



on  
EAGLE'S  
wings

WE ARE

*Chosen*

March / April 2022

# ROLLING THE STONE AWAY

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*“When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices, so that they might anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?’”*

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That Easter morning, the women came to see and take care of the body of Jesus. Their only concern was who would roll away the stone for them since it was rather large. Of course, their concerns were eased when they found that the stone had already been removed. What came next would challenge their faith and the faith of all believers. Jesus was gone. He was no longer in the tomb. Angels announced that he was no longer among the dead but was alive. How could this be? They had witnessed him dying on the cross that Friday. They saw him placed in the tomb. They knew he was dead. What could this mean, rising from the dead? The stone that was on the tomb and now was removed meant they had to decide about what they thought they knew. Their faith was about to be changed forever.

I wonder how often we have come to the tomb of Jesus and wondered about the stone that was placed there. No, you have not thought about it, well I have from time to time. If the stone remains, one does not have to really grow in their faith about Jesus and his resurrection. I mean after all the stone and the tomb represents a finality and an end to life as we know it for Jesus. But now that the stone has been removed and we can look inside we have to make a choice. What do we believe when we look in and see nothing but the burial bands that wrapped up Jesus from the cross? His dead life-less body would have been in the tomb for three days. Now that is no longer true. We must look beyond the known and see the possibilities of the risen Christ. But how was this possible? It was possible because Jesus told us that it would happen. He prepared us for the good news, but it was such amazing news that not everyone was prepared to accept that. It would take the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of those women and his disciples. The only thing that held them

back was the stone that was placed by Pilate to protect the body from being stolen by his followers so that they could claim that he rose from the dead. The power of God was not going to be stopped by a simple stone across a tomb, no matter how large it was. No matter how many guards were placed at the tomb, nothing was going to keep Jesus in the grave. The power of the resurrection was happening, and it would take the world by surprise.

So, are you willing to look beyond the stone and see what lies ahead? Can you look inside the empty tomb and realize what has taken place? Jesus invites us to see beyond his death on the cross, to the glorious resurrection. It is, after all, what he came to earth to do. He came not only to die for our sins but to rise from the dead and open the gates of heaven. It is what Easter is all about. The risen Jesus allows us to be welcomed into the kingdom of God. We are *chosen* to come before the Lord and see his glory and celebrate his resurrection. The stone has been moved away from the tomb. The trappings of Jesus' death remain in the tomb. Now it is up to you and me to make the decision to believe. I am ready to say yes to the risen Lord and recognize him dwelling among us. He is present in the Eucharist as the Body of Christ. He is among us in the community. He dwells within you and me. We are *chosen* to be part of the Body of Christ. Let us be Christ for one another. Happy Easter!



FR. DON WEST  
PASTOR

# FROM ASHES TO EASTER

Back in the beginning of the year, as the temperature dipped down and it got colder outside, I decided to take a good bit of time to clean my fireplace making sure it is safe and ready for use, as I do every year. It is always such a fun task, of course. I grabbed my little broom and went to town, sweeping out all of the soot and ashes that I had left in there from last spring after discontinuing the use of it. I scraped off the sides and shoveled out all the stuff I collected and prepared it for new fires to be burned. I went into the bathroom to wash up afterward and as I looked up in the mirror in front of me, I noticed a smug of ashes across my forehead. Evidently, I wiped my brow while cleaning and didn't pay much attention to the soot on my hands. I said to myself, "huh, a little early for ashes on the forehead since Ash Wednesday is sometime down the road yet, but oh well. I suppose a visible reminder of it every now and again and what it represents doesn't hurt!"

And really, it doesn't. Ash Wednesday is important because it marks the start of the Lenten period leading up to Easter Sunday and the Easter Season. As one receives the ashes on the forehead in the sign of a cross by a minister, the minister also says "Repent, and believe in the gospel." The ashes symbolize both death and repentance yet are a sign of our embrace of the cross as we look towards Christ as our savior and forgiver of our sins in his passion, death and resurrection.

As people receive the ashes on Ash Wednesday, some will immediately wipe them off once they hit the parking lot after Mass, some will wait a few hours and then clean their

forehead, and finally some will leave them for the day. No matter what though, the symbol and meaning of the ashes we receive shouldn't end on that Thursday following Ash Wednesday. Even though those ashes may not be visible on the forehead any longer, they should be very visible and meaningful in our hearts through the entire season of Lent leading us towards the celebration of the resurrection of Christ. We are *chosen* in these ashes to believe in the gospel and to preach the good news of Christ to all of those around us in our lives. Each and every day of Lent, we ought to remember that black mark of the cross on our foreheads each time we look in the mirror so that we continue to remind ourselves of the sacrifices Christ made for us in his loving mission of salvation for each and every human being in this world.

So, after receiving the ashes this year, keep the memory of those alive in your hearts each and every day of Lent. Even though they may no longer be visible on your forehead, as a reminder of how we are *chosen* to be vessels for Christ and continually journey towards the celebration of his resurrection at Easter. Oh and by the way, if anyone wants to help me clean my fireplace in the beginning of next year, you're more than welcome!



**Scott**  
SCOTT STEINKE  
DIRECTOR OF LITURGY

## BEACONS OF LIGHT INFORMATION

St. John the Evangelist, West Chester has been paired as a Parish Family with St. Michael - Sharonville and St. Gabriel - Glendale.

At time of printing, the priest assignments have not been announced. To view the list of priest assignments, please visit [www.catholicaoc.org/beacons-of-light](http://www.catholicaoc.org/beacons-of-light).

*Mary, Mother of the Church and our Mother,  
Present our prayer of thanksgiving to your Son.  
Beg from Him the graces we need to be faithful disciples  
who follow Him with enthusiasm and joy.  
May our witness to the love of God bear fruit  
in our archdiocese, parishes, homes and hearts.  
Teach us to be God's joyful witnesses,  
to radiate Christ in all we do,  
so that all people might know, love and follow your Son  
through this life and into the next. Amen.*

# THE HOPE OF LENT

Many of us can remember back to January of 2017 when Bibi gave birth six weeks early to a baby hippo. The twenty-nine-pound mammal was quite underweight and most of the staff of the zoo held out little hope that Fiona would survive. Many around Cincinnati and beyond followed the daily news of Fiona's care, her ups and downs, as well as her determined struggle to live. Nurses from Children's Hospital came to help, placing a catheter for fluids in her leg, giving Fiona a renewed chance at survival. The Cincinnati Zoo staff created a formula for Fiona's nourishment after reaching out nationally for help. They worked continuously toward Fiona's survival. Many of us followed daily updates on Fiona's tenacity and improvement; the good news was so easy to share and kept us smiling.

Hope was not always there however; in fact, it became the outpouring of support and love from the greater community that gave the zoo staff the extra strength to keep on trying. So here we are, five years later, Fiona is almost 2000 pounds, and still growing. Some think Fiona knows that the thousands of people who come from far and wide to see her, were hoping and praying for her survival. So, she "smiles" at them and enjoys the camera moments.

Here we are too, living with the long days of late winter and hoping for an early spring. We are worn out from the daily

news, from the pandemic, from sad and angry people around us. We worry about choosing the wrong words, about being misunderstood, and judging others too quickly or harshly. We hope that we will see better days, but some doubt that they will come soon. We know that changing our hearts and ways is hard; we need to find focus, to continue works of mercy and charity. After all, what makes us feel joyful and hopeful more than a grateful smile from someone who has benefited from our helpful actions?

If we are looking for someone we can trust, we need only look to the presence of Jesus, the Word made flesh, in us and in others. We can all be prophets carrying good news and disciples who share that news in actions, having faith that we will give others reason for hope and optimism. We all have gifts; we have been *chosen* to share those gifts, discovering what is right and good in situations that might seem hopeless and doomed. In much the same way we watched and shared the simple delight of Fiona's endurance, we need to embrace and share the ever-present love of Jesus as we move forward in hope toward the joy of Easter.



*Mary Montour*

MARY MONTOUR  
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION

## CELEBRATING OUR *catholic faith*

### *Our Sympathies Go Out To...*

The family of Theresa Woods  
Lisa Hollstegge on the death of her mother, Janet Rogers  
Kathleen & Thomas Joseph on the death of their niece  
The family of Bob Schemenauer  
The family of Sharon Schwiertert  
The family of Ruth Phelps  
Kaneesha Ogle on the death of her husband Jeff and to  
Lucas, Kaylynn and Alexis on the loss of their father  
David Krach on the death of his brother  
Rick Baldasare on the death of his mother  
MaryAnn Meyer on the death of her stepsister  
Shirley Taylor on the death of his wife Lois Taylor  
Debra Tetzloff on the death of her mother  
Bridgette Boettjer on the death of her mother Patty

Hunkler and to the entire Hunkler family  
Dan Koenig on the death of his uncle  
Denny Hackett on the death of his brother  
Richard Noeth on the death of his mother  
Julie Conti-Chapman on the death of her mother  
Jan Federle on the death of her husband Richard Federle  
Bruce Federle on the death of his father

### *Congratulations to Those Who Were Baptized*

Gavin Max McDonald	Damián Archer McClain
Madeline Patricia Osburn	William Brady Netter
Molly Anne Osburn	Easton Brooks Schaefer

# IF EASTER DIDN'T EXIST

## 1 CORINTHIANS 15

I was listening to a podcast the other day that was talking about the Marvel universe after the Blip. They went into depth about all of the things that would have gone on in the world without half of the population, and how that would have affected relationships and entire livelihoods as people returned to their lives after five years. I had never thought too deeply about the Blip, I was just excited that people's loved ones had returned (and was frankly way too wrapped up on how Tony Stark SPOILER ALERT had to die for everyone to come back... which hit me way harder after having kids... but I digress).

I guess I never realized that there were five whole years in between those two events. Of course after so long, they had to move on. But to think about how it must have felt to return from a five year hiatus and find your spouse married to someone new, or your job given to someone else, or your house sold... I can't even fathom the difficulty of navigating that situation.

But like Tony Stark had to SPOILER ALERT sacrifice himself to bring back others' loved ones and return the world to normal, Christ had to sacrifice himself on the cross for our sins. The difference here being that Christ would rise from the dead and release us from the weight of our sins, giving us the opportunity to join Him in the Kingdom of Heaven.

But what if Easter didn't exist? Without Easter, there is no resurrection story, no good news. All we would be able to share is the story of Christ's suffering and death, and it would end with that. Instead of the hope that inspires the apostles to go forth and begin the Church, they may have stayed in hiding without trying to spread the good news that Christ had indeed risen. There would simply be no faith. We would be burdened by the entire weight of our sins. We would be thirsty without any water to drink.

But Easter exists. Jesus was triumphant over death. Love conquered hate, mercy conquered cruelty, goodness conquered evil, light conquered darkness. As Christ brings light into the world, we have been *chosen* to be the light of the world to others. Spend this Lenten season reflecting Christ's light, and place a conscious effort towards sparking the flame that is Christ's love.



*Sarah Chivers*

SARAH CHIVERS  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATION

# GIVING INSTEAD OF GIVING UP

I remember as a child giving up candy during Lent, which, of course, seemed like such a sacrifice. In fact, many Catholics continue to think of Lent as a time of giving up something that is appealing to them so they are able to think about the sacrifices Jesus made on our behalf. This, however, fulfills an expectation of the season from the faith perspective of a child, rather than an adult.

What if Lent wasn't a time to give up something, but rather a time to become something? What if we each thought about ways we could dedicate ourselves to making the world a better, more loving place for others, as well as ourselves, thereby bringing the spirit of Jesus to the earth in our common experiences and relationships?

Lent is more a time of self-denial and self-giving, rather than a time of giving up, because the former helps us connect more effectively and lovingly with others in our lives, for we have taken time to see them and the needs they have. This was something Jesus did to a masterful level. He stopped and touched people. He asked them what they needed from him, and he met their needs — not only in loving ways, but also in miraculous ways.

Lent is a time of preparation for the coming of Jesus' spirit in our lives and our hearts at Easter, so that we, too, are risen with him from the tombs in which we reside. By turning away from unfulfilling habits we have formed throughout this past year that have taken us further away from his love, this is our opportunity to turn toward him. We can let him completely overtake us and shine his love into every aspect of our lives.

Perhaps you will choose to go to adoration once a week to spend time with the Blessed Sacrament, allowing him to speak to you in the quietness of your solitude with him. You may choose to go to daily Mass. Maybe you could say "yes" to one of your married children who is juggling so many aspects of life when they need us to babysit or help them for a day. You may choose to take time and clean out your closets, drawers and cupboards, thereby giving yourself a more pristine, tidy home, as well as bringing the items you no longer need or want to a donation center for others to have and use.

# LENTEN EVENTS 2022

LECTIONARY REFLECTION WITH FR. DON 7:00PM  
MARCH 3, 9, 16, 23, 30, APRIL 6, 13 IN THE CHAPEL

EVERY WEDNESDAY  
FIRST EVENT ON THURSDAY

EVERY FRIDAY  
BEGINNING MARCH 4

FISH FRY\* 4:30-7:30PM  
IN THE PARISH CENTER

STATIONS OF THE CROSS 7:00PM  
IN THE CHAPEL

EVERY FRIDAY  
BEGINNING MARCH 4

MARCH 28

LENTEN PENANCE SERVICE 7:00PM  
IN THE CHURCH

EASTER EGG HUNT 12:30PM  
AT THE PLAZA | RAIN LOCATION: PARISH CENTER

APRIL 10

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE EVENTS, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.STJOHNWC.ORG/EVENT-CALENDAR](http://WWW.STJOHNWC.ORG/EVENT-CALENDAR)

\*DRIVE THROUGH AVAILABLE

# A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

As I write this article, our parish finances are in good shape. At the beginning of the pandemic, we were so concerned about the financial security of our parish. However, more parishioners started giving online (this creates more consistency in our weekly income), more parishioners purchased items from our wishlist (this list is available on our website under the Finance tab) and we were able to have a successful Giving Tuesday in late 2021 as well. All of this combined means that at the end of January, 2022, we are 3.42% ahead of budget for weekly offerings (\$832k actual versus \$805k budgeted). Our total income is at \$1.12M versus budget of \$943k. And our expenses were at \$882k versus a budget of \$909k (we are underspending by about 3%). Because our savings/reserves are strong, we are making a concerted effort to make any needed repairs and improvements this spring on our campus. We want to ensure that everything is in tip top shape as we head into our new parish family this July.

Please help us by being an extra set of eyes and ears around campus. If you see any needed improvements or repairs, let us know. And, as always, make sure to check out our parish wish list online. You have been *chosen* to be a part of our parish family, so make sure to help if you can.

Please mark your calendar for August 5-6-7 when we plan on having our FULL St. John Family Festival back on campus! We are very excited about this. If you are interested in helping with the festival by being a booth captain, please email me as soon as you can. We are looking for a few new booth captains this year. Our Festival Committee is hard at work planning this year's festival. We hope you can join us!

In this time of Lent, we ask that you not only "give up" but also "give of yourself". Please consider spending some time volunteering in your community and spreading as much kindness as possible! And, let's all pray for fellow parishioners every day. I do this and would love to know that we are all praying for each other. It is an important part of parish life to support each other in prayer! God bless each of you; you are a *chosen* member of our parish. Thank you for helping us get through another wonderful year. We just could not have done it without your support. Our parishioners are amazing!



JOAN SEIBENICK  
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

## LENTEN MASS SCHEDULE

**ASH WEDNESDAY MASS MARCH 2**  
NOON & 7:00PM

**HOLY THURSDAY MASS APRIL 14**  
7:00PM WITH ADORATION AT 8:00PM

**GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE APRIL 15**  
NOON & 7:00PM

**EASTER VIGIL MASS APRIL 16**  
9:00PM (NO 5:00PM MASS)

**EASTER MASS APRIL 17**  
9:00AM & 11:00AM

VIEW ALL MASSES AND EVENTS ONLINE [WWW.STJOHNWC.ORG/ONLINE-STREAMING](http://WWW.STJOHNWC.ORG/ONLINE-STREAMING)  
GIVE ONLINE [HTTPS://STJOHNWC.WESHAREONLINE.ORG](https://STJOHNWC.WESHAREONLINE.ORG)



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