "on-call" list for baptisms, please contact Jessica Quintanilla at jquintanilla@saintsebs.org for more info.



YOU'RE INVITED: 3RD GRADE HOSTS THE FISH FRY!

Get ready for an evening of fun and fellowship! The next monthly fish fry will be on **Friday, December 7**, and the 3rd grade parents are hosting. This fundraiser is vital to our school, and we're counting on your help to make it a huge success.

As the designated host grade, we're asking each 3rd-grade family to volunteer for a shift. You'll work alongside experienced volunteers who will show you the ropes, so don't worry if you've never done this before. It's a great way to meet other families and contribute to our community—and we promise, it's a ton of fun!

There is childcare available for any kids whose parents are volunteering during the dinner shift. They will be hanging out in the art room and will be served pizza and fries. It is not required to let us know ahead of time, but it helps with planning, so please shoot me an email if you want your kids to attend the childcare room that night.

Important details for volunteers:

- Please arrive on time for your shift.
- Wear comfortable, "kitchen-friendly" clothes, cozy shoes, and a baseball-style hat.
- If you can no longer make your shift, please call or text Katie Sanfelippo at 414-391-1973 as soon as possible.

We can't wait to see you there!

December Signup: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084CAAA72BA2FBCE9-58523780-1252025>

GIVE THE GIFT OF MUSIC THIS CHRISTMAS!



This Christmas season, consider a gift that will last a lifetime and bless our parish for years to come. St. Sebastian is offering the opportunity to sponsor a new hymnal for just \$25.

Each sponsored hymnal will include a beautiful dedication placard inside the front cover, placed *in honor of* or *in memory of* a loved one. Imagine the joy of opening a hymnal at Mass and seeing the name of someone dear remembered in prayer and song!

Sponsoring a hymnal is a meaningful way to celebrate family, honor a friend, or memorialize a loved one while supporting the music ministry of our parish. It's also a unique Christmas gift - one that will inspire faith and worship for years to come.

Hymnal sponsorship forms are available at the kiosk in the Gathering Space. You can also submit your sponsorship digitally through our website by clicking on "Give."

Thank you for helping us lift our voices together in praise of the Lord this Christmas and beyond!

MOMS GROUP: ADVENT COOKIE EXCHANGE & REFLECTION

Join Moms Group for an **Advent Cookie Exchange and Reflection** on **Thursday, December 4** from **7-8:30pm** in the **Adult Formation Room**. It's a chance for moms to get away and enjoy each other's company and some sweet treats! Bring a container to take cookies home in and bring cookies to pass! There will also be an Advent reflection. **All are welcome!**



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: LIGHT THE ADVENT WREATH

As we enter the beautiful season of Advent, we once again invite you and your loved ones to take part in lighting the Advent wreath at Mass. This cherished tradition helps us prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, week by week, as we welcome the growing light of His presence.

We are looking for individuals, couples, families, siblings, cousins, or groups of friends to light the candle at each of our weekend Masses, twelve opportunities in all!

If you feel called to serve our parish in this simple yet deeply meaningful way, please complete the [Advent Wreath Candle Lighting Form](#), or reach out to **Michelle Klotz** by phone, email, or in person.

Let us joyfully wait for the Lord together.



A MESSAGE FROM DEACON JIM



After much prayer and reflection, I want to share with you that I will be retiring this January and relocating to Florida to be closer to our children and grandchildren. This is a bittersweet decision, but one rooted in gratitude for the blessings God has given me—both in family and in ministry.

St. Sebastian has been an extraordinary home for me. For 28 years, I had the joy of coaching here, and for the past five years, I have been privileged to serve as your deacon. These years have shaped my heart, deepened my faith, and surrounded me with a community I truly love.

Although I will be moving, I will continue my ministry as a deacon in Florida. I look forward to serving God in familiar ways, but I remain open to wherever He chooses to lead me in this next chapter.

Thank you for your support, your prayers, and the countless moments of grace we've shared. Please keep me in your prayers as I prepare for this transition—and know that you will remain in mine.

In Christ,
Dcn. Jim

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL MEAL PROGRAM



St. Sebastian will once again be helping with the SVDP Meal Program on **Friday, January 9**. Volunteers are needed to help cook or to serve the meal. Cooks meet in the church hall kitchen at 8 am, servers at 4 pm. Servers will load up the food to bring it down to All People's Church (2600 N. 2nd Street) to serve the meal.

Donations of apples/oranges, cookies/desserts, and lettuce for salad (bags or heads cut up and ready to go) are also appreciated and can be dropped off in the church hall kitchen anytime on Friday, January 9 before 4 pm.

For more information or to donate food or to volunteer, contact Phil Bielefeld at 414-559-0996 or pjb0469@gmail.com. Monetary donations are accepted as well to help offset the rising cost of purchasing groceries.

Thank you to all of the cooks, servers, and donors who helped at the meal program on October 24 where we served 100 meals that evening with plenty of leftovers to feed more the following days that they were open. All who were served were very appreciative and thankful for our efforts.

**Please note that there is NOT a Meal Program date in December because the SVDP kitchen is closed as part of the Christmas holiday on our normal designated date. Future dates going forward for 2026 will be on the 2nd Friday of the odd months.*

DEEPEN YOUR FAITH IN 2026 WITH EMMAUS 90

Emmaus 90 is returning for 2026! Join fellow parishioners on a journey of prayer and formation designed to help deepen your faith between New Year's and Easter.

We will order books at a group rate for anyone **registered by December 8. Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/AdultForm-signup>.**



DEAR FRIENDS AND PATRONS OF MILWAUKEE FESTIVAL BRASS

The Milwaukee Festival Brass will make the season bright with another in their series of "Holiday in Brass" concerts.

"Everyone has their favorite holiday melodies – these are bound together in our memories of celebrations gone by," said Dr. Mark A. Taylor, the Music Director of Milwaukee Festival Brass. "As people prepare to gather and celebrate once again, brass music can conjure those memories and emotions like little else."

The concert will span several centuries of festive selections, from the medieval Spanish carol "Riu, Riu Chiu" and the haunting English Renaissance "Coventry Carol," to a brand new composition entitled "City of David" and an imaginative depiction of Santa's midnight sleigh ride – if Santa were fashioned after Indiana Jones. The program will also feature Solo Baritone Tyler Burmeister on "Ding, Dong Merrily on High."

The Milwaukee Festival Brass will present "Holiday in Brass" on Saturday, December 6 at 2 pm at St. Sebastian Catholic Church in Milwaukee. Doors open at 1:30. See details below. Group rates are available. For more information, please visit the band's website at www.mfbrass.org.

Please join us for "Holiday In Brass" on
Saturday, December 6 2025
2 p.m. - Note the time!
St Sebastian Parish
1747 N 54th St
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Doors open at 1:30 pm.

Ticket prices-

General Admission ages 18-64- \$15
Senior ages 65 and up- \$12
Ages 0-17 are free as always.

Tickets:

<https://www.mfbrass.org/upcoming-performance>

See flyer on next page



HOLIDAY IN BRASS



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2025
2 PM

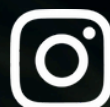
St. Sebastian Parish
5400 W. Washington Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI 53208



For ticket information visit
www.mfbrass.org



FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MILWAUKEEFESTIVALBRASS



FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM
[@MILWAUKEEFESTIVALBRASS](https://www.instagram.com/MILWAUKEEFESTIVALBRASS)

Faith Formation Family Events

These intergenerational lessons are held five times a year, focusing on different core themes. Each Family Program involves catechesis, activities, and take-home materials for continued spiritual growth. All families are welcome to participate in any of the Family Programs.

DATES

- November 1st, 10am-12pm:
Saints & Souls
- November 30th, 4- 5:45 pm:
Advent
- January 6th, 5:30-7pm:
Scripture & Tradition
- March 14th, 10 am-12pm:
Catholic Social Teaching:
Family & Participation
- May 9th, 10am-12pm: Mary

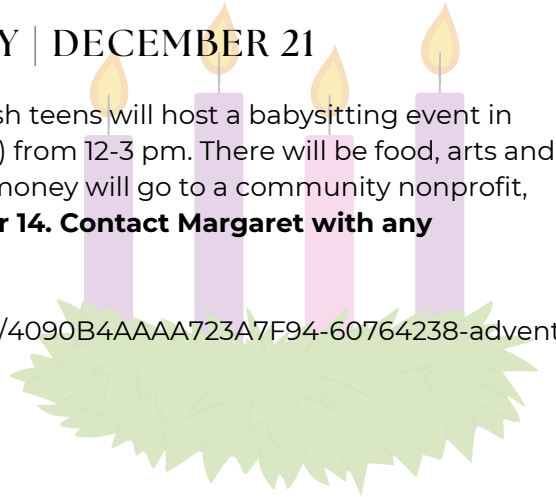


SAVE THE DATE: ADVENT FUN DAY | DECEMBER 21

Save the Date! **Sunday, December 21** is **Advent Fun Day**! The parish teens will host a babysitting event in the church hall. Drop off your 4-12 year olds (must be potty-trained) from 12-3 pm. There will be food, arts and crafts, games and a Christmas movie. The fee is \$10 per child,; the money will go to a community nonprofit, chosen by the youth. **Parents must RSVP no later than December 14. Contact Margaret with any questions.**



<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090B4AAAA723A7F94-60764238-advent>



MEET OUR PARISH FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

Nick and Kendra Steger

Joined St. Sebastian: October 2025

What first brought you to St. Sebastian?

We just moved to the Wauwatosa area and wanted to find a parish near our home to join. We are civilly married but we are planning to get married through this church and can't wait for Saint Sebastian Parish to be where we fulfill this sacrament. We both came from our own Catholic communities from where we grew up and since moving, we wanted to find a new Catholic community to call home.

What do you enjoy most at St. Sebastian?

The first moment we walked into the parish we felt a warm welcome from everyone around us. We are excited to continue to worship with you all!



ST. SEBASTIAN WELCOME GROUP: THEOLOGY OF INCLUSION

Join us for a thoughtful evening of faith and dialogue on Tuesday, December 2 at 7 pm in the Multipurpose Room as we explore how the theology and lived experiences of LGBTQ Catholics can deepen our understanding of God's presence and enrich the spiritual life of the Church. This session will be led by Zac Karanovich, Ph.D., a former attorney and assistant professor of Theology at Mount Mary University, where he also serves as first-year seminar director. Zac is a member of the St. Sebastian office staff and brings both academic insight and pastoral sensitivity to this important conversation. Contact Barb Haig for more information - BarbH1836@gmail.com

News from the El Salvador Committee

Meet the Delegation Members going to Teosinte

St. Sebastian has had a sistering relationship with Teosinte, El Salvador since 1992. Over the past 33 years we have prayed and walked in solidarity with the families of Teosinte. Sending a delegation to Teosinte and hosting members of the community here has been the foundation of our relationship. Historically we have visited each other's community every three years, sending a delegation down or bringing a tour up. During these visits we share our stories, learning about how we are alike in many ways and what challenges we each face.



It has been 7 years since we last visited the small mountain community. We are looking forward to seeing old friends and making new ones. Our travel dates are January 14 – January 21, 2026.

The delegation asks for your prayers as they prepare for and journey to Teosinte. We ask that you continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Teosinte, as they pray for us each week.

We look forward to sharing their stories and community updates with you when we return.

Our delegates:

Joe Cayen: I am delighted to be a part of the 2026 Teosinte delegation. I have heard so much over the years about the wonderful people and look forward to meeting them. I am also excited about the opportunity to learn more about the Salvadoran culture as well as to hopefully discover other ways to support their community.

Jackie Costa: The only way to bring the social justice concepts of solidarity and accompaniment to life is to build relationship by walking alongside our friends in Teosinte. Learning about their reality (struggles) and supporting them, rather than imposing external solutions upon them is one reason I want to make this trip. Helping shouldn't hurt. Genuine partnership starts with showing up, engaging in conversation, building rapport and doing what it takes to understand their fight for justice while providing a willingness to stand with them as an equal, long-term ally. We can all learn and benefit from this connection. Additionally, I hope this trip helps me re-ignite some love for the United States. Tactically, I hope to provide counsel to any of the young women with their resumes, college essays or help the moms in some way.

Gary Hoffman: I will be traveling with the Teosinte Delegation to partake in a special opportunity to share, learn, and experience the culture of our sister Parish. I'm sure that it will be a challenge, but I am looking forward to the teamwork involved in this project.

Mary Madigan: I have been wanting to go to Teosinte since the 90s, when I first heard that we had a sister parish. Latinx culture has always been an interest of mine, and the idea of doing justice work by standing in solidarity with the community really speaks to my heart.

Eamon Holahan: I am making this journey to connect with the people of Teosinte, to learn about their lives, their continuous fight for human rights and walk in solidarity with them.

Fr. Peter Patrick: Since I joined the parish, one thing I want to do before I leave is meet the people we always pray for, and they pray for us.

Continued on next page.

Mary Carian: I go to Teosinte seeking inspiration from a community who persevered in faith despite a cruel dictatorship.

Sue Olson: I look forward to returning to Teosinte and renewing friendships. During our visit I hope to gain a better understanding of the “State of Exception” in El Salvador and how it impacts our sisters and brothers. I will share our parishes love for and commitment to walk in solidarity with everyone in Teosinte.

Christmas Craft Sale



The El Salvador Committee will be selling crafts from El Salvador after all Masses on Sunday, December 7. We have sewn items from the Teosinte Taller. Sale of these items directly impacts the families of our sister community. These high-quality purses, backpacks, wallets and more are made to last. We also offer wooden crafts made in El Salvador. There are a variety of crosses and religious items along with puzzles. Stop by after Mass on December 7. We will accept cash, check and Venmo for payment.

Celebrate Las Posadas on December 19

Las Posadas is a Latin American tradition celebrated in Mexico and throughout Central America. This tradition reenacts Mary and Joseph’s journey to find lodging in Bethlehem. On Friday, December 19th we welcome you to join us here at St. Sebastian as we celebrate. There will be activities for all ages, families are encouraged to come. The Casa Romero Choir will be here to share traditional songs and lead us in a sing-a-long. There will be snacks and juice along with a pinata.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW PARISHIONERS!

We warmly welcome all those who joined our Saint Sebastian parish family in **October!**

Kathryn Kazlo

Amanda and Ken Spence

Mame and Andrew McCully with sons Callan and Kieran and daughter Mara

Alexander and Jennifer Wheaton

George and Doreen Okumu with sons Keith, Fidel, and Glenn

Phil and Rebecca Gries with daughter Cosette

Noelle Henneman and Brady Hunt

Colin and Kathryn Lavey with Daughter Adelyn

Your presence enriches our community. May you find a warm, spiritual home here at Saint Sebastian. We invite all parishioners to extend a friendly greeting, introduce yourselves, and help our newest members feel at home as we continue to grow together in faith and fellowship.

WELCOME

The Gift of Presence

During Advent, many of us find ourselves swept into the rush of shopping lists, schedules, and preparations. Yet the Church invites us into something different, a season of quiet, of reflection, of preparing our hearts. It reminds us that stewardship isn't only measured in what we give, but in how we live.

True stewardship begins with presence, the quiet, meaningful kind that can't be wrapped or bought. Advent calls us to slow down and make room: room for prayer, room for listening, room for one another. This is a season where giving our time, attention, and presence can be more valuable than anything under a Christmas tree.

Being present can take many forms:

- **Time with God:** sitting in prayer, reading Scripture, coming to Mass with a heart ready to listen.
- **Time with family:** not just being in the same room, but truly seeing one another, sharing a meal, talking without distraction.
- **Time with our parish community:** showing up, lending a hand, offering patience, encouragement, or simply a smile that helps someone feel at home.

As we prepare for the coming of Christ, we are reminded that God's greatest gift to us was His presence, **Emmanuel, "God with us."** May this Advent be a chance for us to mirror that gift in our own lives: to show up with love, with intention, and with open hearts.

This season, let us **give generously, not just from our hands, but from our time and our presence.**

In faith and service,
The St Sebastian Stewardship Committee





St. Sebastian Parish Advent Giving Tree 2025



The St. Sebastian Human Concerns Committee is sponsoring the annual Advent Giving Tree from Sunday, November 30th through Sunday, December 14th. Thank you for your help in bringing Christmas to the recipients of these agencies' ministries.

Please take a tag from the Tree, purchase the gift listed on the tag (no substitutions please) and return it on 12/7 or 12/14 beneath the Tree in the Gathering Space. Gifts must be **new** and **unwrapped** with tag attached. You may also bring an item listed separately on this flier with a note specifying which agency it is for. Descriptions of the agencies with contact information are listed on the back of this flier, or call Annalisa at 412-3409 if you have questions.

Gifts will **NOT** be accepted after 12/14 (Third Sunday of Advent).

Dominican Center

Winter hats & gloves (adult size)
Socks (adult size)
Body wash/shampoo/lotion
Blankets
Coats (for kids or adults)

Pathfinders

Arts and crafts kits (sketch pads, paints, canvas, stickers)
Slime/fidgets/sensory toys
Self-care or spa kits (body lotion, bath bombs, perfume)
Essential oils & diffusers
Beauty supplies (wigs, lashes, makeup, nails)
Hardcover journals or 2026 planners
Hoodies (S, M, L, XL or XXL)
Weighted blankets or throws
Wireless earbuds
Kitchen items (pots, pans, serveware)
Gift cards

Women's Support Center of Milwaukee

Diapers (sizes 3-5)

Women's Care Center

Diapers (sizes 3-5)

St. John's Cathedral -

The Open Door Café Meal Program

Pick & Save gift cards (\$10)
Hats & gloves (S, M, L adult size)
Underwear & long johns (adult size)
Winter socks (adult size)

Christ Child Society

Layette items (boy or girl):

Quilts or afghans
Sweaters or sweatshirts (size 3-6 months)
Receiving blankets
Onesies (size 3-6 months)
Blanket sleepers (size 3-6 months)
Sleep & play outfits (size 3-6 months)
Socks
Diapers (size 1)
Board books (for babies, English or Spanish)
Bottles

"My Stuff" Bag items (boy or girl):

Pajamas or long sleeve shirts (size 2-18)
Underwear (size 2-18)
Hats & gloves or mittens (ages 4-16)
Wide tooth combs

CHECK DONATIONS: Place envelopes in Sunday collection basket or drop off at parish office.

St. Vincent de Paul-St. Sebastian Conference

make check payable to:
SVDP-St. Sebastian Conference

Teosinte Scholarship Fund or Initiatives Fund

make check payable to:
St. Sebastian Parish-El Salvador Committee

ONLINE DONATIONS: Visit each agency's website separately to donate online directly (see next page)



Dominican Center

2470 W Locust St 53206

<https://www.dominican-center.org>

414-444-9930

Contact: Liz Perdomo

The Dominican Center integrates residents into the development and revitalization of their neighborhood. Through one-on-one tutoring and job training, members can end the cycle of poverty and find life-sustaining employment. The credit counseling and home-ownership programs provide residents a means of living in healthy, safe and beautiful homes. Sustainable, resident-led communities emerge. This year marks their 30th anniversary of serving the community.

Pathfinders

4200 N Holton St Suite 400 Milwaukee, WI 53212

<https://www.pathfindersmke.org>414-988-6950 or community@pathfindersmke.org

Contact: Jj Burch

For more than 50 years, Pathfinders has brought safety, hope and healing to youth facing homelessness, sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking, crisis and other trauma through innovative and transformational services. Their mission is "empowering youth – changing lives," and their vision is to provide a more meaningful voice for youth in crisis and ensure that all youth are safe, healthy, independent, successful and valued.

Women's Support Center of Milwaukee

2051 W Wisconsin Ave 53233

<https://www.wscmil.org/about-us/>

414-934-8888

Contact: Jackie Wild

The Women's Support Center is a very busy Catholic, pro-life pregnancy Center serving over 150 women a month. All services are 100% free and include pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, baby supplies, teaching Natural Family Planning and much more.

Women's Care Center

1441 N Farewell Ave 53202

<https://www.womenscarecenter.org/milwaukee-wisconsin>

414-223-2610

Contact: Katie Tendick

Women's Care Center is a nonprofit organization in Milwaukee that provides support and resources to women facing unplanned pregnancies. Through their free services, they empower women and men to choose life for their babies, have healthy pregnancies, become nurturing parents, and take the first steps to self sufficiency.

The Open Door Café Meal Program

831 N Van Buren St 53202

<https://www.stjohncathedral.org/index.php/odc/>414-276-9814 or idalianieves-reyes@stjohncathedral.org

Contact: Idalia Nieves

The Open Door Café meal program serves lunches Sunday through Friday to an average of 135 men, women and children each day. This ministry addresses the needs of the whole person and provides hygiene kits, food vouchers in emergencies and other resource information.

Christ Child Society of Milwaukee

4033 W Good Hope Road 53209

<https://christchildmilwaukee.org>

414-540-0489

Contact: Resale Shop, Tu & Th 10am-2pm, 1st & 3rd Sat 9:30am-12:30pm

Christ Child Society welcomes members of all denominations and focuses on nurturing youth in the Greater Metropolitan Milwaukee Area. Their signature layette program provides hospitals and social service agencies in the greater Milwaukee area with complete layettes for needy newborns. Their "My Stuff Bags" program has been ongoing; bags are given to social service agencies and homeless shelters for distribution to children in crisis, containing items to bring comfort to children placed in difficult situations and remind them that someone cares about them.

St. Vincent de Paul Society – St. Sebastian Conference

Contact: Tom Doyle

<https://saintsebastianonline.weshareonline.org/ws/opportunities/SVDP>

The St. Vincent de Paul Society helps parishioners and non-parishioners with emergency needs of clothing, food, appliances, beds, etc. Volunteers make home visits based on referrals from the SVDP Central Office, assess the family's social condition, refer them to appropriate community agencies, if indicated, and provide vouchers for food, clothing, furniture, refrigerators and stoves.

El Salvador (Teosinte)

Contact: Mary Beth Duffey

Teosinte Scholarship Fund: High School and public university tuition is largely provided free of charge. The challenge for Teosinte students is in having the funds to enable them to travel to/from classes, room/board when away from home, and the cost of supplies (books, etc). Scholarship funds are closely monitored by the Directiva (community leadership council) and remain their primary request.

Teosinte Women's Empowerment Initiatives Fund: Sewing Center and micro-loans for small businesses (with the possibility of a community bakery)

SEASON OF SERVICE: STEWARDSHIP AT WORK

Sparkle Squad Returns— Join Us for a Season of Parish Care!



We are excited to announce that Sparkle Squad is returning for another season at Saint Sebastian! Beginning in January, we will meet on the third Saturday morning of every month from 9 to 11 am, continuing through to our Spring Into Service event in May.

Sparkle Squad was originally created to tackle focus cleaning and beautification projects around the parish — those deeper, less-frequent tasks

that go beyond everyday upkeep. It's a chance for all of us — children, teens, adults, longtime parishioners and new friends alike — to come together, roll up our sleeves, and "make our parish shine." For students, these sessions are a great way to earn service hours. But to make this effort successful, we also need adults to help coordinate, lead, and work alongside the youth.

Our first gathering will be an outdoor fall cleanup: raking leaves, tidying garden beds, removing debris, and preparing our grounds for the season ahead. If you'd like to join us (or lead a subteam), please sign up here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4EAFAB28A7F58-59022441-sparkle>.



Saint Nick Sunday & Christmas Season Preview

Christmas is right around the corner and with it, our beloved **Saint Nick Sunday** returns! This festive event combines holiday shopping (featuring parish ministries), photos with Saint Nick, and the 8th grade pancake breakfast fundraiser for their Washington, D.C. trip.

The weekend also includes the **Christian Women's Boutique** on Saturday, giving parishioners and visitors a full weekend of community, fellowship, and holiday spirit.

Stay tuned — details for both events will be coming soon!

We look forward to celebrating these traditions with you and your families!



In Closing – Serving with Joy

As we enter this season of service and community, may we remember that even small acts — a raked leaf, a warm cookie, a smile at a new neighbor — make a difference. Together, young and old, we help Saint Sebastian shine as a place of welcome, fellowship, and faith.

"Serve one another humbly in love." — Galatians 5:13

Let's continue to serve with joy, generosity, and gratitude, keeping our parish vibrant and inviting for all.

Blessings and gratitude,
The Stewardship Committee
Saint Sebastian Parish



ANNUAL HOLLY BERRY CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE

Saturday, December 6th, 9:00am

Join us to get an early start on your Christmas shopping! Here you'll find unique handmade items such as crafts and knits, Christmas ornaments, homemade bakery, and vintage treasures.

The event culminates in a noon women's luncheon served by the men of our parish, known as the "Hello Dolly (singing) Waiters." After the luncheon, there is a Miracle Mile Raffle with a wide variety of higher-end items.

The fun does not stop there! Boutique weekend also includes family activities on Sunday, December 7th. There will be breakfast, activities for kids, and St. Nick is known to make an appearance! Crafts, knits, and 'New to You' are available. Various parish groups will also have items for sale. A one-stop shop for Christmas presents!

NOON LUNCHEON

Reservations required by November 21st for luncheon (or until capacity is reached)

Save your seat by registering at <https://saintsebs.org/events/holly-berry-boutique>

Contact Jen Sveda at boutique@saintsebs.org or
414-241-0442 with any questions or dietary restrictions.

Luncheon tickets: \$35 / \$33 for seniors and staff.

Pork loin with au jus, rice pilaf, glazed carrots (GF) or vegetable lasagna, glazed carrots.

All meals come with bread, butter, salad, and a brownie dessert.

SCAN HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION!

<https://saintsebs.org/events/holly-berry-boutique>



5400 W. Washington Blvd. Milwaukee, WI 53208





New to You: Shop our gently used but ever-popular section of treasures! Contact Cathy Boehme: 414-702-1792 or Sue Zimmer: 414-475-6950 for information on when and where to donate items.

Floral Corner: Poinsettias, amaryllis bulbs, and paperwhites! Parishioner Maggie Pieper will be selling beautiful floral displays. **Krafty Korner:** The CWSS Craft Circle delights us with unique, finely crafted items. If you have an original, hand-made item you would like to donate, contact JoAnn at joannstaz@gmail.com.

Really Knit Stuff: St. Seb's Yarn Friends have been "needling" beautiful gloves, scarves, hats, and dishcloths. Contact Ann Shanley Jones at asjdzynse@gmail.com to donate your handmade treasures.

The Heights Cafe: Enjoy Valentine coffee, hot cocoa, or tea. Purchase a Christmas mug to enjoy your beverage! If you have Christmas mugs to donate, contact Theresa at theresagraff2121@gmail.com.

Personalized Ornaments: Handmade ornaments by Mary Grant.

Sweet Shoppe Bakery: Drop off cookies, cakes, bread, pies, and candies in the Church Hall between 6:00pm - 9:00pm on December 4th and 9:00am - 9:00pm on December 5th. Contact Joy at 414-475-5995 with questions.

Miracle Mile Raffle: Consider donating high-quality, high-end items for the raffle at the Saturday Boutique Luncheon. Contact Julie at 414-530-6157 or daleidense@aol.com to organize dropping off raffle items.

Bake for Boutique: A Boutique favorite is the bakery booth stocked with home-baked goodies of all kinds - and especially Christmas cookies. Plan ahead to make your favorite holiday treat to donate to the Boutique Bakery.

Hello Dolly Waiters Needed: Our luncheon has always been graced by the service of our talented waiters. Gentlemen of the parish, if you would like to volunteer, contact Annalisa at 414-778-0260.

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

At the most recent St. Sebastian's Finance Meeting, committee members approved the audit of the Consolidated Financial Statements of St. Sebastian's Congregation and School Foundation for the year ending June 30, 2025. As depicted in the following summary, the Hybrid Operating Income Statement resulted in a \$117K deficit for the audited year which was expected, as the Finance Committee utilized a surplus of funds reserved during the 2023-24 fiscal year. A big thank you to Joann Perleberg, Director of Administrative Services, for her efforts over the past year and working with the auditor. The unmodified opinion from our auditor is the highest level of assurance from an audit and is considered "clean" or unqualified. If you should have any questions about this overview of the audit, please do not hesitate to contact Dave Misky, Chair of the Finance Committee.

ST. SEBASTIAN CONGREGATION

Comparision Hybrid Operating Income Statement

	24-25	23-24	Better (Worse)
Contributions	810,041	819,258	(9,218)
Choice/SNSP	2,102,710	2,095,075	7,634
School Fees/Tuition	579,963	506,316	73,647
Foundation Support	201,570	197,880	3,690
Other Income	113,168	173,895	(60,727)
Auction/Cabaret/Boutique (net)	72,571	79,718	(7,147)
PAL (net)	(2,011)	38,773	(40,784)
From Reserves	83,000		83,000
Total Operating Revenue	3,961,011	3,910,915	50,096
Salaries & Benefits	3,081,475	2,886,151	(195,324)
Other Expenses	397,080	440,443	43,364
Assessment	150,656	108,994	(41,662)
Instructional Supplies	149,752	88,540	(61,212)
Utilities	135,030	125,766	(9,264)
Technology	84,789	48,667	(36,122)
Accounting Fees	48,663	46,362	(2,301)
Electronic Fees	31,045	21,988	(9,056)
Total Operating Expense	4,078,490	3,766,912	(311,578)
Net Surplus (Loss) from Operations	(117,479)	144,003	(261,482)

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS UPDATE

Masonry Restoration

The restoration work on the church is currently focused on the arches, steel lintel beams, coping stones, and tuckpointing along the East and West elevations. This process mirrors the recent restoration efforts completed on the south elevation. Construction for this phase is expected to conclude by early December, at which point the scaffolding will be removed and full access to the church building will be restored.

Restoration activities will resume in spring 2026, with scaffolding set up on the west gable elevation (north of the bell tower), partial scaffolding on the east side and lifts / ladders positioned on parts of the east and west elevations. If weather conditions are favorable, masonry work is anticipated to be finished by early fall 2026. **A comprehensive masonry restoration update will be provided in the January newsletter.**

2025 Stop the Auction

In August, maintenance was performed on the school playground and parking lot, including patching, seal coating, and striping. The remaining funds from this project—approximately \$7,000—are being allocated to install new circuit breaker panels in a portion of the church hall's stage area, replacing outdated equipment. Additionally, a new bank of switches will be installed to control the church hall lighting, eliminating the need to operate the lights via circuit breakers. The electrical work is almost complete.

Church Sound System Replacement

The installation of the new sound system is now complete just in time for the start of Advent and the Christmas season. The project finished on schedule. Many thanks to Michelle Klotz, Bryan Kirkpatrick and Fr. Peter Patrick for their efforts in making the installation a success and a huge thank you to Patrick Schley, who provided overall coordination and technical expertise. **Prayers of Thanksgiving for the anonymous donors who made the new system possible.**

Church Heating, Air Conditioning and Selective Roof Replacement

In May 2025, the parish solicited bids for several projects: replacing the roof of the gathering space, installing new rooftop units (RTUs) that provide heating and cooling to the church, replacing the roofs beneath the church's RTUs, and replacing the RTUs serving the gathering space, multipurpose room, faith formation rooms and church hall. Small roof areas at the SE entrance to the church and a small roof area that lies between the north wall of the church and the school were also included. The roofing and the HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning) were bid separately to ensure that we would be dealing with roofers for the roofing work and mechanical contractors for the HVAC work. The parish would in effect serve as the general contractor as we did for the 2024 work at the school. We received 3 competitive bids for each portion of the work. The combined low bid was \$1,235,000.00 and included a project contingency of \$123,500(10%), the total cost was \$1,358,500.00.

These work items were included as the highest priority for future funding in the May 2025 Master Campus renovation Plan, as funding was not available in the current LOA budget. The Buildings and Grounds committee determined that if partial funding became available, the priority should be replacement of the Church RTU's, the roofs below them and the small roof areas detailed earlier.

Continued on next page.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS UPDATE CONTINUED

This recommendation was made based on partial failure of the existing church RTU's and significant water infiltration /plaster damage caused by the roofs beneath them and at the southeast areas of the church. Additionally, the plaster ceiling below the roof connecting the church to the school collapsed from water damage this past fall.

Meetings were held with the low bidders that maintained unit pricing while reducing the scope to the priority items listed earlier. The cost of the modified scope of work (including a 10% construction contingency) was \$596,791.00.

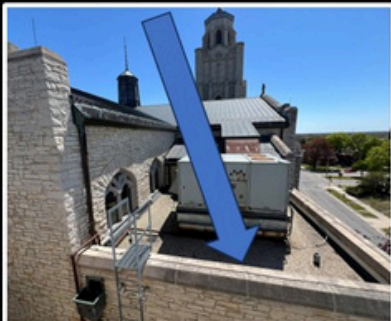
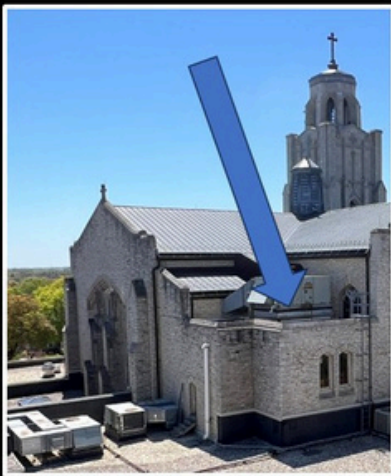
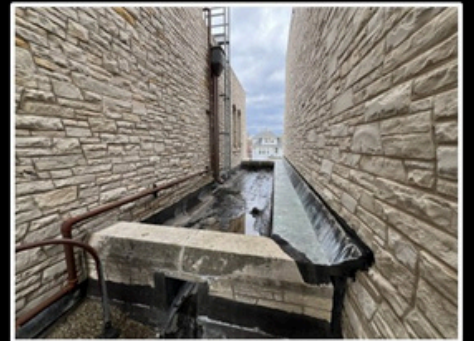
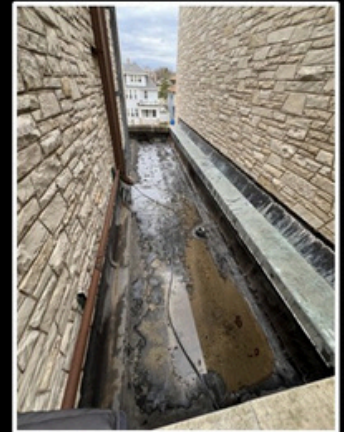
An extraordinary gift made by anonymous donors will now make it possible to accomplish this work in 2026, pending approvals by the Pastoral Council and the archdiocese. (The Finance Council approved the contracts at their November meeting). The gift is a directed gift specifically to accomplish the stated scope of work. Since the gift covers 100% of the project costs there is no increase in borrowing associated with this work. The current masonry contracts are within budget for work to date and at this point are likely to be completed within the contingency amount we assigned.

If approved, the roofing /HVAC work would be completed in 2026 with a preference for a May start but that will be determined by RTU availability. Replacing the RTUs and the roof areas serving the gathering space, multipurpose room, faith formation rooms and church hall will continue to be the highest priority items, along with the stained glass window repairs for the next phase of funding.



BUILDINGS & GROUNDS UPDATE CONTINUED

Roof area between the church and school
will be replaced in 2026



Southeast entrance

The roof areas directly below the existing roof top units that provide heating, ventilation & air conditioning (HVAC) to the Church will be replaced 2026 . The roof area at the Southeast entrance to the Church will also be replaced.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION AT ST. SEBASTIAN

As Catholics, we believe that God is present and active within our lives and yet, it's all too easy to miss. Spiritual direction offers an opportunity for you to intentionally slow down and notice that which reveals itself as Sacred within the concrete particulars of your days. In this paying attention, you can begin to savor and clarify your awareness of the way in which the Spirit is moving within you and within your world and thus deepen your relationship with the Divine Mystery.

Spiritual direction is also a place in which you can consider how your upbringing, your faith tradition, the joys and sorrows of your personal history, and your present-day reality connect you to the Sacred. It can be a place where you can navigate transitions, grieve, and discern. It's a place where you can question and engage and discover. As a monthly spiritual practice, spiritual direction seeks to illuminate and enliven this relationship between you and All That Is, thus distinguishing it from counseling, therapy or life coaching.

A spiritual director offers the experience of "holy listening" in that it takes you where you are at. Grace, healing, and growth are sought through these times of active listening, reflection, and prayer during the session and in the days that follow. Consider this an invitation to explore this as a spiritual practice for yourself.

The "Spiritual Reflection Room," on the second floor of the Parish House, hosts spiritual directors trained in various lineages (Jesuit, Franciscan, and Dominican, for example) to meet with individuals desiring to explore their own unique sacred journeys. These one-on-one sessions are generally scheduled once a month and last for about an hour. Compensation, intake information, and meeting times are negotiated individually between you and your chosen spiritual director.

The following parishioners are trained guides who offer spiritual direction here at the Saint Sebastian Parish House. Please contact via email to explore the opportunity to work together.

Julia Gray - juliagraylange@gmail.com

Deacon Jim Matthias - jmatthias@saintsebs.org

Rhonda Matthias - ListeningPostMKE.Rhonda@gmail.com

Nicki Nelson - nicki@nickinelson.com

Leah Sealey - leahsealey@hotmail.com

If you would like to explore spiritual direction outside of our parish, please check out www.mkespiritualdirectors.com. In 2019, Nicki and Leah helped establish this peer group of local spiritual directors. The group's website was established so that seekers could easily access the profiles of providers in the Milwaukee area. Currently nearly 30 directors are profiled on the site. Along with their contact information, each profile shares the director's background, type of training, and specific areas of interest in their practice.

Please feel free to contact Leah Sealey if you have any questions, leahsealey@hotmail.com.