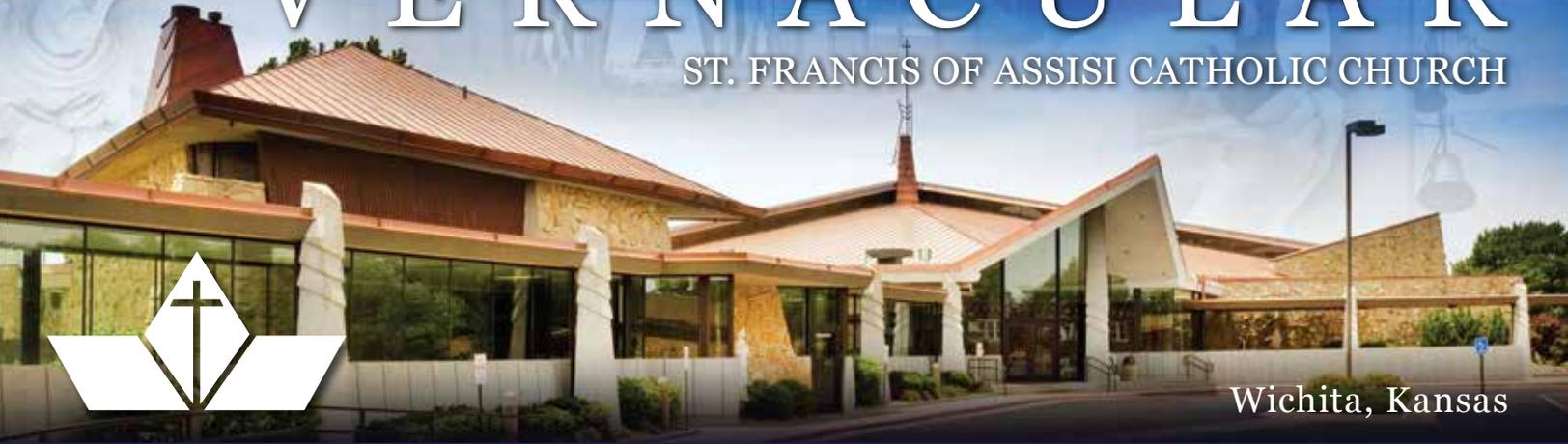


# THE VERNACULAR

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH



Wichita, Kansas

SEPTEMBER 2017

## As Jesus invited us to follow Him, so must we invite others into the Church

Who doesn't like a personal invitation? Who doesn't like to be invited by someone to go somewhere? It doesn't mean that we will always go to the wedding, to the party or to a friend's house for dinner. But it sure does feel good to be invited, to be included in someone else's plans.

The stewardship renewal theme for this year is built on an invitation. The theme, "Who are you following" is based on a passage from Matthew (Chapter 4:18-20) as Jesus is beginning His public ministry. Walking beside the Sea of Galilee He sees two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew.

He said to them, "Come, follow me." At once, they left their nets and followed Him. Jesus invited them, and they came and followed Him.

Our church was formed based on this invitation. Why didn't He just go to the synagogue and start preaching and healing people? He could have then just picked out the best followers. They would have found Him there, for heaven's sake. He was God. No, Jesus

chose to make a personal invitation. He called them personally by name, just like He calls us today through the Holy Spirit.



A key to being a good disciple or a good steward is personal invitation. We are on this journey together as a stewardship parish. We invite and encourage each other along the way.

Jesus was not passive in going out and forming His church. He went out to where the people were and brought them to Him.

As a church, we have much to offer a world that is starving for the Good News. But we can't wait for the world to come to us. A personal invitation is risky; it makes us vulnerable and we might be rejected. Yet we extend that invitation to others as Jesus has extended that invitation to us to be a good steward.

Our faith is not a "me and Jesus" thing. Good stewards recognize that Sunday Mass is a community of believers supporting one another. Our acts of service lift others up. Our generous gifts of treasure demonstrate

to others that our mission is important and that we trust God in all areas of our life. Stewardship is the recognition that we have been gifted by God.

The stewardship way of life is a personal invitation from Jesus to come follow Him and His plans for our life. Let us extend that same invitation to others to come and join us. This is one party that does feel good to be invited too. RSVP today. It is a good follow.

– Pat Burns,

*Director of Stewardship & Finance*

### Respect Life Month

October

### Feast of St. Francis

Oct. 4

Our summer RCIA participants will become Catholics this day.

### Friends of Francis

(adults 40-65)

Oct. 9, 6:30-9 p.m.

### Young Adult Group

(adults 24-39)

Oct. 26, 6:30-9 p.m.

### Novena for the Deceased

Oct. 31 - Nov. 8.

# Stewardship witness: Randy & Heather Gregg

*This is a partial transcript of the Greggs' stewardship talk from last November.*

## **Randy:**

My name is Randy and this is my wife, Heather. We were asked to speak to you about our stewardship journey.

The definition of Stewardship is on the banners hanging from the church walls. Based on that definition, I am not sure that I can count this talk as part of my stewardship. My immediate reaction to being asked to speak before a church full of people could be characterized as many things, but I am not sure grateful was at the top of the list.

My personal stewardship journey started right here in this church nearly 25 years ago, when I went through the RCIA program and converted to Catholicism.

Father Tom McGread was the pastor at the time and spoke to my RCIA class on the concept of stewardship. After seeing so many parishioners give of their time and talent to make RCIA possible, it was pretty clear what he was talking about.

A couple of years later, Heather and I were blessed to move into SFA parish. During our first stewardship renewal, Father Tom was still here and gave his homily on the stewardship way of life.

He closed by inviting everyone to take the leap, to try on stewardship as a way of life and if at the end of the year you felt like God hadn't held up his end of the bargain, then to come and see him. Tough to beat an offer like that; it was enough for us to take the leap.

More recently, I remember one of the early homilies I heard Father Jarrod give, the theme as I recall was "Leave it better than you found it."

It is so easy to take the parish life we have here at SFA for granted. The rich history of stewardship dates so far back that it seems like it has always been here, but the yearly renewal of stewardship gives us a chance to reflect. Those who came before us built such a wonderful environment for us to worship God and to educate our children to follow the same path. With this great gift comes a great responsibility, the responsibility to be

good stewards as well, for each of us to "leave it better than we found it," so that those who follow us can reap the benefits that we have enjoyed.

My stewardship journey started here in this church even though I may not have really recognized it at the time. In fact, most of the good things that have happened to me and my family have been rooted here, my children were baptized here, made their first reconciliation and took their first communion here. The older ones have graduated from the parish school and have been confirmed here, setting them up for their journey as full members of the church.

God willing, the others will all follow that same path and become Disciples of Christ as well, leaving them all with no option but to become good stewards in the tradition of this parish.

I want to thank the stewardship committee for giving us the opportunity to speak to you this morning. Although I wasn't initially grateful, it gave me an extended opportunity to reflect on what stewardship has meant in my life. I also want to say thanks to all of you for all that you have given me and my family by allowing us to be a part of your parish family and to express the hope that over the coming years we can give back even a small part of what we have been given here.

## **Heather:**

We are all on a journey to be the person God wants us to be. The people and circumstances around us change but as we go through our lives, do we see the gifts God has given us for our journey?

I believe my stewardship started by just showing up and participating. I can remember starting to feel the



Randy & Heather Gregg with children Drew, Chris, Alli, Ben & Ethan

Courtesy Photo

importance of being part of the St. Francis family when our oldest was 2. He started talking and asking lots of questions. By attending Mothers Group, baking some cookies or preparing food for funeral dinners, I was able to show him church and community. And so it began.

I also started to notice how I was being called to know more about our Catholic Faith, to pray better, and a desire to be closer to Christ. As time and family changed I adjusted and God always had the gifts needed for me to use. It's so important to respond generously to these gifts. They are given for us to grow close to Him.

I wish I could say some magic words, sprinkle some magic dust or even have a little peek into Heaven to motivate us all to be less indifferent. Can you imagine what would happen to our Church, school and community if we all did nothing? I find my response modeled after Mary's great "Yes" to God. I've also come to learn that stewardship is not something you do. It is someone we become.

St. Gregory the Great tells us "He that has talent let him hide not, he that has abundance, let him quicken himself to mercy and generosity. He that has art and skill; let him do his best to share its use and utility with his neighbor."

I ask you to please share your gifts with us.

# Follow the Leader: SFA offers many opportunities for adults to follow Christ

Do you remember playing “Follow the Leader?” Isn’t it fascinating watching young children take turns being the leader? I mean, what is it in young children that compel them to want to play a game that is simply “You follow me, then, I’ll follow you.” Up, down and all-around, children lead and follow through make-believe mazes and pathways. This game points to something innate within the human mind: we are called to lead and to follow.

The question before us today is this: “Who are you following?” Jesus says, “Come follow me.” We are called to follow Jesus, but this is not always easy. Even the devil tried to get Jesus to follow him in the Gospel (Luke 4:1-13). So, when we ask the question, “Who are you following?” we could also ask the question, “How do you know you are following Jesus?”

One answer to this is to learn how to follow Jesus joining adult faith formation opportunities. Here are a few at St. Francis that are just around the corner:

- **Kapaun’s Men.** On Sept. 22 through Nov. 3, there will be a seven-week series that will train men on the life of virtue as seen in Fr. Kapaun. These classes take place on Friday mornings from 6-7 a.m. in St. Clare Hall. It includes breakfast, coffee, videos, coffee, discussion and coffee.

- **Generations of Faith.** Our next event is Oct. 1, when we will be hosting Sr. Mary Kansier of the Lincoln Diocese who will take us deeper in our devotion to Mary.

- **Young Adult Group.** This one-year-old group meets the fourth Thursday evening of the month for ages 24-39 (new age range). The format of the group is



simple: 6:30-7 p.m. – social, 7-8 p.m. – presentation and discussion, 8-9 p.m. – social. We adjusted the time and age range of the group to make it easier for parents with young children to participate. Babysitting is available; call Sarah Steinert at 613-9507 to RSVP your children.

- **Friends of Francis.** After a full year of hearing about the Young Adult Group, other adults are saying, “What about us?” New this year, we are starting an adult gathering for ages 40-65(ish) that will take place on the second Monday evening of the month. The format of the group is simple: 6:30-7 p.m. – social, 7-7:30 p.m. – presentation and discussion, 8-9 p.m. – social. The first event will be Oct. 9. Babysitting is available; call Sarah Steinert at 613-9507 to RSVP your children.

- **Harvest House.** St. Francis has been blessed with this active group for senior adults. This group meets every third Thursday of the month at 1 p.m. for faith, fraternity, fun and service.

- **Novena for the Deceased.** This will be the second year for this Novena. For centuries, the Church has set aside Oct. 31 to Nov. 8 as a time of prayer and indulgence for deceased loved ones. Join us for prayer, formation, meditation and support as we fondly remember those who have gone before us.

- **Ignite Retreat.** Finally, we will be hosting our fifth Ignite Retreat Nov. 17-18. This 24-hour

retreat is designed to set your relationship with the Holy Spirit on fire with new knowledge and new passion

- **Formed.** We should never forget this online Catholic library of programs, videos, audios and books. Go to our website and click on the “FORMED” button to get connected. Our parish code is 9RMP79.

There are so many ways for us to ensure we are following Jesus. When we learn to follow him, we will be equipped to lead others to Christ. So, let’s play “Follow the Leader” with Jesus.

## NEW PARISHIONERS

**Josh and Megan Curts,**  
3 children  
**Jared and Angela Gerstenkorn,**  
1 child  
**Brian and Erin Koochel**  
**Gregory and Amy Law**  
**Nathan and Christina Luther,**  
4 children  
**F Dwayne and Cyndi Martin**  
**Kyle and Rachel Martin,**  
3 children  
**Ryan Rausch**  
**Gage and Brianna Stephen,**  
2 children

## BAPTISMS

**Andrew Joseph,** son of Adam and Renee Hein, on Aug. 12  
**Liam Nathaniel,** son of William and Erika McGreevy, on Aug. 13  
**Avery Marie,** daughter of Daniel and Christina Engel, on Aug. 19  
**Catherine Lam,** daughter of Dao and Dao Nguyen, on Aug. 19  
**Asher Levine,** son of David and Rebecca Loos, on Aug. 20  
**Emilia Prim,** daughter of David and Rebecca Loos, on Aug. 20  
**Killian Patrick,** son of Justin and Jodi McAninch, on Aug. 26

## Bitting teaches CYM about Sacred Art

CYM hosts various activities throughout the year. We have guest speakers, open gym, Adoration, square dancing, pizza parties, study nights, trivia nights and much more. On Sept. 6 our speaker was Mr. Bitting, a theology teacher at Bishop

Carroll, who spoke about Sacred Art. His message was about how the Church uses the beauty of sacred art to teach the Gospel message.

“Father might have a 10-minute homily, but sacred art continues to convey its message,” Bitting said.

CYM members in attendance that evening enjoyed learning about this topic, and now we will be able to take some of what we learned and apply it to other pieces of art we see at school and elsewhere.

– Alli Gregg



Photo by Emily Savage

## WSS Dance Club offers lessons at SFA

The Westside Steppers Square Dance Club will be conducting square dance lessons in the basement of St. Clare Hall every Tuesday and Thursday from 7-9 p.m., Sept. 21 through Nov. 14. The instructor is Sheldon Lawrence.

WSS is an outreach of St. Francis of Assisi, so parishioners

are always welcome. Come give it a try; the first two lessons will be free. Those with two left feet are especially encouraged; if you can walk and if you know right from left, you can square dance.

Casual attire, couples, singles and families are all welcome. No prior experience needed.

Registration and social hour (including light snacks) will be Sept. 21 from 6-7 p.m. Get all classes for only \$30 (cash or checks only please), which is less than \$1 per hour. For more information, email westsidesteppers@hotmail.com, visit <http://westsidesteppers.com>, or call the club presidents, Rick and Cathy Frost at 648-6772.



# Respect Life Month full of ways to participate

October is annually observed as Respect Life Month. This provides a wonderful opportunity for parents and catechists to teach children and youth the truth about the dignity of the human person.

Human life is under constant attack in our culture today; from the moment of conception to natural death. Pope St. John Paul II said in his encyclical, *The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae, EV)*, “For the Christian, it is an absolute imperative to respect, love and promote the life of every brother and sister, in accordance with the requirements of

God’s bountiful love in Jesus Christ.”

Next month, St. Francis of Assisi Parish and School are joining other Catholics across the country to show their support for all life – from the moment of conception to natural death.

Here is a list of some of the activities:

- Life Chain - Sunday, Oct. 1, from 2-3:30 p.m. at the intersection of Maize and 21st streets
- Pro-life rosary after Saturday masses during October
- School-wide and classroom activities for the students

• 40 Days of Life – SFA will be assigned dates to pray at the Southwind Clinic (watch Bulletin for details)

• Pro-life videos and talks can be found online at FORMED.org. For those not already registered, you will need the parish code (9RMP79) and your own username and password.

Let us show the world that we do care about life and are willing to stand up for it.

As St. Teresa of Calcutta said, “How can there be too many children? That is like saying there are too many flowers.”

## SEAS hosts Dynamic Catholic event Nov. 12

Are you ready to be re-energized about your faith? Plan to join us for an exciting event as Dynamic Catholic brings “Find Your Greatness” with Dominick Albano to Wichita. Dominick is very passionate about helping facilitate a life-changing encounter with Jesus during his events.

While in high school, he began giving talks and leading retreats. Since then, he has spent his entire

professional life in ministry as a leader and evangelist. Albano and a friend founded Arise Missions in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee where he served as executive director for the ministry.

In 2016, Matthew Kelly encouraged Albano to join Dynamic Catholic as an RCIA team leader. He also leads parish missions, youth groups, conferences and retreats.

The half-day event will be on

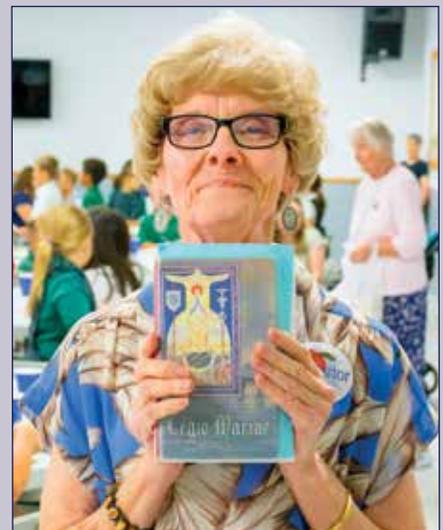
Nov. 12 from 2-6 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church. Tickets are \$25 and are available in the St. Francis church office and online at [DynamicCatholic.com](http://DynamicCatholic.com).

Come join us as we learn about the four habits that will radically transform your life and how to become “the best version of yourself”!

## 2nd Graders celebrate Mary’s birthday



Photos by Krick Reitmeyer



See next page for more photos.



## Junior Catholic Youth Ministry

Wednesday • School Gym (main entrance) • 6:45 – 8:00 PM



OCTOBER 4 •  
 NOVEMBER 1 - NO JCYM ALL SAINTS DAY •  
 NOVEMBER 4, 9:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M. MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH RALLY  
 • DECEMBER 6 • JANUARY 3 •  
 FEBRUARY 7 • MARCH 7 • APRIL 4

JCYM is for the 6th, 7th and 8th graders of the parish. Each night will include prayer, a guest speaker, music and games.



Photos by Rtek Reitmeyer

The Legion of Mary hosts SFA School's second graders every year to celebrate Mother Mary's birthday. They prayed the Rosary together and then had dessert. The Legion gave each of the children a rosary to keep, and Father Labenz blessed their rosaries.

# RCIA summer session ends as winter session begins; SFA prepares to welcome 18 new Catholics Oct. 4

The summer session of RCIA is fast approaching the culminating moment – the reception of the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation) by our catechumen and candidates. God willing, we may have 18 new Catholics on Oct. 4, which is the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi (our parish's patron saint).

You may not know this, but the RCIA program at St. Francis of Assisi is unique when comparing it to other RCIA programs in the United States and throughout the world in that we run two programs a year. We start one program near the conclusion of the other, initiating new Catholics either on the Feast of St. Francis or during the Easter Vigil.

Our winter session started Sept. 13. It is not too late to sign up if you or someone you know are interested in becoming Catholic. You can call the church office, or just start attending the classes (most Wednesdays in St. Clare Hall, 6:30-8 p.m.); we can get you set up from there.

The SFA RCIA program has 25 classes ahead of entering the Church. The primary reason for this number of classes is that upon entering the sacraments of initiation, one should assent in faith to that which the Church proclaims and teaches; one's head and heart ideally ought to take

ownership in their newborn faith – and that takes time.

The process of RCIA is a transformative process, one of spiritual development that involves great conversion; prayer, study and repentance are all necessary for proper conversion.

We strive to arm our soon-to-be converts as missionary disciples – those who, in turn, evangelize the world, bringing the Gospel message everywhere they go; building the Kingdom from within and throughout.

We can see the light of Christ shining throughout the lives of our converts, creating an infectious love of Christ that begs others to join in with them.

Doing all of this over the course of 25 classes is no simple matter. We have a great RCIA team that helps make the spiritual journey as smooth as possible for our catechumen and candidates.

Team members include child care volunteers, catechists (teachers), hospitality hosts (food and drinks are served at every meeting), sponsors, priests, and the RCIA coordinators (my wife, Melissa, and me). This entire team working together is what makes this program possible.

We are always looking especially

for people to help with child care, sponsoring and teaching. Child care is one of the single most enabling assets because children are often the reason people will, or will not, attend RCIA classes.

Sponsors play a critical role in that they are the glue between our large parish and those entering the Church. Community and relationship are an important aspect of RCIA, and sponsors help fulfill it.

The demographics of our RCIA participants span the entire spectrum. As such, we strive to match sponsors to similar catechumen and candidates (e.g., college students, single or married, with or without children, retired, like genders, etc.).

Finally, we ask for your prayers. We ask God that the SFA RCIA program is an effective vehicle for bringing people into the Church. We ask that you keep all our catechumen, candidates, neophytes (recent converts), and the RCIA team in your prayers.

May God's grace and love grant you peace!

– Jeremy Lezniak

## Stewardship Thought

*“Keep a clear eye toward life's end. Do not forget your purpose and destiny as God's creature. ... Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take nothing that you have received ... but only what you have given; a full heart enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice, and courage.”*

– Francis of Assisi

## FUNERALS

**Bill Blalock**, husband of Mary, father of Ann Shutts, Jeannette Hutchinson, Elaine Schmeidler, Mark Blalock, Charles Blalock and Andy Blalock, on Aug. 17.

**Judith Keeler**, mother of Michele Ohotnick, Jackie Burns, Peggy Ast and Rachel Evans, on Aug. 22.

**Stanley Williams** on Aug. 23.

**Terry L. Burnett**, husband of Cathy, father of Lisa Woods, son of Fred Burnett, on Aug. 23.

**Victor W. Bender**, father of Karen Rogers, Robert Bender, James Bender, Douglas Bender and Gregory Bender, on Aug. 31.

# WHO ARE YOU *following?*



And he said to them, 'Follow me.'

Matthew 4:19

As Jesus invited us,  
we must invite others  
- page 1 -

SFA offers many ways  
to follow the leader  
- page 3 -

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
WICHITA, KS  
PERMIT #152

Catholic Diocese of Wichita  
St. Francis of Assisi  
861 N. Soeora  
Wichita, KS 67212-3237

THE  
VERNACULAR

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church  
[www.stfranciswichita.com](http://www.stfranciswichita.com)

