

# WELCOME



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 Monday to Friday 9am

**CONFESSIONS**  
 Saturday: 3 - 3:45pm  
 Thursday: 9:45 - 10:30am

**BENE DICTUS IS YOUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE IN PRINT OR IN YOUR EMAIL INBOX (FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH).**

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Please stop by the Welcome Booth and introduce yourself.

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## A WORD FROM FATHER JAMES

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### BENE DICTUS FACELIFT

Welcome to the new look of the Bene Dictus. Things should indeed be "well said" and they should be "well spread." As you can see, this new "spread" of our monthly magazine is incredibly well done and brings one of the main instruments of communication in our parish to a new level. I wish to offer my congratulations to our Director of Communications, Kate Robinson for gathering a group of talented parishioners together to form an editorial team. This team is assisting Kate with photography, layout and design, as well as actively gathering names so that they can develop stories that will be shared within these pages. Do you love what is going on in our parish, have a background in communications and would like to serve? Drop Kate a line and let her know (kater@saintbenedict.ca).

We desire to be a church where people experience a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ. We want to celebrate transformed lives and if this describes you -whether this transformation has been at a particular moment or over the course of time - we would love you to get in touch with us so we can hear your story.  
([www.saintbenedict.ca/my-saintbp-experience](http://www.saintbenedict.ca/my-saintbp-experience)).

### ME25

Parishioners who have been around the parish for a number of years will be familiar with the ME25 survey by Gallup. We have used this tool four times over the last six years here and we will be utilizing it again this month. This is a simple survey of parishioners that takes about 5-8 minutes to complete and is done at the weekend Masses. It helps us get a read of the health of our parish community and gives us data that will help us make a plan to continue to grow. The survey asks 25 questions and invites parishioners to score the questions from a 1 to 5, with 1 being a "strongly disagree," and 5 being a "strongly agree." Taking this survey is like going to the doctor for an annual check up, except that it measures the health of the parish community as a whole. Surveys are

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



## A WORD FROM FATHER JAMES

CONTINUED

anonymous. Thank you for your openness to participate in this process and for helping us use one of the best tools that exists to measure organizational health and to become more healthy as a parish. We will be conducting the survey on the weekend of January 21-22nd. The homily that weekend will of course, be shorter than usual.

### NEW PREACHING SERIES

In the first few weeks of 2017 we will be taking time to launch our next Alpha courses with the usual "kick off." We also have a variety of different events including the ME25 survey and a visit from Peter Herbeck of Renewal Ministries on the weekend of February 18-19th. As a result of these different moving parts we have decided to do a seven week preaching series that will be based, not on an entire theme, but on the second reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Corinthians. We do not yet have a title for this series, but just between us, we are calling it "The Corinthian Series." Stay tuned for more!

### ATTENTION ALL MINISTRY LEADERS

We are looking forward to seeing all our ministry leaders and their apprentices at our Leadership Summit on Saturday, January 14th. These gatherings are always an amazing opportunity to grow as a parish, to grow in our ownership of the parish vision, to grow in our leadership skills, and to get some advance news of what is coming down the pipe here. It is a time for refreshment and strengthening for all of us in our role as parish leaders. I look forward to spending that time with those of you in ministry leadership.

### ALPHA

Alpha, Alpha, Alpha!!! Yup. Once again, and again and again. Why? Because it is our primary tool to fulfil Christ's commandment to the Church, to "Go and make disciples of

all people." In the fall we had our biggest Alpha yet with some of the best results we have ever seen. I really believe that entering our sixth year of running multiples Alphas, we are just beginning to run Alpha as it is meant to be run, that is, with a substantial number of unchurched guests. This is the best tool I know of to help people who are disconnected from God, and/or from the Church, to get reconnected. It's also an incredible tool to help people in the pews become awakened or re-awakened. If you haven't yet done Alpha, we would love to see you there. If you have already done Alpha, why don't you think of someone you could invite? It could be life-changing and life-saving! Alpha will kick off on Thursday, January 19th at 6:30pm. Register on our website now: [www.saintbenedict.ca/alpha](http://www.saintbenedict.ca/alpha).

### SAINT BP SERVE

So far our efforts to invite parishioners into a process that will help them serve in our parish have been successful beyond our hopes. It is wonderful that so many have responded to this invitation and are actively trying out different ministries. Ministry involvement is a core part of what it means to live out the Christian life and core part of what it means to be a member at Saint Benedict Parish. If you feel called to take this next step in your spiritual journey you don't have to wait until the next time we promote this at Mass. By visiting the parish website ([saintbenedict.ca/saintbpserve](http://saintbenedict.ca/saintbpserve)) you can get this process moving at any time. Give it a try. Our commitment to you is to match you with a ministry that will engage your God-given talents and passions, for there is nothing more exciting than the experience of being used by God to make a difference in the world.



# Join the adventure



## ALPHA



### IT TAKES ONLY A SIMPLE 'YES'

**ZACH BRIGGS**

Alpha Team Member

Saint Benedict Parish was blessed to have a huge number of participants at Alpha this fall; so many, in fact, that there simply weren't enough team members to cover all 14(!) tables of guests. I have been involved in ministry for most of my life, starting as an altar server, later becoming a lector, then a music minister, where I met my wife, Kelly. But this fall, I was asked to join the Alpha Team.

I had gone through Alpha once before, more than ten years ago, but Kelly hadn't. We have wanted to do it together, but with three young boys, it was difficult to find the time. But this time, we resolved to make it work. And then, after the first Alpha night, I received an email asking if I would join the team as a table helper; I'd done Alpha before, I'd done ministry before, and a table helper is largely responsible for hospitality. So I said yes.

I didn't expect much to change. But over the remainder of Alpha, my "yes" led me to grow in ways I never expected. As a member of the Alpha Team, I participated in training sessions, including the basics of prayer ministry. At Alpha, there are opportunities for guests to be prayed over by team members. In all my other ministry experience, this wasn't something I had done before. I'd prayed with others, and led prayers in small groups, but never prayed over anyone.



But I found myself on a prayer ministry team at the Alpha retreat weekend. Sort of unexpectedly; only some of the team is needed, and I didn't think I'd be asked. But the Holy Spirit put my name on someone's heart, and so there I was. And though I didn't think I'd find the words, I soon realized that I didn't need to. I only required an openness, a willingness, a surrender; a "yes." And the Holy Spirit worked through me, passing powerful words to those who needed to hear them.

I was invited to come back on the Alpha Team this January. Without hesitation, I said yes.





# LEADERSHIP / APPRENTICESHIP



## AN INTERVIEW WITH SARAH MARMEN

**KATE ROBINSON**

Director of Communications

Sarah Marmen is the leader of our 9am Music Ministry. She's had a love of music since childhood when her enthusiastic and frequent compositions on the family piano had her little sister crying out, "Mom, if Sarah doesn't stop playing the piano she's going to ruin the batteries!"

### WHEN WERE YOU FIRST INTRODUCED TO MUSIC MINISTRY?

I started taking piano lessons when I was about 5-years old- I would sing in the children's Christmas choir at my church - that wasn't a very heavy commitment - we sang one day during the year, and I think I might have only done that for one year. I stopped playing piano when I was in high school and throughout university. Not because I didn't like piano, or music - I was just busy with sports and school and other aspects of life.

### SO HOW DID YOU GO FROM AN ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CHOIR PERFORMANCE TO LEADING MUSIC MINISTRY?

My brother Mike had picked up a guitar while serving on NET (National Evangelization Team) and then after his time on NET he was invited to lead worship at a CCO (Catholic Christian Outreach) weekend retreat. A few days prior to the retreat, he called me up to say he needed a female voice. He knew of my love for singing in the car and shower so he told me I would accompany him for the retreat. I think we gathered at my brother's place once, and went through the songs we would be leading. And then, we were on the retreat, and I was helping lead worship for 30-40 university students. Thankfully, the

acoustics in the chapel the retreat was held in were fabulous and forgiving. So that's where it started, and it hasn't stopped. I continued to be involved in music ministry with Catholic Christian Outreach for years after that. Eventually, I got involved in music ministry in a parish.

## I CONTINUED TO BE INVOLVED IN MUSIC MINISTRY WITH CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN OUTREACH FOR YEARS AFTER THAT. EVENTUALLY, I GOT INVOLVED IN MUSIC MINISTRY IN A PARISH.

### SO WHEN DID YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN MUSIC MINISTRY BECOME LEADING MUSIC MINISTRY?

A few months after I started attending Saint Benedict Parish, Fr. James became the pastor. He knew of my previous involvement in music ministry so he would regularly (really regularly) ask me when I was going to get involved in music ministry in the parish. This went on for several months. Actually, he wasn't asking when I was going to get involved, he was asking me to start the ministry. To which I responded, 'I'm not a leader'. Obviously, he saw something in me that I didn't. And eventually, let's be honest, he wore me down.

I knew that I wanted to serve in music ministry, but I didn't see myself leading a ministry - I felt under qualified. I'd never lead a music ministry, or any ministry at that point. Even though technically, I had been a leader within CCO. I was surrounded by qualified leaders and had an incredible support network.



.....

## SO EVENTUALLY, YOU SAID YES TO (STARTING AND) LEADING A MUSIC MINISTRY- WHAT DID THOSE FIRST FEW YEARS LOOK LIKE?

Initially, it was me, two members of our INFUSE youth ministry team. (remember them? They were from NET and there were here leading youth ministry for 10 months) two sisters from the Franciscans of Halifax (on parish staff, at the time), and a talented guitarist who continues to be involved in the ministry today (Carlo).

## SO, YOU STARTED OUT WITH ESSENTIALLY, FOUR PEOPLE WHO WERE ON STAFF AND ONE OTHER PARISHIONER?

Yes, things weren't always easy and the support, knowledge and encouragement we received from Patrick (Salah, former Music Director, current seminarian) were invaluable. It was a steep learning curve! I went from showing up and being told the plan, to being the one responsible for creating the plan. What will the songs be? When will they be played? What are the signals Fr. James is trying to send me? Which version of the Mass parts are we going to sing? What's appropriate for the liturgical season we're currently in? When will everyone be able to get together to practice? What if someone can't make it to Mass or practice? How do we possibly teach the congregation the songs? Are people sick of the songs? All of these things, I would work through with Patrick's help and support.

## HOW HAS LEADING THE MINISTRY CHANGED FROM THE EARLY DAYS TO THE PRESENT?

The 9am Music Ministry has changed in that we've grown - we've actually doubled in size, and that has meant new challenges and new opportunities. In those early years, the focus was on providing music ministry week to week, from September

through June. Now, it's about growing a healthy and sustainable ministry and building up the members to be leaders in the parish.

Our challenges are different now. We still get together weekly (outside of Mass) to practice, which we've always done, but we're also trying to incorporate more spiritual growth and health, along with our growth as musicians and leaders of music. We want our ministry to grow

beyond the practical aspect of providing music on Sunday, to helping form disciples who joyfully live out the mission of Jesus Christ.

## HOW HAS SERVING IN MUSIC MINISTRY IMPACTED YOUR FAITH JOURNEY?

From the moment that I made the adult decision to follow Christ, music ministry has been interlaced with my journey in faith. Music has a way of moving people not only through the melodies, but also through the lyrics that we not only sing, but pray. As a child, I always belted out the hymns at Mass - my whole family did! Now I get the chance to encourage others to allow music to be a part of their own faith journey and to pray along with us. God has given me the gift of music, and I believe that when given a gift from God, we're not meant to keep it to ourselves, but to share it. Having the opportunity to share this gift on a regular basis brings me great joy. If I hadn't been encouraged, and hadn't taken the leap of faith, I would be lesser for it. Plus, it's through music ministry that I met my husband, so there's that too!

We are so grateful for Sarah's willingness to share her gifts of music and leadership here @SaintBP. She continues to grow as a leader and has done a wonderful job incorporating some of the things she's learned at recent Parish Leadership Summits in her ministry.

## PLEASE PRAY FOR SARAH, ALL IN THE 9AM MUSIC MINISTRY, AND FOR ALL THE MINISTRY LEADERS WHO WILL GATHER AT OUR LEADERSHIP SUMMIT ON JANUARY 14TH.

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# FEATURES



## MAKING THE MOST OF 2017

**ROB MCDOWELL**

Director of Parish life

Every year at New Year's people talk about their New Years' Resolutions.

areas of life where they want to improve in some way and hope to do better at in the new year. January first rolling around gives us all an opportunity for a new and fresh start. So with hopeful enthusiasm people resolve to lose weight, eat healthier, pay off debt, quit smoking, spend more time with family or friends etc. People of faith quite often get in on it as well and use it as a time to change some of habits that influence our faith and help us to grow spiritually. We attempt to pray more, read our bible more, be more regular in our church attendance, etc.

With all these great intentions, invariably the reality of life sets in and the challenge of actually changing ourselves takes place and the majority fall short of their intentions, with the feeling of frustration and failure, wondering if change is possible. A great passage of scripture that helps us to begin to see how we approach change is found in one of Saint Paul's letters to his protegee, Timothy.

1 Timothy 4:7-8 "Have nothing to do with profane myths and old wives' tales. Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."

Paul shows us how to approach the idea of change. As you read the scripture, did you notice that God doesn't say, "Be godly"? Rather, he says, "Train yourself in godliness" – another way of talking about spiritual growth. Paul recognizes that being godly isn't something that we can just choose to do because we want to. As sinful people, we have a predisposition to sin. We are naturally attracted to sin and it has a power over us which we cannot fight in our own strength. Godliness and spiritual growth do not just happen because we try, since trying harder never works.

John Ortberg helps us to understand what Paul means by comparing it to running a marathon. Most people cannot just decide to run a marathon and do it. Rather, running a marathon is the result of intentional effort and developing a specific training plan that helps you to increase your strength over time. While most people do not naturally have the high level of physical and mental endurance that a marathon requires, it can be developed over time through training. If a person who is presently unable to run a marathon wants to do so, they need to

do things that will incrementally build up their strength and help them to overcome the physical limitations that stand in the way. Training is all about increasing your strength, capacity, skills and mental ability, and, as you start out small and keep at it over time, your ability will increase.

The spiritual life is the same. The idea of growing spiritually, or, as this passage puts it, in godliness, happens when we enter into specific training. We can't just choose to grow; we have to enter into practices or disciplines that help us to get there. Spiritual disciplines (habits) are key practices that help us to increase our ability to live in a way that is consistent with how Jesus lived. There are many different spiritual disciplines that can be practiced (fasting, solitude, silence, journaling, simplicity, etc), but two foundational ones are obedience to the Bible and prayer. The idea of something being a discipline can be overwhelming, since we typically associate discipline with negative thoughts. If, however, you realize that a spiritual discipline is a habit that, when practiced, increases your ability to do something, it can help you to continually come back and see the benefit of it. Developing a discipline or a habit sounds negative but actually leads to freedom and joy. When we are able to do something, we are free to do it and that brings joy into our lives. So whether it is around a New Year's Resolution or at some other point in life, begin to see the change we desire as a process to enter into with God's grace to help us, rather than a practice we begin to just do, in our own strength and ability apart from God.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

How often do you get frustrated at your lack of performance or your inability to change something about yourself?

When you hear/read the words "spiritual disciplines" does that create positive or negative thoughts in your mind? Why do you think about them this way?

Does the idea of "training versus trying" help us to think about spiritual disciplines and spiritual growth in a new way?





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# GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

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 CONTACT: ANNE MACMILLAN  
[AAMAC@EASTLINK.CA](mailto:AAMAC@EASTLINK.CA)



## ARE YOU NEW TO SAINT BENEDICT PARISH?

Have you been attending for a while, and considering becoming a member? You are cordially invited to our next

**NEW @SAINTBP EVENT**  
 ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH AT 7PM.

Please RSVP to Kate Finlayson, (902)-240-3996,  
[katefin8@gmail.com](mailto:katefin8@gmail.com), by Wednesday, January 25th.  
 Kindly let us know if you will require child care, and we will do our best to accommodate.



# FEATURES



## WHAT GOES ON BEHIND THE SCENES?

**JEN FERRIER**

Coordinator of Evangelization

Each Alpha we run requires MANY committed volunteers. Alpha volunteers not only believe that Alpha can and will bring people closer to Christ, but they also believe that there are many blessings found in laboring behind the scenes.

**OUR DEDICATED EVENING ALPHA KITCHEN CAPTAINS ARE: JOHNNY B. MACDONALD, SUSAN LERUE, & JERRY LERUE.**

Together with Doug Doiron, our chef, they plan our evening meals, procure the necessary ingredients, make dinner for 150 people, serve the food and then do A LOT of dishes. Talk about commitment! They do have help however, because they built an amazing kitchen team!

I interviewed our 3 Kitchen Captains to find out what serving in the Alpha Kitchen Ministry means to them.

### WHY DO YOU SERVE IN THE KITCHEN MINISTRY?



**JOHNNY B. MACDONALD:**

Only one of the ten lepers made clean by Jesus returned to say thanks. My reason for being here is gratitude. I am that leper made clean through an Alpha awakening. Now in some small way, I hope to feed our Alpha guests on their way to having their own Alpha awakening.

### HAS SERVING IN THIS MINISTRY CHANGED YOUR LIFE OR FAITH IN ANY WAY?



**SUSAN LERUE:**

It's serving in such a small "Martha" way, and helping to evangelize and bring souls to encounter Christ. I feel it is exactly what God is calling me to do at this time in my life, to be His Eyes, His Hands, and His Feet. It brings me so much joy! My own faith is affirmed constantly serving through Alpha.

**JERRY LERUE**

It has given me a stronger faith because I feel more like Jesus when He washed the feet of the Apostles at the Last Supper; teaching all of us to serve one another.

**JOHNNY B. MACDONALD**

My faith has been increased, especially this year. God seeks us out, and this fall he sought out the largest Alpha crowd yet. The feeling in the kitchen is euphoric seeing the great love God has for his people and how he sent them to Saint Benedict Parish for food in both body & soul.

Thank you to all who volunteer behind the scenes here at Saint Benedict Parish – YOU are making a difference.

**ALPHA KICKS OFF ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 19TH. REGISTER NOW AT [SAINTBENEDICT.CA/ALPHA](http://SAINTBENEDICT.CA/ALPHA).**

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# CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT DATES JANUARY 2017

1 SUNDAY	2 MONDAY	3 TUESDAY	4 WEDNESDAY	5 THURSDAY	6 FRIDAY	7 SATURDAY
SUNDAY MASS SOLEMNITY OF MARY THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD NEW YEAR'S DAY LEVEE INITIAL OFFERING OF 2017	PARISH OFFICE CLOSED		EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT		MEN'S LEADERSHIP GYM	
8 SUNDAY MASS EPIPHANY W.O.W. 'WEE ONES' WORD CONFIRMATIONS COFFEE SOCIAL	9 THE EXPERIENCE (YOUTH NIGHT)	10 ANOINTING OF THE SICK	11 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	12	13 MEN'S LEADERSHIP GYM	14 LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
15 SUNDAY MASS NAME TAG SUNDAY W.O.W. 'WEE ONES' WORD FIRST COMMUNIONS COFFEE SOCIAL	16 THE EXPERIENCE (YOUTH NIGHT)	17 GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP	18 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	19 THURSDAY NIGHT ALPHA (KICK OFF)	20 MEN'S LEADERSHIP GYM	21
22 SUNDAY MASS ME25 SURVEY W.O.W. 'WEE ONES' WORD COFFEE SOCIAL	23 THE EXPERIENCE (YOUTH NIGHT)	24	25 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	26 THURSDAY NIGHT ALPHA	27 MEN'S LEADERSHIP GYM	28 NEW @SAINTBP EVENT
29 SUNDAY MASS W.O.W. 'WEE ONES' WORD PACT	30 THE EXPERIENCE (YOUTH NIGHT)	31	1 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	2 THURSDAY NIGHT ALPHA	3 MEN'S LEADERSHIP GYM	4



## PARISH STAFF TEAM (OFFICE: 902-443-0725)

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## MONTHLY FINANCIAL UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2016

PARISH DEBT REDUCTION	REC'D	TOTAL	AVG/
<b>ENVELOPES</b>	158	\$4118	\$26.06

### PAR

Pre-authorized Remittance

	69	\$3372	See Note
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**MORTGAGE BALANCE AS OF NOV. 30, 2016** \$775,351.67

**INTEREST PAID (ON MORTGAGE) IN NOV. 2016** \$2064.03

**PRINCIPAL PAID (ON MORTGAGE) IN NOV. 2016** \$20,374.10

Principal payments include principal portion of monthly mortgage payment plus additional principal payments made from Parish Debt funds relieved.

SUNDAY COLLECTIONS	REC'D	TOTAL	AVG/
<b>ENVELOPES</b>	1377	\$36,300.60	\$26.36

### PAR

Pre-authorized Remittance

	374	\$43,940.77	See Note
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\*Note: PAR options include weekly, bi-weekly and monthly withdrawals; therefore a 'weekly' average is unavailable.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THE SACRAMENTS OF BAPTISM OR MATRIMONY AT SAINT BENEDICT PARISH, PLEASE NOTE THAT IN ADDITION TO PREPARATION, WE REQUIRE THAT YOU GET IN TOUCH WITH US A MINIMUM OF 3 MONTHS IN ADVANCE OF YOUR HOPED-FOR DATE FOR BAPTISM AND ONE YEAR PRIOR TO YOUR DESIRED WEDDING DATE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BAPTISMS, PLEASE CONTACT CAROL: BAPTISMS@SAINTBENEDICT.CA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WEDDINGS, PLEASE CONTACT THE PARISH OFFICE: WEDDINGS@SAINTBENEDICT.CA.



THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IS EXPOSED IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING 9AM MORNING MASS. REPOSE IS AT 10:00PM

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