



Hope in the Good Life NEWSLETTER

The latest uplifting updates from Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska

CELEBRATING a NEW CHAPTER for Hastings HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE



Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 20th! Catholic Social Services (CSS) is throwing a community celebration, and you are invited. From 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM, we are opening the doors of our brand-new facility at 124 S. Colorado Ave for an unforgettable **Building Blessing + Family Festival**. Our goal is simple: to bring together Hastings' churches, organizations, and families for a day of joy, fellowship, and awareness of all God is doing in our town.

Come hungry and grab a bite from our lineup of local food trucks, and be the very first to taste our exclusive new "Hope in the Good Life" Blend, rolling out that day in an exciting new partnership with LD Roasters, who will also be on-site supplying beverages.

Bring the whole family! The Kids' Corner will be packed with fun, including face painting, coloring sheets, and fun CSS swag. As you explore the grounds, make sure to grab a "Passport to Service." You can collect stamps by visiting our local nonprofit

partners in "Community Row," grab a fresh bar of soap at the Pacha Soap station, and take a staff-led tour of our new facility. Keep your eye out for Sodbuster baseball players and Buster their mischievous mascot! Complete your passport, and you'll be entered to win our grand prize drawing!

At 1:00 PM, the festival will pause for a powerful moment of dedication. We are incredibly honored to welcome Bishop James D Conley from Lincoln, alongside several of our partnering local priests and pastors, to perform the official Community Prayer and Blessing of the new building and grounds. We will pray over the specific spaces—from the food prep area to the chapel—where lives will be changed.

Whether you are a long-time volunteer, a community partner, or a family just looking for a fun Saturday afternoon, there is a place for you here. **Join us on June 20th as we celebrate a new chapter of bringing Hope in the Good Life to Hastings!**

-Jonathan Kiehl, Hastings Regional Director

You're invited to our
CSS HASTINGS



BUILDING BLESSING + Family Festival

Sat. 6/20/26 12-3p 124 S. Colorado Ave.

Community Prayer & Building Blessing at 1P by Bishop Conley & partnering priests/pastors!

Kid's Corner with fun games & prizes!

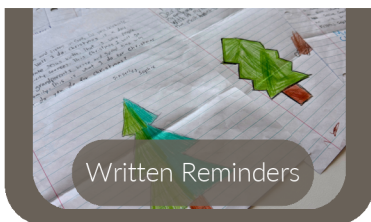
Food trucks, "Community Row", & product samples!

All are welcome- let's celebrate our new chapter of HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE together!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



A Mother's Love



Written Reminders



Tee Up for CSS



Christ's Light

REFLECTING a *Mother's Love*

In March, at our annual Celebration of Hope Gala and Silent Auction, I found myself drawn not only to the conversations among friends, but to the quiet, beautiful presence of mothers and their children. Several women had their babies in tow, their small squeals and bright smiles weaving joy into an already meaningful evening. In a room filled with faithfulness and generosity in support of Catholic Social Services, these mothers offered a living witness to love in its most tangible form.

Motherhood, however, is not only defined by moments of celebration. It is also marked by sacrifice, resilience, and, at times, restoration.

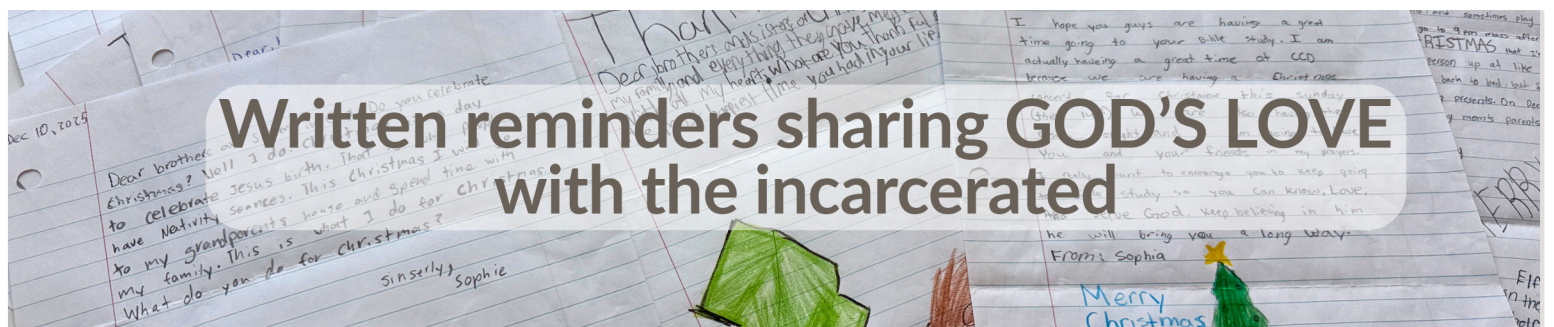
Around that same time, Catholic Social Services assisted a mother transitioning out of the prison system in Nebraska. After a period of separation shaped by difficult choices, she began the journey toward reunification with her children. While incarcerated, she took part in programming that helped her build skills rooted in accountability, trust, and respect—foundations essential for restoring relationships.



Recently, she was reunited with her children.

The same love reflected in a mother holding her infant at the gala is present in a mother working to rebuild what was lost. This is the hope we celebrate—not only in joyful moments, but in the quiet, courageous steps toward healing. It is here, in these stories, that we see the good life unfolding.

-Katie Patrick, Executive Director



During this academic year, the Prison and Reentry Apostolate (PARA) has several batches of letters from the 5th and 6th grade CCD classes at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Sutton, NE. Thanks go out to Mrs. Tracy Galusha for spearheading this effort. She first heard about PARA from Seth Odgaard, the founder of Christ Crucified, a local non-profit organization whose mission is to make Christ known and loved through the Passion. Tracy wanted to find a way to write letters to the incarcerated. As she has shared, **"I was very moved by the story of Servant of God Jacques Fesch - 'No one is beyond repentance or redemption.' Writing letters of encouragement and hope to those in prison... is something anyone can do - even elementary students."** It was an easy "yes" for PARA to find a way to make this happen, even as we navigated the necessary protocol and compliance with the state facilities.

High school students at St. Mary's Catholic Church have performed service projects and gone on mission trips the past couple years and this ignited a fire for her younger CCD students, "They wanted to be 'on mission' too!" So Tracy started Monthly Missions for her Wednesday classes. This past fall, 9 students in her 6th grade class wrote letters of encouragement to the incarcerated. Then, for the spring, she had her 11 students in the 5th grade class join the effort.

Letters are shared, a few at a time, with a Bible Study at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, and they are available to all the state facilities in the diocese. Students, known only by their first names in the letters, have shared some of what they are learning, offered prayers of encouragement, given reminders of God's love and mercy for the incarcerated, and provided a token of love, joy, and support for the incarcerated. The letters are read aloud, and the smiles, laughs, and head nods from those in prison give such a beautiful witness to how the Church extends even to those in prison. These students dignify all our incarcerated brothers and sisters who hear the letters. Tracy shared that, **"My hope is that this opportunity gives students the desire to have a heart more like Jesus's - a heart that can meet people where they're at and share the love of God no matter their circumstances. Writing letters to those serving their 'time' has allowed students to put on a new lens, seeing them as brothers and sisters in Christ."**

Anyone who would like to join us in writing letters to our incarcerated brothers and sisters can take courage from Tracy and her students, "We must never forget that our Lord was put in prison on the night he was betrayed." Reach out to me at lbaus@csshope.org to learn more and start writing!

-Levi Baus, Director, Prison and Reentry Apostolate

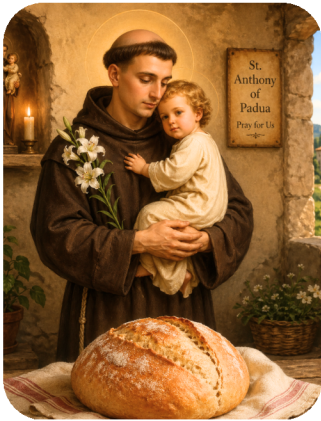
Refrigerator REFERENCE

Catholic Culture & CSS Calendar

How & why we're performing the Works of Mercy in response to the Call of God- join us in our mission!

Our Catholic Culture: St. Anthony Bread

From "Miracle Worker" to "Saint of the Poor" to "Generator of Charity," Saint Anthony of Padua has been given many titles over the centuries. He is especially known as an intercessor for finding lost items. Many people turn to him in prayer when something is missing, often using a version of "St. Anthony please come around, what is lost must be found." But asking for his help is only one part of the prayer. St. Anthony was truly generous in helping the poor in his life, and his work continues in his name and intercession. His life was marked by generosity to the poor, and those who seek his help are encouraged to respond by offering prayers or charitable acts, particularly toward those in need.



One way of thanking St. Anthony for his intercession is a tradition known as "St. Anthony Bread." The term refers to donations given in thanksgiving to God for blessings received through St. Anthony's intercession. These offerings are typically directed toward helping the poor, continuing the saint's legacy of compassion. For example, when someone prays to St. Anthony for help in finding a lost item and succeeds, they may express gratitude by making a donation to support charitable works.

The origins of this tradition date back to 1263 in Padua, Italy. According to legend, a young child drowned, and the grieving mother prayed to St. Anthony, promising to donate grain equal to the child's weight to the poor if her child were restored to life. When the child was miraculously revived, she fulfilled her promise, establishing what became known as "St. Anthony Bread."

Over time, the tradition spread. In 19th-century France, a woman named Louise Bouffier attributed the recovery of her locked shop to St. Anthony's intercession and began distributing bread to the poor in gratitude. Later, in 1887, St. Hannibal Maria Di Francia further promoted the devotion in Italy by organizing charitable efforts for orphans during a cholera epidemic.

Today, St. Anthony Bread continues as a meaningful expression of faith and charity. Donations are often given to support organizations that provide food and assistance to the poor, elderly, and hungry. On June 13, St. Anthony's Feast Day, blessed bread is distributed in many churches as a reminder of his commitment to serving those in need. Ultimately, the tradition symbolizes not just giving food, but becoming a source of nourishment and compassion for others.

30th Annual Memorial Golf Classic & Cookout to honor Tom & Margaret Tracy

It's time to tee it up again! The 30th annual CSS Memorial Golf Classic & Cookout is slated for Monday, September 14th at Hillcrest Country Club in Lincoln. The first CSS golf tourney took place in September of 1996 and drew 24 teams. In a few short years, the tournament expanded to two flights accommodating up to 72 teams. In 1997, the tournament was held in memory of CSS employee Fran Walsh, who lost her life in an automobile accident the day after the first tournament was held in 1996. Each year, the tournament has been held in memory of an individual or couple who has made an impact in the Catholic community. We are honored to hold this year's event in memory of Tom and Margaret Tracy of Lincoln.

There are a number of ways you can support our Memorial Golf Classic & Cookout, even if you are not a golfer. Hole sponsorships and priest sponsorships are available, or you can make a memorial gift in honor of the Tracys or your loved one. The morning flight begins at 7:00 AM, the afternoon flight is at 1:00 PM. Team fees include carts, lunch, and a cookout for golfers/and a guest at 6:00 PM. To register or for more information scan the QR code or call (402) 430-5626. **Space is limited!**



-John McDermott, VP of Marketing & Development

Save these upcoming CSS EVENT DATES

* **FRI 6/5** MONTHLY CSS HOLY HOUR FOR CLIENT INTENTIONS CSS LINCOLN OFFICE CHAPEL

* **SAT 6/13** MONTHLY CLOTHING & FURNITURE SALE CSS DONATION CENTER

SAT 6/20 CSS HASTINGS BUILDING BLESSING + FAMILY FESTIVAL 124 S. COLORADO AVE

SAT 6/27 CHASE COUNTY CHALLENGE FOR CSS IMPERIAL CITY SQUARE-IMPERIAL, NE

SAT 8/08 WALK TO END HUNGER-FOR CSS FOOD MARKET PIUS X HS LINCOLN

MON 9/14 CSS MEMORIAL GOLF CLASSIC & COOKOUT HILLCREST COUNTRY CLUB

SUN 10/4 BOUNTIFUL HARVEST GALA & SILENT AUCTION HASTINGS CITY AUDITORIUM

* Monthly event- visit our website for full list of dates

See more info & register online: csshope.org/calendar





St. Gianna, pray for us!

We celebrate St. Gianna's Beretta Molla's feast day on April 28th, and for the St. Gianna Program this is a pretty special day. While most of the women living with us are not Catholic, we use the opportunity to share the story of our patron saint. St. Gianna, having been a wife and mother, is in so many ways a very relatable saint. She offers a beautifully simple example of living a holy life in the regular, day to day events. She is also a source of inspiration as a dedicated mother, which is something that just about all of our residents can relate to.

Typically, sharing her story includes giving out prayer cards with an image of St. Gianna, and a short run through of her story and why she's so special to us! **This year, we were excited to host Bishop Conley, who celebrated Mass for us as we filled the day with God's love guided by St. Gianna's example.**

In addition to sharing about St. Gianna, it gives us a reason for a little party! At the home, we take advantage of any excuse to celebrate with our families - even in very simple ways. Building community is a big part of what we do. We invited the whole house down to the community room, and provided snacks while offering a time for everyone to connect. It is so much fun to see the children play together and allow the moms the chance to gather together.

St. Gianna's feast day is one of our more laid-back events, but it is one that is very dear to my heart. As Gianna was beatified by Pope John Paul II during the international Year of the Family, **everything about her story calls us to holy and healthy families.** We couldn't ask for a better guide for our St. Gianna Program's mission.



Bishop Conley celebrating Mass in our chapel on April 28th

-Veronica Pino, St. Gianna Program Director

Journeying from darkness to CHRIST'S LIGHT with Kellie

Easter Vigil began in darkness with the blessing of the Paschal Candle, which represents Christ as the light of the world. Slowly all of the Candidates, Catechumens and Sponsors lit their candles from the Paschal Candle and then one by one shared that light with the whole congregation and the whole parish was lit up by candlelight. **This is such a beautiful reminder of the darkness in the world today and the ways that Christ is the light and will always be the light.** We are called to share that light of Christ we each have in our hearts with our brothers and sisters and to draw them out of the darkness into His light and love.



Over the course of the last few years, I have gotten to walk with Kellie. She came to St. Gianna's in the midst of darkness and great suffering. Over time, barriers were broken down and she received the truth of who she is and the love that God has for her. Kellie attended Bible Study at St. Gianna's and after she moved out I continued to invite her to come back and receive God's love for her in a deeper and profound way.

I felt called to continue our friendship after I switched positions at CSS and over the past year have accompanied Kellie on her journey to the Catholic faith. **This Easter Vigil I stood beside her as her sponsor into the Catholic Church where she received the sacraments of Confession, Confirmation and First Communion.** During the mass, Kellie was just radiating with joy and peace. She was finally able to receive Jesus in the Eucharist after longing for Him. Kellie shared that after she received these sacraments she has been overwhelmed with Gratitude and Mercy. She went home that night and prayed in gratitude to God for saving her from the depths of despair and darkness, for the joys and the blessings she has received, and most importantly bringing her to the light of Christ. God is good!

-Alexis Broulliette, Outreach Coordinator

Sr. Karen, Sr. Carol, Kellie, Alexis, and Sr. Gabriel after Easter Vigil Mass

How may we pray for you at CSS?

Share your prayer intentions with us, and we'll offer them during our **Rosary** in the CSS Lincoln Chapel. You may also submit requests anonymously online at csshope.org/pray

HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE NEWSLETTER | MAY/JUNE 2026

I'll support *Hope in the Good Life!*

You may also use this form to correct any mailing info found on the front panel or to provide your email address (see below)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Providing your email allows us to communicate with you digitally, saving us valuable resources (including postage) for CSS programs/services & supports SUSTAINABILITY, a CSS Core Value.

Support enclosed: \$ _____

Check to receive an annual statement ONLY (individual thank you letters for each gift will NOT be sent to you)

Donate online!
csshope.org/donate



Thank you!



"I needed to give you a hug. Thank God, God is good. I want to cry."

-A grateful mom, after our Refugee Services team connected her with the Green Card she'd misplaced a year ago. **She can now begin her new job.**

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: Head, Heart, Hands, Health, HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE

Here's a fun service project worth celebrating!

The **B.U. Stockraiser's 4-H Club** created and donated Birthday Kits to our **CSS Auburn Food Market**.

Members decorated, filled, and stocked the kits to bring birthday joy to our southeastern Nebraska neighbors. It's a beautiful example of the 4-H pledge:

*I pledge my HEAD to clearer thinking,
My HEART to greater loyalty,
My HANDS to larger service,
and my HEALTH to better living,
for my club, my community,
my country, and my world.*



Carson, Bryson, & Ty DeBuhr with CSS Auburn Regional Director April Boellstorff

THANK YOU!



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#HopeintheGoodLife

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(S.A.G.)

Hope in the Good Life Newsletter

MAY | JUNE 2026



Support Chase County HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE

This June will mark the 4th time we've been blessed to participate in the Chase County Challenge. This event is in conjunction with Smokin' on Broadway, a barbeque competition and concert. The Challenge is a dollar for dollar percentage match for non-profits in Chase County. **Every dollar CSS Imperial/St. Isidore Gift & Thrift raises, the Imperial Community Foundation will match. This is our biggest fund raiser of the year allowing us to be sure to have enough funds to assist our clients in need.** We can accept \$ donations anytime from now to the event, which takes place on Sat. June 27 at the newly renovated City Square in Imperial- where you can visit with 20 or so other non-profits while checking out all the meat smoking competitors and then a concert.

Keep in mind what we do with our funds and proceeds:

- Help with qualifying utilities, rent, food, some medical, dental and vision expenses and gas to travel to out of town appointments, plus loan out medical equipment, etc.
- Find resources and help fund resources for emergency situations
- Provide material needs when called for
- Affordable resource for clothing, furniture, household goods, toys, and sporting goods, using the proceeds of those sales to assist our clients
- Providing an atmosphere of listening and caring when someone needs a friendly ear and so much more



The above examples are examples of actual situations in which we have aided. Some of them are very hard situations, hard to imagine. So **please assist us with your most appreciated donations via the Chase County Challenge to maximize your generosity to those in need in our county.**

To donate, mail a check to St. Isidore Gift & Thrift, PO Box 1294, **drop** the donation off at the store, or **attend** the event, find our booth, and give in person. It's important to note the donations are for the Chase County Challenge so make that designation on the memo line of your check or any other type of payment. **Thanks for giving Hope in the Good Life!**

-Bill Sullivan, St. Isidore Gift & Thrift Store Manager



COMING IN HGL EXTRA JUNE EDITION digital only:

We have MUCH more to share with you (too much to fit in a single newsletter!) including more stories and reflections on our encounters with neighbors across southern Nebraska. Join our digital communication list: csshope.org/connect

