

Weekly Bulletin

March 15, 2026 – 4th Sunday of Lent

ST JOSEPH, LYNDEN AND ST PETER, DEMING

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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

Disability Inclusion Mass & Social

When: May 9, 2026

Mass: 11 am- St James Cathedral, Seattle

Social: 12pm: St James Cathedral Hall – 907 Columbia St, Seattle

We invite you to a celebration of diversity in our Catholic faith community at our annual Disability Inclusion Mass and Dance. Any question please contact Miguel Smith at Miguel.smith@seattlearch.org

Parish News

Pastor's Note

School Auction

Thank you to everyone who organized and attended the Assumption Catholic School auction last Saturday. It takes a huge team to pull off something like that, and it would not have been successful had not a whole slew of generous people from all of our county churches come out in support. Thank you!

Two Corrections

I would like to correct/comment on two things, based on feedback about two recent Pastor's Notes.

Regarding Christian vs. Muslim Immigration (Note): My point was that we are having a far easier time than Europe with our immigration because most of our immigrants are Western and Christian, whereas most of Europe's immigrants are non-Western and non-Christian. And I expressed a preference for Latin American immigrants because they share so many of our values. I also made a note about how opposition to Latin

American immigration can sometimes look a lot like the opposition to Italian and Irish immigration, which was explicitly anti-Catholic.

The feedback and counterpoint was that my hesitancy to favor Muslim immigrants is exactly the same in structure and reasoning as the argument against Catholic immigrants. That is, in both cases we have an internal list of what American values are, and we make an argument that a certain class of people will struggle (and may fail) to adopt those necessary American values. In a previous generation, those values were necessarily *Protestant*, in my commentary they were necessarily *Christian* and/or *Western*, but in both cases we are drawing an arbitrary line of exclusion.

My response is that I agree with the critique. I am not arguing that we should *exclude* all immigrants who do not share a specific set of values, but I am arguing that it is easier for us to absorb larger numbers of immigrants who share our values, so insofar as we have quotas, those quotas should be larger for Latin American countries than for non-Christian countries. However, the counterpoint still stands – I have decided that American values are inherently *Christian* values, and my logic is no better than those who would further narrow that claim to *Protestant* values. I cannot escape this critique.

My only argument in response is that, for a nation to be a nation, it needs a shared identity on which its unity is based. And *democratic* nations will set their shared identity *democratically*. Because I believe that Jesus is the savior of the world and that that his model of life is the sole and perfect model of human flourishing, I think it is best for the world and for our nation that it should act based on Christian modes of thought, even while we respect individual citizens' rights to free exercise of religion. And insofar as I have any power as an American citizen to affect our national identity, including in advocating for certain immigration policies over others, I am going to advocate for policies that help us to be more Christian.

Others will disagree with me and draw the line in different places. Some will still draw the line around *Protestant* Christianity. Others will say that religion should have no part at all in our national identity (though, I would counter, morality has to come from *somewhere*, and militantly atheistic countries do not have the best moral track record). This line-drawing is what James Davison Hunter calls “boundary work” in his book “Democracy and Solidarity” ([link](#)). If you want to read American history through the lens of constantly redrawing these lines, I **highly** recommend this book.

Regarding attending Protestant Churches (Note): I was very rushed in writing my Pastor's Note last week and should have provided more nuance in my ebullient recommendation to hang out with Evangelical Christians and attend their churches. I was rightly called out on this.

First, we should always ground ourselves in the teachings of the Church, and the lodestar on the topic of relations between Christians is Pope St. John Paul II's 1995 encyclical [Ut Unum Sint](#). Anything I say that diverges from this document ought to be ignored.

Second, the feedback that I received was that it is imprudent to encourage Catholics to attend Evangelical churches when it is an open secret that one of the largest identifiable groups in Evangelical churches is fallen away Catholics. Many Catholics who are struggling in their faith, and especially Catholics who do not understand the profoundly divine nature of the Eucharist, find the warmth and energy of Evangelical churches to be more fulfilling. By giving a full-throated encouragement to attend these churches, I may very well be giving someone the push that will ultimately result in their leaving the Catholic faith.

I agree with this point and it is well-received. In agreeing, it is not that I would want to “gatekeep” other churches or hide them from our parishioners out of jealousy (which begins to look very cult-like). It is instead the same principle that parents use with children – I want to make sure people are well formed in the values that I believe are *true* before exposing them to values or experiences that I think are *flawed*. In this case, I have an obligation

to make sure my parishioners are well-formed in Catholic doctrine, history, and prayer practices before pushing them into environments where Catholic beliefs might be challenged or opposed.

So allow me to modify my point – if you are struggling in your faith, or if you feel like you have little grounding in the doctrinal arguments for Catholicism vis-a-vis Protestantism, I would encourage you to double down on the Catholic faith, to participate in [“Catechism in a Year”](#), and to join a Catholic small group. The best thing you can do for your soul is to feel solid in your faith.

However, if you are well-formed in your faith, as I was when I started hanging out with and praying with the Protestants at my college, then growing relationships amongst Christians is essential and I would still encourage you to do it. I think it would be silly to attend a Protestant church alone (which is what my hastily written column implied), but I think it is hugely important to be willing to attend church with a Protestant friend, especially if they are willing to return the favor and attend Mass with you. What we are looking for is *relationships in Christ* with other Christians, and if you are solid enough in your Catholic faith, then the next step might be to develop some of those relationships.

I will end by quoting Paragraph 22 of *Ut Unum Sint*:

Along the ecumenical path to unity, pride of place certainly belongs to *common prayer*, the prayerful union of those who gather together around Christ himself. If Christians, despite their divisions, can grow ever more united in common prayer around Christ, they will grow in the awareness of how little divides them in comparison to what unites them. If they meet more often and more regularly before Christ in prayer, they will be able to gain the courage to face all the painful human reality of their divisions, and they will find themselves together once more in that community of the Church which Christ constantly builds up in the Holy Spirit, in spite of all weaknesses and human limitations.



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>

Opportunities & Challenges Listening Sessions

Register Online English: [click here](#)

Capability to Maintain Buildings Metrics

The 4th Viability Metric assesses our Capability to Maintain Buildings throughout Whatcom County.

The following data points will be included:

- **Number of buildings and their condition status:** The Archdiocese of Seattle conducted facility assessments in 2024 and classified each structure with a color coding. Black status (facility with at least two critical structures that need addressing) Red status (facility with at least one critical structure that needs addressing) Yellow status (repairs needed but not in critical condition) Green (no major needs at this time).
- **Insured value of buildings:** this provides some sense of the value of the buildings. It also reflects an approximate replacement cost of each property.

• **Total maintenance spending to insured value:** This measures total dollars spent annually on maintaining buildings and related systems compared to insured value. A ratio of at least 0.64% represents a parish family that budgeted adequate funds to maintain the property and should be the goal for this metric. For instance, if a parish family has \$10,000,000 in total building insured value, they should be spending at least $(\$10,000,000 + 0.0064)$ \$64,000 on maintenance annually.

• **Ratio of PRF to insured value:** This is the ratio of PRF savings (parish revolving fund) for the parish family to the insured value of the buildings. A low ratio of PRF savings to insured value is indicative of a lack of ability to cover the building maintenance expenses needed. The goal is for the PRF balance to be more than 6% of the value of the insured buildings. For instance, if a parish family has \$10,000,000 in total building insured value, they should have at least $(\$10,000,000 * 0.06)$ \$600,000 in their PRF savings account.

	Year Church Built	2024 Status	Insured Value	Annual Maint. Benchmarking	Avg Annual Repair and Maint Exp	Repair and Maint Spent to Benchmark	Diocese Recommended Reserve	Reserve Balance	6% Reserve Surplus/ (Shortfall)	Cost of Known Projects
Parish Family Total			\$ 61,644,756	\$ 394,526	\$ 196,820	\$ (197,706)	\$ 3,698,685	\$2,085,621	\$ (1,613,064)	\$ -
Assumption Church	1921	Black	\$ 34,336,303	\$ 219,752	\$ 42,430	\$ (177,322)	\$ 2,060,178	\$ 878,114	\$ (1,182,064)	
Assumption School										
Sacred Heart	1912	Red	\$ 7,432,156	\$ 47,566	\$ 30,521	\$ (17,045)	\$ 445,929	\$ 174,907	\$ (271,023)	
St Peter	1975	Green	\$ 2,567,736	\$ 16,434	\$ 20,038	\$ 3,605	\$ 154,064	\$ 288,871	\$ 134,807	
St Joseph Lynden	1962	Red	\$ 5,327,173	\$ 34,094	\$ 63,931	\$ 29,837	\$ 319,630	\$ 269,390	\$ (50,240)	
St Anne	1905	Black	\$ 1,841,513	\$ 11,786	\$ 12,081	\$ 295	\$ 110,491	\$ 170,807	\$ 60,317	
St Joseph Ferndale	1967	Red	\$ 8,567,510	\$ 54,832	\$ 20,026	\$ (34,806)	\$ 514,051	\$ 256,703	\$ (257,348)	
St Joachim	1861	n/a	\$ 1,572,366	\$ 10,063	\$ 7,793	\$ (2,270)	\$ 94,342	\$ 46,829	\$ (47,513)	

*FY: Fiscal Year July 1 - June 30

*Assumption School Facility data is still being developed as is a current project list for each location.

The Seattle Archdiocese’s 2024 evaluation of Whatcom County Catholic church facilities, as summarized in the table above, indicates that most locations fall short of recommended benchmarks for annual maintenance spending and reserve balances. **(It should be noted that in the intervening months since 2024 projects have been completed that could improve the original assessment of buildings.)**

COFFEE HOUR - St Joseph, Lynden

Many thanks to everyone who has already volunteered to host coffee!!

There is a new signup sheet to host coffee hour in the kitchen downstairs. It’s on the bulletin board by the freezer. You can also call Marilyn Wyss at 360-961-1168 to sign up. The sign-up sheet goes from April to December of this year. If you have never hosted the hour, there are people who will be happy to either share it with you or to walk you through the process and show you where everything is.

Just a reminder that donuts are delivered each Sunday and all the supplies are provided by the church. All you have to do is come in 45 minutes before Mass, make sure tables and chairs are set up, make the coffee, put out cream & sugar cups, napkins, or any other supplies. Then during coffee hour make sure that juice is poured and coffee is served.

For any questions or suggestions please call Marilyn Wyss at 360-961-1168.

NO COFFEE HOUR EASTER SUNDAY (April 5)

Knights of Columbus Fish Fry- Sacred Heart, Bellingham

When March 20th, 6:30pm

Where: Sacred Heart, Bellingham

The Knights of Columbus are hosting a Salmon & Cod Dinner at Sacred Heart on Friday, March 20th at 6:30 pm after Stations of the Cross and Confession. Everyone is invited.

Knights of Columbus Fish Fry – St Peter

When March 27th, 6:00 pm

Where: St Peter, Deming

The Knights of Columbus will be hosting a salmon dinner followed by the Stations of the Cross on Friday, March 27th. Most of the proceeds will go to seminarian formation. The dinner will begin at 6PM and the Stations at 7. Tickets to the dinner will be sold after Mass.

Easter egg hunt

When: Sunday April 5th, after 10 am Mass

Where: Assumption Church, Bellingham

An Easter egg hunt will take place after the 10am Mass at Assumption on Sunday April 5th. We ask that you hold off on participating in the hunt until Mass has ended and bring your own baskets or bags to collect eggs in. There will be a collection box labeled "Easter Egg Recycling" placed near the Hope House collection bin in the gathering space and next to the office at Assumption School after Easter Sunday to recycle any plastic eggs for next year.

Faith Alive with Fr. Tyler

When: Saturday March 28th | 7 - 8 pm

Where: Sacred Heart Church, Bellingham

Everyone is invited to a special evening of **Faith Alive** with Fr. Tyler. He'll be speaking on the beauty and power of **Marriage**—a perfect chance to deepen your faith and appreciation for this sacrament. Whether you are married, engaged, or just looking to strengthen your understanding, this is for you. Invite a friend.

Shadow Stations of the Cross

The youth of St. Anne & St. Joseph in Ferndale invite you to experience a powerful presentation of the Stations of the Cross. Using shadows, the youth portray the Passion of Jesus in a moving and memorable way.

Two opportunities to attend:

- Friday, March 20th at 7:00 PM – St. Joseph Church, Ferndale
- Friday, March 27th at 6:00 PM – Church of the Assumption Gym

Thank you for supporting our youth.

St Joseph Lenten Reconciliation

Friday, March 20th and March 27th

At 6 pm during station of the Cross

St Peter Lenten Reconciliation

Wednesday, March 25th

At 7 pm during stations of the cross

Holy Week Schedule

St Joseph, Lynden

- April 2nd, Holy Thursday, 7 pm - Bilingual
- April 3rd, Good Friday Confession, 6-7pm
- April 3rd, Good Friday Service, 7pm - Bilingual
- April 4th, Easter Vigil, 8pm
- April 5th, Easter Sunday, 11 am

St Peter, Deming

- April 5th, Easter Sunday, 8:30 am

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

Safety and Security at Saint Joseph

As announced recently at the 11 am weekly Mass, St Joseph's Lynden is forming a Safety and Security Team for the Masses and activities at the church and at church functions. The committee will follow the direction set by Whatcom Catholic and the Assumption Church, which has done considerable work on safety and security. St Joseph's safety and security team will create safety procedures for St Joseph Church, which will be published at a future date. The team will work alongside the ushers at each Mass. If you would like to be on the safety committee, please get in touch with Jim Obermayer at 415 521 4278 or jobermayer41@comcast.net.

St Joseph Choir – Volunteers needed

We are looking to welcome new members. All voices are needed and welcomed! Whether you have experience in a school or other parish choir, sing in the shower or in the car, or have been feeling a gentle nudge from the Holy Spirit to offer your voice in service to Our Heavenly Father, we invite you to consider joining us! No prior experience is required. God works with each of us and does not simply call a select few to sing. In Saint Paul's letter to the Colossians, he urges the faithful to sing 'psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.' Brothers and sisters, your voice matters! If you'd like more information or would like to "trial" the choir and see how the Holy Spirit may work through you. Please call the parish office if you would like to join our choir or have any questions.

Families of Incarcerated

In April a prison ministry was launched out of Sacred Heart Parish in Lacey, and it's reach extends throughout the Archdiocese of Seattle. We understand that having a loved one who is incarcerated can be a difficult and lonely journey. You are not alone. The Families of Incarcerated ministry is here to offer you compassion, community, and support as you navigate this challenging time.

Please consider contacting us by visiting our website to connect with our welcoming community where you'll find understanding hearts and shared experiences. Scan here to open our website!



Year to Date Giving Summary through February

	24-25 YTD	25-26 YTD	% Change
Assumption	722,169.91	732,721.32	1%

Sacred Heart	442,588.76	435,695.59	-2%
St. Joseph - Ferndale	189,238.41	219,652.85	16%
St. Anne	105,950.16	111,895.12	6%
St. Joachim	40,959.99	46,447.82	13%
St. Joseph - Lynden	205,333.67	198,182.32	-3%
St. Peter	91,989.94	83,693.77	-9%

Extra Collections Remitted During February

CCS PREPARES Appeal	1,992.05
Rice Bowl	570.88
Church in Latin America	405.00
Catholic Relief Services	391.28
World Mission Sunday	200.00
Priest Pension	170.00
NW Catholic	170.00
Church in Central Europe	110.00
Holy Land	83.00
CCS Appeal for the Poor	50.00
Peter's Pence	20.00
Black & Indian Missions	20.00

School News

Auction Success

Thank you for your support of the 26th Annual Growing Great Kids Auction & Gala! We're delighted to report that this year's auction on March 7th was an amazing success. The gross proceeds from the evening came in at an incredible \$256,000. Of this total raised, we are thrilled that \$47,000 went to our "Fund the Need" initiative for updating our security systems. We want to give our deepest thanks to our auctioneer, Jeff Ziels, for his great energy and fun spirit. We know we could not have accomplished this without the generosity and support of our wonderful sponsors, donors, parish community, parents, and volunteers. We hope that you can join us again next year or make next year your year to attend for the first time.

With deep appreciation, Auction Chairs Jessica Rosetta and Christy Karowski

No School Friday: March 13th

Since we do not have school this Friday, please note that the school Mass will be on Thursday, March 12th at 8:15am. Our fourth-grade class will be the greeters and leaders at this Mass. All are welcome to attend with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to immediately follow.

ACS families Host Soup Supper

On Friday, March 13th, Assumption School students and families will host the soup supper for our parish community. Come and enjoy meeting families from the school with wonderful soups and bread after the Stations of the Cross.

In case you missed it

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

Upcoming Events

- **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 – **Nyles Varner RIP**
- St Joseph – 12:30pm – 2pm OCIA classes
- St Joseph – 5pm Spanish Rosary
- St Joseph – 7pm-9pm Youth Group

Monday, March 16

- St Peter – 9am Mass

Tuesday, March 17

- St Joseph – 9-11am Morning prayer group

Wednesday, March 18

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

Thursday, March 19

- 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 20

- St Joseph – 9am Mass – Valerie Lang - SI
- 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
- St Joseph – 6pm Lenten Confessions

Saturday March 21

- St Joseph -11 am Little Giants
- St Joseph - 4pm Confessions
- St Joseph – 5pm Mass – Courage & Peace for all women suffering
- St Joseph – 6pm Spanish Rosary
- St Joseph – 7pm Spanish Mass – Leonarda Zavala Suarez – RIP
- St Joseph – 8pm – 10am – Nocturnal Adoration

Sunday, March 22, 5th 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

