Then Jesus said to his host “When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not ask your friends, brothers, relations or rich neighbours, for fear they repay your courtesy by inviting you in return. No, when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind – that they cannot repay you back means that you are fortunate because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise.” Luke 14: 12-14

Dear friends,

In June, we celebrated the Feast of Corpus Christi. Fr. Don preached a homily on the gift of the Eucharist, the real presence of Jesus. In this newsletter you will find a copy of that homily. I invite you to read and ponder it. Tragically, many people in the Catholic Church have lost the sense of this great gift. Many treat the Eucharist as if it were merely bread and wine. Because of this lack of faith, attending Mass becomes optional. If you truly have faith that the Eucharist is the presence of Christ, His flesh and blood, how could you not want to feast at the table of the Lord. Nothing that this world offers can take the place of communing with Jesus, the Risen Lord.

Much of the business of our lives is conducted around tables – breakfast tables, library tables, operating tables, conference tables. Around the table we meet families, colleagues, learners and peers, all focused on the subject which is on the table. As we enter into our church the focus is the table of the Lord. This is why we bow, to venerate the sacred, anointed (altar) table of the Lord. This is why the table is kissed at the beginning and end of the celebration of Mass. This is why at major celebrations of the Church Year the table (altar) is incensed. This table is where the family gathers to focus on the subject which is “on the table” – Jesus, His sacred Body and Blood.

In the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 14, Jesus goes to the home of a Pharisee to share the Sabbath meal. Jesus comments on the fact that there is competition and jostling going on, to see who could sit nearest the host. Jesus addresses this competition by inviting the host to invite the poor, the lame, and the blind. As we gather on the Sabbath, Jesus invites all; the rich, the poor, the healthy, the sick, the child, and the adult. All are welcome. All are treated the same. The Eucharistic Table (altar) is a mirror of the heavenly banquet. We may be surprised at who is sitting at the table with us and how the Master is waiting on the table, treating all with the same dignity.

As Pastor of this great faith community I am truly humbled by the presence of many people, young and old, rich and poor from every nation under heaven. I invite all of us to ponder, how can we assist in making each Sunday, every Mass, a mirror of the Kingdom of God?

We need awesome music to fill our Church with “Praise.” This means more voices, more instruments. Would it not be good to hear the sound of sopranos, altos, tenors and basses, the sound of Praise and Worship. We need the place to be filled with the beauty of creation, and a decorating committee that takes the gift of nature and helps us to ponder the awesomeness of God. We need ushers to welcome the blind, the rich and the poor. As St. Paul remarks, hospitality marks the Christian community. We need Ministers of Hospitality at the doors to welcome all to the Feast of the Lamb.

September always marks the beginning of new things. We welcome Fr. Glen Ball, our new Associate Pastor. We welcome new ways of being God’s presence in the world. We welcome new faces to assist us in giving God praise. Consider how you might assist in making our Sunday gathering a visible sign of the Kingdom of God; where God gathers all His children around the table (altar) of praise.

Fr. Murray Sample
Pastor
Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, brothers and sisters. In doing so we find that it is over 700 years old, making it quite old and at the same time quite Catholic. Some areas of the world celebrate with a procession of the Holy Eucharist around the neighbourhood and church.

On Holy Thursday our Lord Jesus Christ gave us the Eucharist. During Holy Week we concentrate on his passion and death; now Holy Mother Church has set time aside in June for the faithful to reflect on the Eucharist itself. This is Jesus Christ’s gift to His church, to us.

All through the readings today we can find three facets of the core mystery of our faith.
- The Real Presence
- The Eucharist as our source of unity as the people of God
- The Eucharist as nourishment for the soul

For the Real Presence we find its scriptural basis in St. John’s Gospel Chapter 6, and here Our Lord says “the one who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.” This is one of the first truths we learn as Roman Catholics, and the one that offers the suffering soul the most comfort and strength as we move from childhood into our twilight years. The Real Presence and nothing else! As we come to church to participate at Mass, we’re not hoping for Christ to be here, or thinking, maybe He’ll be here? Or that His presence depends on our mood, feelings, or degree of holiness. Jesus Christ comes by those words spoken during consecration by His Catholic priests around the globe.

He promised, and His words are silver seven times refined, by His power He will come. That is what is meant by the Real Presence, brothers and sisters! In the tabernacle in every Catholic Church in the world He is present - not symbolically but actually. That unique strength, that muscle, the truth and only the truth, the centre of the Roman Catholic spirituality is this truth of the Real Presence.

Christ also gave us the Eucharist as a source of unity, a rallying point, so to speak, for His people to gather under His banner and draw us together, just as we hear in St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians. When we receive Holy Communion, all of us receive the same Lord Jesus Christ, and it’s wonderful to see the cross-section of humanity, men and women, the healthy and ill, all races and nationalities, coming forward to receive.

His promise 2000 years later in His universal Catholic Church. Now some of us are nearer to God, others are still on the way, attempting to come every Sabbath to Mass and live His gospel message, and others mistakenly believe that the heavy burdens they carry should keep them away from their creator. If you are in mortal sin and you cannot get to a priest, spiritual communion is okay. Christ gives to us Himself, and He spoke to all of us, and to all that would follow Him, His church, He offered immortal life in His presence for eternity.

The Eucharist has been given as “esca Viatorum,” or food for our journey toward Him. Christ comes not as one passing through like a shadow, but as one who stays. His gift is the same, the whole gift of Himself, whether you receive the Blessed Sacrament or the Precious Blood or both, you receive 100% of the Redeemer, not 50% or some other percentage. His impact on us is in proportion to our individual need. He is the only one who knows our needs, and the capacity in which we can receive Him. By receiving the same Christ, it allows us to become a stronger part of His mystical body, similar to a spiritual adhesive.

The Eucharist nourishes and sustains the soul; the Old Testament manna nourished the body but not the soul. Not so with Holy Communion. The Mass, the gathering at His Church reminds us of our Roman Catholic identity, and the mission He gave to his people two millennia ago, the mission we all share in, to make disciples of all nations, and never forget that we are on a pilgrimage toward Him and the promised land of heaven.

With Holy Communion all the difficulty, all the pain, and all the problems that are part of our fallen human condition become bearable as we take solace knowing that Christ is with us. His grace and the promise of future
glory fuel us onward on our journey, and we learn of what it means to be Roman Catholic. We learn of our creator's love for us, and of our dignity that lies in Him and Him alone, and why we are here. The feast of Corpus Christi is a homecoming of sorts for all Catholics because it reaffirms the truths that lie only in our Catholic faith and in the Eucharist more specifically. Brothers and sisters, do we believe profoundly in this truth? This great mystery? Do we display in our actions what we confess in our words?

Are we reverently receiving this great gift? Making the words of the liturgy our own, repeating after the minister “Amen” before we receive, not with heads down in silence. “Amen” says “I believe, Lord, the truths you teach; I believe that you are God and man, my redeemer the second person of the Trinity, truly present under the form of bread and wine.” Holy Communion is everything that Christ accomplished for us, and everything He did for us…our God and our Savior! If we stay close to His Holy Mass, we’re not far from our Lord, keeping His teachings, His passion, His resurrection, and the promise of eternal life with Him in the forefront of the hard drive of our minds and hearts.

This is what He intended for us as He said “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.”

Meet Father Glen Ball

I would like to take a moment and thank all of you for the friendly and kind welcome to the parish.

I was very fortunate to have spent time serving in this parish during my time at St. Peter’s Seminary and consider myself lucky to have met many of you already and to be able to continue to work with Fr. Murray. I consider myself very blessed to be able to continue to serve the people of St. Michael’s Parish.

I come from St. Michael’s Parish in Ridgetown. I have three brothers and no sisters. My family comes from a farming background and my grandfather, father, two uncles and two brothers continue in that tradition.

I spent much of my childhood and a part of my adult life continuing in that tradition. After completing my undergrad studies in geology I went to work full time on our family’s farming operation in the Chatham area.

I first heard the call to the priesthood when I was about nine years old. I wanted very much to become an altar server and to help the priest to say Mass in whatever way I could.

Getting to know Fr. Martin Johnston in Ridgetown I saw that the life of a priest is not a bad life. Fr. Johnston always seemed so full of joy and love for what he was doing.

As I moved to university and began studying in a science heavy field, my faith was challenged by many people who seemed to have no need for God in what they were doing.

Through the help of a faith-filled friend I came to the realization that my faith in God need not be buried. As I studied more science I began to see very clearly that God’s place in the universe was not written out by science but more necessary because of it.

As I finished university, I began to play the organ for my home parish at about the same time Fr. Johnston retired and my parish was clustered under the Capuchins in Blenheim. Through the music that I practiced and prepared, my faith and understanding of the Church began to grow.

I began to do my own study of the Church and its teachings and found I agreed more and more with what the Church teaches. An old desire that I had suppressed since I was in high school returned and I felt called once more.

At the invitation of one of the Capuchin priests serving at my parish, I visited their friary where we discussed some of what the life of a priest entails. He encouraged me to seek out the diocesan vocation director and with his encouragement I attended a “Come and See” weekend at St. Peter’s Seminary.

Following that weekend I felt that I must further follow God’s call and as the Capuchin priest recommended I decided to do something and applied to St. Peter’s.

To anyone considering a vocation to the priesthood or any vocation, I would give the same advice given to me by the Capuchin priest: “Do something.” God can extend the offer to you but you must accept it. You must be the one to say yes and go where God leads you.

Thank you again for the wonderful welcome and I look forward to serving you and God in the future.
One of my passions is reading online forums and discussions on youth ministry to keep abreast of what’s going on across our country or abroad in young peoples’ lives in faith. A job posting for a youth minister recently caught my eye, in that it required applicants to “Help form Intentional Disciples in our Parish Youth rather than Consumer Christians who want the Church to serve them.”

Too often I think we fall into a “what’s in it for me” or “what do I get out of it” mentality. I also remember seeing a ministry sign that read “before you complain, are you volunteering?” Ministry should not be about great programming or great homilies for consumer Christians. Whatever happened to the old saying, “Lord whatever you want me to do, I will do.” Caution: be ready to do anything.

When we decide to become intentional disciples a lot of things happen. It is not about sanctity. It is not about holiness. It is absolutely not a guarantee that your spiritual life is great and that your personal life is without conflicts.

Being an intentional disciple just means that you have consciously begun the life-long journey of walking with Jesus and being slowly transformed as you do so. The crucial word is intentional. It is an attempt, however early or faltering, to deliberately follow Jesus as his disciple, in the midst of His Church, in a freely chosen way. The essential ideas are:

- Jesus is calling me to follow Him
- I am attempting to do so in the midst of His Church; even if,
- I haven’t the faintest idea where to begin or what this means in the long term and I carry with me the weight of sinful and ungodly habits of mind, heart, and body and understanding of the Christian faith and life.

In this life every journey begins somewhere and every journey begins with that first step. No matter where I am on the spiritual or holiness spectrum I have, at least, begun a conscious life-journey. A journey through which God will save me by His grace and through my response to that grace.

There are true intentional disciples who aren’t baptized yet and there are those who are great living saints. They are all on the same basic journey.

The next step from Intentional Discipleship is Missionary Discipleship. This is not a new term but how many people know how to evangelize? When we make a decision to follow Jesus, it does not happen by accident. It is intentional. If you are following Jesus, you attend Mass every Sunday, because you understand what the Mass is and who is present in the Mass. You are, in fact, trying to live the Sacraments. You and I choose to follow Him.

Pope Francis recently spoke about “Missionary Discipleship.” This second step is important because, once we have matured into following, we must then act. What is that act? The Mission! It is to bring the Gospel to the people. Pope Francis spoke about walking with people in their journey. It happens at work, in the classroom, at home, in sports or in day-to-day activities and in your neighborhood when we evangelize and show people how Jesus walks with them!

Did you ever notice in Scripture that during the three years of training, not only did Jesus share life experiences, but He also repeatedly corrected and challenged the twelve as they lived together. He showed his love as He walked with them day in and day out, through ups and downs. He shared their joys and sorrows.
What I love about our Catholic faith is that it is not about my opinion, but about what the Church teaches. When I don’t have all the answers I know where to look - The Magisterium. In the Church, in the Bible, in the Catechism and Sacraments we find the answers. I am only a sower of seeds. So when someone asks me something and I don’t know, I say, “I don’t know, let’s find out together,” and we start walking.

EDGE, our youth group for Grades 5-7, and soon LIFETEEN, Grades 8-12 (starting January 2018), is not about a program, a catechesis course, or a weekly drop off site for teens. It is a mission field where a group of people devote their time building relationships, having fun, finding answers together, impacting each other’s lives and walking together on a journey discovering Jesus.

It is also evangelizing and preparing people to share what they’ve learned and experienced, as the twelve did. Not only does it pertain to teens, but it often involves parents and family members as well. That’s Intentional Discipleship and Missionary Discipleship.

This year we would like to invite parents and guardians to enjoy a cup of coffee and chat together.

Some of our leaders wanted to share their experiences:

“I feel like EDGE brought some life back into the youth here at our Parish. Seeing young minds learn about our Lord and faith is really touching. I feel like EDGE will help keep the youth connected with their faith, parish and community in order to be closer to God and His people. The team not only brought the youth together, it also brought those who love to inspire young minds together. Our EDGE Leaders were wonderful people to get to know and we now have the pleasure of calling them friends. I am so grateful to be a part of this team.”

“Something I remember was when we had drawn our prayers in the school’s playground. It was interesting to see how they expressed themselves through that activity, deeper than when we pray at the end of all the other nights, because they did not have to share out loud their feelings. Their drawings were pretty and colourful but more important, full of meaning. Volunteering for EDGE has been a wonderful experience for me, not only because I truly enjoy working with children and youth but because it’s a beautiful opportunity to share our faith and contribute, in some way, to the process of growing in God’s love together. It has been also a blessing to be part of a great team sharing the same purpose and working together for our Parish families, children and youth.”

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Eleven disciples gather, eating, doubting what they have been told about the resurrection. *(Mark 16:15)* Christ rebukes them and tells them to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

Mass today ends with Father giving us the same direction that Christ gave the disciples. Those who met Jesus, and walked with him, ate with him and listened to him, documented their experience and shared it with others.

If you’ve been looking for an easy way to follow that direction, consider being a Sponsor in RCIA. In a parish of nearly 3000, it should be easy to find 10-15 Sponsors. This past summer, you may have heard an appeal for all types of volunteers, including one for Sponsors for this session of RCIA. Did you know that 53% of all volunteer hours are being done by just 10% of Canadian volunteers? *(Statistics Canada 2010)*. The same phenomenon can be seen throughout the church. There are choir members who have been involved for 25 years, and Eucharistic ministers who started helping during mass as altar servers. Similarly, some Sponsors in RCIA graciously return to volunteer year after year.

Why is volunteerism steadily rising in Canada? Why do the same people keep coming back for more, while others stay away? It’s the pay and the misconceptions. Let’s try tackling a couple of the misconceptions about Sponsors. Sponsors are not *Super Catholics* who know everything that there is to know about Catholicism.

Actually, to be a Sponsor, you need only be 18 years old and a practicing Catholic. The role of Sponsor is not one of teacher. Instruction, in various forms, is presented to all who attend. The Sponsor journeys alongside the to-be Catholic, and the faith and knowledge of both are enriched. There are often moments when a Sponsor will exclaim, “I did not know that!” The spiritual growth experienced during the course of RCIA is part of the Sponsor’s pay.

There is always loss when you make a life changing decision. Even those moving within Christian denominations often find that family and friends reject their choice. The culture they have been accustomed to changes, individual habits and routines change. These folks who come to the RCIA program don’t do it because it is easy, but because God is calling them.

It is refreshing and encouraging for an aspiring Catholic to hear that they don’t need to have all of the answers, and that it’s fine to ask questions, to share as much or as little about their spiritual path as they wish. It is a relief for them to get to know a few parishioners and make some friends as they prepare to come into the Church. Candidates and Catechumens feel your presence with them, your hand on their shoulder as a profound comfort. Sponsors provide security, familiarity and a sense of belonging just by showing up once a week and exploring faith in a supportive group environment.

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) group, for people interested in becoming Catholic, meets on Wednesday evenings from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. Each potential Catholic is paired with a volunteer Sponsor; a woman with a female, a man with a male.

One moment you are in a boat fishing with your brother, the next you are being asked to follow a man who promises to make you a “fisher of people” *(Matthew 4:19)*. Sponsors don’t fish for people, the people come. People hear that Jesus died for ALL: the criminal, the poor, the flawed, the broken, the addicted. This transforms individuals today just as it did when that Good News first began to spread. A Candidate (baptized Christian) or Catechumen (non-baptized) just needs company on the road because the road is unfamiliar. A Sponsor is that company. Please volunteer.
Every morning at 8:00 am one of the programs that keeps St. Michael School ticking swings into gear. The Breakfast Club is ready to begin another busy day. Staffed by Marsha from the YMCA, and a team of volunteers, the program serves breakfast to a steady stream of students every morning of the week. Any student is welcome to enjoy a breakfast, grab a snack or simply visit with friends and staff.

The daily menu is varied, nutritious and delicious. Cold items such as cereal, cheese and crackers, yogurt, fresh fruit, granola bars and milk are served on a rotating basis. Hot food, such as oatmeal, English muffins, bagels and toast are also popular. The program adheres to the guidelines of the Ontario Student Nutrition Program and the Community Donations Program, ensuring food selections that will nourish and please the students. Students are also allowed requests so occasional treats such as waffles brighten up the morning meal.

The program runs like a well-oiled machine. Students visit the buffet, make their selections, then choose to sit in groups with their friends, in similar age groups or mixed groups. The atmosphere is relaxed and the students socialize well together. The rush begins at 8:45 am as the last of the students hurry in before the morning bell. Fortunately the Breakfast Club is well-prepared for this rush! Breakfast items are packed up into Ziploc bags, allowing students to dash in and take a portable breakfast or a morning snack with them to class. No one goes hungry! Snack food is also sent up to the main office and is available all day for anyone, anytime, who needs a meal or a little extra during the day. Full stomachs make for better listening, learning, attention and positive interactions.

Students benefit from the programme in many ways. First, and most basic, is consistent access to food that is plentiful, varied and nutritious. Students are encouraged to enjoy a good breakfast and to experience new taste sensations. No one is turned away and each student is welcome to have what they need to start their day off well. Secondly, the Breakfast Programme is a real community. All children are welcome. There is a sense of camaraderie and equality amongst those who attend. The staff who engage the children in conversation reinforce good manners and build up a sense of belonging and support. Lastly, access to regular, nutritious food has direct effects on the success of a student’s day. Focus and interest in learning improve, attention spans are longer and students exhibit positive behaviour.

Gabriel Pizzuti, Principal at St. Michael, is a firm believer in the benefits of the program. He knows that the need is real and that, because of the Breakfast Club, many potential problems with learning and student behaviour, are avoided. Thirteen hundred students are served each month. It is an expensive program to operate. However, it is a program that is critical to the success of students at St. Michael.

How can we, the parishioners, help to maintain the success of this foundational program?

❤️ Financial support: Gift cards from local supermarkets are very welcome so that food items can be purchased as needed and stockpiled when prices are low
❤️ Personal donations: a visit to the school office with your donation will enable you to receive a tax receipt
❤️ Support the food drive hosted by the Parish each fall and spring
❤️ Volunteer: the school welcomes volunteers to assist and is anxious to develop a personal relationship. Parishioners are welcome to visit the school and ask to see the program in action. Volunteers for food shopping are in particular demand.

The need is real and is ongoing, particularly at month end and during the winter months. What a wonderful way to engage in corporal works of mercy, at the school right next door. We can all contribute to feeding our parish school children and building up a positive, nurtured school community. It is a program that keeps St. Michael’s ticking, but in reality it is more like a heartbeat, full of life and love for all those involved.

The Breakfast Club at St. Michael School by Louanne Henderson
We know that families in today’s culture are stretched and stressed, constantly balancing demands of work, school, busy schedules and various extracurricular activities. Family time, daily meals and religious activities at home or in church are often pushed off the calendar by more urgent activities.

Many parents feel that they are ill equipped for the task of sharing religious traditions with their families and being the primary religious teachers of their children and teens.

Yet, Pope Francis reminds us again and again: “...it is important that parents be the first catechists, the first educators of the faith in their own family with their witness and their world.” (Address to Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization.)

During the past two years, our Pastoral Team at St. Michael’s Parish has been brainstorming and looking for effective ways to engage parents in our parish in the life and mission of the Church as well as seeking ways to help them take ownership as the primary leaders of faith.

We have considered and implemented some of the strategies from Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth, an initiative that engages and strengthens parents and families in growing as a domestic church through a close and vital partnership with the parish and school community.

Today I would like to share some of the suggestions, tips, and prayer opportunities from Strong Catholic Families to help bring families together in prayer and to focus more on practicing our faith.

It takes effort to establish new habits, and it takes time for habits to become a natural part of our life; implementing even a few of these suggestions will help families to rediscover God in the ordinary events of daily life and to find grace in the present moment of family life. Faith is more caught than taught and for our children to have faith, it needs to be woven into the very fiber of our family life.

**Make family meal time Sacred**

- Set aside family meal nights on specific days of the week, especially on Sundays and holidays. Use these meal times to pray together, to share your highs and lows, your joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments as well as your Cross Moments, times in the recent past (day or week) when you experienced the presence of God in your life and in the world.
- Discuss current events and how they reflect what you/your children believe and why. Ask your children to make the God Connection, ask them “Where is God in this situation?” and “What is God saying to you today?”

**Limit unnecessary activities**

- When discerning adding an activity, or considering a change to your family schedule, ask “Will doing this activity or turning on this screen strengthen or weaken our family life?” Whenever we say yes to something, we are automatically saying no to something else.

**Have images of faith in your home and mirror the Liturgical Seasons**

- Invite each person in your family to select their favorite faith item (crucifix, bible, rosary), they would like to have displayed at your home. You can have a small sacred space that displays the colors and symbols of each Liturgical season (e.g. Advent wreath and candles, crèche, ashes and palms, Lenten calendars, Easter Egg trees, etc.)
Pray together as a family, outside and inside the home

Praying as a family is a wonderful and rewarding activity. Finding the time and opportunity is not always so easy. Here are some of the practical ideas to try to incorporate prayer into daily life:

**Bedtime and morning ritual.** Bless each member’s forehead with the Sign of the Cross, while saying “May God bless you and be with you” before bedtime and in the morning before leaving home. You can have your own variation of the blessing. In our house, our 8-year old daughter made her own bedtime ritual called “One hug, one tuck, one kiss, one blessing.”

**Pray before meals at home and when you eat out.** Praying together when you are out is a public testimony to your family’s faith and is a wonderful witness to your children.

**Attend Sunday Mass as a family.** Ask your children and spouse how they felt about the readings, homily, hymns, and what God spoke to them through the readings or what they learned in Sunday school.

**Use important family moments to integrate prayer.** Birthdays, anniversaries, crises, trips, church and civic holidays, achievements, Sacraments (First Communion, First Reconciliation, and Confirmation) and other occasions large and small. For example, during Thanksgiving each person can say what they are thankful for; at a birthday say a prayer for the person whose birthday it is; during a trip, a prayer for safe travels, etc. It does not have to be lengthy or complicated, it can be traditional prayers such as an Our Father or a rosary, or it can be in your own words.

**Pray for the needs of others.** Pray together for friends who are going through difficult times, sick relatives or needs of people in the community.

Ask your spouse and children what they would like you to pray for and then ask God to supply their needs.

**Pray on your own.** We cannot teach our children how to pray if we do not take time to pray on our own. Take a few minutes each day of quiet, uninterrupted time to read Scripture, and to share with God your concerns, hopes and fears. Take time to be silent and open to God. If you get stuck, check out the free Catholic app, called *Laudate* or any other Catholic resource to help you pray on your own.

Serve others as a family

**Look for the opportunities to perform works of mercy** (feeding the hungry, sheltering and clothing the homeless, visiting the sick and caring for the marginalized) in your community and church. We have a lot of ministries at St. Michael’s that do just that, such as St. Vincent de Paul, Hospitality North, Yarning with Love, etc.

**Commit that each member of the family will participate in one parish activity outside of attending Mass.** Choose a ministry together and discuss how it might play to their gifts and strengths.

**Work together as a family to discern whether something is a want or a need.** What difference will it make individually or in the life of the family if you do decide to obtain a desired item? If you decide to purchase an item, can you donate something to make room for it (one-in-one-out rule).

I hope these suggestions help you to be more intentional in your faith and to grow closer to God and each other.

Lastly, be assured that you are not doing it alone and ask God to help you and bless your efforts for “…he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)
God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1)

Christianity has endured its share of prodigals who returned home: King David, Jonah, the Apostle Paul, Billy Graham’s son Franklin, but none more notable perhaps than St. Augustine whose mother Monica pleaded to God for 19 years that her son might return to his faith. Augustine, one of Christianity’s utmost defenders, did exactly that. The Apostle Paul? At one time God’s greatest enemy, Paul eventually became His greatest servant.

When teens and young adults today reject God and the teachings of their faith, and are perhaps even living an immoral or prodigal life, not far behind you will find a hurting mother and father. Parents of these teens and young adults are often haunted by feelings of inadequacy, confusion and discouragement, trying to understand how their children went astray and where the blame lies. They are faced with the overwhelming task of coping with these feelings while also discerning how to bring their children back to God.

How then does a parent manage the disappointment, worry and despair when children rebel and drift from God? Ultimately how does one turn this burden over to God and entrust it to His care?

1. Pray. Prayer is your lifeline to God. It guides, encourages and comforts, and is a shelter from the storm. Pastor and theologian J. Sidlow Baxter tells us “Our loved one may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons, but they are helpless against our prayers.” Be relentless and petition God to help your child. A great peace can be won when you invite God to carry this burden for you (Matthew 11:28)

2. Turn to Scripture and Biblical Resources. God’s word and the works of Christian writers can comfort a parent’s weary soul. The Psalms are especially uplifting and many were written when David himself was in great emotional pain.

3. Be Patient. Wait and trust in God’s perfect timing. Isaiah 64:4 reminds us...no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

4. Grieve. Jesus wept over the state of Jerusalem and He cries over your prodigal also. Intercession watered with tears is a most powerful form of prayer. Let your sorrow lead you to God’s mercy and compassion and be renewed in your battle to persevere...to be content whatever the circumstances (Philippians 4:11)

5. Reconcile with your own emotions. Let go of blame, anger, guilt and all the if onlys. Reject false guilt, forgive your children, and yourself if necessary, and focus on loving them despite their choices. If God the perfect Father can have prodigals, we can too. Offer unconditional love and acceptance to your child as you would to a non-Christian neighbor or friend.

6. Conquer despair and anxiety. You can worry or you can pray. You can’t do both (Philippians 4:6-7)

7. Pursue God, not this trial. Do not worship this burden by allowing it to consume you and your other relationships, your faith or even your joy. Fix your heart on God’s power and glory. Remember, the prodigal son’s father in Luke’s gospel did not chase after him but went on with his life remaining steadfast in hope and prayer, and when his son returned he welcomed him home with open arms.

God does more than heal the broken. He uses the theme of brokenness throughout the bible to change the hearts and destiny of those He loves; the Israelites and the broken tablets, Paul’s broken ship, the broken body of Christ. If you are praying a prodigal home you are no doubt familiar with this sense of brokenness. Take heart that placed in the hands of God, these circumstances can restore and redeem not only your child but you also!

Author and Pastor Robert J. Morgan, himself the father of a prodigal child, writes about his own spiritual growth amidst his suffering: “I’ve...come to a greater degree of peace, one anchored on the sovereign faithfulness of a caring God who does all things well and who intends to do a sanctifying work, not only in my child but in me.”

Parenting a prodigal will surely test your faith but throughout the bible we witness God’s people enduring trials that eventually become blessings. While you wait then on God’s sovereignty, pray without ceasing for your child, commit to memory the many promises of God, ask Him to help refine and perfect you in the process and finally, praise and thank Him in advance for the work only He can do. Prodigals do come home!

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28)
When I first moved to St. Michael’s in 2015, I looked on the parish website to see if there was a program I could join to get to know other parishioners.

Our parish’s Bible Study with Father Don looked interesting. Little did I know how much it would change my life.

As I had hoped, I met a wonderful group of people who have helped to make St. Michael’s feel like home. Even more significantly though, this program truly opened up Scripture and inspired me to get serious about learning the Bible.

The first part of Jeff Cavins’ “Great Adventure” series took us through the Old Testament and into the New. We were introduced to important figures in the lineage of Christ, which began with Adam, and was peppered with some sketchy characters (including a few shady ladies, as Cavins likes to refer to them) along the way.

The second part of the series, which our class of 45 began last September and finished in June, was a study of the Gospel of Matthew. Jeff Cavins chose this Gospel because Matthew’s audience was the Jewish people, and so he quoted and referred to the Old Testament frequently.

Matthew in particular shows how Christ is the fulfillment of the Scriptures. We learned not only why Christ died, but why Christ lived. What was His public ministry for?

We learned that it was to fulfill God’s promise to Abraham of worldwide blessing (Gn. 22:17-18). Christ established, through His Apostles, the very Church we know today.

He made it known right from His genealogy (some of the shady ladies were not Jewish) and the coming of the Magi at His birth, to the centurion whose servant He healed, that He came to call Gentiles, along with outcasts and sinners, into His Church.

At the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus commissions the Apostles: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” (Mt. 28:19). What will the Apostles do now?

This is what we will learn this fall in Acts: The Spread of the Kingdom. Acts of the Apostles promises to be full of adventure. The Apostles will be turned into spiritual dynamos at Pentecost. Saul the persecutor will have a dramatic conversion into the great Apostle, Paul.

Consider joining us this fall! Both Father Glen and Deacon Gaston will be facilitating and I guarantee you will meet many new friends to stop and chat with after Mass on Sunday.

You don’t need to worry if you missed the first two seasons. The study of Acts: The Spread of the Kingdom will be sure to educate and inspire us to live our Lord’s call to “...go and make disciples of all.”
While growing up we would gather in the kitchen, where we shared many meals and celebrations with friends and family.

The kitchen in St. Michael’s has a very similar place in our church community. It fulfills an important role in our mission: “A Welcoming Eucharistic Community, Sharing Faith and Reaching Out to All.”

Our kitchen is used regularly by various groups for all kinds of events. The Social Committee hosts Coffee Sundays once a month which sometimes include welcomes and farewells to staff, and receptions for priests, as they did for Fr. Murray’s 40th anniversary. There are wedding anniversary celebrations on Valentine’s Day, volunteer appreciation nights, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on Wednesday evenings during lent, etc.

The kitchen is where all the food is prepared and served, so that we can cater to so many parish events, such as:

- Holy Saturday reception for new Catholics
- The Christmas Bazaar and Ministry Fair
- Knights of Columbus and Catholic Women’s League (CWL) fundraising dinners
- CWL funeral lunches
- The Men’s Conference
- Grade eight graduations from our four schools
- Meals cooked for Habitat for Humanity
- EDGE pot luck and youth events
- Bible Study pot lucks
- CWL pot lucks
- Young at Heart luncheons
- Seniors on the Move luncheons
- Marriage Preparation Weekends
- Christmas concerts
- Catholic Cemetery Committee
- St. Michael’s School Thanksgiving meals.

A comment from Joan (CWL):
“Prior to our renovated kitchen we found the counter and refrigerator space to be very limited. The CWL donated money to the parish to be used specifically for renovations as we felt that was definitely a priority for us. Now, when we use the kitchen whether it is for preparing a funeral luncheon, making our apple pies for our fall bake sale, or hosting our June potluck, it has most surely been money well spent. We love the double door refrigerator, stainless steel counter tops and we are very appreciative of the dishwasher. We can use ceramic place settings and real cutlery, and we have handy rolling storage units for convenient setting up and clearing of tables.”

The St. Michael’s kitchen does so much more; it provides a much needed service to our neighbours in need. Every Monday a warm healthy free community meal is prepared at St. Michael’s kitchen.

Northern Hospitality is an ecumenical group of four London churches that have been preparing and serving approximately 100 people from the city every week for twenty years. The kitchen is very busy with many volunteers setting tables, preparing food and beverages etc.

This weekly community meal is a time of sharing our space and resources with people in the community that need a free meal or a safe caring place just to be. Like the Eucharist a shared community meal is a very natural and human experience. Derrick, an occasional guest at our meals wrote a beautiful thank you note to Father Murray.

The kitchen provides the equipment and space but the invisible component, like the Eucharist, delivers the companionship and the blessings that are bestowed on the guests and volunteers that come every Monday night.

Next time you enjoy a welcoming gathering in the hall for fellowship with food and refreshments, pop your head into the kitchen and offer a prayer of thanks that we have such a wonderful resource and a word of praise to those who are serving.
Hello, my name is Derrick; I am one of the many people that attend the weekly Northern Lights meal program at Saint Michael’s Church.

I wanted to provide this letter to you on behalf of us all. In gratefulness and appreciation for your heartfelt interest and efforts forward in making not just a dent in the cycle of hunger, but a positive and lasting impression that there are those who God has in place to care and take care of the needs of the many; in providing high quality and nutritional content that serves to maintain health and wellness, as well as a balanced emotional / mental mindset as people in their varied circumstances walk on with their particular needs.

The group of volunteers, whom I have had the privilege of being involved with, have been exceptional with their demonstrated interest in our lives, as they provided encouragement, support, inspiration, kindness, thoughtfulness and warm hearted smiles and laughter, that sometimes were added with a hug. I know for many it was a love luxury not usually received in a day or at all, and served to widen one’s self esteem or personal confidence that has helped in aiding people to come up higher in their lives.

It has been a phenomenal year filled with a barrage of consistent Motherly, Brotherly and Fatherly encouragement, along with a warm heart, attentive year, demonstrated compassion, empathy and understanding.

The volunteers have functioned exceptionally, while many arrive with different challenges and concerns, yet they involve themselves joyfully and sincerely as they conduct themselves with proper decorum and protocols, without complaint.

We are encouraged in knowing they travel forward and some from distant places to do God’s work in paying forward all the blessings that have been bestowed upon them by God the Father and by us the many that enjoy, need and are blessed by their continuing devotion to serve, going where the needs are, with caring hearts, providing invaluable lifesaving support through conversational care counseling, and feeding the hungry, which in fact, is saving lives.

To you, Father Sample, and indeed all the volunteers seen and unseen, and everyone that participates in bringing this meal program to life, week after week and year after year. And this includes all of their hearts warmth, personalities and character traits, WE, the attendees of the Northern lights meal program, say a HEARTY THANK YOU, and GOD BLESS YOU ALL. May your joy through your service to Him, grow and go on.... and on.... and on. And may you receive jewels in your crown for your unfathomable service in Him. THANK YOU.

Sincerely

Derrick Brooks
**An Invitation from Father Murray**

Holy Land Pilgrimage – Oct. 18-30, 2018. Come join Fr. Don and I as we walk in the steps of Jesus in the land where Jesus was born, lived, died and rose from the dead. We will visit Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem. We will walk on the beach of the Sea of Galilee.

For information contact Joan Bolt 519-471-6373 or speak to Fr. Murray.

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**Volunteers (Elves) needed for Christmas Bazaar!** Can you knit, crochet or sew? Do you bake or make preserves or candy? Are you a crafter or woodworker? Want to help on the day?

Contact Karen Owens at owensk@rogers.com for further information.

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**Please join us in the parish hall for St. Michael’s Christmas Bazaar**

Saturday, November 18th from 9:30am-3:30pm.

You’ll find a wonderful selection of Christmas gifts, crafts and baking.

Help support St. Michael’s Social Outreach Programs.
Parish Photos

Saying Goodbye to Fr. Don

Our Newsletter Team:
Carmen Gicante,
Keith Rodrigues,
Louanne Henderson,
Angela Townend,
Giacomo Barone,
Doug Manners.

Newsletter Design:
Joanne Tremblay

Bible Study
The Gospel of Matthew
The King and His Kingdom

St. Mike’s Breakfast Club
Parish Information

St. Michael’s Parish, 511 Cheapside St., London, ON N5Y 3X5
Phone: 519-433-6689 • Fax: 519-433-2301
E-mail: stmichlon@dol.ca • www.stmichaelslondon.ca
Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Masses
Saturday: 5:00 p.m.
Sunday: 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m.

Weekday Masses
Tuesday & Thursday: 12:00 noon
Wednesday & Friday: 8:00 a.m.
Saturday: 9:00 a.m.

African Caribbean Catholic Community Mass
(St. Josephine Bakhita)
4th Sunday of each month at 2:30 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation
Saturday: 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. and 4:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Free Bus Service to 10:30 a.m. Mass
The route . . .
9:35 a.m. (new time)
- 64 Wyndham
- Blackwater east of Adelaide - bus stop
- Grenfell just east of Blackwater
- Fanshawe/Trossacks - bus stop on corner
- 770 Fanshawe Park Rd east of Fremont - bus stop
- Fanshawe Park Road - west of Fremont
- Adelaide/Fanshawe - bus stop south of Fanshawe
- Kipps Lane/Adelaide - bus shelter just east of Adelaide
- Kipps Lane/Barker
- Kipps Lane - bus stop east of Barker
- Kipps Lane/Kenmore Place - bus stop
- 295 Briarhill
- Cheapside/Boullee
- Huron Street - bus stop east of Wedgewood Drive
10:15 a.m.
- Royal Oak Apartments - 3 stops
go to St. Michael’s Church

The bus will stop at regular bus stops or wherever it is hailed along the route.

Pastoral Team
Father Murray Sample, Pastor
msample@dol.ca ext. 202
Father Glen Ball, Parochial Vicar
gball@dol.ca ext. 306
Deacon Gaston Mabaya, Deacon
gmabaya@dol.ca
Yana Adkinson, Pastoral Minister
yadkinson@dol.ca ext. 203
Sylvain Patry, Coordinator of Youth Ministry
spatry@dol.ca ext. 206

Staff
Doug Manners, Business Administrator
dmanners@dol.ca ext. 205
Mary Egan, Parish Secretary
stmichlon@dol.ca ext. 201
Jolanda Squire, Administrative Assistant
jsquire@dol.ca ext. 208
Rod Tramble, Hall Coordinator
tramble@dol.ca ext. 210

Parish Council Chairperson
Peter Valiquet

Children’s Ministries
Sunday: 10:30 a.m. Mass
Liturgy of the Word: Grades 2, 3 and 4
Sunday School: Aged 3 to Grade 1
Babysitting: Infants to age 3

Calendar of Events
- Mass of Healing, 12 noon
- Confirmation Parent Meeting, 7pm
- Feast of St. Michael
- Thanksgiving Mass, 10am
- First Reconciliation Parent Meeting, 7pm
- Ministry Fair Weekend
- Mass of Healing, 12 noon
- Christmas Bazaar, 9:30am-3:30pm
- All Day Confessions, 8:30am-7:00pm