



# The Belltower Beacon

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

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## FR. JOHN CHLEBO JOYFULLY CELEBRATES HIS 40TH YEAR IN THE PRIESTHOOD

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By living his motto, “you can’t be above the people, you must be with the people,” Fr. John has grown comfortable in his position as pastor by giving parishioners a listening ear and a say in the decision making. He recognizes that this is a parish with people of extraordinary talent, strong commitment to family, and unwavering spirituality. He sees how deeply we care about our church community, surrounding communities and our neighbors around the world. Also impressive is the generosity with which individuals recognize a need and come to him asking “can I help, how can I help?” Fr. John realizes that it’s acceptable not to know everything, not to have all the answers, because “we’re all in this together” and bring unique God-given gifts to the table. As we know from 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, we are all one body with many parts to share, and “if [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.” A perfect example of this is our recent professional survey and subsequent implementation of changes based on feedback. By objectively soliciting input and tabulating the results, we all benefit from the good suggestions made.

Pastoral Associate Gayle Cilimburg affirms Fr. John’s commitment to the people of St. Christopher by stating, “He lives the idea that ‘it’s not all about me’ and is extremely considerate

of others.” They have been collaborating in ministry for 23 years. She described how Fr. John was approachable from the start and made the initial effort to get to know the existing staff by taking them out to lunch individually. Gayle appreciates that he “has always respected and supported [her] as a layperson and woman in ministry. We often go together to wakes and cemetery committal services of deceased parishioners and share in the parts of the service. He solicits my input and is open to my suggestions and opinions on all kinds of topics and is willing to have me be a part of anything we do at St. Christopher. He solicits, considers and appreciates input from those around him. There is also the advantage that his office is nearby, he ‘makes himself available and does not mind being interrupted.’” With both of them being very well organized, Gayle knows that he is always ready to tackle the next project or program with her.

Ordained on June 7, 1980, Fr. John (born May 17, 1954) will soon celebrate his 40th year in the priesthood with 23 of those as pastor of St. Christopher. He was raised Catholic and knew at a very young age that he wanted to be a priest. He entered seminary as a high school freshman (it was permitted at the time), and says he “has never looked back,” enjoying all of his years in ministry. His parents, John and Victoria (both deceased) adopted Fr. John and his brother, James (also deceased). His home parish was St. Mark on Cleveland’s west side where he attended grade school. From 1968 to 1976, Fr. John attended Borromeo Seminary for high school and college, where he received his bachelor’s degree in History; this was followed by his Ordination and Master of Divinity at St. Mary Seminary in 1980. During those years, he worked in the community, including summers in dietary at Lakewood Hospital and one summer for the Cuyahoga

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# 40 years

County Welfare Department. In 2003, Fr. John received his Doctor of Ministry.

As a priest, Fr. John admits that his greatest challenge thus far was the 9/11 tragedy. He recalls the sudden need to help an entire congregation in mourning while he himself was grieving the same loss. Along with his pastoral staff, Fr. John was vital in bringing the church family back into a semblance of normalcy. His leadership is then remembered for the manner in which we all moved forward together. On a local level, Fr. John has officiated over numerous funerals, including many individuals and families he has come to know well. Together with the family, the pastor must be able to process feelings and emotions associated with the personal loss of a loved one. According to Fr. John, in these instances it is important for the parish to see him as a vulnerable human being who can share their pain. A pastor's concerns are many and he wears many hats as he serves the people, manages resources, leads employees and oversees the running of a large, older complex like St. Christopher. An unexpected structural challenge like the roof damage in 1999 can cause a domino effect of immediate, major changes. In this instance, the priority became moving the weekend Masses into the gym, as the priests continued to serve the people sacramentally and spiritually while the physical building was in turmoil. As we know, the crisis was handled well and we returned to a better, stronger worship space.



The key to staying motivated and inspired from day to day lies in Fr. John's complete faith in God. His is the faith of a lifetime with the ideal Catholic role models – parents, teachers, mentors, bishops and fellow priests. He also draws inspiration from his pastoral team, employees, parishioners, and students. When he is feeling

uncertain, he relies on Scripture and worship music. When asked, he was quick to say that one of his favorite songs is "Be Not Afraid" (written by Fr. Bob Bufford, S.J.). It should come as no surprise that in a career such as his, which can keep him awake some nights, he is strengthened by lyrics like "I go before you always. Come, follow me, and I will give you rest," based upon Isaiah 6:20. It is particularly uplifting in these unprecedented times of global pandemic to know that God is in charge and will see us through. God tells us not to fear, that He loves us and calls us by name. When the church leader displays trust in God and courage, the congregation does not fear the future.

Though nothing can prepare us for the unexpected, Fr. John came to St. Chris after years of experience at several churches in our Diocese. Almost to the day, he served 17 years as Associate Pastor at Ss. Cosmas & Damian in Twinsburg; St. Wenceslas in Maple Heights; St. Richard in North Olmsted; and St. Anthony of Padua

in Parma. His duties included Master of Ceremonies for Bishops Sheldon and Pevec, Knights of Columbus chaplain, terms on the Priest Council and the Diocesan Finance Council and several years as Seminary Field Education Supervisor. He has served on many initiatives throughout his vocation including Priest Advisory Groups, Rooted in Faith Diocesan Campaign, St. Mary Seminary Board of Trustees, and chaired a study of the Diocesan Permanent Diaconate. In addition, he is an adjunct faculty member at St. Mary Seminary in the Doctor of Ministry Program.

In his years of ministering to God's people, Fr. John has adopted some important interpersonal skills which help him navigate the nuances of leading a large congregation like ours. For example, he stresses the importance of being a good listener, having patience and stepping away from a discussion for further contemplation, returning to it after he has processed the exchange. In this way, all parties feel that their input, opinions and feelings matter. Fr. John's leadership style is to avoid micromanaging his staff, to collaborate and to delegate. He stresses that "good leaders do not need to know every angle, but they must hire the right staff." He thanks God every day for parishioners who are kind, caring and generous with their time and resources. His happiest moments as a priest come from seeing the parish family come together to comfort one another and at other times to celebrate together. Fr. John is also grateful that St. Christopher has maintained a strong relationship with the Diocesan Office and the Seminary. Having seminarians assigned to our church throughout the years has presented us with many new and diverse opportunities.

Fr. John's passion for helping others is seen in his support of our parish Social Concerns Committee, a group that has for many years advocated for the area's most needy. Current leader John Hosek applauds our pastor's "strong commitment to social justice" and that he is always open to new ideas and approaches to helping and advocating for the poor. Mr. Hosek and his wife Sharon both appreciate and value Fr. John's spiritual reflections. Most would agree with the Hoseks that "we are blessed to have a pastor who offers both a spiritual perspective and helpful advice on daily

living." By helping us live out the message of Christ daily, Fr. John is practicing what he preaches by leading us in taking care of those around us.

Looking to the future, Fr. John admits that our imposed lockdown has forced his staff to fast forward implementation of a highly technological approach to holding weekly online Masses, sending messages and sharing beautiful music by our cantors and music director. This very quickly went from a future goal



High School graduation

of live-streaming services to an immediate need. Once again, parishioners stepped forward to offer assistance and expertise. The result was a professionally executed and powerful Eucharistic celebration to be shared by our parish members and countless people beyond our city limits. Though it will never replace full participation in the Consecrated Body and Blood of Christ, it is certainly the next best thing under these circumstances. Without missing a Sunday, we can still witness the grace of God when we join together as one body every weekend. The biggest challenge has admittedly been and remains converting an older church like ours into modern technology. In this era of COVID-19, our leadership team at St. Christopher has continued to work to serve the people in creative ways. By employing the use of remotely accessed computer programs like Zoom and social media, they hold meetings, establish plans and host sacramental classes. They



Ordination

continue to hold very small and socially distanced funerals, weddings and baptisms within the established state and diocesan guidelines.

Parishioner Mary Horvath, who has served as Parish Council secretary for many years, after serving as the chairperson, appreciates Fr. John's leadership style and "quick ability to forgive." He makes her feel that her service and her input are valued, which makes her proud to serve. Her favorite "Fr. John

anecdote," however, comes from occasional apologies she makes to Fr. John for a minor omission or revision in their recorded minutes. She has learned a valuable lesson when his response is always, "No problem. I'm in the forgiving business." He reminds her that she and all of us should also be in the forgiving business.

Speaking of this unusual time in our collective lives, Fr. John, like most of us, has used some of his lockdown as an opportunity to purge files and read more (particularly mystery novels and history themes). He enjoys coin collecting, a hobby he learned from his grandfather. He also follows our sports teams and enjoys a game of golf. Lest you think he never leaves the compound, Fr. John is close to meeting a personal goal of visiting all 50 states; thus far, he has only eight left to see, all west of the Mississippi River. Above all, he looks forward to a future where we all come together once again as a community of faith reaching out to help those around us near and far. He hopes that this will be his legacy – that he supported and encouraged this humble but exceptional Catholic giving.

We are also very much aware that our Centennial campaign, celebration and Centennial park will forever be associated with Fr. John's leadership and legacy. He knows that in this way we are preparing for "a new century of service" starting in 2022. Although our pastor has no plans to retire any time soon and



Receiving Doctor of Ministry degree

is nowhere near mandatory age, he believes that "there is an art to knowing when to quit." Meanwhile, he is preparing for the busiest fall our Church has ever seen as all spring Sacramental celebrations are postponed until then. A recent Sunday gospel (Luke 24:16 where the apostles from Emmaus fail to recognize Jesus), speaks to our inability at times to see the presence of Jesus in our midst. It is one of Fr. John's favorites, especially during these times, because like the apostles

we are currently confused and perhaps feeling abandoned. The truth is that God is never separated from us, and we must see the face of Christ present in those around us. As we pray for one another and for first responders, medical professionals and those who have continued to keep us sustained in so many ways, we also see the face of Christ in them. This is Fr. John's hope for all of us throughout the coming months and years.

If there is one thing we have learned about Fr. John during these years is that he is serious about his faith and his role as our spiritual leader. Suzanne Malak is a parishioner who is comforted in knowing that her pastor prays for her daily, talks to God about her, and is available to her for spiritual direction. Upon occasion, Fr. John has guided her through a crisis of faith; he also comforted her family during the loss of her mother. Suzanne appreciates that he is Christ centered and states further, "he knows when to listen, when to challenge [her] and when to provide other viewpoints in a supportive manner." His sense of humor is an added bonus to having Fr. John in Suzanne's faith journey and ours.

We know that Fr. John loves using stories and quotes in his homilies. So in conclusion, Fr. John asks that we contemplate one of his favorite quotes and recognize why he himself "chose the stars":

TWO MEN LOOK OUT FROM PRISON BARS;  
ONE SAW THE MUD, THE OTHER SAW STARS.

~ DALE CARNEGIE (1944)

In return, the family of St. Christopher Parish, his pastoral and support staff and Belltower Beacon contributors extend to Fr. John heartfelt gratitude for 23 years of service to our parish, congratulations on his 40th anniversary as a priest, and sincere wishes for many more years of good health, happiness and holy moments.

*Carmen Everett DeHaan*



## COVID-19, CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE, CENTENNIAL PARK AND BRICKS!

What a difference a few months makes! When the last Belltower Beacon was published in early March, the coronavirus was something happening in China. Within a span of just a few days it was all over the news and has completely dominated our lives. Schools closed, eventually for the remainder of the school year. Churches closed – who would have ever guessed that! We learned new phrases like “shelter at home” and “social distancing” that became part of our everyday language and, unhappily, part of our everyday lives. Restaurants, theaters, stores, sporting events and so much more closed or were limited in the services they provided. Wearing a face mask has become a fashion statement and walking the dog a treat that allowed people to be outside.

Nonetheless, we have met the challenges of the past couple of months together as a people of faith. People have reached out to others in so many ways: grocery shopping, phone calls, virtual hugs and smiles. A few dedicated parishioners inspired us to gather food for the hungry in late April and provided 1,000 bags of much needed groceries to those in need (see separate article and pictures elsewhere in this issue). In many ways COVID-19 has brought out the best in people helping people.

We learned a new way to celebrate Mass and even Easter. Liturgies were recorded in the church and made available for people to view each week. Stations of the Cross, a number of music videos and recorded messages were also part of the effort for parishioners to stay connected in a prayerful way to one another. We are all grateful to those who worked hard to make that possible each week. It has inspired us to work towards live streaming our liturgies weekly to serve the homebound and others not able to attend Mass for various reasons. That will take some further work but stay tuned for future developments.

By late February, our capital campaign successfully passed the \$2 million mark towards the goal of \$3 million. The onset of COVID-19 understandably slowed the momentum. We hope to reach out to parishioners later this year who have not yet made a pledge. In the meantime, many have been making pledge payments and I am grateful for their support. Work on Centennial Park has made good progress. It is still on schedule for completion this summer although we may be delayed in making use of it depending on social distancing directives. Meanwhile, check out the pictures that accompany this article. There has been great interest shown in the engraved bricks that will be part of Centennial Park. When completed the bricks will be found near the playground or memorial garden depending upon the donor's preference.

All things considered over the last few months, we have made progress as we prepare to celebrate our centennial in May of 2022 and prepare for a new century of service. There have been a few setbacks but we work together as people of faith and hope. Thank you for being the people you are, for the generosity you demonstrate and for your faith that shows itself in good works towards others. What a pleasure to be the pastor of St. Christopher Parish in Rocky River.

*Fr. John Chlebo*



## PARISH SURVEY UPDATE

Although some of the goals that were developed as a result of the Parish Survey are in a “holding pattern” due to our current pandemic, there are several things happening to move them forward. An update to each goal follows:

### **Goal 1: Improve Welcoming and Community Building Activities**

The Parish Pastoral Staff registers all new parishioners and we have committed to follow up with each family we register within 90 days to determine if there are ways we can further integrate them into the life of the Parish Community.

While we were still able to gather at Mass we had periodically incorporated a greeting of those around us at the beginning of weekend Masses led by a member of the Pastoral Staff. This effort to get to know each other has been well received.

The Pastoral Staff has been welcoming those coming to Mass on weekends by greeting parishioners as they enter the church.

A Hospitality Committee has been formed and Laura Hunter is leading that group. You will see the details of their plans and efforts in an article elsewhere in this issue.

We planned to create Faith Communities based on like-family demographics. The first group that has been formed is among the Young Adult Ministry members. Logan Feldkamp has written about that elsewhere in this issue.

New, easier to read, name badges have been made for the ushers at weekend Masses so they can be more readily identified and seen by those needing assistance.

### **Goal 2: Increase the Percentage of Parishioners Who are Highly Active**

As you know, we increased our Pastoral Staff to include Robin Imbrigiotta and Logan Feldkamp so that we could expand programming for parishioners and to date that has proven to be successful. Examples would be our new Young Adult Ministry, Grief Support Groups, Great Bible Adventure, Joyfully Gifted and Joy of the Gospel.

Once we are able to assemble in groups again we will be offering a second Joyfully Gifted program.

**Goal 3: Enhance the Experience of Liturgical Music at Mass**  
We have incorporated contemporary music during the 11:30 Mass once a month.

We have expanded the variety of hymns sung at Mass, increased the tempo and decreased the volume of organ music and worked to develop fuller participation of the assembly. This has all been accomplished due to the efforts of Bob McMurray, our new Music Ministry Director.

### **Goal 4: Articulate a Clear Sense of Mission and Purpose for the Parish**

We have made certain that our Mission Statement is included in all published communications, i.e., our weekly bulletin, our website, capital campaign materials, etc. We have a large banner which we hope to hang in our Gathering Area once we are able to be back in church.

A preschool option was added to our St. Christopher School.

### **Goal 5: Train and Empower Parishioners to Receive Electronic Communication from the Parish**

As a result of working with a marketing consultant we have enhanced our Parish Website so that all three entities (parish, school, religious education) are all accessible in one location.

We have enhanced communication through email blasts and Constant Contact.

In addition to electronic communication, we have increased the size of our Parish Bulletin to 12 pages to enable expanded news and pictures to parishioners.

Presently we have multiplied our efforts to communicate during the pandemic by providing weekend Masses online which are available on our website, on Facebook and YouTube. Additionally, we have provided Stations of the Cross and some music produced by Bob McMurray, Michelle Romary and others. Logan Feldkamp and Robin Imbrigiotta have also posted some educational pieces on the website.

### **Goal 6: Enhance the Visibility and Level of Engagement in our Church in the City Partnership with St. Colman**

Our Social Concerns Committee continues to include St. Colman in their ministry efforts. Examples would be the Christmas Gift Wreath Program and the Lenten Soup Supper which unfortunately had to be canceled due to the pandemic.

### **Goal 7: Change the Reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation to 8th Grade**

This was one of the first things implemented and is continuing to be done although more slowly than planned due to the pandemic.

We are anxious to resume planning and further developing the actions steps established once we are able to do so.



## YOUTH MINISTRY: BRIGHTER DAYS AHEAD



2020 has been an unpredictable year for all of us, and youth group is no exception. It feels like just yesterday, Fr. John was wrapping up the faith testimony that he shared with our teens but, alas, this was at the beginning of March. If you would have told me that would be our last youth meeting in Mary's Room, for the foreseeable future, I wouldn't have believed it. So much has changed in the past couple months that it feels like a whole new world.

While we have not been able to meet in person, I have been sending our teens and families some online faith content to encourage them in their spiritual lives. One example is "Project YM," a nationwide Catholic group that has been offering live streaming speakers and worship leaders to teens and parishes every Sunday night at 8 p.m. While it is nice for us to have that opportunity, free of charge, nothing can replace the joy of working with our youth and seeing them face to face. With that in mind, our team is working to begin offering Zoom meetings to the teens of our parish and we look forward to rolling that out in the coming weeks. As much as things change, there is one constant and it is that God is still in control and he is still good. My prayer is that everyone in our youth group and in our parish will remember that truth as we look forward to the brighter days ahead!

*Eric Perusek*



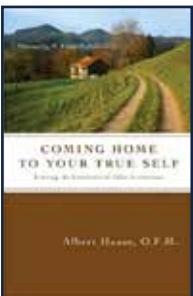
## BEREAVEMENT GROUP

The St. Christopher six-week bereavement group, *The Next Chapter*, began to meet on February 27. The group is comprised of both parishioners and non-parishioners. Our group is in many different phases of grief and all members were a wonderful support to each other. Robin is keeping up with participants by phone; many cannot wait for the group to reconvene.

*Robin Imbrigiotta*

## LADIES GUILD

In early March, the Ladies Guild Executive Committee met to discuss the Guild's spring events. Food trucks were booked for the second Annual Family Game Night and a guest speaker was secured for the Ladies Guild Spring Social. The Lenten book group was approaching its third meeting to discuss a work by Fr. Albert Haase titled, *Coming Home to Your True Self: Leaving the Emptiness of False Attractions*. But then came Governor Mike DeWine's official "stay at home" order. To paraphrase a line from the Scottish poet Robert Burns, "The best laid schemes of mice and 'women' go oft awry."



We could not have known how prescient our Lenten book would be in light of the COVID-19 order to remain at home. As Fr. Haase says, "Home is the sacrament of the present moment. It is only living right now, right here, that we discover our lives and this world awash in the grace of God." The messages from social media and our inner Martha were to make this time "productive" by cleaning closets,

cooking new recipes, learning a foreign language, and getting in shape. But as Cindy McDonough so beautifully said in her Easter message to the Guild, "When I eventually look back at this time

in our world, I don't want to remember it by counting the number of home projects that I completed." What we will remember from this time of isolation is just how deeply we missed our gatherings, the intimate gatherings of friends and extended family for a meal and the large celebratory gatherings for Sunday Mass, graduations, and wedding vows. Virtual gatherings have been a gift during these times, but we dearly miss real, physical presence. Isn't it beautiful and startling then, that what Jesus commands us to do is to gather for a shared meal to celebrate His real, physical presence in communion with one another?

When we endeavored to Rebuild the Guild, we did so primarily to encourage the women of St. Christopher to gather in faith and friendship in celebration of one another. Although we don't know what the next few months will bring as far as restrictions on gatherings, as always, we encourage you to share your ideas with us for future Guild meetings and activities. ([ladiesguild@stchrisparish.com](mailto:ladiesguild@stchrisparish.com)) We look forward, with great anticipation, to seeing each of you again and to celebrating your presence. "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Matthew 18:20

*Nancy Sullivan*



## THE ST. CHRISTOPHER PRESCHOOL WRAPS UP A SUCCESSFUL INAUGURAL YEAR

The COVID-19 pandemic regrettably led to the cessation of Masses, parish activities and the closure of the parish school. It also brought to a conclusion the inaugural year of the St. Christopher Preschool. Despite having to end classes two months earlier than planned, the first year of the parish preschool can be viewed as an unqualified success. Our preschool staff did an outstanding job providing the students with an educational and fun experience.

The St. Christopher Preschool offers a half-day class for 3-year old students and one for 4-year old/pre-K students. Mrs. Katie Shivak is the lead teacher for the 3-year old class. She is assisted by Mrs. Julie Carr. The 4-year old class is taught by Mrs. Jenny Sims and she is assisted by Mrs. Molly Stefan. Both classes use a play-based approach to learning. In addition to learning developmentally appropriate academic and social skills, the students participate in music, art, library and faith-based activities. The preschool students also participated in day school activities such as assemblies and student-led science share lessons. Central to all preschool activities was having lots of fun!

Plans are underway for expanding our preschool programming for the 2020-2021 school year. In response to the expressed needs of our community, the preschool will offer a combined extended day option for both 3- and 4-year old students. There will also be day care available until 5 p.m.

Approximately 20 students made up our initial preschool class, with 14 being in the 3-year old class. Two-thirds of the current 4-year old class have enrolled into our day school's kindergarten. Most students in the 3-year old class have re-enrolled in the 4-year old program for the 2020-2021 school year. The 3-year old class for the upcoming school year is near capacity. The preschool program is growing dramatically and we hope that many of the students will continue on into our day school program and grow its enrollment.

Along with the Centennial Park project and expanded church programming, the preschool is another sign of the vitality of St. Christopher Parish as it begins a new century of service to the Rocky River community.

*Scott Raiff*





# Food For Families

**Daughters with Degrees Home Care**, which is owned by Ellen Miner and Eileen McGunagle and Jane Vitou (a Keller Williams real estate agent), teamed up to provide food for those in our community who find themselves in need during the pandemic. The church parking lot was transformed into a kind and generous respite two weekends in a row. Thanks to parishioners Ellen and Jane and all who volunteered!



# Social Distancing



*Clockwise from top left:*  
**Mike DeHaan** hiking;  
**Carolyn and Joe Kovach,**  
and **Dan Weist** driveway  
visiting; **Peg Cohan** and  
**Robert Trutko** exploring;  
**Mateo Norena** started a  
dog treats business;  
**Sharon and John Hosek** at  
Daffodil Hill!





## FROM THE DESK OF THE DRE

It's spring and it doesn't look anything like the spring I planned for our Parish programs last year. I should have been putting the finishing touches on the First Communions the first two weekends of May. We should have completed PSR and be hosting our teacher "Thank You" luncheon. Our Confirmation students should have made Confirmation. I feel sad and uneasy because all of these wonderful celebrations and Sacraments could not take place in the time we wanted them to happen. It appears that we have no control over our circumstances. But we do have control, we have control of how we react to our current situation. We cannot change what is happening in our world, but we can be positive in our homes with our families. We may as well make the best of it and ride the wave.

Many things have changed in how we learn about our faith and celebrate Mass with our children. It is a great opportunity to watch the recorded Mass each weekend and review the parts of the Mass and responses without disturbing those in the pews around you in Church. This is especially important for the 2nd graders studying to receive their First Communion and the 8th and 9th graders preparing for Confirmation.

As of Monday, April 27 the Ohio Bishops determined that we would continue the closure of our Church until at least May 29. We are still unable to meet in groups of more than 10. Ohio Bishops have decided that ALL First Communions and Confirmations scheduled in April and May will need to be rescheduled for the fall. No decision will be made on rescheduling First Communion and Confirmation until we are back celebrating Mass together on the weekends. Please pray for all of our families who await the celebrations of these Sacraments. We will continue to keep you informed and connected to St. Christopher Church. My prayers are with all of you for health and happiness. Keep the faith.

*Yours in Christ, Sharon Armstrong*

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

For the first time in recent history (twenty-two years), we will not be having Vacation Bible School the week after school ends in June. Instead, our friends from Rocky River Presbyterian Church, Lisa Watts and Bette Case, and I are hosting a joint Vacation Bible School later in the summer. The venue will be Rocky River Presbyterian Church, but will be scheduled for the last week of July for four days (Monday through Thursday) from 5:30-8 p.m. The event begins with a family meal and ends with our usual prayer service and sing-along. If we are still practicing social distancing, we'll hold a "virtual" Bible School which will include a VBS kit of all the supplies for the week and could be picked up prior. Everything is so uncertain at this time, but we wanted to offer something for your family to participate in over the summer months without sports, swimming lessons, summer camps, or vacations. We should have registration forms out by the end of May or beginning of June. Look for an email or visit the Parish website to register your children ages 4 through 6th grade. If we are able to meet in-person we will need teen and adult helpers, as usual. Vacation Bible School is such a big part of our summer; I'm so happy we can still make it happen in some form.

## 8TH GRADE CONFIRMATION

The new Confirmation class will be starting up as soon as we are able to get students back in the classroom. A letter will be sent out to all current 7th graders in both St. Christopher School and the Parish School of Religion. We need to get our list together to get information out to these families and be able to have catechists in place. Confirmation is open to ALL students in grades 8-12. If you know anyone who is not currently enrolled in St. Christopher School or PSR and is in 8th-12th grade and did not receive a registration in the mail, please send them our way. Our Confirmation Team looks forward to working with your student.

## 8TH GRADE PSR

Attention current 7th grade parents! Please watch for a survey coming to your inbox soon. We will be offering 8th grade PSR after school in the fall.

With Sundays being so busy for some of our families, especially those in our 8th grade Confirmation program, we thought it might be helpful to offer at least one class after school. We will still offer 8th grade PSR at 8:30 and 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings. We will be asking for your opinion on the time(s) and day(s) you will be available for PSR. I have at least one teacher committed for a class. Openings for weekday PSR will be limited, unless we can recruit more teachers. When you receive the survey, please answer immediately so we can put this in place for PSR registration. This is for 8th grade PSR only!!

## FAMILY CATECHESIS

This past school year (2019-2020) we offered a brand new religious education program that helped families balance their busy weekend schedules by educating their children in the faith, instead of attending Sunday morning PSR classes. We will be offering Family Catechesis again this Fall to any PSR students in grades 3-7. Once a month, parents come to class in the Atrium to receive their student's lessons for the coming month. Parents return to teach the assignments to their students for the rest of the month. Families turn in the computer chapter assessments and a unit journal log. This process frees up families who need to have Sunday mornings for other activities. We do not offer Family Catechesis to students in kindergarten, first grade or in Sacramental years (grades 2 & 8). Students in these grades have a special program that we follow to prepare for First Communion and Confirmation. If you would like to enroll your student(s) in Family Catechesis or have any questions about the program, please contact Sharon Armstrong at (440) 331-6226 x402 or email at [sarmstrong@stchrisparish.com](mailto:sarmstrong@stchrisparish.com).

## THE BRIGHT FUTURE FOR THE YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Terra Nova, St. Christopher Young Adult Ministry, was off to a successful start in 2020. This growing popularity took the form of monthly potluck dinners, a presence at local Theology on Tap West events, and had plans to volunteer at the Albert Water's Special Needs Prom in May. Unfortunately, the group's success was halted by the current COVID-19 pandemic, causing all parish ministries to shut down. While this roadblock has disrupted the new ministry's momentum, it has provided a time to reflect on its early successes and challenges in order to prepare an exciting plan for the months ahead.

Terra Nova hopes to expand in new ways during the second half of 2020 after social distancing guidelines are lifted. This vision includes the formation of new small groups to build deeper relationships between young adults who share common interests. Small groups will focus on the intellectual, spiritual, and human formation of those in their 20s and 30s. Other projects include an age-specific retreat, volunteer projects, and inter-parish partnerships to expand our sphere of influence at St. Christopher and in the community. Our vision is to provide an outlet for young adults to build relationships within the church and identify ways to offer their gifts for the service of our community. Terra Nova hopes to make this vision a reality as our country recovers from this time of uncertainty.

*Logan Feldkamp*

## THE GREAT AMERICAN BIBLE STUDY



On January 8, twenty-two parishioners of St. Christopher embarked on *The Great Adventure – The Bible Timeline: The Story of Salvation*. Each week we

gathered in the Atrium, engaged in sharing about what we had read, then watched a video presentation, offering content, context and explanation for the reading.

We were getting ready for our eighth gathering when the COVID-19 canceled our in-person meetings. Some participants have kept going and are more than half-way through the program.

This really is a fascinating tour toward a better understanding of the scriptural roots of our salvation history. The Bible is at the heart of our faith and our relationship with God. Scripture informs our beliefs and inspires our devotions. It is one way that our God meets with and lovingly speaks to us. Reading the Bible should bring us closer to Christ, but understanding it is often difficult. The good news is that you can understand the Bible, and *The Bible Timeline* makes it easy. This truly is a great adventure. Parishioners are welcome to join the journey at ANY time. Please call Robin at (440) 331-4255 x105 or email [rimbrigiotta@stchrisparish.com](mailto:rimbrigiotta@stchrisparish.com)

*Robin Imbrigiotta*

## HOSPITALITY MINISTRY

It is with no surprise that the update for the hospitality ministry includes only a small amount of progress. Prior to COVID-19 and our stay-at-home order, we were able to recruit several more volunteers to help with new parishioner welcome dinners and support the ministry. We also conducted an audit of the St. Christopher campus, looking for handicap accessibility, clear and easily seen signage, building labels, and other details that will help make our campus feel welcoming and accessible to all.

Unfortunately, just as we were working through many of the action items to kick-start our hospitality initiative, we entered this new state of normal. Once our diocese, parish, and feeling of safety return to normal (or something closer to it), we will resume our meetings and planning with much enthusiasm.

However, just because we are isolating at home, alone or with our families, does not mean we lose our community or should stop striving to be hospitable. We can still build and strengthen our community with grace and intentionality. If we do not strive to act with hospitality and compassion now, when the need is great, who is to say that we will come together as a community when life is easy and simple again?

I encourage you all to find community and togetherness in this time of isolation. Be the hospitable person who brings a smile to those who around you. Be the person to bring people together despite being physically separated. Be the person who brings joy and hope, just as Fr. John mentioned in his Easter homily, to anyone you can.

Make an extra phone call to someone you know who lives alone. Send a note to a friend you haven't spoken to in a while. Go for a walk past a friend's house and let them know so you can wave hello. Have socially distant beverages on your porches or driveways with your neighbors. Video call your kids, parents, siblings, old college friends, and mentors. Send a small delivery of groceries or treats to someone. Have your kids go crazy with arts and crafts and mail their masterpieces to everyone you can think of. Host a virtual trivia or game night with your family or friends.

What you do doesn't matter, as long as you continue to do something. Do the things that would make you smile, if someone did them for you. Strive to be there for others even when you can't physically be there. Help us be strong, help us be joyful, and help us be together in isolation.

*Laura Hunter*



# CHURCH CHATTER

**BIRTHDAY WISHES** Happy birthday wishes go out to Pastoral Minister, **Logan Feldkamp** (June 6) and our Director of Religious Education, **Sharon Armstrong** (August 3).

**GRADUATES** Best wishes are extended to all graduating student parishioners. In these unusual times, we celebrate each and every one in new ways. May they continue to practice Christian values in their lives.

**RECYCLE** Did you know that **recycling opportunities** can be found at St. Christopher? The school library recycles used computer ink cartridges and cell phones. Plus, containers for paper and cardboard are located at the Northview entrance of the parking lot.

**ASSIGNMENT** In addition to our church, **Deacon Dennis Conrad** has also been assigned to St. Ladislav Parish in Westlake. This dual assignment allows him to minister in both parishes.

**DEACON ANNIVERSARIES** Congratulations to **Deacon Tom Long**, who celebrates 10 years of ordination and to **Deacon Dennis Conrad** who celebrates five years!

**AGAPE** From the ancient Greek, agape means love. As a junior at Magnificat High School, **Ellie Kleinert** made a video presentation for her required agape project. While sheltering during the spring quarter, her project focused on stress management during online learning. Her video was highlighted for the school's wellness Wednesday event. Ellie is a lifelong parishioner.

**SENIOR SERVERS** **Thomas Byrne** is recognized as one of three high school senior Mass servers. He graduated from St. Edward High School and is an International Baccalaureate Diploma candidate. Thomas participated in St. Edward Cross and Anchors Society, Programming Club, Jazz Ensemble, Marching Eagles, and Symphonic Band. He was the drum major in marching band, on the varsity tennis team, a captain of the Science Olympiad team, co-founder of the Ping Pong Club, a Student Ambassador, and a Student Minister. He was a National Merit Scholar. In the fall, Thomas will be majoring in Computer Science at The Ohio State University. Proud parents are Patrick and Tracy Byrne.

**Jack Lally** graduated from St. Christopher School in 2016 and graduated this year, with honors, from St. Ignatius High School. He was an altar server since the 4th grade and participated in youth group. He was a member of the crew team for four years, placing in the top ten at Nationals for two years. He also was a member of C.A.T. (Christian Action Team), and the Labra & Kairos ministry. Jack will attend the University of Dayton this fall, majoring in business. He is a Fr. Chaminade merit scholarship recipient. Proud parents are Sean and Lynn Lally.

**Drew Polito** graduated from St. Christopher School in 2016 and is a St. Ignatius High School graduate. He received a full-cost-of-attendance scholarship and will attend The Ohio State University as an Eminence Fellow. He hopes to follow in his father's footsteps, studying pre-law. In addition, he works at the Congregation of St. Joseph, serving food and doing dishes. Proud parents are Mike and Belltower Beacon volunteer Annemarie Polito.

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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Eric Perusek, Scott Raiff and Nancy Sullivan

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- June 21** FATHER'S DAY  
**July 25** ST. CHRISTOPHER  
FEAST DAY  
**August 15** FEAST OF THE  
ASSUMPTION OF  
MARY

## BLOCK PARTY

It is with genuine sadness that we are cancelling our annual block party for the first time in over 25 years. Even more disheartening, the plan to dedicate Centennial Park at that time will have to be postponed until a later date. We regret this decision, but the uncertainty of the summer months due to the pandemic, as well as recommendations from the diocese, has led us to make what we believe to be the most prudent decision. *-Fr. John Chlebo*

## THANK YOU FROM SHARON ARMSTRONG!!

Thank you to my Parish School of Religion Staff and PSR Catechists. Even though our year was cut short by six classes, our staff and teachers have done a tremendous job with our Parish children. It takes a village to educate our Parish youth in the faith!

<b>Office Staff:</b>	<b>1st Grade:</b>	Amanda Klidas	<b>7th Grade:</b>	<b>8th Grade</b>	<b>Confirmation:</b>	<b>Classroom:</b>
Katie Munteanu	Craig Rimlinger	Cindy Hill	Joanne Morscher	<b>Confirmation:</b>	Eric Perusek	Molly Sheridan
Christina Ward	Sabrina Rick	<b>4th Grade:</b>	Johna Graziani	Christine	Beth Dawson	Nicole Contenza
Nancy Dixon	Adam DiIulio	Claire Armstrong	Maureen Kishna	Fehrenbach	<b>Teen Helpers:</b>	Cora
Suzanne Malak	Laura Armstrong	<b>5th Grade:</b>	<b>8th Grade:</b>	Logan Feldkamp	<b>Office:</b>	Matthewson
Jim Bergquist	Tom Armstrong	Maria Owens	Pat Roberts	Mary Jane Linn	Jake Fehrenbach	Jake Fehrenbach
<b>Catechists:</b>	<b>2nd Grade:</b>	Margaret Hvizda	Marilyn Kysela	Marcy Hawkins	Maeve	Olivia Konopka
<b>Kindergarten:</b>	Lindsay Barbicas	Jackie Dietrich	Bob Tablack	<b>9th Grade</b>	McKeown	Maire Kelly
Laura Armstrong	Nancy Dixon	Cindy Norman	<b>Subs:</b>	Tom Long	Nora Sheridan	Diego Norena
Susan Konopka	Shannon Gould	<b>6th Grade:</b>	Bob Gallagher	John Burke	Luke Kishna	Ruby Goodill
Lauren Clark	Marilu Norena	Marcy Hawkins	John Karaffa	Carmen DeHaan	Becca Krebs	Michaela Cogan
Colleen Brady	<b>3rd Grade:</b>	Angela Shovein	Tom Flood	Theresa Mystic	Arnaud Carroll	Varoline Johnson
	Jeanne Lytell	Bridget Troy				MacKenzie
						Runyon