



ST. DONATUS



ST. ALEXIUS



ST. FRANCIS
DE SALES



STS. PETER
& PAUL



OUR LADY
OF THE ANGELS



ST. PAUL'S



CELEBRATING THE JUNE ORDINATIONS OF **KELLY MARTHALER** AND **DEACON KEVIN SOENNEKER**

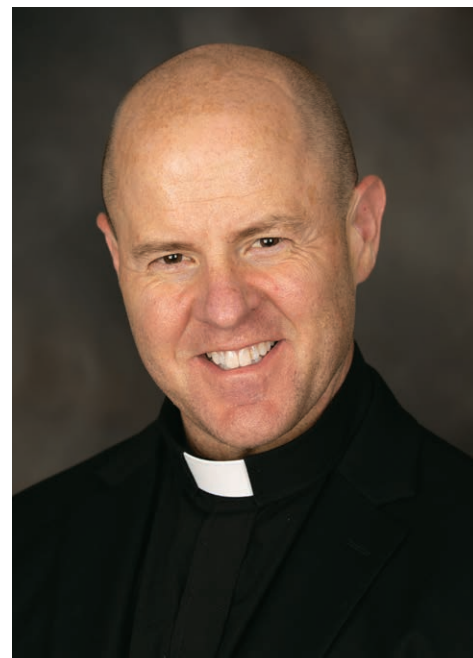
*Faith Community Extends
Heartfelt Congratulations*

June will be an exciting month for our Area Catholic Community, as Kelly Marthaler and Deacon Kevin Soenneker celebrate their ordinations. Deacon Soenneker will be ordained to the priesthood on June 1, and Kelly will be ordained to the permanent diaconate on June 8 at St. Mary's Cathedral in St. Cloud. Both men look forward to these major steps on their vocational journeys. Bishop Patrick Neary will be on hand for both Masses.

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Kelly Marthaler with his wife, Marlys



Deacon Kevin Soenneker

CELEBRATING THE JUNE ORDINATIONS OF KELLY MARTHALER AND DEACON KEVIN SOENNEKER

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Kelly, a member of St. Alexius in West Union, extends his heartfelt gratitude to the entire faith community. He's been studying for the permanent diaconate since 2019.

"I appreciate all the people within our parishes," Kelly says. "All of them have been super supportive. The prayers and support have been amazing."

Kelly is thankful to his wife, Marlys, and his family for being there through his studies. His last class, through the University of St. John's, helped him prepare for preaching homilies. As part of that preparation, he said five homilies after Masses and had people there to critique him. He's appreciative of everyone who supported him in this way. Kelly has been using his practicum time to focus on those who are unseen, like the elderly.

"I felt strongly, and I still do, about being a servant of Christ in the diaconate," Kelly says. "There are many obvious needs, but there are so many hidden needs like those alone at the nursing home. That's how I want to get involved."

As he begins his diaconate, Kelly will spend five to 10 hours, sometimes more, serving the parishes. This could include Mass, weddings, Baptisms, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, and more.

As for what inspired Kelly to become a deacon, he credits Marlys' long career in Catholic education at Holy Family School. He also credits an experience he had on the streets of New York. He brought a plate of food and coffee to a man sleeping on the street during cold, harsh weather. The man said, "May God bless you." This moment hit Kelly, and he started to ask himself what he had done to spread God's kingdom outside his family. About a year later, Fr. Greg Paffel asked him to consider the diaconate, and here he is.

Kelly offers some advice for all those considering studying for the permanent diaconate.

"This is divinely inspired," he says. "You do not do this on your own. You need the support of your wife, family, and the Holy Spirit. You take it one day at a time."

As he approaches his ordination, Kelly wants to thank Deacon Tom McFadden, Fr. Greg Paffel, Fr. Jeremy Theis, and Fr. Mark Botzet for all the support through his studies. He feels very blessed.

Deacon Soenneker, a member of St. Paul's, has been studying to become a priest for about seven years. As the big day gets closer, Deacon Soenneker is excited to become a priest and serve our Lord and His people.

"Coming back to St. Paul's, my heart comes alive," he says. "It's the church where I pray well. I feel at home."

Having enjoyed his years in the seminary at the University of St. Thomas, Deacon Soenneker looks forward to his future in the priesthood. He's most excited to share God's love with a hurting world.

"Life is difficult without God," he says. "I am excited to spread the message that Christ came so we can live abundantly — regardless of challenges. Christ is here to bring you joy and peace through all of that. It's life-changing."

Deacon Soenneker, who worked in the grocery business for many years, spent a large amount of time discerning the priesthood. At a daily Mass in Albany, the priest held up the Body and Blood of Christ during the doxology, and he sensed a voice saying, "This will be you someday."

"I didn't know what that meant, but that led to more discernment," Deacon Soenneker says. "People were giving me signs like people telling me they had a dream that I would be a priest."

Deacon Soenneker wants to thank Fr. David Grundman for guiding him when he was discerning the priesthood. All of the priests in Sauk Centre have been there for him through this journey. He will celebrate his first Mass at St. Paul's at 3 p.m. on June 2. All are welcome.

Our entire Catholic community extends many congratulations to both men!

"Life is difficult without God. I am excited to spread the message that Christ came so we can live abundantly — regardless of challenges. Christ is here to bring you joy and peace through all of that."
— DEACON KEVIN SOENNEKER

STATE OF THE ACC — 2024

Dear Parishioners,

You are the Body of Christ, the Church, the Flock He Shepherds! Our ACC is made up of individuals who worship God at Eucharist together! It is so much more than buildings — i.e. six churches in five different towns. We are Catholics who, in a secular culture growing hostile to Christians, exist to know and follow Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd, and lead others to do the same. Now is the time for us to Pray Boldly and Work Together.

In March 2019, Bishop Kettler made the decision to create Area Catholic Communities throughout our whole diocese. He recognized the Diocese of St. Cloud was changing, shifting, and declining in numbers. He set in motion a plan to address the smaller numbers of priests trying to serve the 131 parishes. Consequently, Parishes on the Prairie was born.

Fast forward to July of 2023, we went from three priests assigned to our ACC to two priests. In some ways, we have been licking our wounds and trying to be church. It has been

taking some time to adjust to a new normal. That said, the new normal is showing some signs of hope for the future. We are growing in strength and resolve to move forward.

There are stories to be told, people to meet, statistics to hear, and perspective to be gained. Curious? Come get the facts with a look to the future of our Area Catholic Community. We are coming together for a STATE OF THE ACC gathering on Wednesday, May 8, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Padua Pub Hall.

In our Father's hands,



Fr. Greg Paffel
Pastor



We are Catholics who, in a secular culture growing hostile to Christians, exist to know and follow Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd, and lead others to do the same.



State of the ACC 2024.

WED. MAY 8

7:00 - 8:30 PM

PADUA PUB HALL

CURIOS? COME GET THE FACTS WITH A LOOK TO THE FUTURE OF OUR AREA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



WALKING WITH JESUS ON THE EUCHARISTIC

Join Us as We Celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life! It is the source from which all graces flow and the summit to which all our actions should point. It is Jesus — Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity! And on the Feast of Corpus Christi, also known as the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, we take particular care to recognize and reverence Christ in the Eucharist.

This year, the Feast of Corpus Christi will be celebrated on Sunday, June 2, and as a parish community, we will honor Christ in the Eucharist that day with a multi-parish-wide Eucharistic procession through the streets.



“The Eucharistic procession is a way for us to give public witness to the whole community that the Eucharist is important to us,” says Deb Holt, head sacristan at Our Lady of the Angels. “It is a time for us to give Jesus honor and to recognize that the Eucharist is the most precious thing to us as Catholics.”

As a community, we have celebrated the Feast of Corpus Christi with a Eucharistic procession for many years. Deb has been involved for about 20 years, but she says that the processions have taken place for much longer than that. As she reminisces about Eucharistic processions of years past, Deb points to the experiences of many other parishioners whose childhood memories involve beautiful experiences of Eucharistic processions.

“I’ve spoken with many parishioners who can remember doing the Corpus Christi procession as children,” Deb says. “It is a long-standing tradition and a beautiful way to



PROCESSION

on Sunday, June 2

“The Eucharistic procession is a way for us to give public witness to the whole community that the Eucharist is important to us. It is a time for us to give Jesus honor and to recognize that the Eucharist is the most precious thing to us as Catholics.”

— DEB HOLT

revere the Eucharist. They used to dress up and decorate their houses and the streets. The Eucharistic procession is very special. We love Jesus, and this is one of our ways to show Him that.”

This year, the procession will begin after 10:30 a.m. Mass at St. Paul’s on June 2. Immediately following Mass, one of the priests will perform the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and then everyone will process out of the church and into the streets.

This year’s procession will bring us from St. Paul’s to Our Lady of the Angels with one stop at a home along the way. Then, we will process back to St. Paul’s, stopping again at another home before we conclude at St. Paul’s. At every stop, we will have Benediction, and there will be singing and praying throughout the route.

As is tradition, altar servers will surround the Eucharist with candles and incense, and our First Communicants will drop flower pedals along the path. It will be a royal celebration fit for Christ, our King! And Deb encourages all of us to participate!

“Join us to give Christ honor and praise,” Deb says. “There is a place for everyone!”

If you or your child is an altar server and would like to participate as such, please contact Deb. We need over 20 altar servers for the procession to run smoothly. She will get you set up with the proper vestments and assign you your role.

Additionally, if your child is receiving First Communion this year, and he or she would like to toss flower petals along the route, please contact Deb. She and a few other women have been collecting flower petals throughout the year for this purpose, and we would love to have as many First Communicants participate as possible.

Even if you cannot participate in a formal ceremonial capacity, we encourage you to participate! Everyone is welcome and encouraged to join the entourage!

“This is a wonderful experience that brings us closer to Christ in the Eucharist,” Deb says. “Jesus is with us! He’s walking with us in our community!”

We hope you can join us!



To participate in the procession as an altar server or First Communicant, or for more information, contact Deb Holt at 320-491-4594.

UPCOMING EVENTS

ACC First Communion Dates *(corrected)*

- May 4 — 4 p.m. at St. Paul's
- May 4 — 6 p.m. at Our Lady of the Angels
- May 5 — 8 a.m. at Our Lady of the Angels
- May 5 — 8:15 a.m. at St. Alexius
- May 5 — 10:30 a.m. at St. Francis De Sales
- May 5 — 10:30 a.m. at St. Paul's

Mother's Day Flowers will be available at St. Alexius, St. Paul's and Our Lady of the Angels for a free will offering the weekend of May 11-12. You can also order a vase of three roses for delivery (on May 9-10) within three miles of Sauk Centre through the Migori committee for \$20.

To preorder roses for delivery, call Kathy at 320-351-5580.

Proceeds from OLA and St. Paul's will help to bring the Kenya Delegates to Sauk Centre. The proceeds from St. Alexius will go to Options for Women.

Thursday, May 8 — ACC State of the Union Meeting

7-8:30 p.m. Padua Hall
EVERYONE from our parishes is invited to attend this meeting where we will reflect back, report on the now, and look ahead to where we are going.

Eucharistic Revival is coming to Sauk Centre on Thursday, May 23.

Please join us:

- 1 p.m. — Rosary at Our Lady of the Angels
- 1:30 p.m. — Procession to St. Paul's
- 2 p.m. — Adoration
- 3 p.m. — Divine Mercy Chaplet
- 3:30 p.m. — Pilgrims depart

Searching Souls — meets on Mondays each month at 6:30 at the Centre for Christ. Videos are presented, followed by small-group discussions to grow together in our Catholic faith. Follow the Searching Souls Ministries Facebook group to see what is happening! Call 320-761-3590 for more information.

- May 6 — The *Baltimore Catechism*
- May 20 — Three parts of the church — militant, penitent, and triumphant

Holy Family School

- May 10 — Kindergarten Mother's Day Program
- May 22 — Sixth-grade graduation
- May 23 — Last day of school

Sunday, May 19 — Our ACC graduates will be recognized at the regular Masses.

Sunday, May 26 — Retirement party for Cindy Sunderman

It will take place from 9-10:30 a.m. at Our Lady of the Angels and 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at St. Paul's.

Saturday, June 1 — Deacon Kevin Soenneker's ordination to the priesthood, at St. Mary's Cathedral in St. Cloud.

On Sunday, June 2, he will have his first Mass at 3 p.m. at St. Paul's Church (would fulfill your Sunday obligation). A simple reception will follow in the Church basement.

Saturday, June 8 — Kelly Marthaler ordained into permanent diaconate at St. Mary's Cathedral in St. Cloud.

On Sunday, June 9, Kelly will be deacon of the Mass at 8:15 a.m. at St. Alexius Church. A brunch will be served in the Church basement.

THE ROSARY IN THE MARY GARDEN AT OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS

Celebrating Our Blessed Mother in Prayer and Reflection

As we enter into May, we celebrate the month of Mary. As the model of perfect love and obedience to Jesus, we honor Mary with the utmost respect. There are a number of ways we can honor her this month and beyond, such as praying the Rosary each day. Or we can join others in the Mary Garden at Our Lady of the Angels.

Sean Fogarty finds praying the Rosary in the Mary Garden especially meaningful, and he prays with the group when he can. The Memorare inscription plaque is particularly meaningful to Sean. He also mows the lawn in the garden and likes to use that time to pray a whole Rosary or even just a decade of the Rosary.

“It can be challenging to create time in your schedule for the Rosary,” Sean says. “My goal is one decade when time allows.”

Sean developed a love for the Rosary while attending the University of St. Thomas. Msgr. James Lavin would lead a decade twice a week and follow with “Lavin burgers” — peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Now, Sean uses time in the car to listen to the Rosary and pray along.

“One decade is also a calming influence when finding yourself in stressful situations,” Sean says.

When Sean joined Our Lady of the Angels in 2012, he wanted to get involved in a ministry without meetings. He and his dad had always done landscaping work at his home parish in the Belle Plaine area. He has always enjoyed that type of work, so when the opportunity was presented at Our Lady of the Angels, he decided



The Mary Garden at Our Lady of the Angels is a peaceful place where one can retreat with the Lord.

to get involved. Amy Klaphake leads the committee that does the work at the garden.

“Amy does a great job of providing leadership and deciding plant placement and all of the details,” he

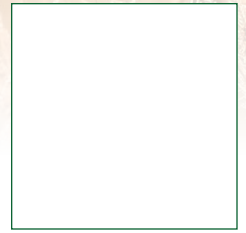
says. “It is a fun group to work with, and we live nearby, so it’s convenient for me to work for an hour or two when needed, mowing, mulching, weeding, and more.”

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“Sitting, kneeling, and standing in a garden praying the Rosary gives comfort and hope,” Sean says. “It also provides a way for others to witness one method of dealing with the chaos of life.” — SEAN FOGARTY



Parish Office: 304 Sinclair Lewis Ave.
Sauk Centre, MN 56378
(320) 352-2196
parishesontheprairie.org



WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULES

Saturday

- 4:00 p.m. - St. Paul's, Sauk Centre
- 6:00 p.m. - Our Lady of the Angels,
Sauk Centre
- 8:00 p.m. - Sts. Peter & Paul, Elrosa

Sunday

- 8:00 a.m. - Our Lady of the Angels,
Sauk Centre
- 8:15 a.m. - St. Alexius, West Union
- 10:30 a.m. - St. Francis de Sales,
Belgrade
- 10:30 a.m. - St. Paul's, Sauk Centre

*See our website for a full listing of
daily Mass & Confession times.*

THE ROSARY IN THE MARY GARDEN AT OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS

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The Mary Garden at Our Lady of the Angels is a peaceful place where one can retreat with the Lord. For Sean, it's a perfect place to pray the Rosary. It's beautiful, quiet and inviting.

"Sitting, kneeling, and standing in a garden praying the Rosary gives comfort and hope," Sean says. "It also provides a way for others to witness one method of dealing with the chaos of life."

Sean's grandmother, Margaret, and great-aunt, Kathleen, were also devoted to the Rosary. He thinks of them whenever he's praying it.

"It is a tradition that has a calming influence on me and is an excellent way to honor Mary the Mother of our Lord," he says.

Sean has called on Mary and our Lord in the Rosary when he's faced difficult situations. Mary has always helped to calm him, no matter the situation.



Come pray the Rosary in May at the Mary Garden at Our Lady of the Angels.