



Spring 2026



### Planted in God's House

is the theme of this issue of the Spirit Newsletter

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# Our Lady Queen of Peace Spirit

Volume 33, Number 2

## Make Us Branches, Holding Fast to the Vine

Submitted by Caleb Mitchell, Director of Liturgy and Pastoral Music

As we begin again this "great campaign of Christian service" on Ash Wednesday (February 18), we are asked to travel with Jesus in this Cycle A of the lectionary. With the Cross, the Tree of Life, as our guide, we will go from the desert temptations of Satan, to the dazzling radiance of the Transfiguration, then to the well where the Samaritan woman is on the verge of a life-changing encounter, to the man born blind who will soon receive new sight, then to Lazarus' tomb, and finally on the road to Jerusalem and the Cross. What a journey we have in store! Using the image of the Cross as the tree of life, we can carry the Cross through our Lenten journey and experience our own personal encounter with Jesus as a gathered community at liturgy. As we gather each weekend of Lent, we will begin with a reminder of the saving Cross, the "Tree of Life" that nurtures and keeps us growing through this journey. The text of this gathering song follows. Consider using these words as we journey together in these 40 days!



### Tree of Life

*Refrain:* Turn our hearts, turn our minds, make us branches holding fast to the vine. Patient Keeper, draw us to your tender mercy, Tree of Life.

1. We remember we are mortal, breath of God but of the earth. Through the desert we must travel, tasting hunger, knowing thirst.
2. We are sinful, we are prideful. We have all gone astray. Deep within us we are needful of a clean heart day by day.
3. As we travel on our journey take our hearts and make them new. Jesus walked this road before us as our God, but human, too. Jesus walked this road before us as our God, but human, too.

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# Lent 2026 Schedule

## Ash Wednesday – February 18, 2025

Masses with Distribution of Ashes: 6:30 am, 8:30 am, 7:00 pm

## Weekend Masses

Saturdays at 5:00 pm

Sundays at 8:00, 9:30, 11:15 am

## Weekday Masses

Monday-Friday at 8:30 am, Wednesday at 5:30 pm in the Chapel

## Individual Reconciliation

Saturdays of Lent, 3:45-4:30 pm

Wednesdays of Lent, 4:45-5:15 pm

## Eucharistic Adoration

Tuesdays from 9:00 am to 5:20 pm

## Stations of the Cross – Tuesdays of Lent at 5:30 pm

**February 24** – Everyone's Way of the Cross

**March 3** – Mary's Way of the Cross

**March 10** – Stations of the Cross for an End to Racism from the USCCB

**March 17** – Everyone's Way of the Cross

**March 24** – Stations of the Cross for Care for God's Creation

**March 31** – Everyone's Way of the Cross

We will have meatless **soup-to-go** after Stations of the Cross. "Sit down" soul meals will be served on March 10 and 24. An offering for Operation Rice Bowl for the soup is appreciated. Sponsored by the QP Respect Life Committee, in partnership with the QP Racial Justice Committee and the QP/STA Care for Creation team.

## Lectio Divina

Saturdays of Lent at 9:30 am in the Chapel

## Taizé Prayer Around the Cross

**Thursday, February 19** at 6:00 pm in the Chapel

**Thursday, March 12** at 6:00 pm in the Chapel

**Thursday, March 26** at 6:00 pm in the Church

## Fish & Philosophy

**Friday, March 6** at 6:00 pm in the Gathering Space  
Fr. Brian Wilk will be this year's speaker.

## Holy Hill Pilgrimage

**Saturday, March 14 at 8:30 am - 4:30 pm.** Cost \$40. Contact the Parish Office to sign up.

## Labyrinth – Located in the Church Auditorium (Lower Level)

*See below for more information*

**Wednesday, April 1, 6:00-7:00 pm**

**Holy Thursday, April 2, 2:00-6:30 pm**

**Good Friday, April 3, 10:00 am-12:15 pm & 2:00-4:00 pm**

**Holy Saturday, April 4, 10:00 am -3:00 pm**

## Holy Week & Triduum Liturgies

**Palm Sunday, March 28 & 29:** Regular Weekend Mass Times

## Holy Thursday, April 2 – Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7:00 pm

This liturgy kicks off the most holy time of the liturgical year; at this Mass we receive the new holy oils, wash one another's feet, and celebrate the Eucharist on the evening of the Last Supper. Following communion, we will process out of the main worship space to the Chapel, where the place of repose will be located. The Chapel will be open for silent prayer until 9:30pm.

## Good Friday, April 3 – Liturgy of the Lord's Passion at 12:30 pm

At this liturgy, we hear the proclamation of the Passion of Jesus, venerate the Cross, and receive the Eucharist that was consecrated the evening before at the Mass of the Lord's Supper.

## Living Stations at 7:00 pm with our youth ministry

## Holy Saturday, April 4

**Blessing of Food at 10:00 am**

**Easter Vigil Mass of the Resurrection at 7:30 pm**

This is the highest point of the liturgical year. Everyone should experience and pray at the Easter Vigil! We begin with the Easter fire and blessing the Paschal Candle. When we process into the sanctuary, we proclaim the ancient Exsultet and hear from various books of the Old Testament. When the lights of Church are lit, we see the glory of the Risen Christ. We will welcome candidates and catechumens through baptism, Eucharist, and confirmation at this Mass.

## Easter Sunday, April 5

Masses at 8:00, 9:30, 11:15 am

# Take Part in the Holy Week Labyrinth

Submitted by Heather Crade, Deb Schroeder & Caleb Mitchell

***"Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying: 'This is the way, walk in it.'" - Isaiah 30:21***

You are invited to walk the labyrinth when it returns to Our Lady Queen of Peace during Holy Week. The labyrinth will be set up in the auditorium (basement of the church) on April 16-19.

What is a labyrinth? A labyrinth is an ancient spiritual tool used for walking, meditation, and prayer. The labyrinth at QP is a replica of the ancient stone labyrinth laid in the floor of Our Lady of Chartres Cathedral in France, built in the 13th century. The winding, spiral path is a metaphor for our spiritual journey. Come and walk the labyrinth this Holy Week!

## LABYRINTH HOURS:

**Wednesday, April 1, 6:00-7:00 pm:** Introductory session to the Labyrinth and Labyrinth open

**Holy Thursday, April 2, 2:00-6:30 pm,** Labyrinth open; repeat of Introductory session at 2:00 pm

**Good Friday, April 3, 10:00 am-12:15 pm & 2:00-4:00 pm,** Labyrinth open

**Holy Saturday, April 4, 10:00 am -3:00 pm,** Labyrinth open

# Walking With Our Catechumens and Candidates This Lent

Submitted by Kay Schachte, Director of Religious Education and OCIA

**“They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God.” – Psalm 92:13**

Lent is a sacred and grace-filled season for our parish, especially for those who are preparing to enter more deeply into the life of the Church. Among these are Catechumens – those who are not yet baptized – and Candidates, who are already baptized Christians seeking full communion with the Catholic Church. As they journey through Lent, they remind us that faith is not simply inherited, but is planted by God, nurtured by grace, and grown within the life of the Church.

For Catechumens, Lent is a time of *purification and enlightenment*. Having already been planted in the soil of faith through their initial conversion, they now open their hearts more fully to Christ as they prepare for baptism at the Easter Vigil. Through the celebration of the Scrutinies on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent, the Church prays that whatever is weak or wounded may be healed, and that all that is life-giving may take deeper root.

The Candidates are also planted more deeply in God’s house during this Lenten season. Already baptized, they use this time to reflect, renew, and strengthen their relationship with Christ and his Church as they prepare for Confirmation and Eucharist. Through formation, prayer, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Candidates are invited to recognize God’s mercy at work in their lives and to recommit themselves to the promises first made at baptism.

As a parish family, we are called not simply to witness this journey, but to walk alongside our Catechumens and Candidates. Our prayers, encouragement, and example help cultivate the soil in which their faith can flourish. In turn, their desire to be planted fully in God’s house invites each of us to reflect on how we continue to grow, be renewed, and bear fruit as disciples of Christ.

As we move toward the joy of the Easter Vigil, may this Lenten season renew all of us – Catechumens, Candidates, and lifelong Catholics alike – so that, planted in the house of the Lord, we may truly flourish in his love.

# Nourishing Our Faith Through Prayer

Submitted by Tricia Heine, Parishioner



**The tree of life – like our faith – grows when it is carefully tended.**

Just like trees need nutrition to flourish, our prayer life is akin to rich soil that sustains our faith. When we enrich our prayer life, we are nourishing our faith.

Lent provides an opportunity to examine our prayer life. It is a time during the liturgical year when the Church encourages us to focus on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Fasting is a way of pruning the branches that aren’t producing good fruit, almsgiving is an opportunity to share our good fruit with others, and prayer keeps the roots of our faith-life vigorous. Even when we use good soil, sometimes a plant will become root bound. The roots need to be freed from the old soil so that they can begin taking in the soil’s nutrition. That can happen to us when we stay in the same prayer routine even when we sense that it is no longer feeding us. Do you feel called this Lenten season to explore a new form of prayer?

Our Lady Queen of Peace has two prayer groups that meet weekly during Lent. On Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:00 pm a group gathers in the Chapel for contemplative prayer. Contemplative prayer, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, is “...a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us” (p. 2709). This communal form of contemplative prayer provides support as we engage with growing our relationship with God. The second prayer group meets on Saturday mornings at 9:30 in the Chapel for a communal form of Lectio Divina. We prayerfully read one of the scripture readings for that weekend’s Mass and reflect on what the passage evokes in us.

All are welcome to join these prayer groups; no experience is necessary. Come join us as we nourish the soil of our faith and encourage the *tree of life* to grow. Contact Tricia with any questions: taheines@yahoo.com

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## Nourishing Our Neighbors This Lent

As we journey through Lent, we are reminded that growth – both spiritual and communal – requires intention, nourishment, and care. At the Catholic Multicultural Center and other Catholic Charities of Madison programs, this season invites us to reflect on how we are rooted in faith while growing in service to our neighbors, especially through the theme of **Nourishing Our Neighbors**.

Nourishment is foundational. Access to healthy, culturally appropriate food supports dignity, health, and hope – often serving as the first step toward stability for individuals and families facing hardship. In 2026, Catholic Charities' food budget totals \$783,453, reflecting both the scale of need across the 11 counties we serve in southern Wisconsin and our commitment to careful stewardship. This investment supports consistent, reliable nourishment across our programs, ensuring no neighbor is left without the food they need.



The reach of this work is substantial. In 2025, The Beacon served more than 54,000 meals to neighbors experiencing homelessness. Mobile Food Pantries reached over 12,000 individuals in rural communities. The Catholic Multicultural Center provided more than 12,900 meals through its Free Meal Program, and the Adult Day Center served over 12,200 meals to older adults and individuals with disabilities. At 5 Door Recovery, nourishing meals and fellowship support individuals on their journey toward healing and wholeness. Each meal represents more than sustenance – it is an expression of care, presence, and respect.

At the Catholic Multicultural Center, shared meals foster connection across cultures, languages, and experiences, strengthening community while meeting essential needs. Across Catholic Charities programming, nourishment supports broader pathways toward stability, healing, and growth – whether maintaining health, establishing routine, or opening doors to additional services.

Lent calls each of us to deeper reflection and outward generosity. We are grateful for parish communities like Our Lady Queen of Peace who walk alongside us in this mission. Through your prayers, partnership, and support, we continue working to nourish our neighbors and cultivate communities where all are able to take root, grow, and flourish.



## OUR JOURNEY OF STEWARDSHIP

By Sue Godfrey, Director of Stewardship and Development

**Stewardship is more than financial giving, it is about creating a welcoming community that worships, grows in faith, and serves others.** This year's theme, "**Planted in God's House,**" speaks to just that: nurturing seeds of faith in individuals and families through deeper worship, spiritual growth, and service to our parish and beyond.

Welcoming individuals into our community is the first step. In October, our parish formed the **Gratitude and Hospitality Committee** to strengthen our spirit of hospitality. You have likely already seen its members' work! In November, they gathered what parishioners were grateful for and created a beautiful word cloud. The following month, they encouraged everyone to write and share thank-you cards with those they appreciate. Most recently, the committee hosted our **first Queen of Hearts Card Night**, bringing parishioners together for fun and fellowship.

Look for more welcoming and community-building activities as this group continues to grow and inspire connection within our parish family!

### Worship: The Heart of Our Parish Life

Our liturgy is at the center of everything we do. It is where we gather as a community to praise God and be nourished by Word and Sacrament. This focus is producing incredible results! For the calendar year **2025**, Sunday Mass attendance reached an all-time high – **over 83,214 people** joined us for worship. That is **14% higher than 2024** and **10% higher than our previous record year** for Mass attendance.

And that's just Sunday Mass! These numbers do not even include those who attended **daily Mass, Holy Days of Obligation, funerals, school liturgies,**

**and Christmas celebrations.** What a beautiful testament to the life and vibrancy of our parish community.

Our thanks and appreciation go out to everyone who actively participates in the Masses – whether it’s the children who take up baskets to the altar, to cantors, lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, choir members, and sacristans. To everyone who plays a part – thank you. Together you make our Masses more beautiful.

## Growth in Faith: Nurturing Our Spiritual Roots

Our theme, “**Planted in God’s House,**” reminds us that faith is like a seed – it needs care, nourishment, and community to grow strong. Throughout 2025, we focused on helping individuals and families deepen their relationship with Christ through prayer, learning, and fellowship.

This commitment is bearing fruit! Our parish offered a variety of opportunities for spiritual growth, including eight different Bible studies, small faith-sharing groups, and sacramental preparation programs. Attendance at these programs has been strong, and we have seen new faces eager to learn and grow in their faith. In fact, we have **14 individuals currently going through OCIA, 490 students in our school, 40+ high schoolers in preparation for Confirmation, and 106 individuals in Religious Education for this year.**

Looking ahead, we will continue to expand these offerings and create more ways for parishioners to connect with God and one another. Whether it is joining a study group, attending a pilgrimage or retreat, or simply spending time in prayer, every step brings us closer to the vibrant faith community we are called to be.

## Service: Living Our Call to Love Others

Around Dane County, we are known as **the Social Action Parish** – and for good reason! Our service ethic is strong, both within our parish and throughout the wider community. Some of our most impactful county-wide ministries include support for the **Catholic Multicultural Center, St. Vincent de Paul, and Luke House,** where parishioners generously give their time, talent, and treasure to serve those in need.

This past Christmas season, we are deeply grateful for the countless individuals and families who donated and delivered gifts through our **Angel Tree program,** bringing joy to **194 children and 37 caregivers across Dane County. In addition, 35 parishioners lovingly created prayer blankets for the 19 babies baptized in the fourth quarter and those who are grieving a loved one lost to suicide,** wrapping them in the warmth and love of our faith community.

Service also happens right here at home. **Sixty-two unique volunteers** helped make our parish gatherings welcoming and hospitable by serving donuts, coffee, and juice during **Hospitality Weekends, the New Member Welcome Brunch,** and at **11 funeral luncheons** hosted between October and December. These acts of kindness – big and small – are a beautiful witness to Christ’s love in action.

Together, we have seen incredible growth – in worship, faith, service, and hospitality. These blessings remind us that stewardship is a shared journey, and every act of generosity, prayer, and welcome makes a difference. Let us continue to be a parish that is vibrant in worship, rooted in prayer, and committed to serving others with open hearts. Together, we are building a community where Christ’s love shines!

## FAITHFUL GIVING UPDATE

In October, Father Brian invited all parish members to prayerfully reflect on what Our Lady Queen of Peace means to them and asked for an increase in financial support to continue the magnificent work of our parish. Your response was incredible!

Together, individuals and families contributed **over \$665,000** toward the parish’s immediate cash flow needs, resolving a critical shortfall. In addition, more than **70% of those who returned Offertory Commitment Cards** pledged to increase their annual contributions by over **\$385,000,** bringing our projected offertory total to approximately **\$2.89 million.** This increase will help us better meet our **\$6.2 million** annual budget and sustain the ministries and programs that make our parish vibrant.

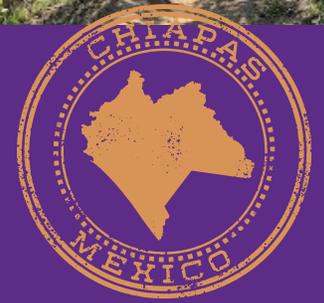
Offertory is just one piece of our financial picture. Other income sources – such as school tuition, development activities, grants, and bequests – also contribute to total revenue. Our financial team continues to closely monitor expenses, and we are

currently running **\$81,000 under budget,** a trend expected to hold throughout the fiscal year. Surplus revenue and future bequests will help to replenish cash reserves that were depleted during the pandemic era.

We sent out **2,541 Offertory Commitment Cards,** and **517 were returned** – a **20% participation rate.** Among respondents, **56.1% prefer online giving, 34.3% prefer envelopes,** and **9.6% use other methods.**

Your generosity of **time, talent, and treasure** makes all this possible. Thank you for your faithfulness and commitment to Our Lady Queen of Peace. Together, we are building a durable foundation for the future!

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# Two Worlds, One Faith:

## *A Journey to Our Sister Parish in Chiapas*

Submitted by Cheryl Horne, Pastoral Associate and Mark McNally, Usher and Parishioner

*Early* in January, parishioner Mark McNally accompanied a small group led by Fr. Stephen Pitts, SJ, to our Sister Parish in Chiapas. Fr. Stephen, a professor at Marquette, is a frequent visitor at Our Lady Queen of Peace and travels regularly to our Sister Parish to support, among other things, the growing coffee industry there.

Realizing it was over 25 years ago the first time I went, I wanted to compare notes with Mark and see what his experience was like. So, on a cold and wintry January day we sat down to share our experiences of and thoughts regarding Chiapas.

The bulk of Mark's group spent time in Chilon – the home of Capeltic: the coffee roasting company associated with our Sister Parish as well as the center for the crafts that come out of the area. We had much to discuss.

### What made you decide to go on the trip?



Mark (center with hat) with Eduardo (Lalo) and some of the people who work at Capeltic in Chilon, Chiapas "on the bus" getting ready to head out to one of the coffee farms

**Mark:** I wanted to meet the people who produce the coffee that I am fortunate enough to drink every morning. I wanted to see what the area is like and what the process is like.

**Cheryl:** The coffee is incredible –

especially there. Something about the brewing process when it comes straight from the roasters ... I remember, back in 1999, early in the days of our relationship with Chiapas, the coffee industry was just beginning. I remember I wanted to go and visit to see what it was like and because there had just been a terrible massacre in a nearby community where 40 people had been killed while praying for peace in Chiapas. Back in the day, the poverty and the injustice – the reality that the only buyers for the coffee growers in our sister parish were the wealthy landowners who had their own private armies .... The Catholic Church taught (and still teaches) dangerous things – the life and dignity of each human person

– and that God loves us all. God doesn't love the people with power more than those who had no power at all... So when the church started to buy the coffee beans from local growers and paid a living wage, the wealthy landowners with their own private armies didn't like it. Subsequently, we couldn't tell people we were with the Catholic Church when we were pulled over at random check points by paramilitary personnel.

So yes, coffee was a part of the trip back then – but the biggest reason was to be in prayer and solidarity with people fighting for a better and more just life. I love that the area is less dangerous now, and we can focus on economic stability.

### What surprised you?

**Mark:** I was surprised by how the local people are such hard working individuals, content with having so little in the way of material things.

When you put things in perspective – everyone in the U.S. seems to want to acquire more and more and more ... a bigger house and a better car and more stuff ... Seeing people who live without that more materialistic goal made a big impact.

### And you didn't find that there? That drive to own more.

**Mark:** No. They – the people I met – seemed to be content with being here, living in harmony with the earth and with each other. It seemed a very different way to live from what I experience day to day here in the U.S.

Life has a different pace there. It's a different way of living. You live on Tzeltal time. You spend time with people and with God, with nature and with family.

I was sad to leave that – the way that the culture's priorities are different from our own. Maybe that's why we have such high blood pressure issues here.

**Cheryl:** Absolutely. I'd say that was a big surprise for me as well. And I know what you mean about Tzeltal time. We would slow down and really see each other and really pray. We would communicate in spite of the language barrier. I remember there was often music to welcome us and there was often dancing. I remember that people seemed less concerned about what they owned and more focused on what they could share with us as guests, and with each other in the communities.

I'd never been in a Third World kind of area before – where people didn't own shoes and may not ever own them. I hadn't been in a place where health care meant a day's journey away on foot or by having someone carrying you. I had never been in a place where we couldn't stay in a town for more than one meal because they couldn't afford to feed the guests more than once.

**Mark:** Yes. That was true on our trip too. The hospitality is very humbling, beautiful, and really amazing.

### What is your best memory of the trip? What was your perfect moment?



One of the coffee growers proudly standing next to the cross that marks the land as well as his faith

**Mark:** Undoubtedly it was getting to take a picture of the farmer – one of the coffee providers for Capeltic – who had the cross in the middle of his field. For us, it's such a symbol of our faith. Everything there is different, the culture, the language – but the cross is the same.

**Cheryl:** Absolutely, I love that. We would attend Mass and wouldn't understand a

lot since it was in Tzeltal and not English or Spanish.

**Mark:** That's still true – you have to wait for the translation.

**Cheryl:** But knowing that our faith, under all the cultural and socioeconomic differences – our faith is still the same. Our faith unites us.

### What did you learn about your faith?

**Mark:** I learned that there's a whole bunch of new things to be grateful for – things that I took for granted my whole life. I learned that God sent me there to experience a different culture, and saying grace is different every night because of that experience.

**Cheryl:** I learned what it means to truly rely on God and the people of God. The people of Chiapas, in the middle of uncertainty and unrest, poverty, and fear, showed me what faith in God's plan, and what hope in the wider community of faith can look like.



One of the small Catholic Churches in Chilon, Chiapas, Mexico that Mark visited

### What do you want to make sure people know about our sister parish?

**Mark:** That the best thing we can do for the people is to buy their coffee because of the opportunities it affords the indigenous Tzeltal people who are our brothers and sisters in Christ. We make a big difference when we support the community by buying their products. In fact, if anyone would like to help expand the local market for the coffee from our Sister Parish to other churches, local stores, etc., I'd be happy to have a conversation about it and maybe help connect you to the people who can make that happen. It really does change people's lives when we support the local economy, when we support the cooperative in our Sister Parish.

**Cheryl:** Exactly. That's perfect. And it would be great to expand the market. I've never gotten over something a woman said to us in prayer on one of our last days of my first visit. She said, "We always pray for each other in our villages. And sometimes, if things are bad, a village will pray for another. But we never knew that anyone outside of our land knew that we were here or cared. And now we know that we are not alone."

### Would you go back?

**Mark:** Yes.

**Cheryl:** I've had four wonderful visits. Some with college students (once things became safer). I'm more interested in watching Mark's generation go, and then, in 25 years, having Mark sit down with someone to compare notes and compare progress. Thanks to people like the Schultes, Charles James, and the Tejedas. Thanks to everyone who donates or buys coffee. Our Lady Queen of Peace has made a huge difference in that part of the world. And to this day, they pray for us as we pray for them.

**Mark:** Exactly. We pray for each other and help to follow the path God has laid out for us ... enjoying a little coffee and community along the way.



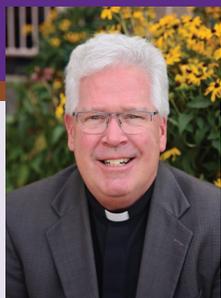
QP Parishioner Mark McNally with a coffee tree on his recent trip to Chiapas, Mexico



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## Father Brian's Message

*Dear Friends,*

We are happy to provide you with a copy of our most recent Queen of Peace Spirit Newsletter. It contains timely information about parish happenings and initiatives. Please read it and share it with others you know who may have an interest.

As we enter the season of Lent we are reminded of many things. Lent recalls our baptism, the beginning of God's life in us. We think of this especially as we follow the journey of our catechumens toward their baptism at the Easter Vigil. Lent also reminds us of sin and our own weaknesses. It leads to a greater dependence on Christ as we move toward Holy Week. And finally, we are reminded of the need for penance in our life, to die to self and to live more for God.

Lent is a dedicated time to reflect on our faith and to grow closer to God. Our traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and charitable works can be a good start. Make this a special and holy time as we prepare to ascend the holy mountain of Easter.

Have a blessed and faith-filled Lent.

*Rev. Brian J. Weib*



Special thanks to the staff and parishioners of Queen of Peace for their contributions to this newsletter.