

I am going to take the opportunity to briefly reflect back on my almost 7 and half years of being assigned here at St Patrick Church of Merna in order for us to take a fresh look at the direction of our parish, specifically focusing on what it means to be “Rooted” or “Rooted in Christ”. Fr. Greg arrived at St. Patrick Church of Merna in 2013 he was fired up and had a vision for our parish. Small groups were formed and the parish was challenged to give 1% of their day to God. When Fr. Greg got sick, and with Fr. Schultz as our new pastor, we journeyed with Fr. Greg until God called him home. What followed was a time of discernment for Fr. Schultz, and while considering the vision of Fr. Greg, he sought to address the parish’s current situation and introduced Stewardship under the theme of ***Rooted in Christ***. We were invited to be ***Rooted in Christ*** recognizing that everything is a gift from God, and thus as stewards of these gifts of *Time, Talent, and Treasure* we were, and still are, called to share them with God and others.

In late 2019, Fr. Schultz began to form a Parish Stewardship Council and in time this council created our Rooted prayer, designed the Rooted logo, and organized opportunities for our parish to be committed to giving God our *Time, Talent, and Treasure*. Fr. discussed this vision during homilies, and we provided ministry weekends to assist parishioners in making a personal commitment to share the Stewardship mission. While COVID put a halt to many things, our Parish Stewardship Council helped to keep things moving forward. We did a survey to check-in with our Parish family and from that survey many positive things happened. We hired a staff member to focus solely on communication, our parish website was rebuilt, we began to live stream Masses, and started the PHP/Parishioners Helping Parishioners fund. The results also assisted our Parish Stewardship Council to have many discussions to help keep our Parish family involved in Stewardship and to grow in a relationship with Jesus as well as share the gifts given to us by God.

This past Spring, we asked our parishioners to assist us by giving input on the topic of Stewardship. After examining the results, we realized that there was confusion between what was meant by Time and Talent. Because of that, we wanted more input and created focus groups where we asked very specific questions to help guide us in our search to help parishioners understand the overall topic of Stewardship. We thank everyone for their input and we are excited to share how to better help you understand Stewardship and the elements of *Time, Talent, and Treasure*.

With the help and input from many, we now have a logo that visually articulates the theme of Stewardship and being ***Rooted in Christ***. The design encompasses the front of our church which is where we come together as a Parish family to pray and serve others. The words ***Rooted in Christ*** are the grounding of our faith in Jesus, which in turn leads to Stewardship. The roots are how we live our life in Stewardship, enriched by God's grace, using the gifts of **time, talent** and **treasure** by ***praying, serving*** and ***giving*** of these gifts given to us by God.

Fr. Schultz wrote in a newsletter in January 2021 about the topic of Stewardship. It seems fitting as we share our new vision that we bring back his insightful words to refresh us on the topic. *"In my homily last weekend, I spoke about the direction of our parish moving forward... 'We strive to recognize that everything is a gift from God, and we are called to share these gifts. We categorize these gifts in the areas of our **Time, Talent, and Treasure**'."* Our updated vision to Fr.'s statement is that the gifts of ***Time, Talent, and Treasure***, and how we share these, are through ***Praying (time), Serving (talent) and Giving (treasure)***.

Continuing with Fr.'s 2021 newsletter he goes on to say...

*"Stewardship is a way of life with the theme of **Rooted (in Christ)**."*  
Our revised definition of Stewardship adds... Stewardship is a way of

life. It is **Rooted in Christ** using the gifts of **Time, Talent, and Treasure** through **Praying, Serving, and Giving**.

He continued to say... *"It has been wonderful to see the fruit of all of us striving to more generously share our gifts with God and others! To keep this momentum going, a Parish Stewardship Council was formed. This council is composed of parishioners, a few staff members, and our priests. It has been such a blessing to see God working in and through this council! It became clear as we moved forward that it would serve the council and our parish well if we developed a mission statement to guide us. A subcommittee was formed and this is the fruit of their work:*

*Rooted in the Most Holy Eucharist and the other Sacraments, St. Patrick Church of Merna welcomes all to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ through stewardship, by loving and serving others through our God-given gifts."*

Our mission statement continues to guide the Stewardship Council (names below) as they continually strive to meet the needs of our Parish and bring us closer to Jesus through Stewardship. Feel free to reach out to any member with questions as we continue moving forward.