Care Team Ministry

NEWSLETTER

November 2026

Hello, and welcome to November!

As the autumn landscape settles and the evenings draw us closer together, November invites us to pause and appreciate the steadfast warmth of our parish communities.

Whether we honor the selflessness of our veterans, gather with loved ones in thanksgiving, or simply share a quiet moment of presence, this issue offers reflections and upcoming events designed to keep our spirits connected and supported all season long.

Friendly reminder:

To ensure all team members feel supported and comfortable, we kindly ask that meetings remain focused exclusively on our shared care mission and keep political topics off the agenda. Thank you!

What's inside:

- Local & Community Events (p. 2-3)
- Honoring our Veterans (pp. 4–5)
  - Special Spotlight: Meet a Care Team Member Veteran! (p. 4)
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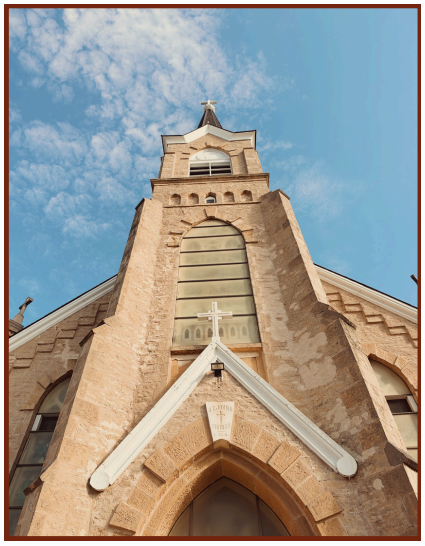
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

St Maximilian Kolbe Care Team

Founded in 2009, this Care Team has served many with compassion and care.

- **St John the Baptist** – Waunakee, WI
- **St Mary of the Lake** – Westport, WI
- **St Michael** – Dane, WI
- **St Patrick** – Lodi, WI

Thank you for your hard work and dedication. We wish you many blessings in the next 17 years and beyond, and look forward to many more years of fellowship together.



Catholic Charities Diocese of Madison
CARE TEAM MINISTRY

OAKWOOD FOUNDATION

Alzheimer's and Dementia Panel

GET YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY THE EXPERTS!



HEIDI NEELEY
is a program manager with the Alzhieimer's Association and a caregiver for her husband who lives with Huntington's Disease



TOM PIETRAS
is parishioner of St. Cletus and a caregiver for his wife of 36 years, Julie, who suffers with advanced Alzheimer's.



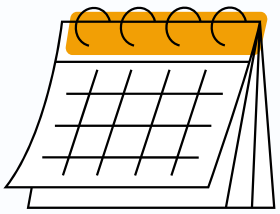
DR. CAROL VAN HULLE
is an associate scientist with the UW Alzheimer's Disease Research Center. She focuses on risk factors and early identification.

Tuesday November 10th 6-7:30 pm
Gathering Space, Our Lady Queen of Peace

To register, email sylvan.bachhuber@qopc.org or call 608-231-4614

Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Brain Health, Memory Support & Educational Gatherings

"Memory Issues & Brain Health" In-Person Badger Talk

- **Date**: Tuesday, November 10, 2026 @ 11:45 AM
- **Location:** 1055 E Mifflin St, Madison, WI (Hosted by Arts for All Wisconsin)
- **Details**: An insightful presentation on dementias, including Alzheimer's, with evidence-based strategies for maintaining brain health. An exceptional educational opportunity for older adults, family caregivers, and parish support teams.
- **Check out the website and see more details here.**

Senior Wellness, Balance & Mobility Activities

Goodman Community Center (Madison) – Senior Fitness

- **Activities**: Ongoing weekly wellness programming for older adults in November. Includes accessible fitness like Easy Yoga Plus (Evjue Room) and low-impact classes for core stability, posture, and fall prevention.
- **View Schedule & Calendar**: Goodman Community Center Activities Calendar

Intergenerational & Family-Friendly Gatherings

Holiday Fantasy in Lights

- **Opening Date:** Saturday, November 14, 2026 – January 3, 2027 (Free Admission)
- **Location:** Olin Park, 1156 Olin-Turville Ct, Madison, WI
- **Details:** A cherished local holiday tradition featuring festive light displays. It offers a relaxing evening drive or stroll for grandparents and grandchildren through twinkling winter wonderland scenes.

Kids In The Rotunda

- **Dates:** Select Saturday mornings in November 2026
- **Location:** Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State St, Madison, WI
- **Details:** Free, engaging live performances for children ages 9 and younger, designed to entertain and educate them. A perfect cultural outing for grandparents and their grandchildren.

VETERANS DAY

Veteran Spotlight: Mary Ann Ihlenfeld, St Thomas Aquinas Care Team

A Journey of Duty and Compassion

Growing up in Boyd, Wisconsin, Mary Ann developed a deep respect for those who serve after seeing the local impact of the draft. Driven by a desire to help others, she earned her nursing diploma in Racine in 1969. She started in a Surgical ICU before working at Santa Rosa Hospital in Texas and later in Okinawa, Japan.

In Okinawa, she served as a nurse with the **United States Air Force** in a small medical intensive unit along the Vietnam War medical evacuation chain—treating malaria, hepatitis, and war injuries while triaging soldiers returning to the U.S.

She credits her sense of duty for helping her navigate this challenging work. Visiting military memorials today, she feels proud and humbled to be among the **260,000 women** who served during the Vietnam War era.

Today, Mary Ann continues her lifelong commitment to care. She keeps her nursing license active so she can volunteer at a free specialty clinic. She also serves as a dedicated member of the St Thomas Aquinas Care Team, bringing her keen awareness, safety mindset, and nurturing spirit.

Reflecting on her journey, Mary Ann often recalls the advice she received long ago from an older gentleman she met—words that have stayed with her ever since: "*Slow down, you'll last longer.*" Alongside that wisdom, she offers her younger self the advice to "Be in the moment," and she advises fellow Care Team members to "*Be open, and meet people where they are*," **reminding everyone that presence is the ultimate gift**.

Thank you, Mary Ann, for your dedicated service and heart for our community!







VETERANS DAY

Honoring Those Who Served

A Foundation of Duty and Sacrifice

For many who answer the call to serve, military life becomes defined by a deep sense of community, purpose, and shared commitment.

Stepping into uniform often brings a complex mix of emotions—feelings that gradually evolve into lasting pride in the sacrifices made and the choice to put others first.

Whether they are stationed overseas or serving closer to home, veterans carry heavy responsibilities under demanding circumstances. From logistics and medical support to leadership and active duty, their dedication comes down to something simple yet profound: a steadfast sense of duty.

Reflecting on Service & Community

Looking back on their time in uniform—and thinking of the millions who have served across generations—many veterans feel deep humility, especially when visiting military memorials today.

For most, service was never just a job. It extended their personal values and faith, creating a lifelong foundation rooted in seeing dignity in every person and stepping up to help wherever it's needed most.

THE EUCHARIST AND OUR THANKSGIVING TRADITIONS



May your Thanksgiving be filled with peace, joy, and abundant blessings!

As November arrives and the weather cools, our culture pauses to reflect on gratitude. For Catholics, this holiday is an ideal opportunity to ground celebrations in faith, tradition, and the Eucharist—a word derived from the Greek *eucharistia*, meaning "*thanksgiving*." Attending Thanksgiving morning Mass unites personal gratitude with Christ's ultimate praise.

Simple ways to bring faith into your family feast:

- **Give thanks for mercy**: Read a psalm of praise like Psalm 100 or Psalm 136.
- **Share graces**: Invite family members to name a specific grace received from God over the past year.
- **Put faith into action**: Show Catholic social teaching by offering companionship or hospitality to neighbors or those spending the holiday alone—mirroring the compassionate service of Care Teams.

Giving thanks is part of our heritage in both good and difficult times, a tradition that predates the 1621 harvest feast (such as the Spanish settlers' Mass in St. Augustine, Florida, on September 8, 1565).

May your home be filled with warmth, love, and gratitude this Thanksgiving.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Autumn & Fall Memories

1. When you look outside and see the trees losing their leaves for the winter, what is one thing about the cozy autumn season that still brings a smile to your face?

2. What was your absolute favorite warm soup, food, or pie to eat on a chilly autumn day when you were growing up?

3. The air feels crisp and cool this time of year. What is a comforting memory you have of wearing a warm sweater or bundling up in a cozy coat?

4. When you notice the days getting shorter and the evenings getting darker earlier, how do you like to make your living space feel warm and bright?

5. Do you remember raking big piles of colorful leaves when you were younger? Did you ever jump into them?

6. What is a small, quiet comfort of autumn—like a warm drink or a soft blanket—that helps you feel safe and peaceful today?

7. Looking around right now, what is one simple thing in front of you that you can be thankful for today?



Thanksgiving Traditions & Gratitude

8. What is your favorite traditional food or dish that always has to be on the table for Thanksgiving dinner?

9. Do you remember helping to peel potatoes, bake pies, or set the table for a big family Thanksgiving meal when you were younger?

10. When you think of a warm Thanksgiving home filled with family and laughter, what sound or smell stands out most in your memory?

11. What is a simple, everyday thing about being together with loved ones that you appreciate the most during the holiday season?

12. As we gather to give thanks, what is one simple blessing or gift from God that you are most grateful for in your life today?

13. When you sit down to share a Thanksgiving meal, do you like to take a quiet moment to thank God for the food and the hands that prepared it?

14. Every good gift comes from above. When you look back at your life, who is someone special you love to thank God for having by your side?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Honoring Service & Sacrifice (Veterans Day-Themed)

15. November is the month we honor our veterans. Do you have a family member, friend, or neighbor who served in the military that you hold in your heart?

16. When you see an American flag waving in the breeze, what thoughts or feelings come to your mind about courage and helping others?

17. Veterans Day reminds us of people who stepped forward to protect and care for others. How does it feel to know that people in your community care deeply about you, too?

18. Many brave men and women served far away from home. What is a place you remember visiting or a place that always felt like a safe "home" to you?

19. Serving others takes a strong and generous heart. Who is someone who showed great kindness to you or helped you when you were younger?

20. When you hear patriotic music or see a military parade or memorial, what memories of community and country come to mind?

21. As we honor those who served and look toward the winter ahead, what is a gentle prayer or hope you are holding in your heart for our country and your neighbors?

