



Sts. Peter and Paul Ecumenical Catholic Church+USA
808 N. Mason Road
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May 2017 Parish Bulletin

Parish Web Site: www.sspp-eccusa.org

Parish Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Sts-Peter-and-Paul-Ecumenical-Catholic-Church-USA-196106814053967>

National Church Web Site: www.ecc-usa.org

National Church Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/eccusa2001>

CLERGY MASS SCHEDULE

All Mass Times 4:00 PM unless otherwise noted

May 7, 2017: Fourth Sunday of Easter	Fr. Bill
May 14, 2017: Fifth Sunday of Easter <i>Mass Intention: All Mothers of the Parish</i>	Fr. Bill
May 21, 2017: Sixth Sunday of Easter	Fr. Tom
May 28, 2017: Seventh Sunday of Easter	+Fr. Carl

Pastoral Staff:

Pastor: +Fr. Bob Catlett, 314.800.3456, pastor@sspp-eccusa.org

Associate Pastor: Fr. Bill LaGrand, 314.650.9214, associate@sspp-eccusa.org

Presiding Bishop: +Fr. Carl Swaringim, 636.240.7839, domcarl@ecc-usa.org

Prayer Intentions

If you would like us to remember a special intention for you at Mass, please contact one of our priests.

If you or someone you know is in need of spiritual assistance (prayers, Sacrament of the Sick, etc.), please contact one of our priests.

Inquiries regarding the administration of Sacraments or services (Baptisms, First Communion, Marriages, and Funerals) are welcomed.

Sunday Scripture Reflections

Fr. Bill LaGrand, M.A.

May 7, 2017 – 4th Sunday of Easter: Jesus is the true gate for the sheep and us. All of us who enter through him will experience salvation. Remember that Jesus hears the voices of those who cry out to him; he cares for his own.

May 14, 2017 – 5th Sunday of Easter: Sometimes, we do not perceive the presence of Jesus even though he is with us at all times. His presence is made known to us through others: medical personnel, first responders, and friends and neighbors who come to our aid. Sometimes, Jesus' presence is made known through a stranger.

May 21, 2017 – 6th Sunday of Easter: The Holy Spirit is continually at work in our individual lives even though we don't recognize it. The Holy Spirit us among us always working to advance the Gospel message by strengthening believers.

May 25, 2017 – Solemnity of the Ascension (Ascension Thursday): The ascension affords Jesus a way to share his divine life while we are living in a passing world. While it is true that everything in our material world will die and pass on, we can have a share in Christ's divine life on earth through the Holy Spirit. We prepare during this life for eternal life after our physical death.

May 28, 2017 – 7th Sunday of Easter: Jesus returns to the father. The disciples and us are left behind to carry on his work. Jesus prays for the disciples because they belong to God and therefore to Jesus as well. By faith, we have an opportunity to share in the love that exists between Jesus and the Father.

From the Bishop's Desk

+Fr. Carl Swaringim, Ed.D., Presiding Bishop

The Sacrament of Marriage



In the review of the Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Faith Tradition, we have looked at the commonalities and differences between the Ecumenical Catholic Church+USA and other Christian Churches, particularly the Roman Catholic tradition. In regard to the Sacrament of Marriage, there are more commonalities than differences, but there are some significant differences. Let's begin with the commonalties.

Being a church in the Catholic Faith Tradition, our Church teaches that the ideal of Christian Marriage is the image of the relationship of Christ and His Church. St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (5:15) wrote: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Ephesians 5:15*

At its most basic level, marriage is a union between a man and a woman for the purpose of procreation and mutual love and support. In the Catholic Faith Tradition, marriage is considered to be more than a natural institution. Marriage was elevated by Christ Himself, in His participation in the wedding at Cana, to be one of the seven Sacraments. A marriage between two Christians, therefore, has a supernatural element as well as a natural one.

The ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage are the spouses themselves, because the external sign of the Sacrament is not the wedding ceremony, but the marriage contract itself. This does not mean the wedding license that the couple receives, but the vows that each spouse makes to the other. As long as each spouse intends to contract a true marriage, the Sacrament is performed.

The effect of the Sacrament is an increase in sanctifying grace for the spouses, a participation in the divine life of God Himself.

And now the differences: first, our Church does not get involved in the ecclesiastical legalities that some churches use to determine the validity or “sacramentality” of a marriage. Our Church’s presumption is that every marriage is a valid and, if between a Christian man and woman, a Sacramental marriage. “Who are we to judge?”

Our Church Canons (namely, Canon 6, paragraphs 14^o to 15^o) state our core doctrinal understanding on Christian marriage:

14^o We believe in the sanctity of marriage as a lifelong commitment between a man and woman.

15^o We believe that within certain marriages there may be circumstances or conditions that make life within that relationship unbearable or dangerous and thus divorce becomes appropriate or even necessary. Realizing that Jesus is merciful and it is God alone who understands fully the reality of any human decision, the ECC+USA welcomes to all of the sacraments those who have been divorced and/or remarried.

So, while we hold, encourage, and promote the Christian ideal of a life-long commitment of a man and woman in marriage, we live in a world of exceptions and happenings that can lead to divorce. So, like our brothers and sisters in the Orthodox Faith Tradition we welcome divorced persons to all of the Sacraments of the Church and will witness marriages after divorce.

Further, our priests and deacons will witness the wedding of any man and women who comes to us asking for a Christian wedding ceremony. Our Canons direct our clergy to hold two preparatory sessions with the couple to discuss the Sacrament of Marriage as well as potential hazards to the commitment required when making marriage vows.

And, to the delight of many couples, our clergy will witness weddings in almost any setting as long as it is a prayerful Christian ceremony done with respect for the

significance of the Sacrament of Marriage. Among the venues that our parish priests have witnessed marriages are: Sts. Peter and Paul ECC+USA; the Jewell Box in Forest Park; Old Hickory, Whitmore, and Bogey Hills Country Clubs; Missouri Botanical Garden; Conservatory in St. Charles; Graham Chapel at Washington University; Harmonie Church at Innsbrook; Oak Knoll Park; Caroline Vineyard in Washington, MO; 9th Street Abbey; several hotels, many wineries, very many parks and a few parents' back yards. Since 1995, our priests have presided at 83 Christian Weddings at venues in eastern Missouri.

Our mission as a Church is to make the unconditional love of Jesus Christ for humankind present in our lives at all times, especially at key moments of spiritual and physical need.

Providing a Christian Wedding Ceremony to people who have not been able to meet their church's marriage requirements for one reason or another has been one of the significant ways we are fulfilling our mission.

Blessings,
+Fr. Carl

From the Pastor's Desk

+Fr. Bob Catlett, M.Div.

***Happy Mother's Day!** The parish extends its best wishes to all mothers in the parish who will celebrate Mother's Day on Sunday, May 14, 2017. A special blessing will be conferred on all mothers present at mass that day.

Thank You from Charity Donation Recipient: "Dear Bishop Robert, Please extend my sincere gratitude to your congregation for their very generous \$1,000 donation to the St. Charles Coalition Against Human Trafficking. Your donation will allow us to continue the great work we have begun. Gratefully, Sr. Esther Hogan, CPPS, Executive Director.

Birthdays and Anniversaries:

Birthdays:

5/6 – John Williamson
5/14 – Sandra Murdock

Anniversaries:

5/20 – John and Jan Williamson

Blessings to all who will celebrate these occasions!