

St. Mary's RECALL



A NEWSLETTER FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF ST. MARY'S SCHOOL, SLEEPY EYE, MN • VOLUME 40 • NUMBER 2 • Spring 2024



Guiding Our Students To Form Authentic Relationships With God



MISS SLEEPY EYE 2024



Congratulations to the 2024 Miss Sleepy Eye Royalty who were crowned on March 9. **Emily Ericksen**, daughter of **Jason and Patricia (Sellner '91) Ericksen** was crowned Miss Sleepy Eye while **Alexa Pelzel** (left), daughter of **Andy Pelzel ('01) and Amy Kral ('05)** and **Adeline Hoffmann** (right), daughter of **Andy ('96) and Heather (Heiderscheidt '96) Hoffmann** were selected as princesses. These three ambassadors will spend the next year representing the community as they attend events in and around Sleepy Eye.

Congratulations Newlyweds



Jacki (Hillesheim '96) Kyllonen married Scott Poppe on April 19, 2024.
Sara Zinniel ('19) married Landen Buse on May 18, 2024.
Caleb Berg ('17) married Sophia Thommes on June 1, 2024.

GOLDEN APPLE AWARD



Congratulations to Rachel Windschitl who was recognized with the KEYC Golden Apple Award for being an outstanding educator. Rachel has taught social studies at St. Mary's Catholic School for 22 years! Thank you for being such a blessing to St. Mary's!

Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament Saturday, September 7, 2024

Sleepy Eye Golf Club

Three Person Best Ball
10:00 AM Shotgun Start

To register your team contact:

Bruce Woitas 507-220-0410
Dan Schmid 507-276-5570
Judd Walter 507-227-0903

Entry Fee: \$60 per person (Includes lunch)

CLASS REUNIONS

Class of 1959: 65-year reunion on Saturday, August 3, 2024 (11am-3pm), at the Sleepy Eye Golf Club. Contact: Carol (Goldschmidt) Hengel at 507-220-1601.

Class of 1964: 60-year reunion on Saturday, August 3, 2024, at the Sleepy Eye Golf Club. Contact: Teresa (Seifert) Wenisch at 507-217-9342.

Class of 1966: 58-year reunion on Friday, August 2, 2024, at Gerald Braulick's home. Contact: Richard Sellner at 507-276-2750 or Jeanne (Miller) Hume at 507-257-3352.

Class of 1969: 55-year reunion on Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024, at the Sleepy Eye Golf Club. Contact: Tom Larson at 507-227-0652.

Class of 1974: 50-year reunion on Saturday, August 17, 2024, at the Sleepy Eye Golf Club. Contact: Mike Schmid at mikeschmid56@yahoo.com

Class of 1979: 45-year reunion on Saturday, August 3, 2024, at the Dawg Haus Bar & Grill in Sleepy Eye. Contact: Lisa (Peichel) Pelzel at 507-302-8146.

Class of 1984: 40-year reunion on Saturday, September 7, 2024, at Carl's Corner in Essig. Contact Karen (Lochner) Schwacke at karen.schwacke@yahoo.com

Class of 1989: 35-year reunion planning in process. Contact Tracy (Sellner) Fitzgerald at briantracy@comcast.net

Class of 1994: 30-year reunion on Saturday, August 10, 2024, at Sleepy Eye Brewing Co. Contact Justin Weiss at drjweiss101@gmail.com.

Class of 1999: 25-year reunion on Friday, August 16, 2024, at Naomi's home. Contact: Naomi (Walter) Weiss at 507-766-4109.

MIKE MAURER AWARD



Congratulations to **Fr. Mark Steffl** (left) and **Fr. Tanner Thooft** (center) who were selected by the staff as the recipients of this year's Mike Maurer Award. Our principal, **Peter Roufs** (right) presented their awards during our staff lunch at the end of the school year. This honor is given to an individual(s) who exemplify Christian values, dedication, and loyalty to St. Mary's as well as a love for education and for the mission of St. Mary's. Our school and parish have been incredibly blessed by the service of these two holy priests. Thank you for your generous gifts of time, talent and treasure.

FAREWELL



As we conclude the 2023-2024 school year at St. Mary's, it is also time to say farewell to our faculty and staff who will not be returning next year. We are so thankful for their incredible service to our school and our students. Thank you to (back row): **Fr. Mark Steffl**, **Fr. Tanner Thooft**, **Sam Rosemeier**, **Rebecca Visser**, and **Shelley Roufs**. Front row: **Tami Kober** and **Marni Malecek**. We wish each of them the best of luck. They will all be missed!

Let Perpetual Light Shine Upon Them

(Includes obituaries received through May 24, 2024)

Kathleen (Murry) Virgin, 91, died on March 9, 2022. She graduated from St. Mary's High School in 1949 and is survived by her four sons, Kurt (Susie), Bryan (Marsha), Paul (Mary) and Tom (Kris).

Richard Stimpert, died on November 30, 2023. He is survived by his wife, Bobbie (Seidl) Stimpert and two sons.

Sister Marya Duscher, OSB, 74, died on January 25, 2024. She graduated from St. Mary's High School in 1967.

Mafalda Wintheiser, 65, died on February 16, 2024. She is survived by her husband, Rick ('76) and their children, Anthony (Shannon), Sofia (Austin) Carmack, and Alexander.

Phyllis Bertha Braulick, 90, died on March 11, 2024. She is survived by her children, Randy (Patti), Jeanie (Gary) Schultz, Allen (Pam Weicherding '81), Kevin (Bonnie), Denise (Dale) Berberich and Deanna Johnson.

Duane "Henry" Helget, 74, died on March 12, 2024. He graduated from St. Mary's High School in 1967 and is survived by his wife Ruth and their children, Tammy Brabazon, Jamie, Jeremy, Kayla (Scott '95), Justin, Nathan, and Jenna.

Dennis Rosenhammer, 90, died on March 19, 2024. He is survived by his children, John ('80) (Patty), Marcia ('81) (Dan) Schindler and Greg ('93) (Cali).

David R. Kokesch, 84, died on March 21, 2024. He is survived by his wife, Dolores (Hoffmann '60) and children, Douglas (Mary) and Duane.

Monica (Steffl) Hertling, 100, died on April 21, 2024. Monica graduated from St. Mary's High School in 1942. She is survived by her children, Allan ('65) (Suzanne), Doug ('66) (Barbara), Robert ('73), Laurie ('73) (Robert) Seifert, Cindy ('75) (Vernard '74) Haala, Steve ('77) (Rita Kuebler '77), David ('80) (Lisa), Ronald and John ('85) (Deb).

Linda Hale, 75, died on April 29, 2024. She graduated in 1966 and is survived by her daughter, Emily (Samuel) Wolfe.

Bonnie Schumacher, 82, died on May 6, 2024. She is survived by her husband, Jim and their children, Trude ('81) (Bob) Bartlett, Kevin ('82) (Vickie), Sandy ('83) Hoffmann, Jerry ('84) (Kim), Rich ('85), Roger ('87) (Stephanie), Gary ('88), Cheryl ('90) Borgen, Jill ('92) (Karl) Weiss and Brian ('96) (Stephanie).

Margaret (Guttum) Windschitl, 81, died on May 14, 2024. She was a member of the class of 1961 and is survived by her husband, Wally and their children, Sue ('82) (Greg) Huiras, Rick ('83) (Mandy), Mary ('85) (Duane) Havemeier and Gary ('89) (Rachel).

Phyllis (Fischer) Nelson, 81, died on May 17, 2024. She graduated in 1961 and is survived by her children, Dan (Joy) Sellner, Doug (Carla) Sellner, Dee Dee ('83) Sellner, and Darren ('86) Sellner.

Linus Deibele, 96, died on May 17, 2024. He was a member of the class of 1947 and is survived by his wife, Marilyn and their children, Connie (Lowell) Helget, Jayne (Brian) Borth, Tom (Lori Helget '82), Jim (Joni) Deibele.

St. Mary's Catholic High



Mark Anderson

Paul & Julie Anderson
Bethel University - Arden Hills, MN



Meriden Andres

Matt & Christina (Braun '96) Andres
Minnesota State University - Mankato, MN



Emily Ericksen

Jason & Patricia (Sellner '91) Ericksen
Augustana University - Sioux Falls, SD



Emma Fischer

Darrel & Nikki (Hillesheim '90) Fischer
Ridgewater College - Willmar, MN



Adeline Hoffmann

Andrew ('96) & Heather (Heiderscheidt '96) Hoffmann
Minnesota State University - Mankato, MN



Elle Kyllonen

Bruce Kyllonen & Jacki (Hillesheim '96) Poppe
South Dakota State University - Brookings, SD



Alexa Pelzel

Andrew ('01) Pelzel & Amy ('05) Kral
Minnesota West Comm. & Tech. College - Worthington, MN



Jonathan Petermann

Jon & Jackie (Schwini '99) Petermann
Gustavus Adolphus College - St. Peter, MN



Riley Rutscher

Steven & Susan (Paulson '90) Rutscher
South Dakota State University - Brookings, SD



Brandon Schmitz

Tony ('82) & Lisa (Mages '84) Schmitz
Bethany Lutheran College - Mankato, MN



Cole Schroefer

Mark ('96) & Maria Schroefer
Minnesota State University - Mankato, MN



Jenica Schroefer

Jason & Amber Schroefer
Minnesota State University - Mankato, MN



Noah Simonsen

Lynn ('80) & Holly Simonsen
Minnesota State University - Mankato, MN



Brayden Suess

Mike & Kristy (Forster '00) Suess
Work

h School - Class of 2024



William Walter
Judd ('98) & Jen Walter
Bethany Lutheran College - Mankato, MN



Kaleb Weiss
Karl & Jill (Schumacher '92) Weiss
Southeast Technical College - Sioux Falls, SD



Hayden Zarn
Ryan & Stacy (Simon '94) Zarn
South Dakota State University - Brookings, SD

St. Mary's Catholic High School Graduation

Grad Date: Sunday, May 26, 2024, 2:00 pm - St. Mary's Church

Class Colors: Black & Gold

Class Flower: Green-tipped Rose

Class Saint: St. Augustine

Class Verse: "For I know well the plans I have in mind for you - plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope." - Jeremiah 29:11

Auxilium Christianorum Award: **Mark Anderson, Emily Ericksen**

Sue Windschitl Memorial Scholarship: **Adeline Hoffmann**

American Legion and VFW Award: **Adeline Hoffmann**

Lion's Club Student of the Year: **Elle Kyllonen**

John Philip Sousa Award: **Mark Anderson**

Charlie Hale Scholarship: **Jonathan Petermann**

Kaylie Hogue Scholarship: **Adeline Hoffmann**

John Mangen Scholarship: **Jonathan Petermann, Adeline Hoffmann**

Tyler Hadley Athletic Achievement Award: **Jonathan Petermann**

Americana Community Bank: **Jenica Schroeffer**

Rick Losleben ('77) Memorial Scholarship: **Emma Fischer**

Fischer (Alissa '05)-Groen Law Scholarship: **Emily Ericksen**

Gordie Osmonson Scholarship: **Elle Kyllonen**

Payton Adams Hustle Award: **Mark Anderson**

Sleepy Eye Chamber of Commerce Scholarship: **Adeline Hoffmann**

Denis ('62) and Lynn Goblirsch Memorial Scholarship: **Elle Kyllonen**

Murthy Medical Scholarship: **Jenica Schroeffer, Elle Kyllonen**

Esther "Sis" (Wagner '39) Dey Soukup Scholarship: **Rachel Portner, Reese Hoffmann**

Sleepy Eye Servicemen's Club Charitable Gambling Scholarship: **Elle Kyllonen**

Mrs. (Mary Beth Sellner '76) Botz Science Award: **Alexa Pelzel, Mark Anderson, Noah Simonsen**

Richard ('53) & Mary Lou Mathiowetz Family Scholarship: **Noah Simonsen, Adeline Hoffmann, Jenica Schroeffer, Emily Ericksen**

Miss Sleepy Eye Scholarship: **Emily Ericksen, Adeline Hoffmann, Alexa Pelzel**

Nicole Fuchs Memorial Scholarship: **Elle Kyllonen, Jonathan Petermann, Emma Fischer, Noah Simonsen**

Charles "Chisey" Hansen ('42) Family Memorial Medical Scholarship: **Jenica Schroeffer**



Congratulations to our salutatorian **Mark Anderson** (left) and valedictorian **Noah Simonsen** (right).

IN TOUCH WITH ALUMNI

by Laura Spaeth Fischer ('97)



Laura Spaeth Fischer, her husband David, and their children, pictured with Dr. Ming Wang at the premiere of the movie SIGHT in May 2024.

I attended St. Mary's from 1984-1997. Or as my 7 year old likes to remind me, "Mom, you went to school in the 1900's!" I feel blessed that my kindergarten through 12th grade years were so strongly connected by being at a K-12 school and I'm so grateful for the foundation which was laid for me.

I can remember exactly which classroom I was in for all years of grade school. I remember when the "new gym" was built in 1988 and we spent our recess time by the football field concession stand during construction that year. I remember learning prayers, May crownings, building Homecoming floats, basketball games, Christmas programs, and Marathons. I remember algebra and science labs, and Church history. I even recall singing the books of the Bible...and still use that song as a resource today!

One of the smaller details I recall was making a button in grade school inked with my thumbprint. The caption on it read, "you are special." There was something imparted on us while making those buttons and I believe it is what God wants all of us to know deep within ourselves - That He has made us for a great purpose, each person is not only special but unique and perfect in His eyes, and He loves us more than we can imagine. Among all of the important things that a Catholic school can teach this is perhaps the most important piece.

I am grateful for the many faithful teachers who cared for us and wanted us to know that God-given dignity we possess. The leadership of **Wayne Pelzel ('68)** and **Jerry Neubauer** held us to high standards, to help us grow in virtue as well as in academics. One of the anchors at the time of my attendance at St. Mary's was **Monsignor John Richter**. His steady presence

as pastor, his deep faith and unwavering commitment to the Gospel was a place of strength for our whole community.

Of course, like any Catholic school, when a partnership with parents is established it gives a child the opportunity to learn and experience their academics and faith more fully. This is something I felt in our home growing up. My parents, **Chuck ('72)** and **Kathy (Moran '72) Spaeth** made our Catholic faith a priority in our home and my sisters (**Rachel '99**, **Amanda '03**, **Mary '05**) and I saw the beauty of what the Church taught through our mom and dad and their example. It's also important to note that living near my grandparents, **Sylvia** and **Moe Moran**, and **Sylvester** and **De-lores Spaeth** was a tremendous gift and had a lovely influence on our lives. Today I am especially grateful for the impact of all of this on our family and the relationships my sisters and I share.

Interestingly, upon graduating from St. Mary's my sisters and I all went to the same college: The University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. I also met my husband David Fischer while we were both students at St. Thomas. And although his name sounds like it could be from Sleepy Eye, his family name actually hails from New York! We were married at St. Mary's 21 years ago and have been blessed with 9 children ages 2-20. It is primarily because of my education at St. Mary's I knew that I wanted our children to attend Catholic school K-12.

We too have found the partnership with our dedicated teachers and pastors to be an incredible tool in forming our children. We keep life full by attending our children's many athletic and other activities, but we also make serving in our parish and schools a priority. With our own experiences of the sacrifices and challenges that come with marriage and family life, we've connected ourselves to various groups that encourage us in our daily prayer, relationship with Jesus and faithfulness to the Church. Every Friday morning throughout the school year my home fills up with about 40 people for a women's bible study with childcare included. David leads a regular men's gathering at church, with bacon included. And we together began a monthly couples event for all married couples in our parish to strengthen marriage and discuss topics that don't always get attention in the midst of busy lives. We really believe that building up the domestic church is a way to build up the whole Church, so much of our life is devoted to this effort.

After venturing into the broadcasting world for a few years after college I feel blessed to now stay home with our children. Part of David's work over the last several years has included being an Executive Producer on a few movies. This May the feature film SIGHT released in theaters. SIGHT tells the incredible true journey of

Dr. Ming Wang from a poor immigrant to becoming a world renowned eye surgeon who can restore eyesight to certain types of blindness. After meeting Dr. Wang 10 years ago, David knew more people needed to hear his story. So, as the producer for SIGHT, David brought this film from its inception all the way to 2000 theaters on May 24, 2024.

We're very proud of SIGHT. And although our up-bringsings differ quite a bit from Dr. Wang's childhood in China, the themes of the movie can resonate with all of us. Seeing the way God can use any hardships of our past to create goodness and joy in the present and recognizing the beauty and uniqueness of every human being are just a couple of those themes.

To that end, I pray that an education at St. Mary's can continue to be a foundation for all students to know the truth that they are unique and that God loves them and has a special plan just for them. Perhaps this truth is even more important to remind ourselves of as we get older...especially for those of us who lived and went to school way back in the 1900's!

To learn more about the movie please visit: <https://www.angel.com/watch/sight>
Check here to see if it's showing in a theater near you: <https://www.angel.com/tickets/sight>

A Note from the Development Director
Chris (Berkner '81) Heiderscheidt

Who was your favorite teacher while attending St. Mary's School?

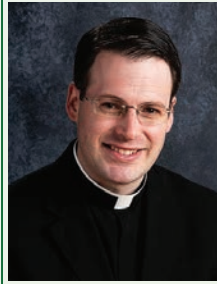


For me, this was difficult to determine as I fondly recall a number of teachers who were special to me, like **Mrs. Lillian (Haala '51) Stimpert**, my second grade teacher and **Sr. Barbara**, my 4th grade teacher. But probably at the top of my list is **Sr. Dale**, my 1st grade teacher (pictured here with me at the last all school reunion in 2016). She had a way of making me feel like I could learn anything!



A gift to our Annual Appeal Fund is a great way to honor your favorite teacher! If you choose to do so, just include their name with your gift and it will be included in the annual report that is published in the fall issue of the Recall. We'd love to hear why this teacher was special; simply include it and we'll publish that too! Each gift to this fund is used to help satisfy the budgeted salary increase (plus benefits) already factored in for this 2023-2024 school year. The average salary for a teacher here at ten years is \$38,900. Our goal is \$175,000 by June 30, 2024. *Thank you for your support of our school!*

Dear Alumni & Benefactors of St. Mary's School,



This is my final chance to write to you, since I begin a new assignment in New Ulm this upcoming July. I am grateful for these four years that I have been able to spend at St. Mary's. They have been filled with many blessings.

In particular, I am grateful for the great support from so many who make numerous sacrifices to contribute to St. Mary's School. I have gotten to know many of our alumni who do not live in Sleepy Eye at weddings and funerals or other events they return for. It is always interesting to hear them speak about some particular memory of an event or teacher.

With the end of the academic year comes another graduating class. Our task is not only to provide an education, but a "formation" for life that includes education and also an understanding of virtue and a Christian understanding of the human person, which is lacking more with each passing year in the culture around us.

This year, the seniors posted this sign on the school building for their last day:



But the count of "29" classrooms on the "for sale" sign was off by one. The missing classroom was the church; the one classroom that the graduating seniors have had for each of their pre-K through 12th grade years of life at St. Mary's in addition to the time they have spent with their families at Mass on the weekends. The "classroom" of the church reminds us of who we are, where our ultimate goal is, and gives us what we need to get there, both in the Word of God proclaimed and the graces of the Sacramentals.

Thanks to all of you for your prayers and contributions in so many ways to help St. Mary's School continue to make this happen!

St. Mary's Recall
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Mission Statement

St. Mary's Catholic School guides students to form an authentic relationship with God while achieving academic excellence to live as faithful disciples of Christ.

Administrative School Staff:

Fr. Mark Steffl - Pastor/Superintendent
Fr. Tanner Thooff and Fr. Sam Perez
Peter Roufs - Principal
Marti Schroeffer - HS Admin. Assistant
Tiffany Hoffmann - HS Admin. Assistant
Cassie Schwartz - GS Admin. Assistant
Bruce Woitas - Athletic/Activities Director
Matt Grausam - Business Manager
Chris Heiderscheidt - Development Director

