



# The Belltower Beacon

*A publication to inform, welcome and inspire the spirited community of St. Christopher.*

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## CELEBRATING LENT IN COVID TIMES

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By the time you read this, we will be into the season of Lent. It has been one year since coronavirus, COVID, social distancing and masks have become part of our everyday experience. Vaccines have begun but it will take time for an entire nation of our size to be able to receive the necessary dose. Hope abounds for the future but patience is still required as we move forward at a snail's pace. As the Pastoral Staff of the parish prepared for this Lenten season we were very much aware that it would again be different from the norm. Although churches are open there remains no obligation to attend Sunday Mass and smaller than usual in-person attendance continues to be the norm. We want to offer opportunities for prayer but we also want to keep people safe and healthy. Our guidelines still require masks and social distancing within our worship space. Listed below are the activities taking place at St. Christopher Church during the Lenten season. Keep in mind that this list was prepared prior to the start of Lent and circumstances may require some changes as the journey towards Easter continues. Consult our website ([stchrisparish.com](http://stchrisparish.com)) for changes and updates and watch for the Constant Contact emails sent weekly to parishioners.

- We are following our normal weekend Mass schedule: Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 8:30, 10:00 and 11:30 a.m.

- The Saturday evening Mass will be livestreamed and available to watch on YouTube, the Parish website or on the Parish Facebook page.
- Weekday Masses will be at 11:00 a.m. Monday through Friday.
- Rosary Devotion will take place on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. (prior to 11 a.m. Mass).
- Stations of the Cross will be held in the church on Wednesdays following the 11 a.m. Mass and on Fridays at 7 p.m.
- There will be a Holy Hour and Benediction on Tuesdays from 5-6 p.m.
- Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays from 4-4:30 p.m.
- Holy Week will begin with the normal Mass schedule on Palm Sunday, March 27-28 and palms will be made available.
- Mass on Holy Thursday will be at 7 p.m. (livestreamed). Adoration will continue in church following Mass until 11 p.m.
- Stations of the Cross on Good Friday at noon and 7 p.m. Weather permitting, the noon Stations will be held outdoors in Centennial Park.
- The Good Friday Service will be at 3 p.m. (livestreamed).
- The Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday will be at 8:30 p.m. (livestreamed).
- Easter Sunday Masses will follow the normal schedule at 8:30, 10:00, and 11:30 a.m.
- All of the Masses on Easter Sunday will be livestreamed.

In addition to these liturgical/devotional opportunities, the Pastoral Staff will be offering some additional Lenten activities. Admittedly, some of these will already be in process by the time you read this. Others, however, may still be available for your participation. I encourage you to visit our website and watch for our weekly Constant Contact email for the latest details on all the activities listed in this article.



## LENT, CONT'D

**Lenten Family Bags:** These were made available by Sharon Armstrong, our Director of Religious Education, to our School and PSR families prior to the beginning of Lent. The bags contain age-appropriate activities for students and families throughout the Lenten Season.

**Mini-Retreat:** Robin Imbrigiotta, our Pastoral Associate, is offering this Lenten opportunity on the first three Saturdays of Lent (February 20 and 27, and March 6) from 9 a.m. to noon. This retreat is available either in-person or by Zoom.

**Lenten Gospels by Zoom:** Different members of the Pastoral Staff will lead a discussion and reflection on the Gospels of Lent. This will take place on the Monday evening prior to each Sunday at 7 p.m. These discussions will take place on Zoom. Check the website and weekly Constant Contact for the link to join on any Monday: February 15 and 22; March 1, 8, 15, & 22.

May you have a safe, healthy and Blessed Lent and Easter Season!

*Fr. John Chlebo*

## FROM MISSION TO MISSION

Cleveland's fundraising team for non-profit, **From Mission to Mission (FMTM)**, which serves missionary priests and religious returning to the United States after serving abroad, extends heartfelt gratitude for the generosity of St. Christopher parishioners this past fall. Hosting the agency's 40th anniversary fundraiser via an online auction and livestream program, the group exceeded their outreach and financial goals. A very special thank you to Fr. John Chlebo for serving on the advisory committee and supporting the effort in so many ways. The event would not have been possible without the expertise of Pastoral Minister Logan Feldkamp and his technical team. The members of FMTM and all those who benefit from its supportive programs are eternally grateful.

## CHRISTMAS LIVESTREAMING DEMONSTRATES STRONG ONLINE GROWTH

The presence of the Coronavirus pandemic paired with the issuance of a winter storm warning created a significant impact on in-person Mass attendance during Christmas weekend. While numbers in the pews were down, virtual engagement flourished, demonstrating the importance of our livestreaming system that was introduced in November. Our livestreamed Masses recorded over 4,000 views throughout the four-day weekend. Of these, 30% of our views were "live," watching our Mass take place in real time. Nearly 2,100 unique devices tuned into our streams over Christmas weekend.

Considering that several members of the same family occasionally gather around a single device to watch Mass, we estimate that somewhere between 4,000 and 6,000 people watched a Christmas Mass from home this year. While this figure is slightly lower than our average in-person Christmas attendance in non-pandemic years, we remain encouraged by the number of visitors who paid a visit to our digital services.



The months of research and monetary resources (in excess of \$20,000) that fund our livestreaming system have generated results worthy of the investment. Over 95%

of our Christmas attendance occurred virtually, highlighting the importance of our stream for those with snow-buried cars, compromised immune systems, and out-of-town travelers. At the time of writing, average online Mass views have doubled from 220 in October to 460 in December during the two months our streaming service has been active. Our months of preparation and research for installing our system proved vital for our ability to share the joy and comfort of our Christmas liturgy with all of you. It is my goal to continue our online growth in an effort to bring the Gospel and love of our community to others. Thank you for your financial and prayerful support of these projects at our parish!

*Logan Feldkamp*

## AN UNPRECEDENTED LENT AND EASTER

It has been more than a year since an unprecedented pandemic drastically changed our lives forever. That it occurred in the middle of Lent was particularly alarming: all of the Catholic traditions we hold so dear during this holy season were cancelled. Suddenly we were like the Israelites wandering in the desert, not sure what to do next. Fortunately, we have the assurance of a God who never abandons us. In this era of “unprecedented” technological advances, churches like ours were forced to quickly make the adjustment to online services. Thanks to our ever-present God, we were able to not only survive but in many ways thrive in the midst of such calamity. We now have the advantage of viewing our weekly Eucharistic celebration anytime from anywhere as many times as we wish. We can listen to our inspiring homilies repeatedly.

This year Lent began on February 17. It is certain that we will not yet return 100% to the way things were, but we are now better prepared and have more freedom to worship in person. We approach Lent as our 40 days of reflection and repentance as we prepare to commemorate the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ. We enter into this period of Lenten contemplation as we always do – praying and hoping that we are transformed into the most Christ-like followers we can be. This amazing transformation can come only when we let go of worldly attachments and surrender completely to God’s will. We avoid detouring into other activities and robbing our Savior of the harvest he deserves. This usually means changing the way we do things, reassessing priorities, trading bad (self-centered) habits for good (other-centered) ones. Today it could mean taking a break from television, non-stop news, the internet and social media. Maybe we can avoid topics (i.e., politics) and people that cause us to respond in negative ways. Instead, we can choose to spend that time in prayerful contemplation, asking God to take charge of our lives. If we pay attention, our bodies warn us about situations (and people) that may cause us emotional pain, and we make our choices accordingly. Certainly we can let go of things we have no control over, respect all people, choose to love and forgive. St. Teresa of Calcutta is famous for her simple but powerful advice for just about every difficulty – “pray and forgive.”

To focus on what matters most – our personal relationship with Christ – we have discovered countless new ways to support our journey. When used as God intended, modern technology is an amazing, priceless tool. We now access online inspirational nuggets via facebook, YouTube, applications (apps) and live streaming. We can thank our very own pastoral, technology and music ministry teams for making these available to us. Social gatherings have continued, albeit virtually. Catholic radio (local and satellite) and cable television (EWTN) bring us videos featuring spiritually fulfilling programs from around the world. If we truly seek meaningful spiritual outlets, they are plentiful and accessible (most of them free of charge/search the internet for Catholic apps and programs). In the many layers of 2020 turbulence and loss, we turn to God more fervently in prayer, thanksgiving, repentance and humility.



Though there is nothing like gathering in person as one, holy, Catholic, apostolic church, we are reminded that God is always in our midst. St. Augustine famously prays to God: “Our heart is restless until it rests in you.” We become restless when we leave God out of our lives. Thanks to our pastoral team, we continue to participate not only in weekly Mass but in a multitude of online worship services. St. Christopher continues to guide our youth, comfort our grieving, celebrate the Sacraments, pray the Rosary together, stay connected and grow spiritually as a faith community. We know that no matter how much the world changes, our God remains the same: a Creator who always was, is now and always will be. One of the Bible’s most popular phrases is “do not be afraid,” and indeed we must have unwavering trust in God in order to survive life’s many challenges. God told Joshua (v. 1:9), “Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” We believe and take comfort in this promise by praying from our hearts, not just our lips. It is only then that we can experience His peace which surpasses all understanding. “When righteousness, peace and joy increase, the kingdom of God is advancing.” (Romans 14:17). This year, more than ever, we need the powerful impact of Lent and the glorious promise of the Resurrection.

*Carmen Everett DeHaan*



## FIRST RECONCILIATION

Our second graders have been preparing to receive their First Reconciliation since October. It has been challenging trying to work around all of the Covid protocols, but we found a way to celebrate this important Sacrament, which is a vital part of our Catholic sacramental life. We were able to create an experience which was meaningful for the students, yet accommodated social distancing guidelines. The class was divided into four smaller, more manageable groups and First Reconciliation was celebrated the last three Saturdays of January and a final session in March. We will continue to prepare for First Communion in May with more instruction on the Eucharist and Jesus Day in April. Please pray for our 75 second grade students and their teachers during this special Sacramental year.

*Sharon Armstrong*



## A COVID CHRISTMAS

'Twas the night before Christmas and all around the town, the snow was a blowing and the temperature was a dropping! Our first and, hopefully last, COVID Christmas was far from merry. What the CDC and the Diocese of Cleveland could not accomplish encouraging people not to gather in large crowds, God took care of with a mighty snow storm. People did not venture out into the wintry mess and Christmas Mass attendance was incredibly low. The in-person total attendance for the six Masses was 234! This is far less than the 4,000 people who typically worship here at St. Christopher on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It was even less than our normal weekend Mass attendance has been since our return to church in late May. Yes, the snowy weather was certainly a factor in keeping attendance low but many chose to stay safe and healthy by avoiding the anticipated crowds.

It was definitely a different feeling in the church. The large crowds, smiling and happy faces and parishioners singing the familiar hymns were sadly missing. The church was decorated and the manger scene was in place but missing were the people who give life to this holy place. Yet Christmas did come and we did celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Savior.

On a positive note, the live streaming of the Masses for Christmas and the following weekend was highly successful. Approximately 2,075 devices tuned into our streaming over the four-day period. Most of the devices would typically have 2-4 people watching. That would bring the total number of viewers to well over 4,000 people.

We are very happy to be able to provide this service and even more happy that so many are watching. We will continue to livestream our Saturday evening Mass at 5 p.m. each weekend.

Perhaps this year we were able to focus a bit more on the real meaning of December 25. There may have been fewer parties and get-togethers, replaced by masks and social distancing. Maybe there were a few less gifts bought and exchanged but a deeper appreciation of the gift of family and friends who may not have been able to spend the time with each other as they would have liked. In this challenging time we were reminded of Emmanuel, our God with us, as indeed He is. As this year of 2021 progresses and vaccine distribution expands, may our focus on God and prayer remain an important part of our lives. May our faith sustain us, our hope inspire us and our love contribute to supporting one another on our shared journey through these COVID times.

*Fr. John Chlebo*



## CALLED FOR MORE

Coming soon to all parishes in the Diocese of Cleveland is a survey entitled, **Called For More**. This is a national program prepared by the Catholic Leadership Institute and already done in 37 dioceses in the United States. It is designed to listen to parishioners in support of parish and priestly life. The hope is to obtain an ideal leadership profile of priests, an ideal profile of a parish and a snapshot of the faith journey of parishioners.

The main instrument of the program is a 75-question survey for all parishioners to reflect on two things, individual spiritual growth and engagement with the parish. The survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete through an online link. Paper copies will be available for those who prefer that method. Experience so far has shown that most responses come from people who attend church and are involved in the parish with some pre-COVID regularity. The survey will hopefully indicate what keeps people engaged in their parish and what things might prompt others to drift away. This in turn will help prepare them to be disciple makers in the parish. This could prove helpful as we return to "normal life" and seek to invite people back to worship and involvement in the parish.

This article is a brief "heads up" to what will be coming in the near future, possibly even by the time you are reading this. We are still learning details ourselves. Some might wonder how this will be different from the parish survey we did in 2018. That was a helpful process for our parish and the Pastoral Council continues to develop goals and action steps as a follow-up, with many items already in place. This diocesan survey will support and augment what we are already doing and further validate and encourage goals and plans we are already trying to implement in our community. Stay tuned for further information as it becomes available and thank you for your support of our parish.

*Fr. John Chlebo*



## THE GIFT CHRISTMAS PROGRAM KEEPS ON GIVING

The St. Christopher “Giving in Faith Together” (GIFT) program kept on giving in 2020 despite the pandemic, thanks to its generous parishioners. Sponsored by the Social Concerns Committee annually, SCC members Rose Mary Zvernia, Rita Kerfonta and John Hosek worked behind the scenes to implement a revised safe version of the GIFT Program.

The 15 nonprofit agencies participating in the program requested gift cards, checks or online donations in lieu of wrapped gifts. Despite the challenges of 2020, our parishioners dropped off gift cards and checks at the Parish Office for the nonprofit agencies, and donated online to their chosen charity.

Here are a few examples of the lives and hearts made happier and lighter because of the GIFT program. Marlene Flowers of Metro Catholic School was grateful for Target, Kohls and Walmart gift cards she received for the children there. Deana Vaber and her coworker happily accepted gift cards and donations at the Cleveland Christian Home. Rocky River Women’s Club members were overjoyed to have gift cards to purchase food for families in need. Family Promise was delighted for the gift cards donated to homeless families.

Laura Guenther, Executive Director of Fill This House, posted on their Facebook page, “The St. Christopher Parish included us in their Christmas offering. People made financial contributions as well as donated items. They have supported us faithfully for many

years and we couldn’t be more grateful for their support.” Laura says the pandemic has affected 18-year old young adults aging out of foster care who have next to nothing when starting out on their own. She knows the need will be even greater in the spring.

Social Concerns members John and Mary Haggard, John and Sharon Hosek and Mary Ann Kuhn delivered gift cards and checks in person to the agencies in time for Christmas. If you would like to find out ways to volunteer or donate, you can access the St. Christopher Social Concerns Committee Facebook page, or email John Hosek at [jjudehosek@gmail.com](mailto:jjudehosek@gmail.com).

Sr. Mary Kay from the House of Champions wrote, “We are so appreciative of the GIFT program even though it was different due to COVID-19; it still provided us with things we need.” Sr. Marilyn Nichol, Outreach Minister of St. Colman sums up the program in her letter of gratitude, “During the challenges of this health crisis, we at St. Colman again give thanks for the beautiful Christmas spirit of the GIFT program. These gifts will enable us to provide for needs of many families in our neighborhood and parish during the winter season. We continue to pray in gratitude for you and your partnership with us to support and assist our community.”

May your generous spirit keep on giving and helping those in need into the Lenten season.

*Sharon Hosek*



## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2021

St. Christopher School's annual celebration of Catholic Schools Week was held January 31-February 5. Unlike in year's past the school was unable to host an Open House, hold an art show, celebrate a school family Mass in the Church, or hold special assemblies. As they've done throughout the school year, however, the SCS Knights demonstrated flexibility and determination and were able to celebrate CSW in a meaningful way.

The week began and ended with two spirit days; Monday for the lower grades and Friday for the upper ones. Each grade level met in the parish gym for Clash of the Classes; a series of grade level competitions. Activities included minute-to-win-it challenges, athletic events, relay races, and an obstacle course. On Tuesday, an all school Mass was held. Students in grades 7-8 attended in the church, while those in grades 3-6 watched the Mass remotely from the Parish Center. Students in grades K-2 watched the Mass in their classrooms. Staff members served as Eucharistic Ministers, giving students in the Parish Center the opportunity to receive Communion.

A highlight of every Catholic Schools Week in the school's talent show and this year was no different. Unlike in years past, the 2021 talent show was a virtual one. Students, whether working individually or in small groups, recorded their performances at home. These in turn were combined into an hour long video presentation that was streamed to the individual classrooms; allowing the students to enjoy the show with their classmates. Our students and staff were treated to a variety of acts; including musical, dance, athletic, and comedic performances. School closed on Friday with a St. Christopher School standard – the all school BINGO game. The 8th grade student council officers called the game remotely and students competed for a variety of exciting prizes.

The St. Christopher School students and staff would like to thank the entire parish community for their continued support of our school. We are already looking forward to CSW 2022 and being able to welcome the parish community back into the school.



*Scott Raiff*





## A LABOR OF LOVE



In the past two years, we have seen articles in the Belltower Beacon describing the concept, development and building of our beautiful Centennial Park. We have had a chance to enjoy it for several months now and are grateful for a mild winter that allows us to be outside during a year of too many restrictions. Our new multi-purpose park was made possible through the collaboration of many committed supporters. It has become a true gem not only for St. Christopher families but for the larger community as well. One of the devoted members of the construction team is general contractor and long-time parishioner Mike Buddie. Citing his “big attachment to St. Chris,” Mike’s work on Centennial Park was a personal labor of love. He, his parents and siblings joined St. Christopher when Mike was age 11; he raised his own children here and now has grandchildren at the school.

Mike and Carol Buddie, owners of F. Buddie Construction, are well known for their involvement in the church and school, for their undying support of parish life, and now for the company’s construction of the spectacular Centennial Park, which quickly became the favorite location for parish Masses, youth group meetings, and parish and school activities and gatherings. In the era of church closings, face masks, social distancing, and heightened safety measures, the opening of the Park happened in God’s perfect timing. The parents who conceived of replacing the outdated playground for the Park could not have imagined how useful it would become when faced with a pandemic two years later. F. Buddie Construction turned a dream into reality just in time!

Frank Buddie started his construction business in 1956 and earned an excellent reputation with homeowners in the area. Mike tells the story of his dad enrolling the children at the day school before building their home and being told by the nuns that he couldn’t possibly have their home ready before school started. Three generations later, there are still Buddie children at our school and the number continues to grow. Mike and Carol, originally from New Jersey, met at the University of Dayton. They are the proud parents of four and delighted grandparents of nine. Their son, Kevin, is a civil engineer who works for the family business and was instrumental in making Centennial Park the success that it is.

He and his wife, Mindy, are parishioners and parents of three boys. Their daughter and her husband, Karen and Andrew Robison, are also raising their family at St. Christopher. The other adult children are Ryan, who is married to Julia, and Greg. Mike and Carol enjoy skiing Lake Tahoe in winter and fishing the Metro Parks in summer. They have been involved at St. Christopher for many years, promulgating many initiatives at the school and the church. Carol uses her pro-life passion to spread the word, to raise funds for Birthright (where she is a Trustee), and to make our embroidered Baptismal bibs available to young families.

The concept for Centennial Park came from parents concerned about the aged condition of the former play space, used for hours each day for student recess, outdoor gym and other activities. Furthermore, it has always been a popular gathering space for neighborhood families that do not belong to the parish. Over a period of two years, the idea grew into actual plans, deadlines, ground-breaking and construction. The planning committee launched a fundraising campaign which included selling personalized brick pavers (still available for purchase). Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of parishioners, the project reached completion. It was officially blessed at an outdoor Mass in August with a large group in attendance, not only seated throughout the park but also sitting in their cars. Fr. John is extremely grateful that we are preparing for a new century of service to our community. He has stated: “Thank you for being the people you are, for the generosity you demonstrate and for your faith that shows itself in good works toward others.” (Further details in previous Beacon issues can be accessed on our parish website. It is indeed a brilliant success story).

In its 64 years of business, F. Buddie Contracting Ltd. has left a legacy of satisfied customers, a tradition being continued by Mike and his crew. When asked, Mike stated that one of his favorite parts of the job is seeing a project go from an idea and a dream to the finished product and a satisfied customer. In addition to Centennial Park being a labor of love, Mike and the team enjoyed working with Fr. John, principal Scott Raiff and other staff. They are “a great group to work with,” and have the best interests of students and parishioners in mind at all times. If you wish to join this worthy cause, add your name by making a pledge and/or by ordering a brick paver (or two). The Buddie team will continue to add bricks as long as supporters continue to order them.

It goes without saying that a great deal of time, work and resources went into creating such an amazing green space. In the words of St. Basil the Great, “A tree is known by its fruit; a man by his deeds. A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love.” Therefore, be sure to enjoy our Centennial Park in one or more of its many wonderful ways, in quiet prayer or with friends. Spend time admiring the landscape and statuary, being inspired, being grateful and being at peace. The Park and all our worship spaces – indoor and outside – do indeed comprise our holy ground, and when we are there, God is present.

*Carmen Everett DeHaan*



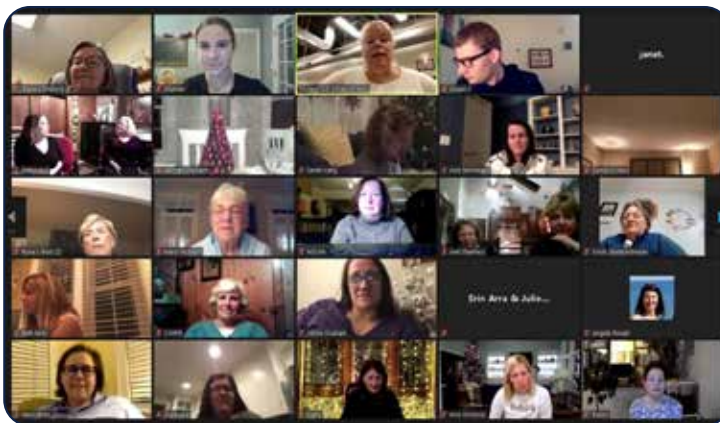
## Bricks at the Park



## VIRTUAL LADIES NIGHT OUT

On December 10, 58 women gathered together, virtually, for the 4th Annual Ladies Night Out. Traditionally, Ladies Night Out is hosted in the Parish Center and is filled with tasty food, fabulous wine, and wonderful friends, all benefitting Moriah House Family Shelter through a fun Chinese-style auction. This year, however, we had to get a little creative.

When we first started discussing the possibility of Ladies Night Out for 2020, we thought it wouldn't be possible. Hosting a virtual wine tasting or benefit sounded complicated, unknown, and, frankly, not nearly as much fun. We started brainstorming and soon saw the benefit of having a social event, even if it was through Zoom rather than in person. We felt that the event should be purely social, a chance to gather as a community of women, instead of focusing on fundraising for Moriah House. Although Moriah House will always be near and dear to our hearts, our planning committee felt an even stronger longing to gather as a community, something that had proven to be a challenge in 2020. As our ideas were developed and pieced together, we soon came up with a plan for a virtual Ladies Night Out. Before we knew it, we had an event in the works!



For the 4th Annual Ladies Night Out, 58 women gathered via Zoom, each with their own St. Christopher-etched wine glass and a personal wine tasting kit

from CLE Urban Winery. The event was filled with fabulous wine and corresponding pairings, and the wine tasting was facilitated by Destiny Burns, owner of CLE Urban Winery. Destiny walked us through each of the five wines and explained why the pairings worked so well with each one. She also shared the unique 'Cleveland' attributes about her winery, production, staff, and wines themselves. Throughout the night, we learned about the five S's of tasting wine (See, Swirl, Smell, Sip, Savor) and what it means when wine has legs. There was also a quick shout-out to Moriah House and an update on how well they have supported our sisters in need during this exceptionally challenging time. At the end of the event, door prizes that were generously donated by the Ladies Guild were given away and we all said good night.

Although it was certainly not what we pictured for the 4th Annual Ladies Night Out, it was a success. Our goal for the evening was to celebrate our community and to see each other's smiling faces. Not only did we accomplish that goal, but we also had great wine and a few laughs as well. I know our virtual wine tasting doesn't replace the traditional event, or even come close to making up for all of the cancelled events in 2020. However, I am hoping that the 58 women who joined us enjoyed the evening as much as I did, and that just for a moment their hearts were filled with joy as we remembered how beautiful our community is at St. Christopher.

*Laura Hunter*

## LUNCH SERVED WITH A SMILE



Working in a grade school cafeteria may not be for the faint of heart, but these long-time St. Christopher school cafeteria employees make it look easy, and all agree that working with

each other is one of the things they love most about their jobs. All of them are St. Christopher parishioners and began working in the cafeteria while they had children attending St. Christopher School. As pictured left to right are Lisa Bill, Denise Oswald, Colleen Moore, and Christina Ward.

On a typical day in the cafeteria, Lisa Bill and Colleen Moore are in the kitchen preparing and serving the food, while Denise Oswald and Christina Ward are in the cafeteria running the registers, helping the children as needed and cleaning between lunch periods. As you might imagine, lunch time during a global pandemic is somewhat different than it had been in previous years.

Colleen Moore, who has been a St. Christopher parishioner since 1988 started working in the cafeteria in 2001. That was the year that the parish center was completed, and St. Christopher School started the hot lunch program. Her three children attended St. Christopher School and two of her three sons were attending St. Christopher at the time she started. Her sons are all now adults, and the older two are married with children of their own. Colleen is blessed with three grandsons: 2.5-year-old twins and a 16-month-old who call her Cici.

Lisa Bill, who has been a parishioner of St. Christopher for over 25 years, started just one year after Colleen in 2002. She, too, had three children who attended St. Christopher School and started working in the cafeteria when her youngest son Luke was a student in the 2nd grade. Lisa is also blessed with one grandson and another grandson is due in early February.

Christina Ward has been a St. Chris parishioner for about eight years and has been working in the school cafeteria for about seven years. Her daughter Alexis is a current St. Christopher School student in the 7th grade. Christina will occasionally work in the kitchen as a substitute and enjoys her stints serving food.

Denise Oswald has been a St. Christopher parishioner for twenty years. She started in the cafeteria as a volunteer while her son Jack, now a sophomore at St. Edward, was a student at St. Christopher School. She has been a cafeteria employee for the last five years and says she loves working with Colleen, Lisa and Christina and thinks of them as family.

In addition to enjoying working with each other, they all expressed that they very much enjoy seeing the children grow and change from year to year. This year has been understandably different as the children are all wearing masks when they come through the line. Mrs. Oswald stated that she misses being able to see the children's faces.

Each day they are joined by one or two St. Christopher school parent volunteers for the four lunch periods. The children are spread out at many more tables than were used in years past to allow for distancing. They also have implemented more in-depth cleaning procedures between lunches and at the end of the day. Serving the food now takes a bit longer. There is no more "grab and go," as they must hand all items to the children rather than allow them to take their own. Everything they have implemented has helped to keep the kids safe and healthy, but still allow them to enjoy their lunchtime per Mrs. Moore.

Pre-covid the children were able to move around after eating and were able to play ping pong and air hockey on tables that had been donated to the school. The tables remain in storage and will be back in use when it is safer to use them. Though the tables made lunch periods louder, typically the cafeteria ladies were glad when the children were enjoying themselves. On occasion lunch periods would get a little TOO loud and boisterous. It was during one of these times that Mrs. Ward said she pointed out a black mark on the wall and jokingly told the children that it was a hidden camera to keep an eye on their behavior. That quieted them down a little - at least for that day!

A fun tradition that they have been able to continue during the pandemic is "Ticket Tuesday." Each student who buys a hot lunch on Tuesdays is entered into a drawing to win an ice cream voucher. The drawing each week seems to be quite exciting for the kids based on the noise level. "It's always a fun and successful lunch time if the noise level is high," according to Mrs. Bill.

Additionally, Mr. Scott Raiff, who is in his sixth year as principal at St. Christopher School, really engages with the children in the cafeteria which makes the lunch time experience more positive for both the students and the cafeteria staff. Whether it is involving students with picking or announcing the winner of Ticket Tuesday, asking his many trivia questions, or in prior years playing ping pong or air hockey with the students, his positivity is appreciated. His dedication to the students was on display when twice, in the same week, he and Mrs. Bill searched through all the garbage to find a student's lost retainer according to Mrs. Oswald.

Though this year has proven challenging the "lunch ladies" all appreciate the way Father John, parish staff, teachers and staff, students and families and their suppliers have all worked together to ensure a safe cafeteria environment.

St. Christopher School and parish are lucky to have this dedicated group of ladies as a part of our community. Thank you for all you do for our school!

*Annemarie Polito*



## CHURCH CHATTER

### BIRTHDAY WISHES

Birthday wishes go out to Pastoral Associate **Robin Imbrigiotta** (April 18), **Deacon Dennis Conrad** (April 18), **Deacon Tom Long** (April 21), REO secretary **Katie Gould** (April 26), **Sr. Jeanne Cmolik** (April 30), school secretary **Judy Zell** (May 9), Pastoral Associate **Gayle Cilimburg** (May 14), and **Fr. John Chlebo** (May 17). They would appreciate receiving your best wishes on their special day.

### TEACHER & EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Two of our parishioners were honored by the Rocky River City School District for the 2020-21 school year. Teacher of the year went to **Jessica Dessoify** and employee of the year went to **Patty Corrigan**. Jessica has been a parishioner since she was two years old, receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation, the Eucharist, Confirmation, and Matrimony here. She is a second grade teacher. Patty has been a parishioner for 27 years and serves as a food services cook. Congratulations, ladies!

### NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

Congratulations to the recently inducted students into the National Honor Society! **Chase DeClerck**, **Cecilia Wischmeier** and **Allison Kysela**, from Rocky River High School. From St. Ignatius: **Andrew Van Horn**, **Riley Stanton**, and **Matthew Giberti**. And **Joseph Byrne** and **Ted Cawley** from St. Edward.

### WORST COOK? NO!

Did a tall, young man on the Food Network's Worst Cooks in America Season 21 look familiar? You saw parishioner, **Joey Kinsley**. As one of the "recruits," he made grilled lamb chops with pomegranate couscous, an Asian stir fry, and meatballs with Jamaican curry. His last dish, which caused him to be cut from the competition, was enchiladas. His mentor, professional chef Carla Hall, called his endeavor a "hot mess." But, Joey still says that she is "SUPER nice." Joey has served as an altar server and cantor at St. Christopher. The next time that you see him, ask him for details about his experience, including why he auditioned, his history of cooking, and what it was like to be on set for 13-14 hours a day, all during the pandemic.



### HABLA USTED ESPANOL?

Former Rocky River Middle School students were awarded medals in the 2020 National Spanish Examinations. Connor Kane took a silver medal, Caroline Kysela a bronze medal, and Stephen Tirpak took honorable mention. Connor played on the RRHS freshman football and is an altar server. As a freshman at RRHS, Caroline played on the girls JV soccer team, performed with the marching band, sings with the Treble Choir and is a member of River's Edge (show choir). She also volunteers as an altar server and has been a parishioner for 14 years. Stephen is a freshman at St. Ignatius High School, where he plays football. He, too, is an altar server. Felicitaciones!



### LIGHT THE NIGHT

**John and Sharon Hosek** celebrated their granddaughter **Ryley's** 10-year remission from leukemia in 2020. **Ryley** and her family have been fundraising with the Light the Night Leukemia & Lymphoma Society event every year. God bless Ryley and her family!

Share your joyous events with us!

Please forward submissions for Church Chatter to

**Roberta Trutko** at (440) 263-7894 or [roberta32red@hotmail.com](mailto:roberta32red@hotmail.com).



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

March 1-April 2	FAMILY LENT IN A BAG
March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	LENTEN GOSPEL REFLECTIONS
March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	HOLY HOUR/ BENEDICTION
March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	STATIONS OF THE CROSS
March 5, 12, 19, 26, April 2	STATIONS OF THE CROSS



March 6	LENTEN MINI-RETREAT
March 13	CONFIRMATION RETREAT
April 16/17	2ND GRADE JESUS DAY
April 18	BLOODMOBILE
April-May	FIRST COMMUNION (DATES TBD)
May	CONFIRMATION (DATES TBD)
May 16	BLOODMOBILE

*\* All events subject to change or cancellation.*

## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday, March 28	REGULAR WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE	Good Friday, April 2	STATIONS OF THE CROSS NOON & 7 P.M.
Wednesday, March 31	CONFESSIONS 7-8 P.M.	Holy Saturday, April 3	*EASTER VIGIL 8:30 P.M.
Holy Thursday, April 1	*MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER 7 P.M.	Easter Sunday, April 4	*MASSES AT 8:30, 10:00 & 11:30 A.M.
Good Friday, April 2	*THE PASSION OF THE LORD 3 P.M.		

*\* Also livestreamed.*