

ASSUMPTION

of the Blessed Virgin Mary

PARISH

Building Relationships, Strengthening Our Church

Small Church Communities

Community is something that tends to start out small, gradually expanding like ripples in a pond. For only within the context of smaller communities are we truly able to unburden our hearts, share our struggles, and receive the support needed to embrace the joys and sorrows of this life. For longtime members and facilitators Bob and Liz Allmeyer, this is precisely what Small Church Communities are all about, building relationships and ultimately strengthening the larger Church.

“Small Church Community members share their concerns and struggle,” Bob says. “We share our lives together and then we reflect with one another on Scripture or various books being studied. In this way, we really get to know parishioners and, hopefully, that just continues to grow and expand.”

Here at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Small Church Communities take on all different sizes and characteristics. Some meet weekly while others monthly – some are gender exclusive, while others contain a mix of couples and singles. What they all have in common, however, is that they are all designed to help parishioners fall more deeply in love with Christ and His Word through small-group reflections, sharing, and prayer.

“We typically read a book based on Scripture together or do reflections revolving around the upcoming Sunday’s readings,” Bob says. “Then we are able to reflect and share together. Often, this ends up becoming a springboard for other topics and discussions.”

Because these groups are more relational and discussion-based, one of the goals of Small Church Communities is to maintain an open and more relaxed format. This enables each member to freely share what is on their hearts and to benefit from the prayers and support of others.

“One of the purposes of Small Church Communities is to make everyone feel important in the group,” Liz

continued on back cover



Bob and Liz Allmeyer

APRIL 2017

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LIVE IN CONCERT

FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2017



WITH SPECIAL GUEST
MARY KATE BUNCHER

7 PM: ASSUMPTION CHURCH
— IN O'FALLON —



TICKETS: \$25 General Admission, **\$100** VIP
VIP ticket includes formal reception with dinner, Q&A, and acoustic set with band, PLUS concert seating in the front section.

Tickets can be purchased at www.universe.com/beonetenthavenuenorth or by calling Bryan in the Parish Office at 636-240-3721 x240.

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First State Bank
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General Admission discounts for members of youth ministries, groups of 15 or more, and seniors - contact Bryan in the Parish Office at 636-240-3721 x240.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

The Eucharist Is Source and Summit of Our Life

Dear Parishioners,

Jeremiah tells us, “Thus says the Lord: Stand by the earliest roads, ask the pathways of old, ‘Which is the way to good?’ and walk it; thus you will find rest for your souls” (6:16). Jeremiah was referring to the roads that lead to Jerusalem, the roads that would lead to and from the exile in Babylon, the roads on which Jesus walked, the roads that are yet called the Holy Land.

We need not make pilgrimage to the Holy Land to ask our question, “Which is the way to good?” Our earliest road is Main Street, O’Fallon. Our ancestors gathered on this hill in 1869 and pledged themselves to follow Mary in her mission of bringing Christ to the world. This community built this church in the center of the town; this Church in the center of town holds an altar that stands in the center of the sanctuary; at this altar in the center of the sanctuary, the Eucharist is celebrated and we, God willing, allow it to become the source and summit of our lives, the center of our heart.

We have journeyed through Lent, preparing ourselves to celebrate the great mystery of Jesus’ death and resurrection, and then we spend 50 days reflecting on the mystery at work in each of our lives and in our life together. At Pentecost, we will pledge ourselves again to follow Christ, proclaiming His victory over sin and death to the ends of the earth. It is the Holy



Spirit dwelling in our hearts, which draws us to the altar to be transformed into the very Body and Blood of Christ whenever we celebrate the Eucharist.

I am privileged to witness God’s glory being revealed in your hearts every day. I am grateful for your faith, for the way you pour out your hearts for one another over and over again. Your support for our ministries, your love for our children through supporting their faith formation, your outreach to the poor and your prayer for one another are all signs of Christ’s Eucharistic presence at work in our community. I am also humbled to be witness to your suffering, praying at the hospital bedside of a loved one, gathering at the grave as we commend a friend to God’s eternal embrace, listening as you struggle to find God’s will in your lives, and walking with you as you wrestle with conflict in

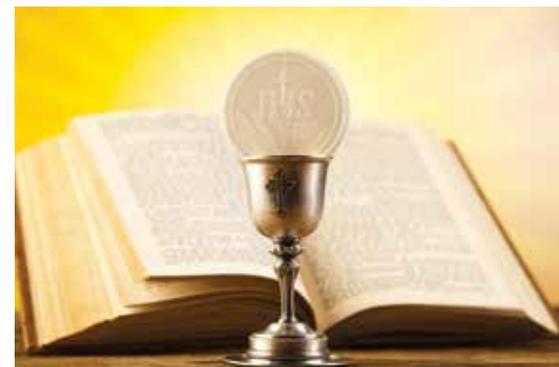
your own soul or with a neighbor. These moments, too, are part of the mystery of Jesus’ death and resurrection. When we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, we lay it all on the altar; indeed, we place our lives on the altar, trusting that the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead will bring us to life in Christ whenever we eat His body and drink His blood.

We need the Eucharist; we need each other to celebrate the Eucharist. Let us joyfully follow the example of our ancestors who built this parish. Let us honor the legacy of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary by attending Mass on Sunday. Let us let God love us out of the darkness and into His own marvelous light by bringing our lives to the altar on Sunday.

Per Matrem Ad Filium,
(Through the Mother to the Son)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Mitch Doyen". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a thick black line.

Fr. Mitch Doyen,
Pastor



CHURCH DECORATORS' WORK REFLECTS LITURGICAL SEASONS

With her years of experience in running a nursery with her husband, Rosemary Pieper has brought that creative knowledge into our church as she leads the Church Decorators Ministry.

"Our mission is to show the liturgical seasons of the Church by our decorating, and to put the people in a frame of mind," Rosemary says. "With Ash Wednesday, it's all purple with crucifixes, sticks and rocks to show it's a time of repentance. Easter will be joyous with the Resurrection. Basically, we work to show the

people the different seasons of the liturgy, and to set the mood for their worship. That's what we try to do."

Some members of the 35-strong committee are available all through the year to work, while others respond when they can. The group decorates the church and our chapel.

"If we need extra help at Christmas, we use the 24/7 Men, who are a little younger, and who can help with the heavy stuff," Rosemary says. "Our storage closet is at the top of the balcony!"

The work of decorating the church throughout the year enables the committee members to enrich their faith lives.

"They love to see how the church is transformed as the

seasons progress," Rosemary says. "And it's most rewarding at Christmas and Easter, when the church comes alive with decorations."

The committee not only decorates the church interior, but at Christmas, decorations are placed outside, along with lights both inside and out.

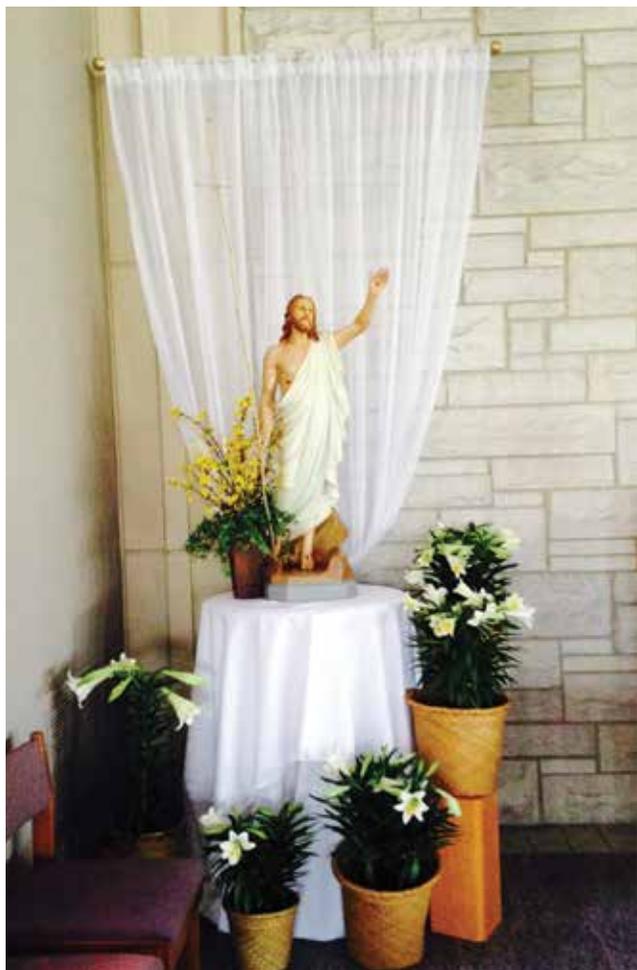
Rosemary also agrees that the work of decorating the church is an act not only of stewardship, but also one that brings the committee members closer to Christ.

"I think our way of participating in the Eucharist and Mass, in that way, is stewardship," she says. "It makes me feel wonderful when you come into the church and see how the decorating helps the people come closer to God in the liturgy. And we grow closer to Christ. It's kind of why we do it."

Rosemary has been a church decorator for about 30 years. At first, she was one of the helpers. However, the leader at the time became ill and passed away. Rosemary then stepped in to serve as the ministry leader.

While there are no formal meetings for the committee, Rosemary calls on a subcommittee to go over the photographs taken of each season's decorating.

"We review and talk about it, and discuss how we can do something better,



The parish's Resurrection statue, a feature from our old church, was restored last year and returned to celebrate. It once again will be displayed this year.



Colorful pots of mums and other spring flowers reflect the joy of Easter.

ONS

make it more meaningful,” Rosemary says. “For Lent, about four years ago, we added a narthex cross with pots of sticks and purple décor. When Easter comes, the pots become forsythia.”

A feature from the old church – the Resurrection statue – again is returning to the church this Easter.

“Last year one of the ladies had our Resurrection statue restored,” Rosemary says. “It’s so beautiful. I’m so happy we’re able to use it. Now we keep it securely stored. It’s very fragile.”

Rosemary is most appreciative with the work of her committee.

“I’m very thankful we have the help we have,” she says. “It all comes together – it’s really remarkable how it all comes together. I don’t get to do much – I run around, and then stand back and let them do it.”

But additional hands are always needed, especially at Easter and Christmas.



The narthex cross was added several years ago.



Items recalling the Last Supper are used as a reminder of Christ's last gathering with His disciples before his death.

As Rosemary Pieper notes, sign-ups always take place at the Stewardship Fair. But if you are interested in this ministry and would like to help, please contact Rosemary at 636-240-8262.



Branches of forsythia, flanked with lilies, continue the joyful atmosphere of Easter.



Good Friday is marked with this display of a crown of thorns, hammer and nails.

LIVES THAT BEAR WITNESS TO THE FAITH: *Meet*

Speaking in Rome on May 8, 2016, Pope Francis urged his listeners to be a “witness — made not just with words, but also through one’s daily life.” Here at Assumption, we are blessed to have many parishioners provide us with an invaluable example of what it means to actively live out the faith. Among these faithful witnesses are Scott and Cynthia Wilcox, whose faith reaches beyond the confines of Sunday

Mass to play a role in their lives on a daily basis.

Scott and Cynthia are involved in our parish in various ways — they lead the Crusader Run fundraiser, help with Marriage Preparation, are active in the Prayer Team Ministry, serve as Eucharistic Ministers, attend and help with Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) retreats, and participate in parish Bible studies. In addition, Cynthia has assisted with Vacation Bible School, and Scott helps put up Christmas and Easter decorations in the church. Considering this list of activities, it is quite safe to say that this couple has jumped into parish involvement with open hearts and minds!

While Scott and Cynthia have been parishioners at Assumption for about a decade, their participation in the parish really began to grow following a couples’ retreat they attended at Eagle Hurst Ranch.

“We did the couples’ retreat for three years and we loved it,” Cynthia says. “Most retreats are only for men or only for women. But with the couples’ retreats, we met other couples at the church and got to know the things they were involved in. So we realized all of the opportunities and the things that you can become a part of and really click with. It just started with that exposure and getting to know more people. I think that kind of opened the door to learning more about people and finding out about other opportunities for involvement.”

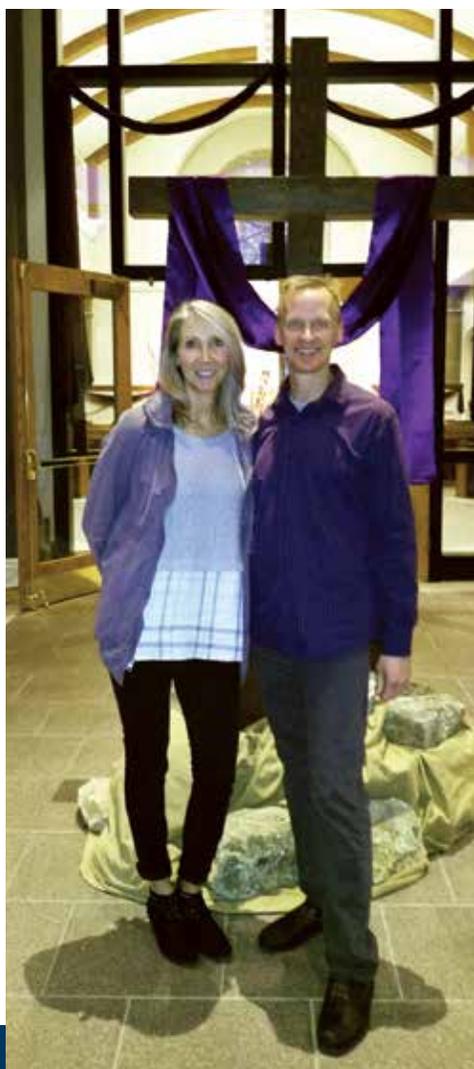
Those retreats also stand out

to Scott as a turning point in the couple’s faith life. He describes the moment that he and Cynthia saw the announcement for the retreat in the church bulletin as an “ask and you shall receive moment.” Later, when he would be asked to give his witness at a CRHP weekend, Scott would point to the retreats at Eagle Hurst Ranch as the spiritual spark that inspired him and Cynthia to become more active in the church.

Like the couples’ retreats, the CRHP retreats Scott has attended also had a great impact on his faith life.

“Being a participant, I didn’t know too much what to expect,” Scott recalls of his first CRHP weekend. “I describe the experience in this way — everyone has seen the Grinch episode where his heart grows three sizes in one day. It’s like that — you walk out of there and your heart is just so full of love. Going back and actually doing a witness and sharing my spiritual experience with others was something I’ll never forget. It was just so impactful sitting down and figuring out what I would share, and then getting up there and talking about it was an amazing experience.”

Whether it is serving as Eucharistic Ministers, organizing the Crusader Run, or helping out with Marriage Preparation at the parish, both Scott and Cynthia have found that the more they devote themselves to stewardship, the more rewarding it is. They are particularly thankful for how their participation in the parish



Cynthia and Scott Wilcox

Parishioners Scott and Cynthia Wilcox

has helped them nurture their faith life and develop valuable friendships with fellow parishioners.

In addition to the growth in faith and fellowship, Scott and Cynthia have experienced, there has been an even greater reward. The more in touch with their faith the Wilcoxes became, the more involved they became in the church. And the more involved they became, the more their daily lives bore witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And five years ago, Cynthia – who came to the Catholic faith 26 years ago – was overjoyed when her mother decided to join the Church. Going through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – RCIA – at age 70, Cynthia’s mother told her daughter and son-in-law that the way she witnessed them living out their faith was what had inspired her to become Catholic.

Scott and Cynthia’s story serves as a powerful reminder that we are given the opportunity to bear witness – not just through words, but also through our daily lives – to the Catholic faith, bringing ourselves and all those around us closer to the Lord. What a wonderful reminder to never leave our faith at the doors of the church after Mass, but instead to make it a living, breathing part of our lives each and every day!

“We would encourage all parishioners to get involved in the church. However much or little it is, don’t be afraid. There were times I haven’t always been involved and so I understand – you’re afraid of over-committing yourself and not being able to do it, or maybe think you’re not holy enough or good enough. Just don’t let all those fears hold you back from doing the things that you want to do. Assumption is a family – they’re there for you. There is so much support, and so many amazing people here.”

– Cynthia Wilcox

“We would encourage all parishioners to get involved in the church,” Cynthia says. “However much or little it is, don’t be afraid. There were times I haven’t always been involved and so I understand – you’re afraid of over-committing yourself and not being able to do it, or maybe think you’re not holy enough or good enough. Just don’t let all those fears hold you back from doing the things that you want to do. Assumption is a family – they’re there for you. There is so much support, and so many amazing people here.”

LENT/EASTER SCHEDULE

DIVINE OFFICE

Monday thru Friday at 7:30 a.m. and at 6:00 p.m. in the Chapel

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

April 7 — 7 p.m.

EASTER TRIDUUM

April 13 — Holy Thursday Mass, 7 p.m.

April 13 — Stations of the Cross, 3 p.m.

April 14 — Good Friday Service, 7 p.m.

April 15 — Easter Vigil Mass, 7:30 p.m.

April 16 — Easter Sunday Masses, 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and noon

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

April 23 — Divine Mercy service for the St. Charles County Region. Confessions will begin at 2:30 p.m., and during Confessions, we will pray the Holy Rosary, followed by the Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3 p.m. Holy Mass will follow at 4 p.m.

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Building Relationships, Strengthening Our Church

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says. "Although Bob and I are technically the facilitators, we try hard to incorporate everyone into different aspects of our gathering. We are all part of the Small Church Community together. There isn't really one single leader, but rather all of us coming together and sharing with one another."

Yet, Small Church Communities aren't exclusively about bonding parishioners with one another. Even more importantly, they are focused on helping members come to know and love Christ on an increasingly personal level. In Bob's case, being part of a Small Church Community has helped him appreciate and internalize Scripture, making it "more relevant" to his daily living.

"The more you delve into God's Word, the more you

get a feel for Him and His great love for us," Bob says.

In the process, members also get a greater sense of the larger Church and their role within it. This motivates members to get more involved, taking what they've received out to their families, parish ministries and the entire community.

"You start becoming increasingly aware of your role in the larger Church," Bob says. "That awareness just continues to grow as you realize who you are in Christ. I think one of the key reasons for this is you develop a relationship with God that isn't simply personal, but is also rooted in the community. We are called as a community to worship, and being part of this Small Church group helps you really see that."

No matter what your schedule or where you are in life, there is a Small Church Community that is right for you. To join one, simply contact Mickie McCool, Lay Pastoral Associate, at 636-240-3721, ext. 229 or mymccool@gmail.com to learn about the various offerings.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. (MH), Vigil Mass 5:00 p.m. | **Sunday:** 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., Noon

Daily Mass: Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m., MH at 6:30 a.m.

Perpetual Adoration: 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Reconciliation: Thursday 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Chapel, Saturday 4:00-4:45 p.m. in the Church