

## A NOTE FROM DEACON RICK

This Sunday's Gospel finishes out our sequence of three very special readings from the Gospel of John. First there is the theme of living water in the story of the woman at the well.

Then light with the man born blind. Now we have the theme of life. The raising of Lazarus from the dead points to our rising in faith to a new and eternal life through Baptism.

But there's more to today's reading than just the raising of Lazarus from the dead. While this reading shows Jesus' power over physical death, it also points to Jesus' power over spiritual death.

In this vein, Saint Augustine saw the raising of Lazarus as a symbol of the sacrament of Reconciliation. Just as burial clothes bound Lazarus, sin binds human beings and restricts our freedom.

Look at the plight of the Israelites who were in bondage in Egypt for 400 years. Then when they finally get their freedom, what happens? They return to their old habits and end up wandering the desert for 40 years, slaves to sin.

So this is a good opportunity for us to look at the behaviors and habits that we are slaves to. Whether its pride, envy, gluttony or simply hardness of heart.

As we see in our Gospel reading, Jesus not only raises Lazarus from the dead, he unbinds the burial bands from Lazarus as he came forth from the tomb. And so the Lord, through His priests, frees us from the chains of sin, from spiritual death in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

We truly experience new life, a kind of second Baptism, through this sacrament of God's mercy.

Saint Augustine wrote in a homily on this Gospel: Everyone who sins, dies. Every man fears the death of the flesh, few the death of the soul.

With regard to the death of the flesh, which without a doubt must someday come, all guard against its coming: that is the reason for their labors.

Man, destined to die, labors to avert his dying; and yet man, destined to live in eternity does not labor to avoid sinning.

It is our mission as Christians to proclaim that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. It means we live as a people of hope and that we spread that hope to others.

Saint Peter wrote: Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope.

Of course, this hope must first be real and personal, based on our encounter with Christ and His mercy. So that we can witness to the joy that arises from the gift of the living hope we've received.

This is the witness that evangelizes, the witness of joyful and hope-filled disciples of Jesus, those who believe that Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life.

Deacon Rick

# Welcome to St. Mary Magdalene

*We would like to extend a warm welcome to Fr. Randy Gonzales and Jason Schweers.*



**Very Reverend Randy Gonzales,  
C.I.C.M., V.F.**

Father Randy will be joining us on June 30, transitioning from Transfiguration of Jesus parish in Wallace, NC. He will become our new pastor when Fr. Mike leaves for his new assignment in Swansboro.

Fr. Randy Gonzales, CICM, was born on November 21, 1974, in the northern part of the Philippines. After completing high school, he entered Maryhurst Seminary of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM) in 1992. He professed his first religious vows in 1997 and continued his formation by studying theology at Maryhill School of Theology in Quezon City, Philippines.

In 2001, Fr. Randy was sent to the United States to begin his missionary internship program in San Antonio, Texas. He was ordained to the priesthood on July 29, 2004. From 2004 to 2007, he served as Parochial Vicar at Sacred Heart Parish in Mercedes, Texas.

From 2007 to 2018, Fr. Randy served the CICM mission as Associate Director and later Director of the CICM Missionhurst Development Office, helping animate missionary awareness and support for the global mission of the Church.

In December 2019, he was appointed Pastor of Transfiguration of Jesus Parish and Santa Clara Mission in North Carolina, where he continues to serve the parish community and promote the missionary spirit of the Church.

As a CICM missionary, Fr. Randy remains committed to the Church's universal mission through pastoral ministry, missionary promotion, and service to diverse communities.

We are pleased to welcome Jason Schweers as our new Director of Operations. He joined us on Monday this week, bringing strong leadership and organizational skills developed over 25 years of service in the U.S. Army, where he retired as a Command Sergeant Major.

Jason was raised in a faithful Catholic home in Texas and Nebraska. His father is a cowboy, and his mother, who was an art teacher, later became a high school principal in Iowa. He has one younger sister and two younger brothers.

He is married to his best friend, Sarai (pronounced Sarah), and together they have four sons: Caleb (19), Clayton (18), David (16), and Benjamin (15). In his free time, he is trying to get back into hunting and is learning how to fish.



**Jason Schweers**  
Director of Operations

*Please join us in giving Father Randy and Jason a warm St. Mary Magdalene welcome.*



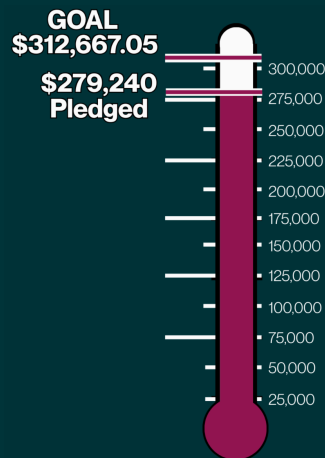
## Bishop's Annual Appeal

**The Bishop's Annual Appeal** is more than a yearly campaign; it is a shared mission of faith, hope, and service across the Diocese of Raleigh.

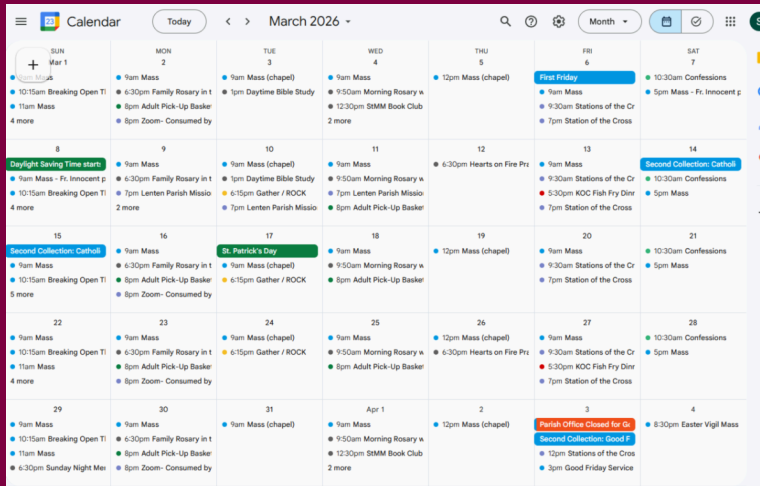
**Your gift** helps form future priests, sustain Catholic schools, and nurture faith through evangelization and discipleship. It extends compassion through Catholic Charities, strengthens campus and parish ministries, and supports those most in need—the poor, the elderly, the sick, and the marginalized.

**Thank you for your continued support.**

We are **SO CLOSE** to reaching our goal for the 2026 Bishop's Annual Appeal! Thank you to the 478 parishioners who have already **made a gift or pledge**. With 18 percent of our parish families participating, we have reached \$279,240, which is an incredible 89% of our goal. If you have not yet had the opportunity to give, now is the perfect time to help us reach the finish line. **You can donate online [HERE](#).**



**Our calendar is now available online! Click here to view our new Google Calendar, where you can click on each event for more details.**



**FOR BEST VIEWING, OPEN THE CALENDAR ON YOUR LAPTOP OR PC**

### Mass This Weekend

Click [HERE](#) to Live Stream our **9am Sunday Mass** and our **Mon/Wed/Fri weekday Masses**.

#### Music for Weekend Masses

**Gathering:** Lent Entrance Antiphon - Adoramus Te Christe

**Responsorial Psalm:** 130: With The Lord Is Mercy

**Preparation:** Come Alive (Dry Bones)

**Communion 1:** Pange Lingua Gloriosi/Stabat Mater

**Communion 2:** I Am The Bread Of Life

**Communion 3:** My Soul is Thirsting/Morning by Morning

**Sending Forth:** This is Amazing Grace

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Would you like to donate flowers to beautify the altar and church this Easter or for weekend Masses, to honor our Lord? If so, please go [here](#) to sign up.

Flowers may be donated to mark a special occasion or made in honor or in memory of your loved ones. Questions? Please email [floralministry@stmm.net](mailto:floralministry@stmm.net)

### Tax Season



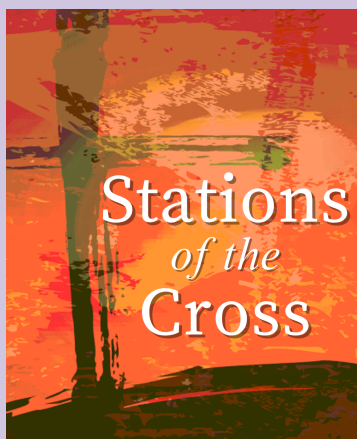
Directions for accessing your 2025 StMM tax statement can be found [HERE](#). We are grateful for your continued support of St. Mary Magdalene

Parish. Your generosity sustains our parish and is vital to keeping St. Mary Magdalene running and fulfilling its mission. Thank you!

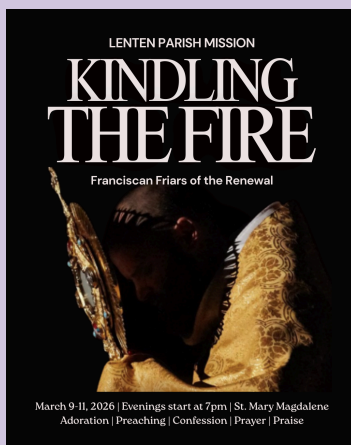
### Would you like to set up an automatic draft to support St. Mary Magdalene?

Directions can be found [HERE](#). Thank you for your generosity, which in turn helps St. Mary Magdalene continue serving and supporting you and our entire parish community.

## StMM Lenten Activities



For Catholics worldwide, the **Stations of the Cross** is a



Thank you to the **Franciscan Friars of the Renewal** for



**New Dates!** Father Innocent Montgomery, CFR, will lead a

popular Lenten devotion, also called the "Way of the Cross." It is a prayerful meditation on the final hours of Jesus' life.

Stations of the Cross will be held in the main Church every Friday during Lent, immediately after the 9am Mass and again at 7pm. On Good Friday, the Stations of the Cross will be at noon. Everyone is welcome!

leading our Lenten Parish Mission, *Kindling the Fire*.

**Did you miss any of the nights?** A full recording of each night can be found below.

**Monday, March 9**

**Tuesday, March 10**

**Wednesday, March 11**

The Franciscan Friars rely on donations to continue their ministry and provide fantastic programs like *Kindling the Fire*.

**Your generous donation**

shows appreciation and allows them to continue their work.

weekly Lenten online prayer journey for StMM called **Consumed by Fire**. This interactive series will include reflection, discussion, and Q&A.

All are welcome to join Fr. Innocent to grow in faith and pray together throughout the season of Lent. The link to join all sessions is **HERE**. Each week will also be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.

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Join Fr. Innocent **on Zoom** at 8pm as he leads us on a weekly Lenten prayer journey.

**Feb 23-** Made for Communion (**Recording here**)

**Mar 2-** The Fire of Contemplative Prayer (**Recording here**)

**Mar 16-** The Fire of Transfiguration (**Recording here**)

**Mar 23-** The Fire of Mission

**Mar 30-** The Body of Christ on Fire

## **Lenten Penance Services**

Mar 24th 7pm St. Catherine of Sienna

Mar 25th 7pm St. Raphael

Mar 26th 7pm Holy Name of Jesus

Learn more about Consumed By Fire in a **special video** Fr. Innocent created for us.



Be sure to visit the **Diocese of Raleigh's Lenten webpage**, where you'll find a variety of resources, insightful

articles, practical guidelines, and opportunities for almsgiving to help you make the most of this sacred season.

# Easter Schedule

Holy  
Thursday  
**2**  
APRIL

7:00pm Holy Thursday Mass

Good  
Friday  
**3**  
APRIL

12:00pm Stations of the Cross  
3:00pm The Passion of the Lord

Saturday  
**4**  
APRIL

10:00am Blessing of Easter Food  
8:30pm Easter Vigil Mass

Easter  
Sunday  
**5**  
APRIL

7:00am Easter Mass  
9:00am Easter Mass  
11:00am Easter Mass

## StMM Ministries - Volunteers Needed



St. Mary Magdalene's Safety & Security Ministry is seeking volunteers to help maintain a safe environment for parishioners, families, and guests during Mass, parish events, and after-hour programs. Volunteers will receive training to monitor activities, provide initial emergency response if needed, and coordinate with local first responders. This ministry works campus-wide, including both the School and Parish, ensuring a holistic approach to safety. With our growing community of over 3,000 families, a dedicated ministry is essential to protect against potential disruptions and ensure the well-being of everyone on campus. Volunteers join a committed team, helping to create a secure and welcoming parish environment.

For more information and to volunteer, visit: [Safety & Security Ministry](#).



### Help Support Our Wedding Ministry!

St. Mary Magdalene is entering a busy wedding season, and we are looking for a few more volunteers to help make these beautiful celebrations run smoothly. Volunteers assist with simple tasks that help welcome couples, families, and guests on their special day. If you enjoy serving the parish and supporting the sacrament of marriage, this is a wonderful way to help!

If you are interested in volunteering or would like to learn more, please email [weddings@stmm.net](mailto:weddings@stmm.net).

# StMM Ministries - Thank You!

## Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest



The Knights of Columbus Council #7186 would like to congratulate everyone who participated in their annual youth Free Throw Contest. There were 6 participants who were both the council and district winner for their age group.

The female winners were Juliet, age 11, and Abby, age 12.

The male winners were Diego, age 9, Miles, age 10, Jack, age 13, and Landon, age 14.

Photos of the winners can be found below in the "Pictures" section of the Enews.

Please be on the lookout for the Knights of Columbus' upcoming youth Soccer Challenge. It will be held in late

summer. Questions can be directed to [communitykoc7186@hotmail.com](mailto:communitykoc7186@hotmail.com).

## StMM Ministry and Group Events

### MARCH



**Attention All EMs!** Our parish will soon use Ministry Scheduler Pro to manage Extraordinary Minister schedules for the 5pm, 9am, and 11am weekend Masses. To make the transition smooth, **all EMs must attend one training session. Only ONE date remains!**

- Wednesday 3/25/26 6:30-8pm

**Click here** to sign up and check your email for more information. You will need to bring a computer or your phone. Contact your Mass EM Coordinator or Ellen O'Rourke [elleno1182@gmail.com](mailto:elleno1182@gmail.com) with any questions.



The Knights of Columbus will once again host their popular Lenten Fish Fries! There is one date left: **Friday, March 27**. Mark your calendars now and plan to join us for a fun evening of fellowship and great food, **featuring new menu selections including fried shrimp and, for the kids, buttered noodles.**

The Knights would like to thank this year's Fish Fry sponsors: Gold Sponsor Kathy Lynch, Realtor at Keller Williams; and Silver Sponsors John Tudor from State Farm Insurance and Triangle Painting and Siding. Their generous support helps make these events possible.

**Pre-orders are now being taken for Friday, Mar 27.** Please go [HERE](#) to place your order.

### Become a Mulholland Columbiette in March!

Are you a Catholic woman 18 years of age or older, looking for a way to give back to your community and grow in faith? Would you like to make new friends with other Catholic women, serve together and pray together? We are a band of sisters: a network of women throughout the US doing good works in service of God and our neighbors. We host spiritual and social events - there is something for every woman at any phase of life. And, we are a NO pressure group - you do what you can, and what sparks your interest. Do this for YOU! You can learn more about us at our [website](#), or contact us at [fr.hcmulhollandcolumbiettes@gmail.com](mailto:fr.hcmulhollandcolumbiettes@gmail.com).



Our next Joining Ceremony is on:  
March 25 at StMM School- [Info and RSVP](#).

**Columbiettes' Annual  
Easter Egg  
Hunt**  
**Sunday, March 29th,  
after the 11:00 am  
Mass**  
**'Live' Easter Bunny - pictures - prizes**  
**The event is open to children 1-9  
years of age.**  
**Space is limited so register early**

The Columbiettes' Annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place on **Sunday, March 29, (Palm Sunday) following the 11:00 am Mass**. Please sign up for the Easter Egg Hunt [HERE](#).

The Easter Egg Hunt, for ages 1 to 9 years, will take place on StMM's soccer fields, and will include a "live" Easter bunny, a bunny board for family photos, and prizes!

Space is limited so sign up soon!



### Commemorative Brick Order - Spring 2026

Our commemorative bricks line the walkway to our Activities Building and offer a meaningful way to celebrate a First Communion, Graduation or memory of a loved one. StMM will be placing our annual brick order soon. The **deadline to submit orders is March 31st**. Engraved bricks are \$100 each and order forms can be found [HERE](#)

Questions? Contact: [hoffman@stmm.net](mailto:hoffman@stmm.net)

**The deadline to order is March 31, 2026!**

## APRIL



Join us as Fr. Mike leads the beautiful tradition of the **Blessing of Easter Food on April 4 at 10:00 am** in the chapel.

This cherished Catholic custom, especially rooted in Eastern European traditions, invites families to bring baskets filled with foods that will be shared on Easter Sunday. These foods often include bread, eggs, meats, and sweets, each symbolizing the joy of the Resurrection and the end of the Lenten fast.

Through this special blessing, we ask God to sanctify the food that will nourish our bodies as we celebrate the new life of Easter. It is a meaningful way to prepare both our homes and our hearts for the joy of the Resurrection.

### The Sunday after Easter is Divine Mercy Sunday!

Come celebrate the Feast of Mercy on **Sunday, April 12th at 3pm** in the church. All are welcome! Bring your family, friends, and children. There will be music, prayers, Adoration, Confession



and Benediction. **Doors open at 2:40pm, we will begin promptly at 3pm.**

Questions: [hoffman@stmm.net](mailto:hoffman@stmm.net)



**Are you an adult interested in becoming fully initiated into the Catholic faith?** Are you a baptized Christian looking to receive the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Confirmation? Then you owe it to yourself to get more information on the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA). While coming to know Jesus and His invitation to become a disciple, the OCIA process involves the journey of faith and conversion. A person is introduced to the beliefs, life, liturgy, and apostolic work of the Catholic Church. **The next OCIA journey begins on April 27, 2026 for those who wish to be initiated into the Catholic faith.** Please contact Deacon Rick at [stevens@stmm.me](mailto:stevens@stmm.me) or 908-910-0309 for more information or to register. **Advance registration is required.**

**StMM Community Golf Outing**  
Hosted by **Parish ATHLETICS**

**SPONSOR A HOLE**

**\$125 BUSINESS & FAMILY SPONSORS WELCOME**

All proceeds will support the construction of a new restroom facility at the Apex Parish Athletics Field!  
Contact [parishathleticsinfo@gmail.com](mailto:parishathleticsinfo@gmail.com) for more information!

### SPONSOR A HOLE AT THE StMM COMMUNITY GOLF TOURNAMENT ON APRIL 20th

Families and local businesses are invited to **Sponsor a Hole** at the StMM Community Golf Tournament. All proceeds will help fund the Restroom Construction Project at the Apex Parish Athletics Fields. It's a simple way to show your support—even if you're not playing!

3 Ways to Get Involved:

- Looking to Sponsor a Hole? Click [HERE](#)
- Want to Golf? Grab a foursome [HERE](#) before they're gone!
- Interested in a Sponsorship Package? [Learn more HERE](#)

Thank you for your support of this exciting community event hosted by Parish

Athletics! Questions? Email [parishathleticsinfo@gmail.com](mailto:parishathleticsinfo@gmail.com).

## Meetings, Events, & Information

Please click on the link for more details.



### We are making improvements to our website!

As we work behind the scenes, you may notice a few minor technical glitches or broken links. Thank you for your patience while we complete these updates.

## CHURCH

- **Deacon Rick offers an Adult Faith Refresher & Confirmation Prep series** Please click here for more information.
- **Breaking Open The Word is a new weekly Gospel discussion group that is held after the 9am Sunday Mass.**
- **Please prayerfully consider making a pledge or donation to our Parish Life Center campaign, enabling us to build a lasting**
- **Are you gluten-free due to a medical condition and need a low-gluten Communion Host? Click**

space for our parish family. Campaign and donation information can be found [HERE](#).

here to learn how to receive low-gluten Communion at StMM.

- The 2025 StMM Annual Stewardship Report and the 2025-2026 Quarterly Report are available on our website.

## SCHOOL

- Thinking about a Catholic education for your child? StMM school tours are now being scheduled.
- 2026-2027 School Year Applications are now being accepted.

## GROUPS & MINISTRIES

- Hearts on Fire, a charismatic prayer group with Deacon Dev, meets in the Chapel at 6:30pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month.
- StMM Book Club meets the first Wednesday of the month to discuss a selected reading. The next meeting is on April 1. Everyone is welcome. [Click here for more information.](#)
- St. Mary Magdalene's marriage enrichment fellowship group, Chrysalis, provides space monthly for couples to grow in their love for God & their spouse. Childcare is provided.
- Would you like to be an Angel for expectant mothers? Gabriel Project needs Walking Angel volunteers to accompany women facing crisis pregnancies with prayer, practical assistance, and loving friendship.
- Forward in Hope is a grief support group at StMM. Please [click here for more information.](#)
- 2026 Appalachia Service Project (ASP) applications are now being accepted for high school students and adults. Please go [HERE](#) to apply and for more information.
- AAMEN Education Assistance Program is accepting applications for stipends to attend a trade school, junior college or four year college. More information can be found [HERE](#).
- A Call to Prayer rosary on Zoom is held every Tuesday at noon for human dignity and immigration.
- Prayers & Squares Prayer Quilt Ministry
- Traveling St. John Vianney Ministry-sign up to pray for our priests.
- Project Rachel Support Group - for hope and healing after abortion.
- Courage - A support group for those facing same-sex attraction, and EnCourage- A support group for relatives of people who experience same-sex attraction have local chapters which meet regularly.
- Catholic Senior Organization (CSO) meets the 3rd Monday of the month. The next meeting is on Monday, April 20, at 10:30am.
- Parish Athletics Spring Soccer and Baseball registration is now open.
- Let Your Faith Flow- Help Us Bring Clean Water to Uganda! St. Mary Magdalene is launching the Uganda Water Project to bring life-changing clean water to the people of Kicheche, Uganda.
- Frassati is the Young Adult group at StMM offering faith, fellowship, and community. Email Nicole at [frassati@stmm.net](mailto:frassati@stmm.net) for more information.
- Birthchoice is recruiting volunteers for a new Pregnancy Resource Center which will support parents carrying to term a child with a prenatal diagnosis.

- The Catholic Parish Outreach Food Pantry's Annual Pig Pickin is on Saturday, April 11.
- Adults with physical disabilities are invited to join a Handicapped Encounter Christ retreat on Sat., March 28.
- Oak City Cares is hosting a fundraiser on April 16 to raise money for meeting the needs of the homeless in Raleigh. Please go [HERE](#) for more information.
- The 2026 Power and Purpose conference will be held in Steubenville, Ohio, on June 12-14. Click [here](#) for registration and more information.

## PICTURES

**Congratulations to The Knights of Columbus free throw winners pictured below. They were all both Council and District winners for their age group.**



Landon Moore



Abby Shaw



Miles Miller



Juliet Becker



Jack Becker



Congratulations to Viviana Soprano, who was baptized on Sunday, March 8.

A big thank you to everyone who supported last Friday's Knights of Columbus Fish Fry. They served 671 meals, and they are grateful to the Columbiettes, Boy Scouts, Frassati group, StMM Care for God's Planet Team, and fellow Knights for working together to make it a memorable evening.



Everyone enjoyed eating and socializing at the Fish Fry last Friday.

Pictured left, front to back:

Billie Schnorr, Mike Cefaratti, Art Klaum.

Pictured right, front to back:

Jim Schnorr, Vince Kinsella, Jim Schultz,  
Fr. Mike, Geraldine Klaum.



StMM's Care for God's Planet team member, Anne Marie Egan, helped everyone compost and dispose of their trash responsibly at the Fish Fry.

**FOLLOW StMM  
ON SOCIAL MEDIA**



**Faith Formation**

[Click HERE for the 2025-2026 Faith Formation Calendar](#)



Next  
Session



Tuesday  
March 24, 2026  
6:15 pm  
Church

## Questions about Faith Formation:

**GATHER (K-4th grade)**- contact Suzanne Will at [will@stmm.net](mailto:will@stmm.net) or 919-657-4800 x7280

**THE ROCK (5th & 6th grade)**- contact Sarah St. Aubin at [st.aubin@stmm.me](mailto:st.aubin@stmm.me) or 919-657-4800 x7307

**EDGE (7th & 8th grade)**- contact Sarah St. Aubin at [st.aubin@stmm.me](mailto:st.aubin@stmm.me) or 919-657-4800 x7307

**Apostello and the Way (9th-12th grade)**- contact Niki Furnier at [nfurnier@stmm.net](mailto:nfurnier@stmm.net) or 919-657-4800 x7309

**Confirmation**- contact the coordinator at [confirmation@stmm.net](mailto:confirmation@stmm.net)

St. Mary Magdalene | 919-657-4800 | 625 Magdala Place | Apex, NC 27502 US

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