

Spirit of Life

Roman Catholic Church

STEVE HARMON AND CLASSIC RHYTHM “MUSIC THAT CAN BE ENJOYED BY ALL”

Music has a way of bringing people together. Whether we’re congregating to worship and participate in sacred music, or coming together to enjoy classic tunes, music builds community.

At this year’s St. Kateri Community Block Party, Steve Harmon and Classic Rhythm will be doing just that – helping build community through music.

“The sound we make is pretty universal, and it is a type of music that can be enjoyed by all,” says Deacon Dennis Rohr. “All kinds of people get together for this great event, and we’re excited to play for it.”

Formed in 2013, Steve Harmon and Classic Rhythm play a wide variety of music – particularly familiar songs from the 50s and 60s as well as country music. They have played at several community events.

“We love to play and sing and entertain,” says Steve Harmon. “We played at Art in the Park in Mandan on July 4, the Mandan Eagles Club dance, the Mandan Band Shell Summer Concert Series and at the Baptist Nursing Home.”

The band consists of four members who attend Catholic parishes in our community. Steve Harmon, who founded the band, attends Ascension and plays the guitar and does vocals for Classic Rhythm. Wayne Jundt is a parishioner at St. Anne’s and plays guitar and keyboard and also



Steve Harmon and Classic Rhythm – (from left) Steve Harmon, Bob Gruman, Dennis Rohr and Wayne Jundt

does vocals. Deacon Dennis Rohr is a member at Christ the King and plays drums, and Bob Gruman attends Corpus Christi and plays the bass guitar.

“We’re all Catholics in our band, and there is a certain segment of stewardship to what we do,” Deacon Dennis says. “We play for fun and are happy to play whenever the parishes ask us to.”

The band and its members try to share their talents in different ways in their parishes and the community. In addition to playing with Classic

continued on back cover

SETTING AN EXAMPLE OF STEWARDSHIP FOR OUR CHILDREN

As we strive to live as grateful stewards, we must remember that each of us has a responsibility to help our youngest parishioners learn what it means to live as a disciple of Christ. Jesus Himself told the disciples, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Mt 19:14). Christ wants children to grow closer to Him and to become His disciples, and parents are responsible for helping to lead their children to this end. The Rite of Baptism reminds us that parents are “the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith.”

An important part of faith involves living a life of stewardship, as the proper response of a Christian disciple. So, it follows that parents bear a great responsibility that comes from Christ Himself to raise their children as grateful stewards. However, it may already be difficult for adults to grasp the concept of stewardship and put it into practice in their own lives. How can parents teach their children to do the same?

First and foremost, parents can teach stewardship by setting a good example. Indeed, the example of our lives is so powerful that it can and should be a witness to the Gospel. As parents live the life of stewardship, their children will see the beauty in the stewardship way of life, and they are bound to follow suit. If parents live in thanksgiving to God for all He has given them, their children will grow to see that all we have is a gift from God. And when par-



ents offer gratitude to God, it will surely impact their children.

Eight-year-old Suzie has watched her dad serve Communion at Sunday Masses throughout her young life. When asked why she thinks he does this, she responds, “We need to help the priest.”

Meanwhile, her older sister, Jane, responds to the same question by explaining, “We need to serve God. He does so much for us. We should appreciate it and give back to Him.”

It is clear that by witnessing their dad’s example, the girls are beginning to understand – each in her own way – that the life of a Christian disciple involves selfless service in gratitude to God. However, it is not just their father’s example that has helped them develop this understanding. Both their father and their mother emphasize stewardship as a family practice. They spend time in family prayer, serve at the soup kitchen together,

bring up the offertory as a family, and participate in other acts of service. Such involved participation in the faithful life allows the girls to bear witness to the power of serving others in thanksgiving, even at their young ages.

“We need to help other people,” Suzie says. “Jesus wants us to put other people first, and if we want to listen to Him, we need to serve others.”

As Suzie’s statement demonstrates, the stewardship way of life is not only understood or lived out by adults – Jesus wants children to be His disciples, as well. So, it is essential that parents help their children develop a true understanding of stewardship, and encourage its practice through the example of an active faith life.

May all Christian parents be not only the first, but also the best teachers of faith to their children, in what they say *and* in what they do.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

SAVE ROOM ON YOUR BUSY SCHEDULES FOR STEWARDSHIP

Dear Parishioners,

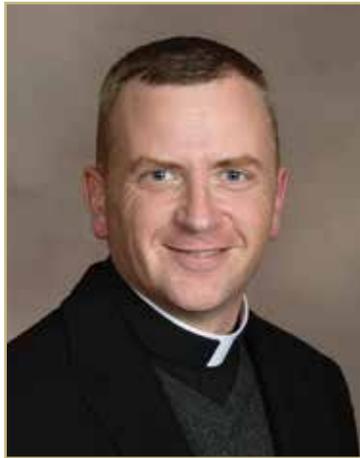
I don't know about you, but I still get a surge of adrenalin as the beginning of September approaches. Even though I'm no longer in school, I feel a sense of anticipation when I see the shelves filled with brand-new notebooks, composition books, and all the assorted items students use. I'm aware once again of the great hopes, exciting dreams, and good intentions that a new school year holds.

Even for those parishioners not directly involved in school, September marks new beginnings. Labor Day traditionally marks the unofficial end of the summer vacation season, and our calendars may reflect that. Many of you have calendars a lot like mine — they're full year-round with appointments and obligations. But even for us, things get busier in September as various organizations that took a break during summer begin their regular round of meetings again.

Nevertheless, I have a request for you as you fill up your fall schedules. First thing, please put in some time to share the talents God has given you. As you are aware, as Christian disciples — as stewards — we are called to return to God a portion of the Time, Talent, and Treasure He has entrusted to us. We should make our commitments to God when we begin our planning, so that we don't offer Him just the scraps of time and energy left over after everything else.

Make this September the month you make a commitment to sing in the choir, including attending rehearsals. Or begin working with our parish religious education in one way or another. Or decide to launder altar linens once a month. Or volunteer to help in the parish office one morning a week. Or help care for the parish grounds. Or join the Knights of Columbus. Or join a social service ministry. Or... well, you get the idea.

There are many ministries and groups within



the parish where you can serve, and you'll find that you receive even as you give. Hardly anyone in the parish can't find at least one activity in which they can participate and which fits their schedule. If **you** aren't involved, make this September the month to change that.

Thinking about commitments, some people say they don't have Time for prayer. Again, it's a matter of priorities, and I challenge any one of you to demonstrate to me that you can't pray at least one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be during the course of the day. That's at least a beginning.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Msgr. Chad Gion". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Msgr. Chad Gion,
Pastor

FROM CRADLE TO CONVERSION:

As Bonnie Volk puts it, “We were cradle Catholics, but that’s all we were.”

“We went to church on Sunday, but didn’t know a lot about our faith,” Bonnie says. “But there was a point when I was questioning things, ‘We’ve done this all our life, but what does it mean?’”

For Bonnie, her husband, David, and their three children – Hunter, Eden and Grace – their journey of faith has been a gradual one, with ups and downs, “light bulb moments,” and most of all, a lot of earnest prayers.

The couple, both of whom grew up locally, spent a number of years living in the Twin Cities, before returning home to the area. Joining Spirit of Life seemed like the natural choice, as they had family who were members, while also being drawn by the engaging nature of the parish.

“We started going to Spirit of Life because it was very engaging and we really wanted our kids to be Catholic,” Bonnie says. “We didn’t know why, but this is what you do.”

After going through some challenges in the public school, the couple decided to enroll their three children – then in the first, fourth, and sixth grades – in Catholic school.

And then came the turning point.

“I volunteered to drive the kids on a school trip, to an hour of adoration, at a church in a



David and Bonnie Volk, along with their three – grown or nearly grown! – children have deepened their faith together at Spirit of Life. They recently welcomed a new daughter-in-law in to the family when their oldest son, Hunter, married Jenna. (From left) Grace, David, Bonnie, Jenna, Hunter, and Eden Volk.

different town,” Bonnie says. “I didn’t know what adoration was, I was new to this, and it was a new school. We were just a mess as a family at the time, nobody was happy.

“We’re sitting in adoration, I barely knew the Rosary and I’m trying to get through,” she continues. “I just remember

looking at these young priests and thinking, ‘These guys look so peaceful. What would make them give their whole life? God, if You are real, I want to have what they have, I want to know what they know.’”

God revealed Himself to Bonnie in those moments, and she quickly realized it was just

MEET BONNIE AND DAVID VOLK

the beginning. From reading books and listening to cassette tapes about the faith, her knowledge of the faith began to grow – and with it, her love of the Church.

For David, the changes that the parish underwent had a significant impact on his faith.

“The changes have affected my faith and made me really dig in and learn more,” he says. “It’s one of those, ‘The more I learned, the more I realized what I didn’t know.’”

“As a contractor, I relate the physical changes to the church itself, to the spiritual changes within the people,” he continues. “You can see it in the people, and in the Mass itself. It’s been a pretty amazing journey.”

The Volks have found that the more they have become involved in the parish, the deeper their faith has grown. From Bonnie serving on the Parish and Stewardship Councils, to David serving on the Stewardship and Finance Councils, and both of them being Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, they find that the more they become engaged, the more their faith flourishes.

“We started getting more engaged – we got on committees, and we went to more functions, outside of just Sundays,” David says. “It’s amazing all the things that are going on outside of Sunday morning. Staying connected with people – it’s the little conversations, it’s the small things that keep me in the game, staying

connected with the people who are in it with you.”

They also make a priority of regularly receiving the Sacraments, spending time in prayer, attending Bible studies, and visiting Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration.

“Morning prayer, going to daily Mass and Confession as often as I can, I know I need it!”

Bonnie says. “It rejuvenates me and it sets me free from the things that hold me back. The Adoration Chapel, it’s really been a blessing. You can go there and see Jesus and take time with Him – it’s just so healing.

“And the grace comes in the Sacraments – you can’t get that anywhere else!” she continues. “There are times when I’m struggling, and I just have to say, ‘Increase my faith, Lord!’ It’s been such a great and amazing journey. It’s not a journey that’s always been easy, but we’re always going forward towards Him, there’s no turning back now.”

The Volks encourage other parishioners to consider going deeper in their faith and becoming more involved in the parish.

“It starts with prayer,” Bonnie says. “Maybe get on your knees, or go to that quiet place at home. God is calling all of us. It starts with prayer – ‘Open my heart, so I can hear You. I don’t know how to do this, God. You’ve got to help me. Show me You’re real.’ God just wants our hearts, and to follow Him, that’s true happiness.”

“We started getting more engaged – we got on committees, and we went to more functions, outside of just Sundays. It’s amazing all the things that are going on outside of Sunday morning. Staying connected with people – it’s the little conversations, it’s the small things that keep me in the game, staying connected with the people who are in it with you.” – David Volk

A MODERN MODEL OF SAINTHOOD ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA

In the dark final years of the Cold War, a small woman — standing at barely five feet tall — offered a living counternarrative to the inhibiting fear undergirding our daily lives and our foreign affairs. Instead of living in fear, Mother Teresa acted out of love. Instead of withdrawing and isolating herself, she gave tirelessly to others.

Many of us harbor a personal connection to this saint, for we lived during the height of the media coverage of Mother Teresa's work and her friendships with Pope St. John Paul II and the beloved Princess Diana.

Long before she received the name Mother Teresa and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu was born on Aug. 26, 1910, in Skopje, Macedonia, the crossroads of the Balkans. The youngest of three children, Mother Teresa was raised predominantly by her mother after her father's death, when she was about 8 years old. Dranafile (Drana) Bojaxhiu, Mother Teresa's mother, undoubtedly became a strong influence on her daughter's vocation, since Drana herself was a devout Catholic and known for her prayer life and her charity.

Agnes attended a Catholic primary school and, following the example of her mother, became active in their parish and sang in Sacred Heart's choir. As a young person, Agnes enjoyed reading the lives of the saints — while immersing herself in the stories of these holy men and women, Agnes first felt the stirring call to become a missionary.

At the age of 18, Agnes traveled to Dublin, Ireland, to join the Sisters of Loreto. She became Sr. Mary Teresa, named after St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and began to learn English. Within a few months of arriving in Ireland, she left for India.

In India, Sr. Mary Teresa lived at the Loreto Entally community in Calcutta, where she served as an educator and taught at St. Mary's School. After her final profession, she became Mother Teresa



and, a few years later, began serving as the school's principal.

On an ordinary day, Mother Teresa received an extraordinary call. While on a train ride to her annual retreat, Mother Teresa felt what she would describe as Jesus' thirst for souls. Soon, Jesus called her to found the Missionaries of Charity, an order devoted to serving the "poorest of the poor."

The order formally began on Oct. 7, 1950, and has grown from one woman tending the sick and dying in the streets of Calcutta to over 4,500 reli-

gious sisters helping the poor in over 130 countries around the world. Additionally, the order grew to include the Missionaries of Charity Brothers, the Missionaries of Charity Fathers and the Lay Missionaries of Charity.

Though externally Mother Teresa joyfully and indefatigably served the poor for nearly 50 years, during the majority of this time, she experienced a "dark night of the soul," an extensive period of not feeling God's presence or hearing His voice. Other saints, notably St. John of the Cross, similarly experienced a dark night of the soul. Despite this spiritual struggle, Mother Teresa continued her work joyfully throughout her sickness and until her death on Sept. 5, 1997.

Pope St. John Paul II beatified Mother Teresa in 2003. Fittingly, a pontiff who has underscored the importance of social justice celebrated her canonization. On Sept. 4, 2016, Pope Francis canonized Mother Teresa, the "Saint of the Gutters," at the Vatican.

St. Teresa of Calcutta offers us an example of ceaseless prayer and selfless service. She is a modern model of sainthood that we can emulate in our daily lives starting with how we serve and treat the other members of our family, our faith community and all those with whom we interact on a daily basis.

St. Teresa of Calcutta, Pray for Us!

PARISH OFFICE HELPERS FURTHERING SPIRIT OF LIFE'S MISSION

It may seem like a church's busiest day is Sunday – but step into the parish office and you'll quickly realize that keeping the church running smoothly is a full-time job.

"I've worked in corporate America pretty much all my life and have attended many Catholic churches – it is the busiest place I have ever experienced," Amy Schweitzer says of volunteering in the Spirit of Life office.

Volunteers like Amy and her daughter, Victoria, help fill in when office staff are away or extra support is needed. While tasks often include what you'd normally expect in an office setting, such as answering the phone and assisting visitors and parishioners, Amy says the mission behind the job goes much deeper.

"They really truly do God's work in all facets of what they're called to do," she says. "Every day is different. Nothing is ever the same. If you want variety in your life, that's where you should go. We're just trying to be Jesus to all people, even each other."

On Mondays, other volunteers will join the staff to help count the weekend's collection monies. They join what Amy describes as an array of people who

are willing to step in and assist with whatever the parish needs in the name of furthering its mission.

"We really feel called to help at Spirit of Life because of their mission to help all people regardless of who they are," Amy says. "That makes me want to help other people. Even though it's nuts-and-bolts things like answering the phone, it's so that the Church can continue its mission of touching hearts and saving souls. The everyday stuff is all part of the big picture."

Being in the office also allows helpers to be closer to God in a literal sense. Amy says one of her favorite attributes of the job is being close to the Perpetual Adoration Chapel, which she says provides the opportunity for a quiet escape from our often busy, noisy world.

For parishioners who might have some time in their schedule to help out in the Spirit of Life office, help is always needed.

"There's a strong need, anyone who wants to help just needs to dive in," Amy says. "I know people are scared of commitment, but if you want peace of mind and a skip in your heart every day, just give to others and the peace will overflow."

*"We really feel called to help at Spirit of Life because of their mission to help all people regardless of who they are. That makes me want to help other people. Even though it's nuts-and-bolts things like answering the phone, it's so that the Church can continue its mission of touching hearts and saving souls. The everyday stuff is all part of the big picture."
– Amy Schweitzer*

If you would like to learn more about serving with the Parish Office Helpers, please call the parish office at 701-663-1660 for more information.

801 1st Street SE | Mandan, ND 58554
Phone: 701-663-1660 | myspiritoflife.com

Change Service Requested

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Spirit of Life

Monday: 8 a.m.

Tuesday - Thursday: 7 a.m., 9 a.m.

Friday: 7 a.m., 9 a.m.,

Saturday: 9 a.m., 5 p.m.

Sunday: 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m.

CONFESSIONS: Sunday: 8-8:30 a.m.

Saturday: 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 7-8:30 p.m., and 20 min. before
weekday Masses except Mondays

St. Martin's Parish

Even Months: 9 a.m.

Odd Months: 11 a.m.

St. Anthony's Parish

Even Months: 11 a.m.

Odd Months: 9 a.m.

STEVE HARMON AND CLASSIC RHYTHM *continued from front cover*

Rhythm, Steve has recorded three albums of original Christian music.

"We also volunteer at nursing homes and use our musical abilities to lead music at Catholic liturgies," says Steve.

Come together and hear Steve Harmon and Classic Rhythm at the St. Kateri Community Block Party on Sept. 9 from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. All are welcome!

"Church is community, and relationship building is essential," Steve says. "Enjoying church activities like the St. Kateri Community Block Party helps pass on church to the younger generation and enables neighborhood outreach."

Celebrating its fifth year, the St. Kateri Community Block Party has grown into a wonderful com-

munity event of giving in honor of its namesake, St. Kateri Tekakwitha.

The St. Kateri Community Block Party was started to allow the parish family to interact with the community around us without excluding anyone. This event supports the mission of the Mother Teresa Outreach to aid marginalized families in our community, offering attendees free entertainment in addition to complimentary food and drink. This event has grown over the years, with the 2016 participation at an astonishing 2,000-plus attendees. This year's event includes live music from the bands Classic Rhythm and Dirty Word, a climbing wall, children's festival, free brats, burgers, Indian tacos and so much more!

For more information about Steve Harmon and Classic Rhythm, reach out to Steve Harmon at 701-527-4909 or 1397steve@bis.midco.net. And be sure to join us Saturday, Sept. 9 – music starts at 5 p.m. and dinner begins at 5:30 p.m. The event lasts until 10 p.m. as we celebrate with food, music and fun!