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homes of area parishioners. At these monthly movie nights we would watch classic Catholic movies like 'A Man For All Seasons', 'Romero', 'The Sound of Music', among some of the more modern ones on the lives of the saints. These opportunities, along with a revamped Faith Formation program this year, are just some of the new things happening in our parishes.

There will also be some new ministries that you will be invited to look into. We are putting together a team of Eucharistic ministers who assist with distributing Holy Communion to residents at the nursing home who are unable to attend the weekly Tuesday and Saturday Masses in person.

I want to make a renewed push to invite parishioners to join our Parish Life Committee. This group has been vital to bringing us parish events in the past, like Bingo, our annual parish picnic, and more. This group helps us run more than just the fundraisers, but also the fun-raisers (my personal favorite).

We have been very blessed to have dedicated teams of church cleaners who help keep our church and worship space so tidy and beautiful for Masses each week. This will be a wonderful opportunity to invite more people to be a part of this effort.

And this does not even include the liturgical ministries, helping so many get something new out of the weekend Mass while providing a wonderful opportunity to serve others at the Eucharistic celebration.

One of the things that has become very clear to me during my time here in the One in Faith Area Catholic Community is that churches are like homes, and they

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are like farms. For the most part, they are not going to run without volunteers, without those men and women of all ages who are willing to generously give back to their community and, in the process, be renewed in their giving.

I think about all the ways that helping out in the home shaped my personality and character for the better. The same is true when you help out in your church community, whether it is by being part of the cemetery committee or as a volunteer catechist for our faith formation program. When you participate in parish events, from something as simple as our monthly hospitality weekends to a book club or even a parish picnic, all of these both strengthen our community life and help build up our faith and character unto eternity.

Saint Peter put it simply:

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace." (1 Peter 4:10)

Each of us has received something to give, and no gift offered in love is too small. I hope you will prayerfully consider where God may be inviting you to serve and be served through your Catholic parish community.

Concerning Mass times for the upcoming Christmas season, after consultation with leadership at the individual parishes, the schedule for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Mass is as follows (see next page):

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Church / Date	December 24	December 25
Saint Mary, Melrose	4:00 PM – English 6:30 PM – Spanish	9:00 AM – English
Saint John the Baptist, Meire Grove	7:30 PM	---
Saint Andrew, Greenwald	---	9:00 AM
Saint Michael, Spring Hill	4:00 PM	---

Many thanks to the visiting retired priest who will be helping us on this occasion to make the celebrating of Christmas Mass at each location possible. When the merger decree for our parishes takes effect, according to the guidelines we were given, major feast days like Christmas and Easter would be celebrated at one location with all necessary Masses there to accommodate all participants. For this reason, I cannot guarantee that we will be able to have a Christmas or Easter Mass at all these locations next year, regardless of whether a retired priest is available to assist. I will let you know if this expectation changes. As for between now and Christmas, even if the formal merger decree is announced, this plan of Mass dates and times will not change since it is has been announced here.

Thank you, and God bless you.

Mary, Handmaid of the Lord, pray for us.

In Christ,

Father Mitchell Bechtold

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FATHER MITCHELL’S PASTORAL BULLETIN

Sunday, October 18, 2026

**To the parishioners of the Church of Saint Mary,
serving the communities of Melrose, Meire Grove, Greenwald & Spring Hill
on the church campuses in Melrose & Meire Grove**

The Holy Father’s prayer intention for October: “Let us pray that the mental health ministry be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma and discrimination of persons with mental illnesses.”

Greetings.

We are now a week away from the return of our Stewardship Weekend, October 24 and 25. I can’t promise that it will be as flashy or as entertaining as it was in previous years; Deacon Ernie and the Stewardship Committee brought a creativity and an enthusiasm that is not easily matched. That said, what I hope to bring this year is not only an appeal for what you can do for your church, but also a look at what your church is looking forward to doing for you in the new opportunities and events we have scheduled and are anticipating.

For example, we have the recent additions of our men’s and women’s groups (She Shall Be Called Woman and That Man Is You), which are off to a great start. I am looking forward to adding a weekly Bible study and a book club, beginning Advent 2026, both of which I will help to lead and teach. I expect these to also be available for online, virtual participation for those occasions you want to be there but can’t. During the Lenten season, we are looking forward to hosting a parish mission. And, with the help of host families (this one is kind of a long shot), I was hoping the parish could sponsor a year of Catholic movie nights at the