

# SAINT CLARE PARISH PROFILE

## MIKE MADDEN



St. Clare parishioners are familiar with Deacon Mike Madden’s dedicated service as a pastoral associate for the past two years, right up until his retirement from the position on April 4.

But his commitment to helping others spans most of his life.

Deacon Mike was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, as the oldest of 8 children.

“My first stirrings of interest in ordination were in grade school,” he said, noting he spent five years in seminary during his upper teen years. But he transitioned to a different calling in 1969.

“I actually had a hard time leaving the seminary, because I felt I needed to find some other way to lead a ‘meaningful’ life,” Deacon Mike said. “Eventually, over many years, I have discovered that my calling in life is two-fold: ministry and teaching.”

Deacon Mike enrolled at Indiana University in 1969 and earned his bachelor’s degree. Then he attended Vanderbilt University and received a medical degree in 1976. His next stop was Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, where he underwent three years of internal medicine training. From there he devoted two years to nephrology training at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

From 1981 to 1985, Deacon Mike served in the U.S. Navy at the Navy Hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia, reaching the rank of lieutenant commander. In 1985, one year after marrying his wife, Nancy, the couple moved to Missouri, and he held a faculty position at St. Louis University until 1987.

The couple moved to Appleton in 1987 and became longtime members of St. Bernadette Parish. In

2006 they moved to Wrightstown, where they have resided ever since.

After practicing medicine for four decades, Deacon Mike retired in 2018.

“For most of my career, I ‘ministered’ one-on-one with patients, and I taught medical students and residents,” Deacon Mike said. “I seemed to have a knack for explaining things to both patients and students in ways they could understand and remember, and I enjoyed doing that very much.”

In the late 1990s, Deacon Mike realized he could “return to my first ‘love,’ the church, and bring my ministry and teaching calling in the form of the permanent diaconate.”

He proceeded to become ordained by Bishop Robert Banks in 2002 and earned a master’s degree in pastoral theology from St. Joseph’s College of Maine. His first diaconate assignment was at St. Bernadette Parish.

“When I retired from medicine in 2018 (one year after joining St. Clare Parish), I asked Fr. Brian (Wideman) if the parish could use me in any particular way,” Deacon Mike said. “He and I eventually agreed on a plan to become the part-time pastoral associate.”

Deacon Mike’s primary duties during the past two years — up until his retirement from the position on April 4 — included organizing some of the diaconal ministries with the other deacons, assisting with discipleship formation, helping with baptism preparation, and generally preaching and teaching.

“My primary joys in ministry include especially working with young families and their newborns in the baptism program, and preaching and teaching, since that is sort of one of my gifts,” he said prior to his retirement as pastoral associate. “I am blessed to be able to simply give the ministry of presence to grieving families at funerals, and anyone who is struggling with life’s many difficulties.”

Deacon Mike and Nancy have three sons and four grandchildren. In his free time, Deacon Mike plays guitar with the music ministry of the People of Praise, and he makes scale-sized models of airplanes, ships and other things. He recently shared his interest in model building with students at St. Clare Parish during a Catholic Schools Week activity.