



# ASSUMPTION

*of the*  
*Blessed Virgin Mary*  
PARISH

## “THIS PARISH HAS GIVEN US SO MUCH”

*Jim and Shelly Schneider Reflect on Life at Assumption*

When Jim and Shelly Schneider moved to O’Fallon and joined Assumption almost 20 years ago, they were immediately struck by what a vibrant and welcoming parish we have! In all of their time here since, they have fully enjoyed being a part of this faith family by staying active in parish life.

Currently, Jim is on the Parish Council and Shelly is a member of the Stewardship Committee. They are both a part of the Day of Reflection team and participate in Small Church Communities. While their activity with the parish has looked different during the various stages of their life – depending on the ages of their children, their available time, and so forth – the Schneiders have always felt truly blessed to be a part of such a strong faith community.

When Jim and Shelly first moved to the area, life was busy with their three young children. Although they attended Mass regularly and served as lectors and Eucharistic Ministers, they weren’t sure when they would have the time to fit more parish involvement into their schedule. Then one day, they saw an announcement that Sr. Elizabeth from the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood had placed in the bulletin – Sister was leading a Bible study group (now called Small Church Communities) that met on Wednesday evenings while the children were in their classes at the Parish School of Religion.

For Jim and Shelly, this opportunity would be the first open door that would lead them to increased participation in parish life.



*Parishioners Shelly and Jim Schneider*

MAY 2017

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## “THIS PARISH HAS GIVEN US SO MUCH”

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“We had heard them announce the Bible study groups, and that one fit perfectly because it was at the same time and near the kids’ lessons,” Jim says. “So, it gave us that challenge to go ahead and do it. At first you wonder how you’ll do it, and then after a while it becomes a habit and you wonder how you ever did without it.”

Now, despite Sr. Elizabeth’s passing over a year ago, the Small Church Communities are still meeting in the order’s Mother House. The groups’ staying power and devotion to studying the Word of God together is a testament to the wonderful job Sister did with this program for so many years.

While the Small Church Communities were the impetus for the Schneiders’ increased involvement in parish life, another experience that has had a great impact on them during their time at Assumption was their coordination of “Wholehearted Marriages: Making Good Marriages Better.” In this program, couples met once a week for six weeks to focus on strengthening their sacramental marriages.

“It just got them talking about their marriage and thinking about things they maybe hadn’t thought about, or hadn’t thought about in a while,” Shelly explains. “That was probably one of the most special ministries to me because marriage is my vocation. As our kids – who are now 22, 23, and 24 – begin to leave home, it has always been important to me to make sure our marriage is as strong as it can be. After that program ended, we created a one-weekend marriage

retreat that we did for about four years.”

For Jim and Shelly, parish involvement is a habit that they have cultivated over time as participation in one ministry has naturally led to another... and another... and another!

“We’d start with something and then just branch on to something else,” Jim says. “We started going to Bible study to learn a little more, and then we started getting more out of Mass, and then it just went from there. When you think about doing something, you can first think of 50 million reasons why you have too much going on – but once you start making that time, it really isn’t hard at all. So, it may cost an hour or two a week, but what we get out of it is worth so much more.”

Indeed, with each of the different ministries they have been involved in, the Schneiders have found that they receive countless blessings in return. For this, they are truly thankful to be part of such a wonderful faith community.

“This parish has given us so much,” Shelly says. “It has given us amazing priests and phenomenal friendships. I love being a part of Assumption because our priests are so genuinely concerned for the parishioners and give so much of themselves. This parish has given us so much more than we’ve ever given.

“We like to get involved and give back, because God has blessed us so abundantly in family and faith, in every conceivable way,” she continues. “It’s true – if you just take a step, then God will open a big door.”

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– Shelly Schneider



## A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

### *My Soul Magnifies the Lord...*

Dear Parishioners,

May is celebrated in the Church as the month of Mary, our Blessed Mother. As the Mother of the Church, she provides us with an example of what it means to be a servant of God and of our brothers and sisters, as well as how to obediently fulfill the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

As Catholics, we are called to live the life of Jesus. There are certainly challenges to living as a disciple of Christ, but living stewardship as a way of life brings great joy to those who take the risk. As we hear in St. Paul's letter to the Romans, "All things work for good for those who love God."

After Jesus Himself, we look to our Blessed Mother as an ideal steward and an example of what stewardship means. As the Mother of Christ, she lived her life in a total spirit of faithfulness and service. She responded to the call to be a disciple. For us to be disciples, we also need to be good stewards of the gifts we have received, including the gift of our parish family.

At no point in Holy Scripture does Jesus tell us that following Him is easy. We know it is not always simple and effortless. It requires dedication and com-



mitment. Pope Francis has said on more than one occasion, "We cannot be part-time Christians and Catholics! We should seek to live our faith at every moment of every day."

From the moment Mary said, "May it be done unto me according to thy word," she let the Holy Spirit fill her heart, mind, soul and body so that she would live her whole life witnessing, "My soul magnifies the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior." As followers of Mary, as members of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, we trust this testimony of Mary as the truth of our lives. The Spirit of the risen

Christ has been poured out in our hearts; it is our mission, our only purpose, to bring Christ to the world.

I pray that we find the strength to live and practice our faith as Jesus and Mary have taught us. This means being faithful to the sacraments and serving one another. We have a great parish – let us make it even greater as we grow more deeply in love with Mary and her son, Jesus, the Christ.

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



## VACATION BI

# *Faith-Building for Kids*

*"It's important for many kids and parish families to attend Vacation Bible School. It's one of the memories that sticks with a child. It's an opportunity for kids to meet and develop relationships with their peers in the summer routine while they're at school."*



*This year's Vacation Bible School, themed "Mighty Fortress," is set to offer a host of faith-building opportunities for our youngsters.*



Final preparations are underway for our Vacation Bible School that will bring about 200 youngsters and 100 Counselors in Training to our parish campus for a week of fun and building faith!

It will be a "Mighty Fortress" that greets everyone as they gather at 9 a.m. on June 12. Each day will run from 9 a.m. to noon through June 16.

"Through the theme 'Mighty Fortress,' the kids will get the understanding about how Jesus is our rock and salvation, and where to go when we need help," says Julia Bross, Volunteer Director for the week.

Participants are preschool 4-year-olds through fifth grade. The Counselors in Training, or CITs, are those in sixth grade through the senior year of high school. The fee is \$35 for the first child in a family and \$25 for each additional sibling.

During the day, the children will rotate through activities that include music and outdoor games.

"There are outdoor games with catapults with kind of a castle setting, and the theme is tied to a Bible passage each day," Julia says. "A skit by the CITs also ties into the daily Bible passage, as will the snacks each day. There will be Bible study in the classroom, and there will be an activity that ties to the Bible. We make it a fun learning experience."

At the end of each day, the children will have a closing prayer session and discuss what they did that day, as well as practice the songs they learned.

The activities serve to teach the youngsters in their faith in order to help it grow, by working with the shorter attention spans and the time the younger children are able to focus.

*The opportunity to register will be on our website at [www.assumptionparish.org](http://www.assumptionparish.org)*



# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

## Kids and Volunteers

*families to have the opportunity to do Vacation Bible School for you for life – a volunteer will see the ‘a-ha!’ in a child as they develop their faith with their peers. It’s a good break in the summer routine while they’re able to build their faith.” – Julia Bross*

“For example, when the kids go ‘fishing,’ relating to the story of Jesus’ miracle with the loaves and fishes, they still retain the part of the story about the miracle,” Julia says.

Not only do the Vacation Bible School youngsters grow in faith, but their CITs do, as well.

“The underlying phrase we use is ‘to be a mentor,’” Julia says. “We talk at their training session about how the kids look up to them and watch all their reactions to the activities, and their attention span. So, if a CIT pulls out a phone – we coach them about this and use the phone as a friendly reminder. They are an integral part of Vacation Bible School. Without their hands, the adults couldn’t do it. They are a huge part of keeping the kids engaged and keeping the activities going. I can’t say enough about what the CITs bring to the table.”

For both age groups, it is important that Vacation Bible School provides the opportunity to come together during the summer in a solid foundation of faith.

“Personally, I have gone to Vacation Bible School as a child and with my own growth and development, I got more involved in high school and college,” Julia says. “Kind of an eye-opening moment for the volunteers is to see the kids embrace their faith. It’s important for many kids and parish families to have the opportunity to do Vacation Bible School. It’s one of the memories that sticks with you for life – a volunteer will see the ‘a-ha!’ in a child. It’s an opportunity for kids to meet and develop their faith with their peers and a good break in the summer routine while they’re able to build their faith.”

*mentioned in the bulletins and on the parish website at [AssumptionVBS.com](http://AssumptionVBS.com).*



*With adult and teen volunteers, our Vacation Bible School participants last year enjoyed a lot of fun and fellowship as they grew deeper in their understanding of their faith.*

## THE BIBLE

### *The Textbook of Stewardship*

**H**ave you ever wished that life came with an instruction manual? What a valuable resource that would be! Whenever you find yourself running in circles, this instruction manual would give you step-by-step instructions on how to fix the problem and reroute your course.

Well, here's some good news. For those living a Christian life, there *is* such a manual – the Bible.

Sometimes referred to as the “textbook of stewardship,” the Bible is a bountiful resource for the present-day Christian. Written by anointed prophets and sages, this collection of divinely inspired parables, poems and letters is full of testimonials that express the blessings that come from true discipleship, expressed through lives of stewardship.

Stewardship is not a new concept. The Bible gives proof to this claim through passages such as the 26th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. We read Moses' words, as he tells the Israelites to offer the choicest portions of their harvest to God: “When you have come into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you as a heritage, and have occupied it and settled in it, you shall take some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you harvest from the land which the Lord, your God, gives you, and putting them in a basket, you shall go to the place which the Lord, your God, will choose for

the dwelling place of his name... ‘Therefore, I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me.’ And having set them before the LORD, your God, you shall bow down in his presence” (Dt 26:1-2, 10).

St. Paul briefly touches on the essence of stewardship when he said, “In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).

Again, in St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, we read about living a life of Christian stewardship: “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:6-7).

While this is well and good, what does it mean for the present-day Christian? Why should it matter that the Bible alludes to stewardship in various passages? It shows us that Christians and Jews have struggled with and benefitted from the concept of stewardship for thousands of years. It ties the message of stewardship to the role of a Christian disciple. It gives proof that stewardship and discipleship go hand-in-hand. It offers encouragement to us, that stewardship is in fact a foundational component of the Christian life, a way of life that one of the founding fathers of the Church – St. Paul – preached about and advocated.

The Bible is indeed the textbook of stewardship. It lays out the steps we must take to become true disciples of Christ. Reading and meditating upon God's Word is always a fruitful exercise. Those who regularly delve into Scripture often develop a deeper understanding of who God is, how and why He loves us, and how we can show Him our love in return.

As you strive to become a grateful steward and live the life of Christian discipleship, develop a love for Sacred Scripture. Allow God's Word to nourish your soul regularly, and watch as stewardship changes from a foreign concept to an integral component of your daily life.





# Serving at the Table of God

The statistics are startling – 795,000,000 people in the world do not have adequate nutrition. You don't have to leave the TV on for long before you're encouraged to sponsor a starving child in a third world country, or even here in the United States.

And as important as it is to help those in need of food around the world, there is another kind of hunger that is often ignored – loneliness. Feeling worthless or unloved. Anger, bitterness, hurt. These things are also signs of hunger, but they aren't needs that can be satisfied by any natural food. These are examples of spiritual hunger, and they can only be satisfied by spiritual food.

Terry Briggs, and other parishioners who serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, or EMHCs, recognize that hunger, and choose to serve the parish by helping bring nourishment to those in need of spiritual food, the Eucharist.

"Whenever I see people's faces when they're receiving Communion, there's a multitude of expressions – some are happy, some are sad, some are hurting, some are just grateful to be there," says Terry, who has been served as an EMHC for over



*Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion serve to bring the Eucharist to their fellow parishioners at Mass each week.*

10 years and coordinates the ministry. "A lot of people, when they come to get Communion, they're looking for some kind of peace in that moment. We're blessed to have this opportunity to make the Eucharist available to the congregation at Mass."

Terry often relates the role of the EMHCs to that of those who served the Lord and His apostles at the Last Supper, the institution of the Eucharist.

"You think about the Last Supper, the people sitting at the table were directly involved with Christ," Terry says. "But what about the people serving Him? They were back and forth, serving Christ and the apostles.

I kind of look at myself as being one of the waiters – look at how much you get being the waiter."

As a "waiter" at the table of God, Terry has found that he's gained a lot – from growing in His relationship with the Lord, to also making his relationship with other parishioners more meaningful.

"Being part of the Mass and being a EMHC just draws you closer to God," Terry says. "It's a service. If you want to be closer to God and you want to serve, the perfect way to serve is to give God to the people around you. Your act in giving and the congregation's act in receiving is a human experience. But when you put God into it, you take a human experience and make it into a holy thing.

"If you do that in the Eucharist, maybe you'll be more likely to do it in your every day, at work, at home," he adds. "Instead of just interacting with people, you bring God into something and you make it a holy thing. Being an EMHC makes me more aware of God being in my life, where before I didn't look for Him. He was there, but I wasn't looking for it. Now I'm more aware when God shows up in my life, I can see it and I look for it."

In order to become an EMHC,

*continued on back cover*

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ASSUMPTION  
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## *Serving at the Table of God* continued from page 7

parishioners must go through training, either one-on-one with Terry, or as part of a scheduled group. Trained EMHCs are not scheduled weekly, but rather are invited and encouraged to take a tag from the EMHC podium in the narthex, on their way into the church, at any Mass where they would like to serve.

Terry encourages his brothers and sisters in Christ to consider serving in this valuable way.

“There is probably no other ministry that you can be so close to God and other parishioners, than being a EMHC,” Terry says. “You’re literally giving God to the person who’s receiving the Eucharist. That’s about as close as you can get.”



*If you would like more information on becoming an EMHC, or to schedule training, please contact Terry Briggs at [terry.l.briggs@charter.net](mailto:terry.l.briggs@charter.net).*

### 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

**Liturgy of the Hours Morning Prayer:** Monday – Friday: 7:30 a.m. in the Chapel