

Weekly Bulletin

March 8, 2026 – 3rd Sunday of Lent

ST JOSEPH, LYNDEN AND ST PETER, DEMING

Front office – info@stjoseph-stpeter.org – 360 354 2334

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.

-Matthew 28:19-20

Part of the Whatcom Catholic Churches: For comprehensive information regarding all Catholic Churches in Whatcom County, Family #2, including priest schedules, Mass times and locations, please visit whatcomcatholic.org.

Scheduling a priest appointment – 253-356-5522 / priests@whatcomcatholic.org

Emergency requesting a priest – 360-773-1388

Vatican News

Message of Pope Leo XIV for Lent 2026

Please read Pope Leo XIV's Message for Lent on the official Vatican Website.

www.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html

Archdiocesan News

Please read the attached letter from Archbishop Most Rev. Paul D. Etienne

Parish News

Pastor's Note

Pastors Praying for Pastors

I was blessed this week to attend a "Pastors Praying for Pastors" event hosted by the Firs, which one of the pastors at Hillcrest Church had invited me to. It was wonderful! Some praise and worship together, some praying for each other in small groups, and finally lunch.

This was very much an event for and by Evangelical pastors. But I did a lot of hanging out with those folks in college (at one point, I was the Catholic president of the mostly Protestant Christian Club on campus), and the Catholic Charismatic Movement that I spent time with used a lot of Evangelical prayer elements, so I was very comfortable. And *boy* do Evangelicals know how to pray!

It was really wonderful to have a morning to pray with fellow Christians and to be prayed over by fellow pastors. I would also recommend looking for experiences like this yourselves – attend another Christian church (key: go to Catholic Mass on Saturday night), pray with other Christians, and see where the Spirit leads. It is important for us to pray together so that, someday, we might finally heal our divisions.

Listening Session Kudos

In related news, about a month ago I attended a gathering in Federal Way with the Archbishop and all of the Pastors of the Archdiocese. We spent the first day checking in and the second session receiving training on the next phase of Partners in the Gospel.

I have my own internal and staff take aways from that event, but the one I want to hand on to you is a serious compliment. During the Partners segment, many Pastors reported their disappointment and frustration with how few parishioners had attending their listening sessions. I had to raise my hand and say that our experience in Whatcom County was not like that at all! Something like 1-in-6 parishioners attending our last round of listening sessions. That might not sound like a lot, but the Global Synodal Process only saw a 1 – 2 % participation rate, so 17% participation is HUGE. Well done, Whatcom County!

Assumption Confession “Crisis”

We are having something of a confession crisis at Assumption on Saturdays. The priests show up at 3:00 pm, and hear confessions until 4:45, but about half the time we are not able to get through everybody in line. In addition, many people are waiting upwards of an hour to have their confession heard. We will likely need to move to a 2:30 pm start time soon.

This is a good problem to have! But we are reaching the point where it is not possible for one priest to have the stamina necessary to get through all of the confessions at Assumption before his 5:00 pm Mass. In fact, I once had one fill-in priest ask if he could be spared that experience and say Mass at a different church.

I am not yet sure what to do about this. We may do some training on how to make a “good” (in this context, “efficient”) confession – focusing on number and kind and excluding contextual stories. I am always open to adding confession times, but we are finding that the Friday confessions on first Fridays and throughout Lent do not have the same capacity problem. Ideally, I would have two priests at Assumption on Saturdays, but the logistics make that challenging.

At this point, I just want you to know that I am aware. If the Lord gives you a solution, let me know. Otherwise, I’ll prepare a survey, a whitepaper, and some town halls at some point.



More information at: <https://www.whatcomcatholic.org/about-the-process>

Or follow us on Facebook: “Whatcom Catholic Fellowship”

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61586701240099>

Evangelization Metric

The Evangelization Metric indicates what is being done to grow the church at each location in our parish family. Prior to the Listening Sessions in April this information will be shared with you. The Evangelization metrics data points are:

Total confirmations and first communions: This captures the total number of people confirmed or who received first communion each year across the parish family. These sacraments reflect the rate that parishioners “continue through” the faith journey beyond their baptism.

Total faith formation participants: This is a count of participants in faith formation as reported in the Parish Annual Report. Faith formation is the building block for evangelization.

Total participants in OCIA/OCIA adapted for children (previously RCIA): This is a count of participants in

OCIA programs across the parish family as reported in the Parish Annual Report. OCIA participation reflects commitment to the Church through sacraments of initiation.

School enrollment: This identifies the school's ability to gain and retain students. The general goal is for Catholic K-8 schools to have enrollment of 200 students or more.

Staff Viability Metrics

While the parish maintains some full-time positions, most of the staff are on a part-time schedule. The Staff metrics data points are:

Staff count: This is total payroll staff across the parish family. While some of this work can be accomplished by volunteers, key roles are best accomplished by paid staff to sustain viability. Reviewing current staff can determine whether the staff structure needs revision.

Administrative staff: Parish families require significant administrative work, finance, facilities, HR and compliance. These roles enable pastors to focus on pastoral needs.

Faith formation staff: Evangelization is dependent on good formation of the faithful. Formation needs strong leadership to be effective, and parish families should invest in staff to support this work and all the volunteers involved in making these programs happen.

Facilities staff: One of the pressing issues for the Catholic Church in Western Washington is significant deferred maintenance. Hiring qualified staff to perform and oversee maintenance of facilities is imperative.

Youth Adoration St Joseph Ferndale

When: Wednesday's 4:30 -6:00 pm

Where: St Joseph, Ferndale Hall and church

Adoration for youths' grade 6-12 and their parents will be open on Wednesdays in the St Joseph sanctuary in Ferndale beginning this week March 4th from 4:30-6pm. We are offering this as a quiet time for teens who are seeking a deeper relationship with Jesus to have time in front of the blessed sacrament. Pizza and drinks will be made available in the parish hall during this time to accommodate teens who are coming from school activities, sports practices or staying for faith formation. Please no children under the age of 6th grade. There will be Catholic faith inquiry and bible study opportunities available for high school aged students from 6pm-7:30pm. Teens do not need to be Catholic to attend adoration or faith formation meetings. This time is open to all teens in our larger Ferndale, Bellingham, Blaine and Lynden area. We are offering this time and space for those who want to grow in their relationship to Jesus, learn about the Catholic faith and/or bring their friends to share and explore the Catholic faith.

Spanish Women's Retreat

When: Sunday, March 8 - 9am to 1pm

Where: Assumption School Library

Hosted by: MFCC (Movimiento Familiar Católico Cristiano)

Prepares

Thank You Parish Family once again for your support in reaching out to Families in our Community who need a little help through our PREPARES group. Our Loving St. Valentine's themed Giveaway on the 3rd Friday of February resulted in serving:

54 Families with

52 bags of groceries

90 pkgs of diapers

54 " " wipes

604 Boutique items and 1 Party-In-A-Pan from the monthly Birthday drawing. These Families were primarily from Lynden, but 6 zip codes were represented! 6 of them were first timers, 8 indicated new pregnancies since last time they came, and 4 new babies. 8 are requesting Companions! We can use more Volunteers. Especially those who speak b o t h Spanish and English and will take the full training to become Companions to Families who would just like a friendly someone to call or share some time with once a month. We also have need for 4 people who can spare a couple hours handing out food once every other month or so. Miracle Food Network has asked us to pick up food from them in Ferndale and distribute it from our location an additional day a month. This would also require someone with pigs or chickens to pick up from our Giving Garage any leftovers as well. The day would be negotiable depending on the Volunteers. Please consider these additional opportunities for Lenten sharing and call Pam Ames with any questions or to Volunteer, 360)510-2334

Wills & Estate Planning Seminar

When: Tuesday, April 7, 10-11:15am

Where: St Mary Parish, Father Auer Center, Room 5, 4001 Saint Mary's Dr, Anacortes

St. Mary Church will be hosting a Wills & Estate Planning Seminar on Tuesday, April 7th from 10:00–11:15 a.m.

We are pleased to extend this invitation to all parishioners throughout the Skagit, Island and Whatcom Counties. This seminar is a wonderful opportunity for individuals and families to learn more about the importance of having a will, planning their estate, and ensuring their wishes are clearly documented.

Adult Faith Formation Series

When: Mondays, beginning March 16 at 9:15 am.

Where: Sacred Heart Library in the Parish Hall

Join us for a special seven-week video study, "Mysteries of the Rosary: The Joyful Mysteries." Host Mark Hartfiel will lead us on a spiritual journey to the Holy Land walking the places where these mysteries occurred. Come deepen your faith! No registration required. Refreshments will be provided as we gather in fellowship. We look forward to seeing you there!

Lenten News

St Joseph, Lynden Lenten Fridays: Confessions, Stations of the Cross English & Bilingual and Soup Supper

During the **Fridays of Lent**, the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** will be available beginning at **6:00 p.m.** during the **Bilingual Stations of the Cross**. Stations are also available every Friday after 9 am Mass. All are welcome to participate.

St Joseph Lenten Reconciliation

Friday, March 13, March 20, March 27

St Peter, Deming.

Soup Supper at 6:00 pm and Stations of the Cross at 7:00 pm

St Peter Lenten Reconciliation

Wednesday, March 25

Holy Week Schedule

St Joseph, Lynden

- April 2, Holy Thursday, 7 pm - Bilingual

- April 3, Good Friday Confession, 6-7pm
- April 3, Good Friday Service, 7pm - Bilingual
- April 4, Easter Vigil, 8pm
- April 5, Easter Sunday, 11 am

St Peter, Deming

- April 5, Easter Sunday, 8:30 am

For the full Holy Week schedule in our parish family, please see whatcomcatholic.org.

Grief Support

LAMENTATION: An Eight Week Journey Mourning and grief come in waves, sometimes like a tsunami and at other times like a gentle yet persistent rain. And grief has its own timeline: whether we have lost someone in the past year or twenty years ago at times, we want support for our healing journey. God and our Roman Catholic Faith call us to community at times of joy and celebration and in times of questioning, searching, and, yes, in times of grief and loss. Beginning on Saturday, April 11, 2026, Assumption will be the location for an eight-week Grief Ministry Program: LAMENTATION. It will be from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm in the Teacher's Lounge Room. LAMENTATION, written by Deacon Dale Pollard, offers a journey of spiritual insight and hope, giving those who are mourning an invitation to experience God's love, care, and transformation. Deacon Dale will lead this series with the assistance of his Grief Ministry Team which includes Clarence Bob, David Strutz, Rita Clare Hall, and Dr. Kathy Ernst. LAMENTATION is open to any Whatcom Catholic parishioner who has experienced the loss of a loved one. Please contact Dr. Kathy at kathy@whatcomcatholic.org or 253-356-5523

School News

Employment Opportunity - Preschool

Assumption Catholic School is seeking a preschool teacher beginning this spring. The position will start March 18th, 2026, or until filled and last until the end of the current school year. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply. For more information and to apply, go to the school website

Growing Great Kids 26th Auction & Gala Saturday March 7th

We are sold out! Thank you to all that have registered and are coming to the dinner and "Live" auction. We are truly blessed to have such a wonderful community of support in Whatcom County. Please pray now for a successful night to help the kids and teachers keep moving into the future.

For last-minute tickets to the silent auction: contact Angie King in the school office at 360-733-6133.

Strong Starts at Assumption!

Providing your child with a quality Catholic education is one of the greatest gifts you could ever give them. Assumption Catholic School has some space available in select classes, particularly in our rising second grade, and we would love to welcome your family into our community.

If you have ever thought about learning more, now is the time! We invite you to visit our website (school.assumption.org) or call the school for a no-obligation tour (360-733-6133). Some tuition assistance is still available, and we are happy to answer your questions. Please email Dayna Dennis (ddennis@assumption.school) to learn more!

Affiliated Organizations

Worldwide Marriage Encounter

When: April 24-26, 2026

Where: Hamton Inn, Everett, WA

April 24th - 26, 2026, May the love of God heal and strengthen our marital bonds so we can live in Love and experience Joy. The next Worldwide Marriage Experience (WWME) will be at the Hampton Inn in Everett, WA on April 24-26, 2026. Apply at www.wwme.org: tap on APPLY, scroll down to April, click on Everett and fill in your information. For more info. Leave a message at 206-772-2344.

WSSC: Depolarizing Within: In-Person Workshop

When: Saturday, March 21, 9am-noon

Where: Archbishop Brunett Retreat Center, 4700 SW, Dash Point Rd, Federal Way, WA, 98023

The *Depolarizing Within: In-Person Workshop* teaches participants to look at their own attitudes towards the political “other” to develop strategies for engaging in politics without demonizing, and to constructively intervene in conversations with like-minded peers when those conversations stereotype or demonize the other side. Mass will follow the workshop at Noon.

CRS – Rice Bowl -Nourishing Futures in Guatemala

In Guatemala, nutrition classes and savings programs give mothers and families better opportunities to improve their health, nutrition and financial well-being. Visit crsricebowl.org/week-3 to read how your support of CRS Rice Bowl is helping the Guatemala community thrive.

Community News

Bellingham St. Patrick’s Day Parade

On March 15th, the City of Bellingham will have a St. Patrick’s Day Parade. The lineup for participants begins at 11 AM, with the parade starting at noon.

The parade routes start on Cornwall Avenue in front of Bellingham High School and end at the intersection of Cornwall Ave. and Chestnut Street.

Please be aware that some roads may be closed, and street parking could be limited due to the event. Expect potential traffic delays due to the festivities.

Upcoming Events

- **Sunday, March 8, 3rd Sunday of Lent**
- St Peter – 8:00 am to 8:15am Confession
- St Peter – 8:30 am Mass
- St Joseph – 11 am Mass – **Anne & Andrea Daquino – Special intention**
- St Joseph – 12:30pm – 2pm OCIA classes
- St Joseph– 5pm Spanish Rosary
- St Joseph – 7pm-9pm Youth Group

Monday, March 9

- St Peter – 9am Mass

Tuesday, March 10

- St Joseph – 9-11am Morning prayer group

Wednesday, March 11

- St Joseph– 5pm Confession
- St Joseph – 6pm Spanish Mass
- St Joseph – 6:30pm-7:30pm Faith Formation Classes
- St Peter – 6pm Soup Supper
- St Peter – 7pm Stations of the Cross

Thursday, March 12

- St Joseph –11:30am Patriotic Rosary
- St Joseph – 6:30pm-7:30pm Faith Formation Classes
- St Joseph – 6pm-7:30pm – Lent Bible Study – St Therese Room
- St Peter – 3pm-5pm Social Action

Friday, March 13

- St Joseph – 9am Mass
- St Joseph – Stations of the Cross after 9am Mass
- St Joseph – 2pm Divine Mercy Chaplet
- St Joseph- 6pm bilingual Stations of the Cross – Soup supper

Saturday March 14

- St Joseph -11 am Little Giants
- St Joseph - 4pm Confessions
- St Joseph – 5pm Mass – Michael McCormick - RIP
- St Joseph – 6pm Spanish Rosary
- St Joseph – 7pm Spanish Mass – Eufracia Sanchez Borja - RIP

Sunday, March 15, 4th Sunday of Lent

- St Peter – 8:00 am to 8:15am Confession
- St Peter – 8:30 am Mass
- St Joseph – 11 am Mass
- St Joseph – 12:30pm – 2pm OCIA classes
- St Joseph– 5pm Spanish Rosary
- St Joseph – 7pm-9pm Youth Group



March 3, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Yesterday, an appellate court issued its ruling on the case regarding the state Attorney General's subpoena of records under the Charitable Trust Act. I want to take this opportunity to reiterate our original statements about this subpoena and make clear to everyone our position.

We share the same goals as the Attorney General: to prevent abuse and pursue healing for victims. As a way to continue healing for our Church and for victim survivors, we want to give a transparent accounting of the history without jeopardizing the privacy of victim survivors.

We are pleased to see that the court agrees that the subpoena from the Attorney General is indeed overly broad. For context, the original subpoena requested every receipt from all our parishes and schools from January 1, 1940, to the present. We believe this broad request would take months of effort to produce irrelevant documents and waste millions of dollars for us and for taxpayers. The court also appropriately recognized that the Attorney General's subpoena as written "would unconstitutionally infringe the Archdiocese's religious protections."

We remain, as we have from the beginning, open to working with the Attorney General's team to find a more balanced set of records to share – along with a guarantee for the privacy of victim survivors as we do not want the state's investigation to re-traumatize them in any way.

As I did with the former Attorney General, I invite our new Attorney General to meet and discuss how we can best partner to achieve our shared goals. As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul D. Etienne".

Most Rev. Paul D. Etienne, DD, STL
Archbishop of Seattle

