



hear it through
the Grapevine
Easter 2019

Sacristans

I believe that St. Joe's Parish is blessed in so many ways – parishioners with family roots from all over the world, young families to great-grandparents, staff, and volunteers. All make our parish a vibrant one. Each one of us has the responsibility to contribute to the success of our church community. It's by actively participating in weekly Sunday Masses, financially supporting to ensure that all our expenses are covered, or contributing to one of our many ministries. For me it's all of the above. Here is one of my favorite ways...

Several years ago I had the opportunity to become a sacristan. That meant arriving a few minutes early for Mass to set out vessels for Mass and stay a few minutes after to wash and put them away. Easy, effortless, and added only another thirty minutes to my Sunday Mass once every few weeks. Then, another opportunity arose for me to use my God-given gift of organization, planning and leadership for the benefit of our Church Community – head sacristan. It is so rewarding to work with dedicated parishioners who are keen in helping our parish to flourish. What a privilege for each one of us to set out the vessels which are empty chalices, patens, pitcher and bowls, and fill them with bread and wine. Soon they become Christ's body and blood. A beautiful way to ask Christ to open our hearts and make us like Him to all we meet in the coming week! I am so blessed to serve our Church Community in a very small way.

Walk-In Ministry

I have worked in the Walk in Ministry for over 5 years. This is a program for self-identified people that find themselves in need of help. Assistance is offered in a variety of ways; food vouchers, bag lunches, referrals, prayer and/or a friendly ear. My involvement in this ministry was a result of trying to fill a void that leaving a very meaningful job had left. I love doing this work so much because I feel it is God at work through me. It is such an honour to have people share their personal stories with me and am humbled that God has allowed me to be part of their journey. I know I am very fortunate to have enough and feel fulfilled when I am able to assist others who may not. Some of the people requiring support are part of a marginalized population that depend on helping hands while others find themselves in emergency situations due to circumstances. One situation that comes to mind was that of a grandma with many grandchildren. A family member became incarcerated without notice which left the children in her care. She was in a state of shock and had no resources due to living on a fixed income. I was able to set up appointments for her with Alberta Works and the food bank and provide helpful information for other supports available. She left our office with bag lunches for the children, a food voucher and a plan! I was filled with such gratitude for the blessing of being able to offer hope, and for my parish that cares enough to make a difference!

Gift Shop

I have been volunteering in our church community for many years, and volunteering in many different areas. I started young, alongside my parents and siblings. I continued as an adult with my husband and children and still today as a retiree. The last number of years, I have volunteered in the Gift Shop and Library, a wonderful place. Not only do I get to see all the items that come in, I also have met a lot of great people on both sides of the counter. Parishioners come in asking all sorts of questions on different Bibles, saints, and rosaries. Sometimes, they are looking for specific items I have never even heard of! It has been a huge learning curve, and I love asking our Priests or Google to find the answers for them. I think what makes this job the best, is the other volunteers. We always have time to visit with each other or with the customers. Through the Gift Shop I have met a lot of people new to our parish and renewed old friendships. I am blessed to have had this opportunity.



The Window of Mercy

In 2014 the idea resurfaced to put stained glass windows in the confessionals and the exterior window between the two reconciliation rooms in our Church and a small committee was formed.

As I had previously been asked to submit some designs for the windows, I returned to the drawing board to freshen up my designs and resubmit them. These designs ranged from the abstract to the representational, from ones with verses of Scripture to ones with images only. Each one, however, centered on the Cross of Christ.

The design chosen and now seen in the exterior window is echoed in the confessional windows. It incorporates variations of line, texture, color and form, with fluid lines swirling and overlapping, and generally diminishing in size as they reach upwards. These represent the joys and sorrows, pain and suffering we experience in life. However, in the midst of all that, stands the Cross, symbol of our Faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, our refuge and our strength. Thus, the over-riding theme is one of hope, joy and peace as we count on and experience the mercy of God.

Mentor Couples

My wife and I have been working in the Marriage Ministry as a mentoring couple, for about 7 or 8 years. Before that, we worked as a senior couple in Engaged Encounter. We love this ministry!

Working as Mentoring couple is exciting. The couples we have worked with have been so inspiring; they are a bit older than when we got married, very smart, know a lot about marriage and are thirsting for a connection to God and the Church (though some don't quite know it yet)! In almost every case we have gotten to know them very well and have become very fond of them. We still see many of them around town or in church.

Being a part of this ministry has been life giving to both of us, in many ways. First, the young couples give us hope for the future. They are bright and hopeful and ready to tackle the problems in the world with hope and optimism. Secondly, we become sort of surrogate parents for couples whose families live far away. We get to see them and their children coming to church in the years after our work together. Finally, we have been blessed to go to many weddings, and have even been asked to be god-parents to a child of one couple! As we do not have grandchildren yet, this is a special grace for us.

I encourage all married couples to work in this ministry. We do not have a perfect marriage, but we show the young couples the joys of married life. In many ways, our marriage has grown stronger because of what we have learned through this ministry.

Prayer Chain

I love doing this work because I believe wholeheartedly in the power of prayer. I receive so much satisfaction by helping others connect to a group of dedicated people willing to pray for the intentions of anonymous strangers. In turn, I find that I myself feel more deeply connected with the Catholic community.

I took charge of the prayer chain when my predecessor announced that he was going to step down. I felt called to put my name forward as a replacement. I enjoy being involved in the parish and connecting with others, however I have a busy life and young children. The prayer chain seemed like a perfect way to get involved and make a difference while still meeting the needs of my family.

I am passionate about this ministry because as a child, I witnessed first-hand the power of prayer. My closest friend collapsed of a brain aneurysm when we were 10 years old. The doctors offered no hope and she was never expected to wake from her coma. Many people prayed non-stop for her and on Easter Sunday of that year, she woke from her coma. She is now married with children.

I am grateful and honoured to have been entrusted with this ministry and am blessed to be part of our church community.

Altar Servers

Behind the scenes, we have hard working and amazing young parishioners in our altar server family. Our team demonstrates strength and commitment. We have even doubled in size over the last two years. As well, we introduced mentors to assist the new servers "develop their sea legs" during Mass. These mentor servers have shown a total dedication to training our new family members. It is so beautiful to see everyone's teamwork and coordination at Mass. The server commitment is unending. When you are that server scheduled for the 9:00 am mass Sunday morning, it can take a lot of dedication to be that early riser rather than being tempted to hit the snooze button for the 11:00 am Mass. Serving on a Sunday afternoon for the French Mass or even on a day where there is no school is often asked of our servers. That is our family. That is our team. Their dedication to service and availability speaks volumes about their characters as young parishioners and their dedication to our ministry.

Welcome Table Ministry

I enjoy meeting and talking with people; therefore, this ministry provides me the opportunity to assist new members and parishioners with questions or concerns about any of our other ministries. Also, it helps them to feel welcome to our parish community; for example, when we moved to GP it was nice to have someone to help us to feel welcome in St. Joseph Parish and to make new friends.



10404-102 Street, Grande Prairie, AB
P: 780-532-2351 F: 780-532-2286
www.saintjoseph.ca
@StJoesCatholicChurch