

COWBOY Catholic

St. Paul's Newman Center
University Catholic Community

FALL 2021



Feeding the Faithful
Sunday Supper Preparation

Forming Future Leaders

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A significant aspect of the mission of St. Paul's Newman Center is forming leaders in the Catholic Church. Over the years we've seen Newman Center graduates move on to parishes in Wyoming and beyond serving as Directors of Youth Ministry, Faith Formation, Evangelization, Music and more. In this edition of Cowboy Catholic, you will get to meet students and alumni who are serving our church in various capacities.

One result of the significant staff changes this past year has been the opportunity for students to step forward as paid interns. As you meet Aimee and Samantha in the feature about music leadership, you can begin to imagine how they will be serving our church and enhancing our prayer and worship for many years to come.

Two recent alumni, Brenna and Max, will share their experience of transformation at St. Paul's that led them to dedicate a year for Max and two years for Brenna in service at an orphanage in Honduras...in the midst of COVID-19 and a hurricane in Honduras. Max has recently agreed to return to St. Paul's this December to join our staff as a Ministry Assistant working with Youth, College Students, and the Latino Community in Laramie.

Finally, five other students will reflect on their experience in leadership roles at St. Paul's and living in our community housing. St. Paul's is proud to offer residences for men and for women on the block of the Newman Center. The women and men who live in these houses commit to intentional living which includes prayer, shared meals, and service to the Newman Center. They also open their residences each week for the men's group (brotherhood) and the women's group (sisterhood) to gather for a meal and conversations about their faith.

I pray that as you read about the remarkable ways our students are living their faith at St. Paul's and beyond, you feel connected to the vital ministry of the Newman Center. As you can image, the financial support needed for Campus Ministry is far beyond what that parishioners of St. Paul's can supply. Thank you for your continued support in prayer and finance, enabling the Holy Spirit to continue to work in this special place.

Fr. Rob

Pastor





Two Talented Women Take on Music Ministry

Leading the way with Aimee Gray

by Lillie Rodgers

Hailing from the pleasant nook of Pinedale, Wyoming, Aimee Gray was surrounded by music and faith growing up. For as long as Aimee can remember, her mother has coordinated the Music Ministry at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Pinedale. Aimee's older sister, Haley, was a staple in the Newman Center choir during her college days. Yet when Aimee arrived in Laramie as a timid freshman in 2017, she did not jump right into leading music. Despite learning the guitar her freshman year, she refused to play for anyone publicly! First came the task of building Aimee's confidence in her musical and leadership abilities, which developed as Aimee dived head-first into the Newman Center's Campus Ministry. From Search retreats to mission trips to Panama, Oklahoma City, and Chicago, Aimee has been one of our most loyal students. The payoff: Aimee's personal faith has blossomed, and with it, her willingness to see herself as a beloved, valuable,

and necessary part of the Body of Christ, with gifts to share. When Tom Quinlivan, SPNC's previous Music Director, invited Aimee to serve as his music intern in 2020. Aimee was as flabbergasted as a Cubs fan after the 2016 World Series (did they really win!?). Yet Aimee was the perfect fit: responsible, organized to a fault, and clandestinely musically adept. Despite reservations, Aimee accepted, and soon enough she was accompanying Tom with her guitar skills, leading the student praise team, and singing the responsorial psalm at liturgies. In Aimee's words, "Tom developed me as a musician, both with guitar and vocally, as well as gave me the confidence to lead. I'm so grateful for my time as his intern and for the friend and mentor he has been for me." With Tom's departure this past summer, Aimee has stepped up to direct the Music Ministry at SPNC – a herculean job not for the faint of heart. When she isn't at Newman for



Campus Ministry events or her music internship, Aimee works diligently towards her degree in Kinesiology and Health, as well as certifications in Physical Education, Adapted Physical Education, and Health Education. She will graduate in May, no longer resembling the timorous freshman who played music behind closed doors. Five years since her apprehensive arrival in Laramie, Aimee Gray is a vibrant leader who shares her faith and musical gifts with all

Defying Anxiety

by Myra Belser and Samantha Rogaczewski

Samantha (better known as Sammi) Rogaczewski; is a native of Sheridan, Wyoming. She is a sophomore, studying Environmental Systems Science. Immersed in music throughout her life, her love of singing for liturgies in second grade and hasn't stopped since. When she landed in Laramie, she immediately expressed an interest in Music Ministry at the Newman Center to her dear friend and mentor, Tom Quinlivan, the Director of Pastoral Music and Liturgy. Since then, Sammi has been instrumental (no pun intended) in music and worship, sharing her musical talent at Mass, Adoration and Praise, and Cowboy Catholic student meetings. "Music ministry at St. Paul's has become an integral part of my college journey."



When approached with the idea of becoming a music intern for the parish, she was both very excited but apprehensive. "I was not confident in my ability of leading a faith community and singing in front of peers. However, with Fr. Rob's encouragement and support, I could foresee this as an opportunity to fulfill a deep desire to guide others to God through music." Sammi has learned to muscle through the anxiety and has come so far as mastering solo singing and piano accompaniment along with utilizing her natural leadership abilities. "God reminds me to worry less about my mistakes, and more about sharing my gifts to lead others to Him through music."

Campus Ministry sees a unique blend of personalities that lend itself to a thriving ministry. Five students share their perspectives on components of ministry that bring faith and friendship to the forefront at St. Paul's.

Leadership



My name is Joey Flock and I am from Loveland, Colorado! I am a Senior studying Physiology at the University of Wyoming. I have been involved with the Newman Center since the second semester of my Freshman year, so I've been hanging around St. Paul's for almost three years now.

My journey has greatly changed in those three years at the Newman Center as

I started by just wanting to go to Mass every Sunday and that would be it. But now, I can't get enough of the Newman experience because of the amazing student leaders at St. Paul's who promote a faith-filled life. I have been blessed with the opportunity to become a student leader at the Newman Center myself and this has been one of the most influential and exciting experiences I have had throughout my collegiate career.

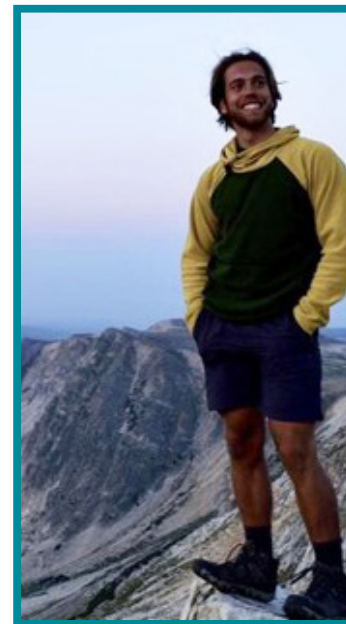
Being a leader at SPNC is amazing because I get to help develop the faith of so many other students, but I also get to enjoy deepening my own faith through the process. On the Newman Leader Team I coordinated social events for Newman Center students, and I truly love seeing new relationships form between the students and how they build each other up and grow in the faith together.

I am also one of the SEARCH retreat directors this semester and I could not be more excited about this opportunity. SEARCH is so instrumental for building and strengthening the faith of so many students at the University. Knowing I am making a difference in these individual's lives has meant more to me than I could ever imagine. As a leader at Newman, I have been blessed to grow as a student, a Catholic, and a person.

Building Relationships

"If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up." Ecclesiastes 4:10.

These words do a great job, in simple terms, of capturing how important relationships are in this wild roller coaster of a ride that is life. When you first get to college, you have so much freedom yet so little direction, and there are so many things pulling you in different ways, some that are not good for you. We often know few others, and it can be hard to find your place or the people that appreciate you for who you are no matter where you have been. St Paul's Newman Center has made Laramie feel like a home away from home. The relationships I have formed here have been a big reason why.



Bobby Schimmel is a junior majoring in Kinesiology, from Colorado Springs, CO

From my perspective, friends are people who not only care for you, but also challenge you. They help you strive to achieve, to grow, and to become the best version of yourself. And, most important of all, they help you keep your eyes focused on God and the great many blessings and plans He has for us. They are there to lean on in the difficult times (of which there are many) and to rejoice with in the good times (of which there are many too). The relationships I have been blessed to find at St Paul's took time (effort matters!), but they all have guided me in these areas and have helped me more often choose the path less traveled due to their examples. And for that, I am incredibly thankful.

Service

St. Paul's Newman Center is a place that knows the importance of community and only asks for each person to be present. My name is Rachel Sucharski, and I was born and raised in Alamosa, CO. I am currently in my third year at the University of Wyoming studying Physiology with an Honors minor. I began attending Mass and other Newman Center events my freshman year, and

it was one of the best decisions I made.

In January of 2020, I took a leap of faith and participated in the Chicago Encounter Trip. Throughout that week, we traveled to various organizations that serve populations such as the homeless, those facing food insecurity, and those with developmental disabilities.



Even though these organizations served different physical needs, the emotional and spiritual needs of the people we encountered were the same. The basic need was for kindness, acknowledgment of dignity, and a listening ear. The challenge was to provide these, so I found myself stepping up to the plate and out of my comfort zone. I quickly realized that the best way to show kindness, acknowledge dignity, and actively listen was to be completely and undistractedly present. Since this realization, I have found that being present isn't reserved for when I am intentionally serving others; it's meant for every interaction with another person.

As I continue to participate in service and outreach opportunities, I have found that the act of being present is at the heart of everything. On a weekly basis, a group of students brings the Eucharist to members in the community who cannot come to Mass. Most of this time is spent being present in conversation. There have been numerous times when a simple conversation had a deep emotional impact on those being visited and those doing the visiting—all through the gift of presence.

Living in Community



My name is Hallie Jette. I am a senior at UW majoring in Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) with a concurrent in Environment Systems Science (ESS) and minors in Agroecology, and Rangeland Ecology and Watershed Management. My home is Buffalo, Wyoming.

Living in the Women's House with four roommates has been a positive experience. Sharing common space in community with like-minded people who share Catholic beliefs has been rewarding. The friendships with fellow students as well as those living community in the Men's House have impacted my life.

The world can be cruel with people quick to judge. But it can also be a place where people care and are accepting and loving. Dealing with depression, I count on my friends in community who are in my corner and who are accepting and supporting. It is indescribable.

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Worship

Worship at St. Paul's Newman Center has taken many forms over my three and a half years here. We are blessed at Newman with an incredible community that worships in very diverse ways. One of my favorite forms of worship at the Newman center is our adoration and praise night. Once a month, we meet as a group on a Wednesday night to pray, sing, and simply rest in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. It is a powerful night of prayer and growing closer to God, and always offers healing for me and for many others. Weekly, I find myself attending daily mass and Sunday Mass. Sunday 5 pm liturgy is always a special time to gather at Mass together with other college students and grow closer to one another as we are each transformed more and more into the body of Christ. I also have been able to attend daily Mass which often has a population of more residents of the community, and it is so special to form connections with the members of the resident community as well. One of the unique opportunities at St. Paul's Newman Center is weekly Mass on campus. This is especially moving when we come together to celebrate Mass outside on Prexy's pasture, living our faith out in front of other students, in the heart of campus. It allows students to worship God both in the sacraments and in enjoying his creation. Newman has shown me how worship can also take many other forms, such as going for a hike or run, spending time singing or playing guitar with a friend, or spending time in simple prayer or conversation with others.



Emily Mahood is majoring in Civil Engineering from Jackson, WY

Serving Children in Central America

Two Newman Alumni Volunteer in Honduras

by Max Lube and Brenna Fankell



Recent graduates, Max Lube and Brenna Fankell followed a different path than most post graduation in 2020. Their love of service led them to Amigos de Jesus Children's Home in Honduras. The Amigos de Jesús family is a place where hope and healing are found, and the vulnerable flourish and grow to discover their God-given potential.

Growth Starts Outside the Comfort Zone

Max Lube:

I am honored to share my beautiful experience of volunteering at Amigos de Jesus Children's home over the past year. While my first day in rural Honduras was not until August, 2020, my searching for a meaningful way to make a difference started years before. I have always had a desire to help those in need, but it wasn't until after my junior year at the University of Wyoming that a year of service became a possibility. I was drawn to Amigos for an opportunity to humbly serve children, live in an international Catholic community, learn Spanish, and be a part of something bigger than myself. After what felt like years of anticipation, it was a surreal moment to finally step out of the bus and onto the 200 acre property which has 13 home-style living quarters, a school, a large agricultural area, and a gorgeous chapel on site. I had been told that Amigos is a sanctuary of healing for all who come, and it was definitely evident to me that God was tangible and present there. Nothing could have prepared me for the year to come.

The basic job description of an Amigos volunteer is to help care for the children in whatever way is necessary. On a typical day, I spent most of my time teaching 8th and 9th grade science in the bilingual school onsite. Due to COVID-19, we were teaching both in-class students from Amigos and online students from the surrounding neighborhood. After completing my classroom responsibilities, I was free to go out and play with the children in the afternoon through dinner which I often ate in one of the homes. Each evening looked a bit different for the volunteers. On Mondays, we spent the night in the homes with the children, Tuesday we had a home cooked community dinner and activity while on Thursdays after dinner we had a spirituality night led by a part of the volunteer community. During the breaks in the school year, we alternated shifts watching the children throughout the day. Each volunteer had additional responsibilities, and with my background in Chemical Engineering I was designated to help with the newly installed water system which brought running water to each building across Amigos.

For years, I had a quote on my bedroom wall that stated, "Growth starts outside the comfort zone," and I surely found myself in plenty of uncomfortable situations. Teaching for the first time, trying to communicate in a second language, learning a new culture, and



adjusting how I live out my faith were all challenging situations to overcome; however, it was in these difficult times that I began to see God in new ways. I started finding God in the little moments. After particularly challenging days, all it took to cheer me up was the warmth of a child's smile, the sound of their excitement and laughter, or the hug and compassion of a fellow volunteer.

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When I was overwhelmed and stressed, slowing down to look at the mountains, gaze up at the stars, or watch the abundant wildlife around me put everything in perspective and reminded me how small I really am. Most importantly, I learned to have a reliance on God who is always there.

I encourage anyone who is interested in supporting or possibly volunteering at Amigos to visit www.amigosdejesus.org/

Walking into the Circle of God's Love



Brenna Fankel:

“Widen the circle of God’s love until no one is left standing outside.” This phrase adorns the back of one of my Newman Center T-shirts I received while studying at UW. It has since become one of my favorite quotes. We are all searching for something, for someone, to whom we belong. There is nothing more beautiful than entering into conversation realizing our humanity and our brokenness is what brings us all together. The Newman Center helped me discover that even in this brokenness, I belong to Christ. The staff, parishioners, and students I met there helped bring me into the circle of God’s unfailing, unconditional love.

Then, they sent me out with a mission: to help others realize their goodness and that they belong in the circle of Christ.

This mission brought me to what feels like the middle of nowhere to serve 150 children who have been abandoned, abused, and suffered great hardship and loss in their lives. In my time here at Amigos, I have served as a 6th and 7th grade Science teacher. This involves creating lessons, making worksheets, and teaching both in the classroom and virtually to neighborhood students. I also work in the clinic. This involves distributing daily medicine to kids who need it, going on trips to the doctor, as well as taking 8 children to the dentist every week.

While I love my assigned jobs, the part I find most beautiful is spending quality time with the kids. When I arrived here, I was assigned to 3 boys *hogares* or homes. Every day my boys and I run around, play games, go on walks, listen to music, watch movies, talk and eat meals together. True beauty in this experience is the kids-listening to them play and laugh, watching them smile, spending time talking with them, seeing them run up to you, hug you, and pull you into their next adventure-the list is endless.

Living here is a true joy, but it is not always easy. It is not always fun. I have learned a lot about my strengths, but much more about my weaknesses. Creating and maintaining my relationships with the kids keeps me going. I am called to share in the lives of the kids and share my life with them. It is in this sharing that we realize that although we have lived very different lives, we still have a lot in common. We share in joys, sorrows, difficult times, happiness and struggles. It is in this quality time that I realize I’m not standing in God’s circle inviting the kids in. We meet each other where we are, come together and hand in hand walk into the circle of God’s love.



[Living in Community continued from pg. 5]

Being present to fellow Newman students while working through difficulties is what Christ calls us to do. On the flip side, I will forever be grateful for the love and support from fellow Newman friends who have been there for me.

Transferring to the University of Wyoming two years ago was a hard decision, but by connecting with St. Paul’s Newman Center Community and with my community at the Women’s House, I feel I am at home.



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Coming Full Circle

by Myra Belser



Who is that priest in the dreadlocks and long hair, many people asked on Sunday, October 31? The disguised priest turned out to be Fr. Tom Ogg making his "I'm home...again" appearance. His subtle humor in taking advantage of Halloween, suddenly moved to an emotional moment as Fr. Ogg told the community how grateful he was for St. Paul's Newman Center. He praised the congregation for their love and support 60 years ago when he was a young man discerning his vocation, and as a newly ordained priest in residence in 1975.

The major reason Fr. Ogg is vacating his peaceful, secluded ranch home in Tensleep, Wyoming is to be in a more practical location. His 45 plus years of ministry with Worldwide Marriage Encounter still demands a fair amount of air travel. Weighing the option between a 6 ½ or a 2 ½ hour drive to DIA was one reason for him to relocate. Despite being back in familiar surroundings and among familiar faces, he admits the sounds of bugling elk will be a facet of the Big Horns he will sorely miss.

Contributions Fr. Ogg has to offer to Laramie community and Campus Ministry bring anticipated elation to the many he will and continues to serve. Welcome home...again, Fr. Ogg.