

The Catholic Communities of Good Shepherd, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary & Sacred Heart of Jesus

Good Shepherd: 513 State Rd., PO Box 295, Rib Lake, WI 54470, 715-427-5259

Our Lady of Perpetual Help: W5409 Whittlesey Ave., PO Box 503, Medford, WI 54451, 715-748-3336

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary: 215 South Washington Ave., PO Box 503, Medford, WI 54451, 715-748-3336

Sacred Heart of Jesus: 322 W. County Hwy. A, Stetsonville, WI 54480, 715-678-2395

November 16, 2021

Dear Church Community Family,

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” (Mt.7:24) The parable of the wise builder speaks to the fundamental truth of our faith, always be grounded in Christ. This coming January 1st the four parishes of the eastern section of Taylor County, Good Shepherd in Rib Lake, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Medford, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Whittlesey, and Sacred Heart in Stetsonville, will be combined together as a clustered community. What this means is that these four parish communities will be connected through the shared leadership of one pastor along with other ministers. Bishop Powers of the Diocese of Superior has appointed Father Jayanna Kanna and myself, Father Patrick McConnell, to serve the spiritual, pastoral, and sacramental needs of your parishes.

As January approaches I am writing you this letter to invite us all to pray for the strength to build our community on Christ. The parish communities that you call home will remain the fundamental Catholic faith community that many have claimed as their faith family. However, with the opportunity of a cluster we will be given the ability to work more closely with four parish communities to grow as one church built on solid rock.

Though many would agree that having one priest for every parish would be a more ideal configuration for the diocese, the current availability of priests has limited the availability of sacraments along with pastoral leadership. With the Bishop’s guidance we have been combined as a cluster to best provide the sacraments for as many as possible with the current availability of priests. We are especially grateful to Father Jayanna who has come from the Diocese of Cuddapah in India to assist our diocese as we face a clergy shortage.

With the combining of four parishes under the sacramental service of two clergy we will need to reconfigure how our sacraments are provided. Much of how we celebrate liturgies from Masses to funerals to reconciliation will remain the same. However, we will need to address the times. With this understanding and the need to address this issue before January 1st: Fr. Jayanna, Deacon Pat Gierl, myself and two delegates from the leadership of each parish met last week Thursday, November 11th, to discuss the shared Mass schedule for our four-parish community. After helpful discussion and collaboration this is the proposed daily Mass and weekend Mass schedule for our four parishes that best accommodates each parish and our clergy.

Good Shepherd – Rib Lake: Tuesday 6:00PM (followed by Adoration & Confession 1st week of the month); Thursday 8:30AM (followed by Adoration & Confession 1st week of the month); Saturday 6:30PM (preceded by Confession 5:45PM-6:15PM); Sunday 9:30AM

Our Lady of Perpetual Help – Whittlesey: Friday 8:30AM (followed by Adoration & Confession); Sunday 7:30AM

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary – Medford: Tuesday 5:15PM (followed by Adoration & Confession); Wednesday 8:30AM (school Mass during the school year); Thursday 8:30AM; Saturday 5:00PM (preceded by Confession 3:45PM-4:45PM); Sunday 8:30AM & 10:30AM

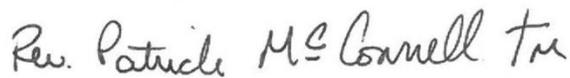
Sacred Heart – Stetsonville: Wednesday 8:30AM (followed by Adoration & Confession); Friday 8:30AM; Saturday 4:00PM (preceded by Confession 3:00PM-3:30PM); Sunday 5:30PM

These Mass times will be reviewed again in a year to see how effective they are in meeting the needs of each parish community and the abilities of the clergy serving our church community.

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1Cor.3:11) Though the process of losing, of change, can be a fearful one I challenge us all to take time to reevaluate our foundation. The faith we share in our own parish communities is founded on Christ and those who have Christ as their foundation they are “like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built” (Lk.6:48) With this truth let us move forward not with fear of what we could lose but what we gain. Know that I will work hard at maintaining much of the current realities in all four parishes with the hope that in the future we will be able to work together in deciding the changes that are necessary for us all to grow in Christ Jesus as unique parish communities and as one church community.

If anyone has any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at 715-218-9812 or speak with your parish council members. Together let us build our church home on the solid foundation of Christ Jesus.

In Christ Through Mary,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Patrick McConnell Tr".

Fr. Patrick McConnell

Pastor – Good Shepherd, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Sacred Heart of Jesus