

# ST. CLARE *of* ASSISI PARISH

February 2015

*Helping Those Who Have Fallen Victim to Poverty*

## Family Promise at St. Clare of Assisi

**P**overty — for many in our society, it is an all-too-painful reality. And it can have an impact on any one of us, at any time.

“We can all end up in that position very easily,” says Kay Urban, Director of Family Promise at St. Clare of Assisi. “It only takes one little thing for the dominos to topple.”

In an effort to help those who have fallen victim to poverty, faithful Catholics across the nation are coming together through Family Promise to help their less fortunate brothers and sisters achieve freedom from the struggles of homelessness. As stated on the organization’s website, “Family Promise is a nonprofit organization committed to helping low-income families achieve lasting independence.”

Kay became involved with Family Promise at St. Clare of Assisi after being invited to join in on the ministry. In the past year, St. Clare’s parish has helped more than 176 people get back on their feet. Kay enjoys taking part in such an effective form of stewardship and helping struggling families successfully achieve independence. Kay’s devotion — and that of her fellow St. Clare of Assisi parishioners — to Family Promise is a perfect display of stewardship that encompasses the Catholic faith.

In Green County, an ecumenical board involving 30 churches volunteers their time, space and resources by implementing the practices of Family Promise in their own community. Of these 30 churches, St. Clare of Assisi is a leading parish, and 13 are host churches.

Each host church communicates directly with the Green County Human Services department to locate people in need. This department then assigns each person or family to a specific host church. In accordance with the mission of Family Promise, it

### *The face of homelessness...*



Since Family Promise of Green County started in November of 2011, we’ve learned that the face of homelessness is younger than we thought.

November is National Homelessness Awareness Month. Please help if you can.

According to 2013 statistics, 23% of all homeless people in the U.S. were children under the age of 18. That’s a total of 138,149 homeless children, according to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.

- 2 The Renovation of Nilles Hall
- 3 Growing in our Faith During Lent
- 4 A Look Back on the Brunch With Santa
- 5 Lenten Liturgy and Devotion Schedule 2015
- 6 Living Lent in 2015
- 7 Results of the 2014 Stewardship Renewal

1760 14th Street, Monroe, WI 53566  
Phone: (608) 325-9506  
[www.stclaregreencounty.org](http://www.stclaregreencounty.org)

*continued on back cover*

## *The Renovation of Nilles Hall*

### **This project includes:**

- Total removal of the existing concrete floor, replacing it with a poured concrete – level! – floor that will be stained and sealed. We will not re-carpet that space for ease of controlling moisture and cleaning.
- Removal and replacement of ceiling tiles.
- Thorough inspection of all wiring and upgrades as necessary.
- Sealing of limestone walls to stop moisture and “flaking” of the walls.
- Painting the walls.

The cost of the above will be \$28-30,000 depending on electrical needs. We have this money in reserve in the building fund – but I will, of course, invite any parishioners to make a restricted gift for this.

The planned for remodeling of the three bathrooms will then commence, making them more accessible and nice spaces. The cost of this project is \$36,000 which is being totally funded by a grant from the Apostolate to the Handicapped, Inc.

The start date was Jan. 5. Of course, it will be a bit messy for a while – but the result will be grand! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Larry M. Bakke  
Pastor



*A Letter From Our Pastor*

## Growing in Our Faith During Lent

Dear Parishioners,

February 18 marks the beginning of Lent with a unique holy day — Ash Wednesday. While not a Holy Day of Obligation, we are offered a special opportunity on Ash Wednesday to take a step back from the daily grind to focus on an important element of our Christian lives.

As the ashes are placed on our foreheads in the sign of the Cross, we are told, “Remember you are dust and to dust you will return” or “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.” This is a significant reality to keep in mind as we begin our journey through Lent. All of us are sinners and each is in need of seeking the Lord’s help and forgiveness. Our very breath is a gift from Him — without God’s mercy and grace, we can do nothing.

The way of Lent should be the life of the steward, one in which we acknowledge that all we have is from God and that our lives are meant to be lived as a gift of gratitude for all He is and does for us.

Many of us associate our Easter preparation as a time for self-denial and sacrifice. While those elements are important, they will do us little good if we do not remember that the whole point of those actions is to improve our relationship with God and each other. Sometimes we get caught up in the complexity of Lent and lose sight of our calling as stewards to actively pursue depth in our relationship with the Lord while we live out our faith.

Lent is an important time for us to refocus and to recognize the magnitude of Christ’s victory over the grave. It is by overcoming sin and death on Easter Sunday that we are set free from the bondage that sin puts us in and rejoice that, “By his wounds, we are healed” (Is 53:5).

As we journey through Lent this year, let us pause to praise God for the gift of life that He has given us. Let



us thank Him for the opportunities He presents to us each day to grow, to accept the challenges thrown our way and to choose Him. When we live out our lives in humble service to God and to one another, dying to the desires of the flesh, we think of ourselves less and give Him the glory that He so greatly deserves. May we join in the prayer of St. John the Baptist, “He must increase, I must decrease” (Jn 3:30).

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Larry M. Bakke  
Pastor

*When we live out our lives in humble service to God and to one another, dying to the desires of the flesh, we think of ourselves less and give Him the glory that He so greatly deserves.*

# A Look Back on the Brunch With Santa

*Thank you to everyone who volunteered and helped make our Brunch With Santa a success!*



## Youth Ministry on the Move



---

## Lenten Liturgy and Devotion Schedule 2015

### **Ash Wednesday Masses – Feb. 18**

8:30 a.m. – St. Victor Church, Monroe  
Noon – Monroe Clinic, Hospital Chapel  
5 p.m. – St. Rose of Lima, Brodhead  
6:30 p.m. – St. Victor Church, Monroe

### **Evening Prayer (Vespers)**

Sundays of Lent – 4:30 p.m.  
Feb. 22, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

### **Stations of the Cross**

*Tuesdays of Lent* – 5:30 p.m.  
Feb. 24, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

*Fridays of Lent* – Noon  
February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 20, 27

### **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**

March 6 – Following 8 a.m. Mass until noon  
March 18 – 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

## Living Lent *in* 2015

During the 40 days that Jesus spent fasting and praying in the desert, Satan was constantly tempting Him. He preyed on Jesus' humanity, trying desperately to get Him to test God. Of course, we all know that it didn't work. As Jesus is 100 percent God at the same time that He is 100 percent man, the devil was unable to take hold of Him.

Yet, the story of Jesus' temptation in the desert communicates an all-important truth to us. Jesus, the God-man, experienced everything we have and everything we ever will as human beings. Satan even tried to tempt Him, just as he tempts us every day. But because Jesus is God at the same time that He is human, He had no tendency to give in to Satan's attempts.

Even so, Christ fought Satan tooth and nail, putting him in his place: "Get away, Satan! It is written, 'The Lord, your God shall you worship, and Him alone shall you serve'" (Matthew 4:10). At that, the devil left Him.

We all find ourselves in similar situations. We live in a world wrought

with sin, and, in his ever-so-cunning way, Satan makes the sinful look appealing. We must stand firm in our faith and tell Satan to "Get away," just as Jesus did. Only then will we truly experience the glory of the salvation Christ came to give. Lent offers us a particular time to fight Satan, taking courage in the resurrection that we are preparing to celebrate. It is a time that we spend focused on strengthening our relationships with the Lord. Armed with His power, which we receive in many different ways, we can resist the temptations of the devil and accept the salvation Christ offers each one of us.

How can we do this? Get to know the Lord through prayer. Read the Scriptures often. St. Jerome tells us that ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ. So, we must be steeped in Scripture. Read it daily — chapter by chapter, or verse by verse. It is, after all, the Word of God! Draw close to the Blessed Mother. She knows her Son better than any of us, and she is eager to bring us to Him. Join her at the cross, where she witnessed

her most precious Son die for each one of us. Pray the Rosary — individually and as a family. It is a powerful prayer through which, with Mary, we walk through Christ's life, His Death, and His resurrection. Unite with Christ Himself in His suffering.

At a minimum, the Church tells us to fast and abstain from meat throughout the Lenten season. Catholics who are 14 years of age and older must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday (which falls this year on Feb. 18), Good Friday (falling this year on April 3), as well as all of the Fridays throughout Lent. In addition, Catholics between the ages of 18 and 60 are required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Fasting is defined as eating one meal and two smaller meals, which, together, do not equal the larger meal.

The idea behind these requirements is to help us focus on the spirit of the season. We are to be preparing ourselves, just as Christ did, for the great event which won for us salvation!

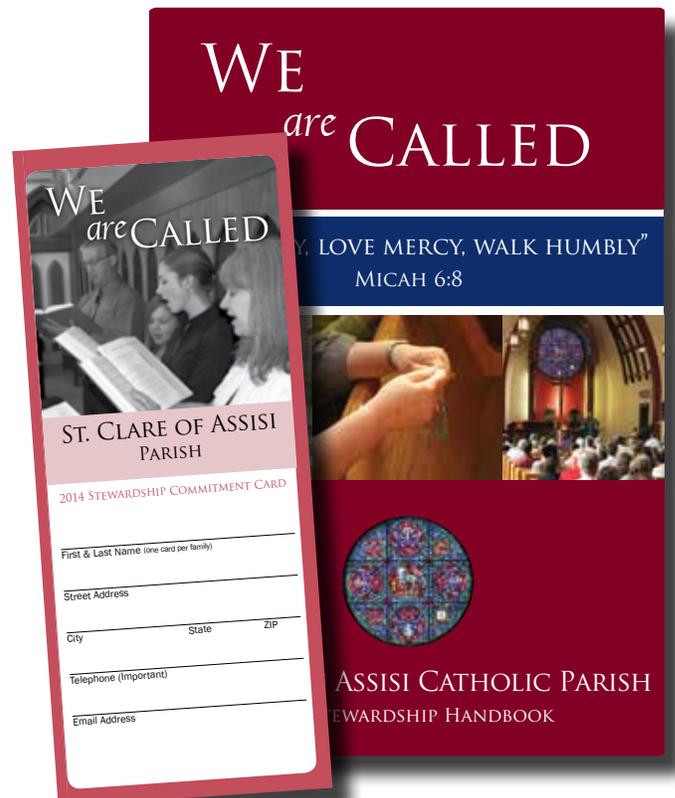
## *Results of the* **2014 STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL**

This past autumn, our parish leadership at St. Clare of Assisi conducted the 2014 Stewardship Renewal. The results certainly demonstrate that commitment to prayer, ministry and the Catholic faith are of continually increasing importance to our parish community.

As of press time of this newsletter, 51 percent of active households took part in the Stewardship Renewal by filling out and returning a commitment card.

Several of the notable results from the 2014 Stewardship Renewal include the following:

- A total of 812 Prayer Commitments — or commitments to Stewardship of Time — were made by 267 households who returned commitment cards.
- The top five “Time” commitments were:
  - “Attend Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days,” 241 commitments
  - “Spend 15 minutes a day in personal prayer,” 197 commitments
  - “Pray together with my loved ones,” 108 commitments
  - “Pray the Rosary at least weekly,” 90 commitments
  - “Attend weekday Mass at least once a week,” 54 commitments
- A total of 1,216 Ministry Commitments — or commitments to Stewardship of Talent — were made during the Stewardship Renewal, with 248 of these being new “interested in joining” commitments and 962 being re-commitments. There were 248 commitment cards with talent commitments.
- The top five “Talent” commitments were:
  - Apostolate to the Handicapped, 87 commitments
  - Funeral Lunch Ministry, 67 commitments
  - Secret Angels, 65 commitments
  - Eucharistic Ministers, 58 commitments
  - Parish Dinners, 58 commitments



- A total of 287 households made “Stewardship of Treasure” commitments. The average annual pledge was \$1,517. There was an annual offertory increase of \$78,051.
  - There was a total of 139 weekly offertory pledges.
  - There was a total of 131 monthly offertory pledges.

Indeed, these statistics point to an increasingly-active commitment to stewardship here within our St. Clare of Assisi parish community. And while the spiritual benefits of stewardship can never be quantified, this annual commitment on behalf of our parishioners helps to ensure that St. Clare of Assisi remains a vital and faith-filled parish community. We thank all who participate in the life of St. Clare of Assisi Parish!



# ST. CLARE of ASSISI PARISH

1760 14th Street  
Monroe, WI 53566

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Monroe, Wis. 53566  
Permit No. 177

Return Service Requested



## Family Promise *continued from front cover*

is important that whole families are not split up during the assignment process. Once families are phased in to the ministry, they are referred to as “guests.” St. Clare of Assisi does not have the space to house the number of guests assigned, so the parish co-hosts with nearby St. John United Church of Christ. Volunteer parishioners from both churches work together at St. John in service to this stewardship.

As co-hosts for Family Promise, St. Clare of Assisi and St. John United Church of Christ interact with a group of guests once every 13 weeks. Over the course of a 13-week cycle, a group of up to 14 guests is housed by each of the participating host churches for a one-week period. Guests are permitted to stay within the program for three to six months, depending on their individual needs and circumstances.

“Most of the time we are only in contact with them one or two times in three months,” Kay says.

The goal of this ministry is to provide guests with food, shelter and counseling so that they can achieve sustainable independence. According to Kay, it is the responsibility of a host church to serve their guests to the best of their ability. This means providing meals, cots, overnight shelter and transportation on a daily basis, Monday through Friday. During weekdays, guests are transported to the local Day Center to find jobs and/or job counseling. On weekends, guests stay overnight at the Day Center.

St. Clare of Assisi is in constant need of volunteers to participate in their Family Promise program. Those who would like to participate in this wonderful stewardship opportunity may contact Kay Urban by phone at 608-558-8906 or by email at [kurban\\_906@yahoo.com](mailto:kurban_906@yahoo.com). For more information on Family Promise, please visit [www.familypromise.org](http://www.familypromise.org).