

Monthly Newsletter



From the desk of Fr. Peter Patrick:

Lent

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18. This season is about renewal—removing barriers between God and us, and between each other. Some Christians use acronyms like "Let's Eliminate Negative Thinking" or "Lessen Every Natural Tendency" to remember Lenten practices, but the primary focus is on Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving. These help us practice self-discipline, reflect, and renew our spirits as we prepare for Easter.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matt. 11:28-30. Jesus calls us to bring our burdens to him. Lent is the perfect time to do that. What are you going through now? What is burdening you? Family, job, health, broken relationship?

Lent is here again, inviting us to slow down, turn our hearts to God, and walk with Jesus toward the Cross and Resurrection. These forty days are not meant to weigh us down, but to help us clear away distractions and find what truly gives us life.

Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are simple but powerful ways the Church gives us to renew ourselves. Prayer brings us closer to God. Fasting helps us let go of things we do not need. Almsgiving opens our hearts to others, especially those in need. These practices help us grow in love for God and our neighbors.

I encourage you to pick one specific Lenten commitment this year—something realistic and meaningful. For years, I have tried to give up a bad habit and pray for a good one to take its place, and it has helped me grow spiritually. Your commitment could be a few extra minutes of daily prayer, joining the Stations of the Cross, making an effort to forgive, or caring more for those in need. Small, faithful steps can lead to great spiritual growth.

Let's walk this Lenten journey together as a parish family, supporting each other and focusing on the hope of Easter. May this holy season renew our faith, strengthen our love, and bring us closer to the Lord, who always loves us.

This Lent, I encourage you to make use of the sacrament of reconciliation. It does not matter how long it has been since your last confession. God is always waiting for us to return, and the moment we do is what matters most. I want to share a reflection on the reading for Saturday of the second week of ordinary time A (1/24/26): 2 Samuel 1:1-4, 11-12, 19, 23-2.

This reading is one of the most moving and unexpected moments in the Old Testament. Saul and Jonathan have died, and David weeps. What makes this scene powerful is that Saul was David's enemy. Saul chased David, wanted him dead, and made his life hard for years. Yet when David hears Saul has died, he does not celebrate or say, "Finally! Justice!" or "Now I can rest." Instead, the Bible says David tore his clothes, mourned, wept, and fasted.

In this newsletter you will find information about:

- Facing Racism Book Discussion
- Facing Racism Lenten Reflection Series
- St. Vincent DePaul Meal Program in March
- Family Faith Formation Events
- The Sparkle Squad
- Fish Fry Volunteering
- New Parishioners
- Men's Retreat
- A Reflection on Renewal
- Introducing Saint Josephine Bakhita
- Parish Auction
- Lenten Taize Service
- Craft Group 2026
- Women's Lenten Day of Reflection
- The 2026 El Salvador Delegation
- The St. Sebastian Cabaret, "Fish Fry: The Musical"
- The Winter Farmers Market
- Parishioner Spotlight
- Spiritual Direction

This is remarkable. Most people would not react this way. It is a holy response, which is why this passage matters for us today. David did not celebrate his enemy's downfall, even though many would have. He understood that Saul was still chosen by God, still part of God's plan, and still a life that mattered. David did not see Saul only as the one who hurt him, but as someone.

God once chose. How often do we do the opposite? When someone who hurt us fails or suffers, we might quietly think, "He deserved that," or "That's karma."

David shows us a different kind of heart—one that does not celebrate when others are humiliated, and can even grieve for those who hurt him. This is a truly Christian heart, like the heart of Jesus, who prayed on the cross, "Father, forgive them."

What can we learn from this today? This reading challenges us in three ways: Do I secretly feel happy when someone I dislike fails? Do I remember people for their mistakes or for their good qualities? Can I show compassion even to those who hurt me? This is not easy, but it is the kind of heart God wants for us—a heart that does not seek revenge, does not keep score, and stays gentle even when hurt.

Final Thoughts: In this moment, David already shows the heart of Jesus. Jesus did not rejoice over sinners; he wept over Jerusalem and died for those who crucified him. Being a true disciple is not just about prayer, going to Mass, or knowing Scripture. It is about having this kind of heart. Have a blessed and fruitful Lenten season. God is good all the time, all the time God is good.

See you at Mass,
Fr. Peter Patrick



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.

FACING RACISM BOOK DISCUSSION



Come and bring a friend for a lively discussion on 3 Friday evenings at 6:30 in the St. Sebastian Multi-purpose room.

The titles and dates are:

- *James* by Percival Everett; Feb 6
- *Solito* by Javier Zamora; Mar 27 (Church Hall)
- *I Am Nobody's Slave* by Lee Hawkins; May 1

Fish Fry take outs will be available from 4:30 to 7:30 pm at St. Sebastian School (enter through playground entrance facing 54th St.) Purchase your fish fry supper and bring it to the book discussion if you wish.

FACING RACISM LENTEN REFLECTION SERIES

Facing Racism is offering a 7-week study-reflection-discussion series for the Lenten season, beginning February 8 (that's 10 days before Ash Wednesday!). It will consist of 3 emails per week with links to short videos about an aspect of racism (input) and reflection questions, and an optional Zoom discussion on Saturday to share our reflections from that week. Sign up beforehand by sending an email to facingracism@saintsebs.org.

LENTEN TAIZE SERVICE | MARCH 9TH

Spend time with our St. Sebastian community in prayer this Lent. We'll be hosting a Taizé prayer service here at St. Sebastian on Monday, March 9 at 7:30pm. Join us to spend some personal time with God through this reflective and musical style of prayer. Questions? Contact Patrick Schley at pschley@saintsebs.org.



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL MEAL PROGRAM



St. Sebastian will once again be helping with the SVDP Meal Program on **Friday, March 13**. 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, March 13 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 January 9 where we served 70 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.

**In the past we have asked for apples or oranges. SVDP seems to have plenty of apples so we are going to focus on oranges this time (oranges, mandarin oranges, or Cuties). SVDP also made a specific request for donations of juice...large cans, powder, or juice boxes.*

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





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 March, 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>.



WANTED: FISH FRY VOLUNTEERS



On February 6, St. Sebastian first grade families will host a sit down and carry out fish fry in the school cafeteria from 4:30-7:30. Please join us for fellowship and some tasty fish. We are always looking for additional volunteers for this event. Helpers don't need to be affiliated with the grade hosting; anyone is welcome to sign up. Please email fishfryvol@saintsebs.org for inquiries or interest in volunteering. It is a great opportunity for students to get service hours.

Friday 2/20 and 2/27, carryout only fish fry will be available from 4:30-7:30 in the St. Sebs cafeteria.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW PARISHIONERS!

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

Yveline Francois

Rob and Kelly Mangan with son, Vincent, and daughter, Cecilia

Craig and Katie Netemeyer with daughter Grace, and son, Elijah

Michael Rusin and Julia Sheriff

Alexandra DePalma with sons, Luke and Simon

Molly and John Liddell with daughters, Aoife and Saoirse

John and Marie Basich with son, John

Ty and Ashley Mattinson with son, Brooks, and daughter, Madden

Mark and Crissy Tud with son, Franco

Matthew and Alexis Rittler with daughter, Amelia, and son, Graham

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

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION | FEBRUARY 7

Join us for a family event that everyone is invited to attend!

On **Saturday, February 7th** at **3 pm**, we will have a formation opportunity to come together and reflect on how our church foundations have been built upon the teachings of the bible and the sacred traditions of Jesus and the Apostles. Additionally, we will learn about the liturgy as it relates to scripture and tradition.

There will be a **teaching Mass with Fr. Larry at 4 pm**. In this Mass, he will stop to explain why we do things the way we do. A teaching Mass equips the faithful for active, conscious participation, making the Eucharist's transformative power vivid and personal. Note that this Mass **DOES** count towards your Sunday Mass attendance obligation!

Please join us for this faith renewing opportunity to learn and pray together as a parish community.

Following Mass there will be a pizza dinner. **Please RSVP** below so we can plan properly, and add a comment with your pizza topping preferences. We are asking for donations of desserts and drinks to share.



MEN'S RETREAT | FEBRUARY 19-22

Men of St. Sebastian, this is your invitation to a preached 3-night retreat from the evening of Thursday, February 19 to Sunday, February 22, 2026. The retreat is held at the Jesuit Retreat House on Lake Winnebago, 4800 Fahrwald Road, Oshkosh, WI. You will have your own room and bathroom. The grounds are vast and beautiful for the opportunity to explore. All meals are provided and delicious.

Fr. Rob Kroll, SJ will be leading a preached retreat through his own spin on the Spiritual Exercises. Yes, the retreat is silent, but there will be opportunity for optional conversation if you are looking for that each evening. The cost is \$450, but the experience is priceless. If cost is a factor, there are grants available. The motto always is pay what you can up there. Reach out directly to me or call the Jesuit Retreat House (1-920-231-9060) to learn more. Don't let finances be a barrier.

Here is the link for more information and to register: www.jesuitretreathouse.org. Look for group #009. Only sinners are welcome!

Please consider coming on retreat and getting a break from all the busyness of life and deepen your relationship with God. Please reach out to me if you are looking for any more information.

Danny Carlin
414-218-8039
Dcarlin3028@gmail.com



STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION: A SEASON OF RENEWAL: BOTH IN NATURE AND IN SPIRIT

Spring arrives quietly at first. The sun stays out a little longer. A hint of green peeks out from where the ground once was bare, dry, and cold. Buds begin forming on trees that appeared lifeless just weeks ago, cloaked under a thin layer of frost. Nature reminds us, gently but persistently, that renewal is always possible. Even after a long winter (and boy has it been), life returns—often in ways we do not immediately notice, but always with purpose and promise.

In the life of the Church, spring coincides with the Easter season, a joyful time when we celebrate the heart of our faith: the Resurrection. During Easter, we proclaim that new life has overcome death, that hope is stronger than despair, and that God is always at work bringing forth something new. This message is not meant to remain confined to just Sunday Mass or just one season. Spring shares an invitation to live each day grounded in trust and renewed faith.

Scripture speaks often of this promise of renewal. Through the prophet Isaiah, God assures His people, “See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19). When I read these words, I am reminded that God’s work of renewal is ongoing. Sometimes I see it appear in dramatic moments of transformation, but more often I feel it unfolding quietly—in softened hearts, restored relationships, or a renewed sense of purpose.

Renewal does not always mean starting over completely. For many of us, myself included, it looks more like returning to what truly matters. It may mean making space again for prayer after a season of distraction with travel and holiday festivities, maybe it means choosing patience when frustration comes much more easily, or perhaps it will guide you to offer forgiveness even when it feels difficult. Like seeds planted beneath the soil, growth often happens unseen. Yet our God is faithful and always nurtures what we entrust to Him, even when it isn’t always obvious to us.

Spring also reminds us that renewal is not only personal, but communal. No garden thrives with a single plant alone, and no parish flourishes through individual effort only. As members of a faith community, we are called to grow together—by supporting one another through challenges, celebrating joys, and sharing in the work of building God’s kingdom. Each act of kindness, each moment of service, and each prayer offered for another becomes part of this shared renewal.

This season also invites us to look outward. As life awakens all around us, I encourage you to ask where God may be calling you to be a sign of hope. Who might need a listening ear, a helping hand, or a word of encouragement? Spring offers us the chance to renew our commitment to living the Gospel through compassion, generosity, and love—especially toward those who may feel overlooked, marginalized, or tired. After enduring a particularly dark winter myself, I can speak to the difference it makes in my life to attend Mass every Sunday and feel the warm embrace of my Saint Sebastian family. You really do make a difference.

Of course, spring weather can be unpredictable. Warm sunshine may quickly turn into rain or wind. Our personal and spiritual journeys can feel that way too. Renewal does not promise that difficulties will disappear. Instead, it assures us that God remains present in every season. He is working patiently and faithfully, even when progress feels slow or uncertain. The promise of the holy resurrection teaches us that nothing is ever truly lost when placed in God’s hands—a faithful reminder that rain is a necessary and important step in the process of renewal. Just as dry soil needs water to nourish flowers, so do our hearts need His guiding light to live faithfully, spreading the word.

As we move through this season of growth and light, let us work to remain attentive to the quiet ways God is at work among us. May we as a faith community trust in the promise of new life unfolding—within our own hearts, within our parish family, and within the wider world. Notice the buds, appreciate the flowers, and celebrate the fresh start that we are being given.

May this spring **renew** our hope, **strengthen** our faith, and **inspire** us to walk forward together with joy.

ST. JOSEPHINE BAKHITA: A SURPRISE SAINT FOR A MODERN CRISIS

In February, the Catholic Church turns its heart toward a remarkable woman who transformed the scars of slavery into a radiant witness of hope. The Feast of **St. Josephine Bakhita**, February 8, is not only a day to honor her sanctity but is also the **World Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking**. In a world that often prefers to look away, this day calls us to open our eyes to the millions of our brothers and sisters currently held in the bonds of modern-day slavery.

Born in Sudan in 1869, Josephine Bakhita was kidnapped by slave traders at the age of seven. The trauma was so severe that she forgot her birth name; "Bakhita," meaning "**Fortunate**," was the name mockingly given to her by her captors. For years, she endured frequent beatings, forced labor, and the physical branding of her body. After being brought to Italy, she encountered the Canossian Sisters and, for the first time, learned of a "Master" who did not use the whip—a God who loved her and died for her dignity. She gained her freedom but thankful today for her past that caused her life to change.

It is a common misconception that slavery is a relic of the past. A real surprise is that today more people are in bondage than at other point in history. Human Trafficking is a **\$150 billion global industry** affecting more than 50 million people. It takes many forms in our own communities:

- **Labor Trafficking:** Often hidden in construction, agriculture, and domestic work.
- **Sex Trafficking:** Exploiting the vulnerable through coercion and violence.
- **Debt Bondage:** Forcing individuals to work to pay off "debts" that never diminish. As Catholics, we believe in the **inherent dignity of the human person**, created in the image of God. Trafficking is a direct assault on that dignity, reducing a child of God to a mere commodity.

St. Josephine Bakhita is the patron saint of trafficking victims, and her feast day invites us to move from "awareness" to "action."

Pray: Join the global Church on February 8 in praying for the victims, the survivors, and even the conversion of those who perpetrate these crimes.

Lord, we ask for the intercession of St. Josephine Bakhita. May her courage inspire us to seek out those who are hidden in the shadows of exploitation. Break the chains of the oppressed, heal the wounds of the broken-hearted, and teach us to see your face in every human being. Amen

Educate: Learn the "red flags" of trafficking. Victims are often in plain sight—at car washes, nail salons, or restaurants.

Ethical Choices: Be mindful of the goods we purchase. Support "Fair Trade" products to ensure your coffee, clothing, and electronics are not produced through forced labor.

Support Local Shelters: Many Catholic Charities and religious orders run "Safe Houses" for survivors. They are often in need of supplies, funding, and volunteer support. Here in Milwaukee, Organizations the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, Franciscan Peacemakers and St Bakhita Catholic Worker House: work throughout the year. (2000, October 1). *Josephine Bakhita (1869–1947)*. Vatican News Services.

FROM SEBS, WITH LOVE PARISH AUCTION | FEBRUARY 14TH!



AUCTION VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We're heading into the home stretch for our February 14th Auction, and we could use a few more friendly faces to fill volunteer shifts! If you're able and willing, we'd love your help. Please take a look at the available shifts here and sign up for one that catches your eye. Thank you for supporting this event—we appreciate you!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094DAEAD2AA7FAC25-61551313-stsebastian#/>

FROM SEBS, WITH LOVE AUCTION: EARLY BIRD REGISTRATIONS EXTENDED THROUGH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Find the secret passageway, gather intel, and walk the tunnel of love while fundraising for St. Sebastian Catholic School & Parish on Saturday, February 14!

Early Bird Ticket Registration has been extended through Wednesday, February 4th!

https://stsebs.schoolauction.net/.../register/ticket_sales

From St. Sebs, With Love, February 14th, 2026 Auction

Mass @ 4:30 pm

Check-In Begins @ 5 pm in the Gathering Space

Live Auction Begins @ 8 pm in the Church Hall



We are also seeking underwriters/sponsors and silent and live auction items. To register or for more information, please go to <https://saintsebs.org/events/auction>

CRAFT GROUP 2026!

The Craft Group is ready to go for 2026! We have a great list of projects available for anyone who wants to participate. If you love making things and enjoy being with other people, consider coming to a gathering for an evening. The Craft Group meets the **First Tuesday of each month** from **February through November** at **8:00 PM in the Multipurpose Room**. Each month we work on a new project. The items we create will be sold at the Holly Berry Boutique, which will be on December 5th. We are a welcoming group. If you just want to stop in for a particular item we are making, please feel free to join us. No need to call or sign up, just stop in and have some fun and express your creativity. We usually have delicious chocolates to munch on too. Please see the list of items pictured with the date of the project. All materials and tools will be supplied. Looking forward to having you join us on a regular basis or just for an evening. Any questions, I can be reached at: joannstaz@gmail.com.

Feb 3rd JoAnn & Sam
Gift Card Holder



March 3rd Laura
Yarn Wreath



April 7th Lisa
Cinnamon Ornament



May 5th Stephanie
Eyeglass Lanyard
& Crystal Snowflake



June 2nd Laura
Bath Bomb



July 7th Jackie & Sam
Crystal Tree Earrings &
Icicle Earrings



August 4th Laura
Hanging Bell



September 1st Jo Ann
Door Hanger



October 6th Jackie & Sam
Book Ornament
& Magic Wand



November 3rd
Lisa & Annalisa
Candy Jar & Music Pyramid



Additional Projects Laura Bonnie
Chocolate Espresso
Stir Spoon



Scissors Holder



November 17th Finish Up

December 4th Set Up

December 5th Boutique



Lenten Day of Reflection: Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving

**Saturday, February 21
St. Sebastian Church Hall
8:00am -4:30pm**

Throughout this day, we will reflect on prayer and how it shapes our inner strength. Life can be unpredictable, yet prayer helps us stay flexible, brave, and guided. By remaining close to God, we become better servants to those we meet.

The morning will invite us into the practice of Fasting, deepening our bond with God, while the afternoon will lead us into Almsgiving and the ways it draws us into the needs of others.

Theresa Utschig will lead us on this day of reflection.

More information is available on the Retreat Webpage at <https://saintsebs.org/events/womens-retreat>

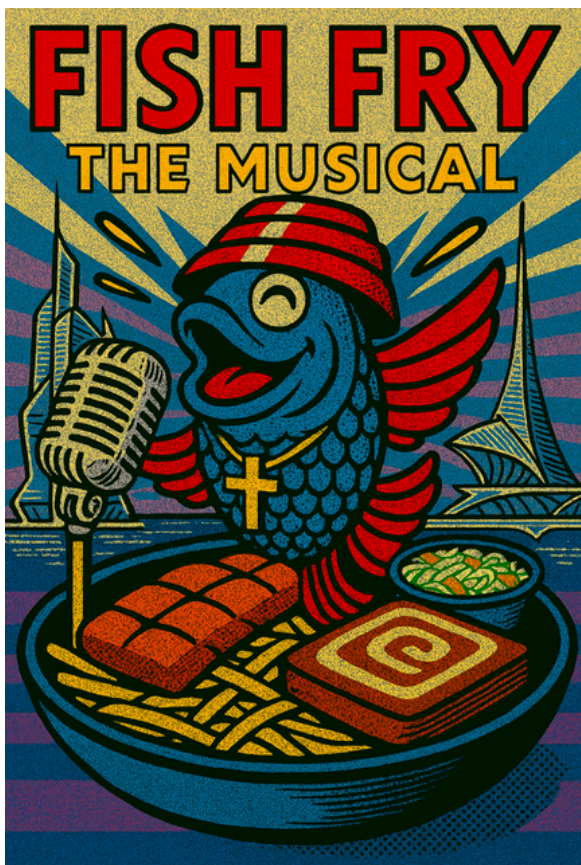
**Full Day (including lunch) \$30
Half Day \$15**



Registration closes February 9th

THE 2026 DELEGATION TO OUR SISTER COMMUNITY OF TEOSINTE, EL SALVADOR RETURNS

The delegation including Fr. Peter Patrick, Mary Carian, Gary Hoffman, Jackie Costa, Joe Cayen, Mary Madigan, Eamon Holahan, and Sue Olson made the 8-day journey to visit our brothers and sisters in Teosinte from January 14 – 21. We were greeted at the airport by Sophia and Elena, two members of the directiva who accompanied us throughout time there. Our visit included several historical sites in San Salvador. We spent 4 days in Teosinte living with families, learning about their lives, meeting with scholarship students and the local teachers. We shared meals and even learned how to make pupusas. There are many stories we will share with you over the next several months in the newsletters and in the Teosinte corner located in the gathering space.



FROM THE ST. SEBASTIAN CABARET

Join us on **Friday, March 20 and Saturday, March 21st** at **7 pm** for "Fish Fry the Musical," a custom scripted musical written by Marilyn Jozwik, Mary Madigan, Deb Mamerow and Jim Zaffiro .

Online tickets are available at:
<https://tinyurl.com/2026-Cabaret>

Additional information will be available on the Saint Sebastian website in February.

Questions can be emailed to:
saintsebastiancabaret@gmail.com.

We hope you will join us for this "unique-to-Saint Sebastian" theatrical show!

WANTED: WINTER FARMERS MARKET VOLUNTEERS!

Interested in helping make the annual March 1st St Sebastian Winter Farmers Market and Breakfast happen? Many hands are needed! Please visit www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F48A9AC2BA2FFC61-61588993-2026#/ to sign up.

For more information on the Winter Farmers Market, see the flyer on the next page.



Winter

FARMERS MARKET

All are
welcome

Sunday, March 1, 2026

Market: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Brunch: 9 a.m. – noon

St. Sebastian Catholic Church
5400 W. Washington Blvd, Milwaukee WI

Products include

Eggs
Meat
Rice
Sweet Breads
Preserves, Jams, Jellies
Salsa
Mushrooms
Soaps & Body care
Apples & Cider (Slushies!)
Syrups
Honey
Oats & Granola
Alpaca Wool Products
Gluten-free & Vegan Bread
Rustic Sourdough Bread

Freewill donation
accepted to
support the work of

Join us for Farm-to-Fork Breakfast Buffet

**Locally-sourced meal including:
sausage or veggie strata, pancakes
with Wisconsin produced maple
syrup, homemade applesauce, slow-
cooked oatmeal, apple cider and
Valentine coffee**

**Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$8 for students
and \$5 for kids age 3-7**

**Buy Tickets Anytime after Jan. 15, 2026
<https://saintsebs.org/>**



**Food, Faith and
Farming Network**
Connecting Community, Land, and People

This Winter Farmers Market is hosted by **St. Sebastian's Catholic Church** and sponsored by **Food, Faith and Farming Network**, a nonprofit organization supporting local, sustainable food sources and Wisconsin family farmers since the 1980s.

SAINT SEBASTIAN PARISHIONER SPOTLIGHT

Name:

Kate Kazlo

Year You Joined St. Sebastian:

December 2025

What made you decide to make St. Sebastian your home?

I joined St. Sebastian Church because of the genuine sense of community and the welcoming spirit of everyone in the parish.

What do you appreciate most about the St. Sebastian community?

I so glad I joined such an amazing parish and am happy that I found my way back to the Catholic church. It has been especially meaningful to watch my nephews grow up within the St. Sebastian Church and School community.



Name:

Nell Bormann

Year You Joined St. Sebastian:

2018

What made you decide to make St. Sebastian your home?

I was looking for a progressive Catholic church and was encouraged by the inclusivity, diversity, and welcoming atmosphere. When I first heard a sermon from Father Peter Patrick, I knew I was in the right place. His words connect truth to real life in a way people can feel and carry with them after they leave. St. Sebastian offers a sense of belonging rooted in shared faith, values, and tradition, and I look forward to connecting with everyone on Sundays.

What do you appreciate most about the St. Sebastian community?

I love how involved the parish is in both the neighborhood and in the lives of the members. The church really goes the extra mile to welcome new parishioners and ensure that you feel welcome. The community itself provides connection, service, and encouragement to live out my faith in meaningful ways.

Are you involved in any ministries or volunteer roles at St. Sebastian?

I'm a proud member of the Stewardship Committee! I love being involved with this group because I feel it's a very tangible way to live out my faith. Through our stewardship, we are using our time, talents, and resources in service of others and the church, which gives me a real sense of purpose. Being involved alongside others who care deeply about the parish and its mission has helped me to create strong connections, and it's rewarding to see how our collective effort directly supports the church and makes everyone feel more welcome and valued.



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

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.