



ST. BRIDGET CATHOLIC CHURCH

Pastor's Office

Dear Parishioners,

Every year at this time, I always like to think back on the many wonderful milestones our Catholic faith bestows upon us. The winter months that follow Christmas are sublime and still, but soon the Lenten weeks are upon us. Finally, the gift of Easter fills the spring, and the forty days that follow until we celebrate the Ascension of Our Lord fill us here in Richmond with the optimism that warm weather and azalea blossoms always bring.

Indeed, summer is the perfect time to relax and reflect. But at St. Bridget Church, we pause only briefly. For here in a community committed to spiritual discovery, religious education and rejoicing in the Real Presence of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, every season offers the warm embrace of rich and traditional Catholic worship and continuous opportunities to serve “the least of these.”

St. Bridget's Commitment To Serve You

The work and dedication of our many regular, active members make St. Bridget Church the warm and welcoming spiritual community we have come to know and love. And lest we forget, all members of St. Bridget Parish enjoy numerous benefits not found everywhere.

We have the good fortune to attend Mass in a beautiful church built in the traditional American Gothic Revival architectural style. Our congregation also adheres closely to the strictures of the Roman Missal and the spirit of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II). We have a rich history of providing youth ministry, adult education and Christian Formation for all who seek it.

At the same time, St. Bridget has always looked to the future by observing a long tradition of ministering to the less fortunate and reaching out to the greater community. Saint Bridget and the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart share a relationship with the Parish of Carissade in Haiti. Active St. Bridget parishioners may also be certified to serve as sponsors for sacraments celebrated in other parishes. We offer an excellent school of religion for Catholic children attending both public and private schools in the area. Parish children also receive special tuition rates at our award-winning K-8 parish school.

Most of all, St. Bridget parishioners enjoy the privilege of membership in a large, devoted and extended parish family. In fact, many of our parishioners have called St. Bridget home over several generations. Some families have even been lucky enough to receive the blessings of many of the seven Catholic Sacraments—Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation, Holy Matrimony, Holy Orders and Anointing of the Sick—as they have made their spiritual life journey with us. Others who worship among us moved away from the parish after growing up here, only to return years later as adult parishioners with children of their own.

Serving St. Bridget In Return

Of course, a parish that offers as many benefits and opportunities as ours requires us, in turn, to accept the responsibility to practice our faith as *active* members. To grow as a parish family in our Catholic mission, St. Bridget relies on the continuous spiritual, personal and financial generosity of every one of us. We are fortunate to have many dedicated parishioners in our midst who contribute to the St. Bridget community in countless ways. They set a standard for how to meet—and even exceed—the expectations God has for us as we participate in the life of Christ on Earth.

This year, to identify all our dedicated members, as well as to assess our staffing needs, focus our spending, and develop our ongoing budget and stewardship goals, St. Bridget conducted a re-registration of parish

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members. From its earliest years, St. Bridget Church has relied on periodic census initiatives to pinpoint the number of members who take a regular, active role in the life of our parish community.

In Fall 2010, St. Bridget's launched our re-registration project by mailing and emailing special forms to **all 2,691 households listed in the parish database**. We also provided forms during all liturgies on two Sundays last November. Finally, we created a convenient "census station" in the church commons to allow parishioners to submit information at any time during a six-week period last fall.

Finally, at its May 18, 2011 meeting, the parish council adopted an official parish census count of **2,200 "active" parish households**.

To reach that figure, the council first recognized the **1,500 parish households** that had returned census forms to St. Bridget by that date. We then designated **700 additional households** active in the parish even though we received no forms from them. To be considered "active," those 700 households met at least one of the following key criteria: They had updated their household information since January 2008; made at least one financial contribution to the parish in 2010 or 2011; pledged to the parish's current Stewardship Campaign; or reported having one or more children enrolled in St. Bridget School. We also considered "active" any homebound parishioners to whom Eucharist is regularly brought.

In order to target parish resources to our most active parishioners, St. Bridget decided to move the **500 remaining households** in our database to "inactive" status. These households will no longer receive parish mailings such as weekly offertory envelopes, *The Bridge*, and *The Catholic Virginian*.

Still, St. Bridget remains, at heart, a church where "all are welcome in this place" for Mass, Reconciliation and all other sacraments. And by sharing our census results with you, I hope to encourage your continued participation, spiritual presence and financial support for our unique parish community.

In that spirit, I would like to take this opportunity to urge all who might not have been counted in this year's census to **register now** with the parish and renew your commitment to the good work and deep faith we practice each day. To do so, please contact Frances Smith, 282-9511, ext 314, fsmith@saintbridgetchurch.org.

Please join us "on our way" as we continue the mission and tradition of St. Bridget Parish.

Sincerely in Christ,



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