We are gathered here today to honor two very special ladies – Julie Kleindl and Kara Wickenhauser. They are both long time members and were educated here at St. Bernards where they continue to bless our parish and greater community with their generosity and dedication. The family histories and structures are quite unique as they are both "farmers daughters" – and – each have two brothers and one sister – and – each have one daughter and three sons.

Now, let's get a little more personal...

Julie Kleindl was born to Jim and Carol Wickenhauser and her siblings include Randy, Rob and Jill Good. Julie is married to Andy for 36 years and they have one daughter Melanie and three sons, Luke, Brett and Jared plus four grandchildren, Logan, Walker, Bodhi and Ivan.

Julie graduated from St. Catherine in St. Paul with an Occupational Therapy degree and started as an OT in schools, which was a great job. When her family grew, she decided to stay home with the children and did daycare for 12 years. In 2006, the Kleindl family moved to the farm, they currently reside on, and became more heavily involved at St. Bernard. Around that time, Father Martin Shallbetter was seeking members for a faith formation committee and that is where it all started for her. Shortly after that, the faith formation director position was open and she was hired as the director of grades 6-10. This job was a wonderful way to serve young people, families and continue to grow in her own faith. Some of her favorite memories were of the mission trips, especially to New Jersey, planning retreats, service nights, celebrating the sacrament of confirmation with many families and our wonderful volunteers/catechists.

Currently Julie serves as a greeter, a lector, organizes the Glad Days ice cream booth, waters flowers in the summer, and changes the St. Bernards sign with her husband Andy. She was an integral part of the church re-decorating committee and very recently made soup for the soup social – Arizona Pepperpork.

She has helped with various roles in the community, most recently to her kids and schools organizations. She spent several years on the post prom committee as well as volunteering in many ways, on the wrestling booster group.

In summary, Julie says life is full of unpredictable twists and turns. She never envisioned being a faith formation director, but it was one of her favorite jobs! She worked with 4 priests, and the best co-worker – Kara, and was surrounded by so many wonderful catechists and youth volunteers. Our goal was always to provide the best program for the students! I am proud of the work we did to create a strong program.

Fun Fact – Julie loves to cook and Andy is willing to try any new recipe once!

Kara Wickenhauser was born to Leo and Sharon Willems and her siblings include, Brian, Dave, and Beth Heather. Kara is married to Rob and has one daughter, Grace, married to Zach Heiland and 3 sons, Ben, Brandon and Zach.

Kara graduated from Minnesota State University Mankato, with a Bachelor of Science degree – Community Health major with a Gerontology minor. Her job resume includes,

1994 - 2003 – Senior Center director for the City of Chanhassen
2008 – 2026 – St. Bernard and Ascension Faith Formation director for Preschool – Grade 5.
2024 – 2026 – Hospice Volunteer Coordinator at Ridgeview Medical.

Kara explains it like this. The first church committee I served on was the Ladies Guild. I was young and out of college and received a call saying I was the new VP – I had no clue I was even nominated or that I needed to attend a meeting to decline. I served as VP for one year and automatically became President the following year. This was the start of many parish volunteer opportunities to come. In addition she has served as a youth minister leader, on the welcome visiting priest/speakers committee, vacation bible school committee co-chair, Synod committee, faith formation catechist and marriage prep volunteer. Kara had the pleasure of working with her sister-in-law, Julie, for 18 years as the joint faith formation directors.

Since Rob is a fireman, she has *volunteered* for various Cologne fire department fundraisers over the years – steak fry, drive-in movie weekend and deliver calendars door to door. She also supported Glad Days with any volunteering as needed. Over the years, Kara helped coach her kids youth sports (one year for St. Bernards when they had a team) and supported many school needs/events/activities – assisting in the classrooms, working at sporting events and serving on fundraising committees.

Kara served as the prize committee chair for Centrals post-prom for 10 years and served as an overall chair person for 2 years. She served as the Touchdown Club treasurer for 3 years and also the West Carver Long Range Planning Committee.

Fun Facts – In 2002 Kara and Rob attended World Youth Day in Toronto Ontario with 5 youth from St. Bernard and Ascension and were 15 feet away from Pope Saint John Paul II.
I love the outdoors and cooking.

Thank you both for recognizing the perpetual stewardship opportunities and for answering God's call – your unlimited energy has benefited our parish and entire community.

We can't wait to see what you will do next!!