



The Belltower Beacon

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

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June 2021

A WARM WELCOME TO FR. ANTHONY MARSHALL

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Our very active and vibrant parish family welcomes Fr. Anthony as our newest Parochial Vicar. Fr. Anthony recalls that his initial reaction to being assigned to St. Christopher was “Thanks be to God!” Upon visiting our campus and meeting our pastoral staff, his heart was indeed “filled with joy” as he became even more excited about coming here. Since then he has been impressed with the manner in which our parishioners care about the spiritual life of our community, the stewardship of our resources, and the “fearless dreams of parishioners past and present that led to such a beautiful parochial setting.” During his time here, Fr. Anthony looks forward to celebrating the sacraments with us, especially the Eucharist, and being involved in the life of the people. As Covid restrictions are being eased, Fr. Anthony will experience more fully our beautiful community of believers and our many parish activities.

On June 25, Fr. Anthony, SSS, will celebrate his 10th year of ordination with the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (SSS – Latin for *Societas Sanctissimi Sacramenti*), a religious community

of priests and brothers founded by St. Peter Julian Eymard in 1856. The Congregation’s primary focus is “... to believe that God’s love is manifest in the Eucharist – the body and blood of Christ ...” Following his ordination, Fr. Anthony assisted his Congregation’s parish on Chicago’s south side, serving a largely Hispanic community (not claiming to be fluent, he is able to communicate in Spanish). He was then appointed Vocation Director of his Province and transferred to New York City. While there he volunteered at the Federal Prison where he celebrated Sunday Mass, heard confessions and provided sacramental ministry. Fr. Anthony’s life thus far has taken him to many interesting places, including Sri Lanka, where he ministered to some of the poorest people in the world (many of them Catholic). In 2015, he was transferred to the Congregation’s U.S. headquarters in Cleveland. During this time he served the Diocese of Cleveland and his religious community as a vocation director, a formation advisor, and an instructor of Sacred Scripture at Borromeo Seminary and John Carroll University.

As we can see, Fr. Anthony brings a rich history of diverse and priceless experiences. Through the Eucharist, he hopes to share God’s love with the people, especially the needy and suffering. Perhaps no one is more grateful for an additional priest than Fr. John Chlebo, who will be assuming added responsibilities in July of this year as delegate to senior priests for the Diocese of Cleveland. Even with Fr. Anthony’s limited parish experience, Fr. John appreciates that “he brings many other gifts that he has developed ... his joy and enthusiasm for ministry, his preaching and teaching, his willingness to work collaboratively and his love for people.”

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FR. ANTHONY, CONT'D

According to Fr. John, these attributes are “obvious” in him, are already being witnessed by those around him, and will enrich the life of the parish.



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Prior to March of last year, Fr. Anthony was enrolled at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome where he was studying Biblical Greek and Hebrew with the hopes of earning

a doctorate and becoming a biblical scholar. When the pandemic spread through Italy, the American priests were encouraged to leave. He then returned to serve the Diocese of Cleveland and was later assigned to our parish. His dream is to be the best diocesan priest he can be and his passion lies in being involved in the life of God's people as much as possible. By becoming a diocesan priest after this five-year period, Fr. Anthony will no longer be a member of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. As a parish priest, he is influenced and guided by the recent words of Pope Francis who stated: “The new parish priest must first love the community, freely, just because he was sent to it; and by loving it, he slowly will come to know it in depth and be able to help set it on new paths ... It is the attitude of the shepherd, who never abandons his flock, but places himself in a different position with respect to it according to the concrete needs of the moment: in front to open the way, in the middle to encourage, in the back to gather the last ones. A priest is called to this in his relationship with the community entrusted to him.” [from the Pope's audience with members of the Belgian Pontifical College in Rome; March 18, 2021]

Fr. Anthony was born in Euclid, OH and attended St. Christine elementary school. When his mother, Carol, became a Highland Heights police officer, they moved there, and Fr. Anthony graduated from the Mayfield School District. In addition to his mother, Fr. Anthony grew up with three step-siblings and a stepfather Duane Ganser (deceased). Though he felt a calling to the priesthood in early childhood, he found himself being sidetracked by an interest in meteorology. He pursued this passion with the guidance of meteorologist André Bernier (WJW-TV8), who mentored Fr. Anthony not only in all things meteorological but also in his personal faith journey. Fr. Anthony recalls: “Andre taught me a lot about the weather and on-air presence; he also encouraged me in my own faith journey as I was growing up.” Nevertheless, it was the meteorology that held Fr. Anthony's interest during those years. To his friends and classmates, he became known as “the weatherman.” By age 16, he was reporting the weather on-air for a local Willoughby station, then on to a TV station in Erie, PA for the summer of his 18th year.

During his early teens, though raised Catholic, Fr. Anthony stopped practicing his faith because he “just didn't get much out of Mass as a teenager.” After a short period, however, he found himself reflecting more seriously on his faith in Christ and once again drawing closer to the Church. Fr. Anthony's journey back and his enrollment at Borromeo Seminary were influenced greatly by two priests from St. Paschal Baylon Church, Highland Heights. “Fr. Mario Marzocchi and Fr. Donald Jette were great role models for me,” he stated. “They truly lived a Eucharistic life. They gave the gift of themselves in their priestly ministry to all of God's people. They loved everybody, and I think this love brought others to Jesus.” Following his ordination, Fr. Anthony studied theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago; he earned his Master of Divinity and his Master of Arts in Theology. He has a working knowledge of Spanish and Italian; he reads Hebrew and Greek (with the aid of a dictionary). He uses modern technology to share his views and makes himself available through twitter.

Fr. Anthony likes to think of himself as “an old fashioned” priest who hopes to come closer to parishioners by visiting their homes. He loves the story about the Risen Lord fixing breakfast on the seashore for his disciples where Peter's reconciliation with Jesus takes place (John 21:1-19). Fr. Anthony also wants to feed the lambs and take care of the sheep that God is entrusting to him. After many years of studying and working in academia, Fr. Anthony would like to some day enjoy the great outdoors by learning to play golf. Meanwhile, he'll focus on being the best parish priest he can be “by being open to our generous and loving God, who delights in surprising us with His mercy.”

Instead of challenges, Fr. Anthony sees only countless opportunities for growth. He is inspired by the words of Pope Francis which support his new journey into day-to-day parish life: “Being Church means being God's people, in accordance with the great plan of his fatherly love ... proclaiming and bringing God's salvation into our world ... Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel ...” Two of his favorite Christian worship songs also carry strong messages that inspire and strengthen Fr. Anthony's faith in God and God's people: “We have been told, we've seen his face...” (by David Haas) and “Lord, I Need You” (by Matt Maher). Indeed, we have seen the face of God and truly we do need Him now more than ever.

It comes as no surprise that Fr. Anthony is drawn to stories in the Bible like 1 Samuel 3:1-19, where Samuel is called to be a prophet and responds without hesitation: “Speak, for your servant is listening ... Here I am, Lord.” In a year full of so much change, anticipation and hope, we too are saying yes to gratefully returning to our happy, busy normal. As we celebrate this rebirth, we thank God and add Fr. Anthony to our long list of blessings. Please join us in extending a warm, loving welcome to Fr. Anthony as we all get to know each other better.

Carmen Everett DeHaan

THIS & THAT FROM FR. JOHN

There are several topics I wish to address in this issue of the Belltower Beacon so here goes!

A new Parochial Vicar for our parish and a new Ministry for me. The lead article of this issue introduces you to our new Parochial Vicar, Fr. Anthony Marshall. I welcome him and am very happy to have him with us. His presence here allows me to accept Bishop Malesic's invitation to take on the additional responsibility of Delegate to Diocesan Senior Clergy while remaining Pastor of St. Christopher. This part time position takes effect July 1, 2021 upon the retirement of Fr. Jack Manning who currently serves in that role. I am just beginning to learn the details of this assignment. Responsibilities focus on gathering retired priests for spiritual, educational and social opportunities; developing a system of regular contact with them; and reaching out to retired priests with special needs such as assisted living or nursing care. I am happy about the assignment as well as the opportunity to continue as Pastor here at St. Christopher. I look forward to sharing more about this new role in the months ahead.

Called For More, The Disciple Maker Index.

I wish to thank all who responded to this diocesan wide effort. 317 parishioners participated in the survey. That is a very good response and we are truly grateful for your time and support of this diocesan request. The collection of that data from around the diocese has concluded. As I write this, we await the next steps of sharing the results and acting upon them.

Capital Improvements



Much work is being done around the parish property. Some sidewalks and curbing have been replaced as needed. The outdoor handicap ramp that leads to the side entrance of the church from the handicap parking area has been improved in order to

be brought up to current code regulations. Mary's Room has been renovated including new flooring and a new ceiling. The kitchen was completely redone with new appliances and cupboards. The bathrooms were also redone with new flooring and wall covering. In addition, there are new tables in the room.

This summer the main parking lot will receive a major resurfacing. Both entrances to the south end of the parking lot will be included in this project along with the Parish Office parking area. This is a \$750,000.00 project and is a major part of the capital campaign we

conducted in late 2019 and early 2020, just prior to the pandemic. Sometime in the next few months you will see work done in the area of the St. Christopher shrine in the church as we prepare for a new statue. The current statue will be moved to a place yet to be determined in the school. All of this work, as well as Centennial Park, are the result of the generosity of parishioners who have contributed to the campaign and we are all grateful. The pandemic curtailed some of the pledge drive that was nearing an end causing us to fall short of the \$3 million goal. There will be other capital needs we are saving towards including replacement of roofs and HVAC equipment. Your pledges and donations are still welcome! Feel free to contact me for more details. It is a way for all of us to prepare for a new century of service.

Paver Bricks for Centennial Park

We continue to receive requests regarding the purchase of paver bricks for Centennial Park. It is still possible to do so. When we have enough new requests we are able to have new bricks put in place. The best way to proceed is to email the parish at info@stchrisparish.com and we will, in turn, email a form to you. There are also forms available in the lobby of the Parish Office. The outside door to the lobby is always open for dropping off or picking up materials so you can pick up a form anytime. Please return the forms with payment at your earliest convenience to the Parish Office.

Centennial



Saturday, May 14, 2021 marked the 99th Anniversary of the first Mass celebrated at the "new" St. Christopher Parish. Fr. Patterson celebrated Mass that day at 8 and 10 a.m. Those liturgies took place at the Rocky River Town Hall. Back in 1922 the Town Hall was located in what we now call Old River. We originally planned to begin a more formal celebration of our centennial year at this time. However, the pandemic of the past year has delayed our planning. It is now our intention to celebrate our centennial during the calendar year of 2022. This will require

some planning! If anyone is interested in being part of a centennial planning committee please contact me at the Parish Office.

Fr. John Chlebo

SPOTLIGHT ON JOHN & SHARON HOSEK

While many may see retiring after many years of work as an opportunity to relax, John and Sharon Hosek see their retirement years as an opportunity to do more and to give back. They have been very active parishioners over the years, and you may know them most recently through their work on the Social Concerns Committee or SCC. John has chaired the meetings for this committee and produced a monthly newsletter for about five and a half years. This committee helps St. Christopher parishioners find various volunteer opportunities and charitable actions for local agencies.

The SCC mission statement is: Through prayer, study, education and positive action, the Social Concerns Committee is committed to offer St. Christopher parishioners the opportunity to promote the principles of Catholic social justice. Our main goal is to empower, directly serve and advocate for those who suffer from want and injustice. Please read more about the Social Concerns Committee by visiting the SCC Facebook page.

John and Sharon have been retired for about ten and eleven years, respectively, from their careers in which they both worked for government agencies. Their retirements have allowed them time to pursue the more fulfilling acts of serving those less fortunate than themselves.

The Hoseks joined St. Christopher parish after getting married and relocating to

Being new to this area, they wanted to become involved as parishioners to help the parish, as well as to meet people. They have been involved in many areas of service to the parish over the years including the welcoming committee, the Belltower Beacon – for which Sharon acted as editor for its first five years, as Eucharistic Ministers for



the Nursing Home Ministry, and making meals for Family Promise. Family Promise allowed families experiencing homelessness to stay at the St. Christopher Home which was the house located on church property where the St. Francis statue now stands. Unfortunately, the St. Christopher Home was torn down several years ago when frozen pipes burst damaging the house beyond repair.

John was born in Cleveland and raised in Garfield Heights, attending St. Therese School and then Benedictine High School. After his bachelor's degree, he earned a master's degree in Economics from Case Western Reserve University. During his

Medina counties. It was from NOACA that he retired in 2011 after 26 years of service.

Sharon was raised in a large Catholic family with nine siblings on a farm in Springfield, Kentucky. She spent her early years enjoying her large family, helping with the family and the farm. The farm is still operational and still owned by her family. Her siblings are a large part of her life and she enjoyed frequent visits to Kentucky to see them prior to the pandemic.

Sharon attended a Catholic grade school near her small hometown and then her local public high school. While enrolled in business vocational school, she was recruited to work at the FBI as a stenographer. She worked at the FBI headquarters in Washington, DC for two years and then continued working with the FBI in Dallas, Texas for another five years. Other turns in her early life, including the blessing of two sons, eventually brought her to the greater Cleveland area.

She and John met while both working at NOACA. Sharon retired from NOACA in 2010. She worked in the private sector but spent the better part of her career, 32 years, working for the government.

While the Hoseks are very involved in the parish and helping those less fortunate than themselves, they still find time to enjoy what many may think of as more "typical" retirement activities including spending time with two married sons and their families – and traveling. They were fortunate enough

"IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR ME TO START ATTENDING MASS AGAIN TO
RECEIVE COMMUNION"

Rocky River in 1996. (They both had previous marriages.) While John was born and raised in the greater Cleveland area, he wanted to live closer to Lake Erie which is what brought them to Rocky River.

career he worked as an economist in both the private sector as well as for the governmental agency known as NOACA – the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency. NOACA is a transportation and environmental planning agency which serves Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and

to have been able to enjoy a trip to Europe in 2019, prior to the start of the pandemic. They have been able to enjoy their two granddaughters, who live locally. John and Sharon have even been able to have their granddaughters participate in some of their volunteer activities, such as helping

at the Rocky River Assistance Program, taking pictures of volunteers at Habitat for Humanity, and making cards for nursing home residents.

Neither John nor Sharon have limited their volunteering exclusively to St. Christopher. Sharon has been volunteering at the Rocky River/Lakewood Meals on Wheels since her 2010 retirement. John has volunteered with College Now, which aids low-income families in achieving their dreams of going to and succeeding in college. He also currently volunteers for RESULTS, an anti-poverty advocacy group. In the past he has been a member of the Social Action Commission for the Diocese, a member of the Rocky River Planning Commission and of the Rocky River Library Board and Foundation.



The Hoseks have both been vaccinated for the coronavirus and have recently begun attending Mass in person again. “It was important for me to start attending Mass again to receive communion,” Sharon said. They started by attending a weekday Mass on a Thursday and were complimentary about how the new procedures have been implemented to keep parishioners safe.

The coronavirus has had an understandable impact on the Social Concerns Committee as many of the agencies for whom they try to enlist help have had to change procedures to protect both their patrons and volunteers. While both the SCC and the agencies they help have had to make changes due to the coronavirus, John pointed out that despite the changes and some limitations on in person activities, “Everyone can still pray, and that makes a tremendous difference.”

Our parish is blessed to have such a kind, caring and others-centered couple as parishioners.

Annemarie Polito

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL JULY 2021

WE ARE BACK IN PERSON! Vacation Bible School is back July 26-29 from 9-11:30 a.m. at Rocky River Presbyterian Church. Our Bible School team decided that we would wait until later in the summer to ensure that more adults would be vaccinated and Covid cases were down. We plan on meeting outside and limiting the number of campers to 60 to be able to keep our campers safe.

Registration forms were available May 15 until we reach capacity. We will need adults and teens to help make Bible School happen. Our theme this year is Compassion Camp. If you are able to volunteer to help, please contact Sharon Armstrong at (440) 331-6226 x402 or sarmstrong@stchrisparish.com. Vacation Bible School is such a big part of our summer – I’m so happy we can still make it happen this year.

Sharon Armstrong

Thank you!

Thank you to our PSR Catechists who led our kindergarten-8th grade students through this year of virtual learning. They were met with a challenge and exceeded all expectations, teaching our young people to accept and give God’s love and grace. Your rewards will be great in heaven!

Lauren Clark: Kindergarten	Adam DiIulio: Kindergarten
Laura Armstrong: 1st grade	Sabrina Rick: 1st grade
Lindsay Barbicas: 2nd grade	Marilu Norena: 2nd grade
Johna Graziani: 3rd grade	Jeanne Lytell: 3rd grade
Amanda Klidas: 4th grade	Craig Rimlinger: 4th grade
Sharon Armstrong: 5th Grade	Marilyn Kysela: 5th grade
Angela Shovein: 6th grade	Bridget Troy: 6th grade
Maria Owens: 7th grade	Pat Roberts :8th grade
Bob Tablack: 8th grade	Bob Gallagher: extraordinary helper
Katie Gould: office assistant	

Thank you, parents for a wonderful year!

Sharon Armstrong

THE BENEFITS OF THE K-8 MODEL

Today, most school districts group students across a relatively narrow band of grades. In the community of Rocky River, for example, the four school buildings serve students in grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. This is similar to what is found in other Westshore communities like Bay Village and Westlake. There are certain merits to doing this as it allows for greater specialization in the allocation of teachers, professional development, and resources to meet the unique needs of learners within a particular range of grade levels.

St. Christopher School and other Catholic schools in the Diocese of Cleveland continue to educate students utilizing a K-8 model of instruction. This model offers many advantages to our students, especially those in the middle grades of 6-8. Research studies published in Educational Leadership and the American Educational Research Journal showed that adolescent students that attended K-8 schools performed better than those attending traditional middle schools. Other benefits included:

- Experience higher levels of self-esteem and fewer behavior problems
- Have more of a positive attitude toward school
- Have higher levels of academic achievement
- Experience more core instructional time
- Have significantly higher scores in reading, language arts, and mathematics
- Experience better outcomes in 9th grade

Our recent MAP testing session results certainly support the achievement and instructional benefits of the model for students in the middle school grades. On average our students grew 25 percentage points above the national median. The mean RIT (a measure of instructional level) of our 7th and 8th grade classes was well above the 90th percentile. The 8th grade's RIT scores would have placed them above the 85th percentile for 11th grade

students. The 7th grade RIT scores were the equivalent of the 85th percentile for 9th grade students. Students and staff in both grades are to be commended for this phenomenal achievement.

There are more benefits to the K-8 model for adolescent students, however, than just academics. Our "Angels" Program, for example, gives older students opportunities to mentor, support, and tutor younger students. Younger students in turn benefit from having an older student serving as a role model and support system. During the course of grades 6-8, our students develop into servant-leaders. Beyond the Angels program, this includes leading the school in prayer during morning announcements, serving as readers during Mass or as altar servers, instructing younger students during programs like Science Share, and assisting in classrooms throughout the year. Covid restrictions have limited the frequency and ways our older and younger students interact, but these opportunities will return during the 2021-22 school year.

The staff at St. Christopher School is committed to helping all students grow spiritually, academically, and socio-emotionally. We believe that our K-8 model is a key component in helping to facilitate the growth and development of our students. This prepares them to be successful students, leaders, and witnesses to their faith in high school and beyond.

Scott Raiff



LIVESTREAM MINISTRY HARNESSES TECHNOLOGY TALENT

The introduction of our livestreaming system last fall offered a new opportunity for St. Christopher parishioners to become involved in parish ministry. Five parishioners, alongside myself have taken on the task of learning to operate our livestreaming system. Many of these individuals have prior experience in audio-visual programming with radio stations, television companies, and production teams. Thanks to the generous gift of their time, we have volunteer livestream operators for every Saturday night Mass. This job is not taken lightly as each stream reaches hundreds of people every weekend.

Livestreaming Ministry Coordinator:
Logan Feldkamp

Operators:

Kevin Tennant	Bill Leimkuehler
Dan Bowman	Rebeka DeChant
Mike Hayes	

Volunteers first shadow a current operator to understand the operation of the system and the different equipment involved. After this experience, they perform several “test streams” during Sunday morning liturgies. These private streams allow the future operator to control the equipment themselves and have a recorded version for review after running a test. These recorded test runs are reviewed by me in addition to the volunteer to identify strengths and weaknesses within the particular stream. After running a handful of test streams, operators who run quality productions are added to a monthly schedule, often streaming one Saturday night Mass a month. This job has remained vital throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to help bring our service into the homes of parishioners who have not yet returned to Mass. The attention to detail and sophistication of our streaming system makes this a very difficult job. We are very thankful for the gifts these individuals have offered our community! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me at the Parish Office.

Logan Feldkamp

LADIES GUILD UPDATE

In the Ladies Guild’s near century of service to St. Christopher Parish, suffice it to say there has never been a year like this one. As it became clear that the pandemic would drag on for many months, the Guild’s board members discussed how best to fulfill the Guild’s mission of connecting the women of St. Christopher in faith and friendship despite Covid’s limitations on physical gatherings. Longtime Guild member and past president, Georgene Cooper, reached out with a pep talk for us all. She wrote, “The Guild has survived since 1922 through the depression, world wars, polio epidemics, controversy in government and our Church, lack of funding for our church and school, and a shortage of volunteers to lead our membership. Through it all the Guild rallied and then was reborn with you and those who lead the Guild once again. We now face a pandemic that keeps us from being with one another, sharing smiles, hugs and face to face conversation. Reaching out to members, will keep the Guild alive.”

Fortitude, one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, has long been evident in the perseverance of the Guild, and this year would be no different. The Guild adjusted and continued using the means available, email and Zoom. President Cindy McDonough reached out with weekly reflections to the members and asked the question: “What insights have you discovered or new hobbies have you begun during this difficult year?” Several Guild members responded with inspiring reflections of their own which were shared through email. Many other members applauded their efforts with supportive comments. Though we all greatly missed our usual, tangible, physical gatherings, grace was present nonetheless. The following events were hosted via Zoom:

- A January Sanctified Yoga session led by parishioner and Inner Bliss instructor Claire Kaufman.
- In honor of Pope Francis’ document *Laudato Si (On the Care of Our Common Home)*, an educational recycle session was held with Guild member and Rocky River Green Team Leader Andrea Mediate.
- A 40-day Lenten Immersion was led by Claire Kaufman that included weekly Sanctified Yoga sessions, daily reflections, scripture, and prayer suggestions, opportunities for fasting and almsgiving, and outdoor stations of the cross at the Jesuit Retreat Center.
- Still to come is the relaunching of the Guild’s Little Flower Project and a fall happy hour social in the beautiful Centennial Park.

As our de facto historian, Georgene, likes to say: “Long live the Guild!” And indeed, despite these most challenging and historic months, the Guild is alive and well. If you’d like to be a part of our community, please email Cindymcdonoughcpt@gmail.com. All are welcome!

Nancy Sullivan

FIRST COMMUNION

We celebrated First Communions a little differently this year due to the pandemic. Instead of large groups of second graders at Masses the first two weekends in May, we are celebrating in groups of up to four families per Mass the last weekend in April through the first weekend in June. Although it's been an atypical year, we still loved guiding these families through this special year in their faith.

Thank you, 2nd grade team, for your hard work and compassion.

Robin Seedhouse | Marilu Norena | Lindsay Barbicas

Sharon Armstrong





20s AND 30s MINISTRY RETURNS WITH A NEW LOOK THIS SUMMER!

Following a successful kickoff, the St. Christopher 20s and 30s ministry was forced to table all future events due to the pandemic. Meetups at the Rocky River Brewing Company, a bowling night and concert at Mahall's lanes in Lakewood, and the endless food of locally-hosted potluck dinners all ceased to materialize as the pandemic gripped the world. With new hope offered by the vast distribution of vaccinations, our young adult ministry has the opportunity to rise again, this time with a new name, look, and approach to offering spiritual and social opportunities for those in their 20s and 30s.

Earlier this year, St. Christopher was happy to be named the host parish of the newly formulated "Near-West Suburban Parish Young Adult Pod." A new program started under Mike Hayes, Director of Young Adult Ministry at the Diocese of Cleveland (and St. Christopher parishioner), the "Parish Young Adult Pod Project" joins area parishes in an attempt to provide consistent, inter-parish young adult ministry. Serving as the host parish, St. Christopher will be joined by the communities of St. Angela Merici (Fairview Park), St. Luke (Lakewood) and St. Mark (Cleveland) in forming the Near-West Suburban Pod. Young Adult events will take place twice per month with the first event being a BBQ-themed cookout event at our very own Centennial Park on Saturday, June 12 following 5 p.m. Mass. Join us for food, beer and plenty of lawn games with other area young adults. Interested in joining us or want more information? Contact Logan Feldkamp, Pastoral Minister, for all things young adult and stay tuned to weekly email updates with information about future events.

Logan Feldkamp

CHAMPIONS OF THE CYO!

They may not be the champions of the world, but our 8th grade girls basketball team and 5th grade boys basketball team both won Cleveland area CYO championships. This is the second consecutive championship for both groups. The girls used an incredible defensive effort to defeat archrival, St. Raphael, 27-10. The boys ended their season undefeated for the second consecutive year. We are very proud of both of these teams' accomplishments and of all of our CYO student-athletes as well. We are also especially grateful to the many parent volunteers who assist as coaches.

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BRIGHT SPOTS

This past April, after six long months, youth group finally resumed in-person meetings. It's been a challenging year for everyone and the chance to gather in-person was a welcome return to some form of normalcy. Our teens shared prayer requests, reflected on reasons to be Catholic, and gave insightful responses in discussions. At the end of both meetings, we satisfied our competitive spirits with intense ultimate frisbee showdowns (similar to tag football with a frisbee).

While this year has been a strange one; it hasn't been without its bright spots. For many of us, including me, this year brought more work from home and time with family. As far as youth group, youth zooms often yielded honest moments from the teens and some great reflections.

As we move away from the grey of winter and towards the light of summer, I am reminded of our true source of light and hope, Jesus Christ. We may not know what tomorrow may bring but we do know this, we are never alone. Please keep our teens and our group in your prayers, as we continue to journey in our Catholic Faith together.

Eric Perusek



TEN40!

TEN40!, an all-male a cappella group from Bowling Green State University, brought their “pitch perfect” sounds to Centennial Park for an outdoor concert on Thursday, May 6. The evening was chilly and damp but the group’s high-energy performance kept the crowd entertained. When rain threatened at the intermission, the second half of the show was moved into the church.

TEN40! concludes each year with a tour to accomplish their mission “as musicians and performers to spread the knowledge and joy that music can bring.” Robert McMurray, Director of Music Ministry at St. Christopher, was instrumental in scheduling this concert as part of the tour and the group thanked him with a serenade proclaiming him as a “Ten40! Sweetheart.”

Musical highlights included a medley of popular Disney songs and the emotional title track from Ten40!’s new CD “Born to Fly.”

A food truck from Forno’s Wood-Fired Catering was available for gourmet refreshments.

Colleen McKenna



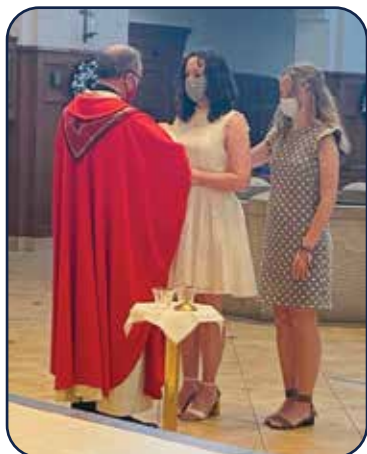
Stations of the Cross



CONFIRMATION

Our 8th graders started preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation in September of 2020. Students started classes in person before the pandemic cases hit all-time highs in November and December. We finished up classes and a retreat virtually. While nothing replaces in person formation, we were able to prepare our 75 candidates to celebrate the sacrament at four Masses this May. Pastors were granted special permission by the Bishop to celebrate Confirmation in their parishes. Fr. John was thrilled to celebrate these Masses with this class, most of which he and Fr. Tim had baptized here at St. Christopher. While many families were disappointed that we couldn't celebrate Confirmation as a large group, we were able to offer four Masses in small groups of no more than 20 families, which offered a more individualized experience of the Sacrament. Although this past year was a very stressful time in the life of the Church, we celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit to these students.

Sharon Armstrong





THANKS TO OUR WEEKEND USHERS

A year ago we were able to resume “in person” Mass attendance on May 30-31, the Feast of Pentecost. What a wonderful celebration after having been unable to do so for 10 weeks as we struggled to stay safe during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As Fr. John said at the time “...it is not as easy as simply unlocking the doors and letting the people in!” We needed to provide hand sanitizer, require the wearing of masks, use only one church entrance/exit, sanitize all areas between Masses, create social distancing within all areas of our church building and follow the detailed guidelines provided by the diocese. This was a labor intensive effort that was made possible by parish volunteers.

As we prepared to celebrate Mass in the church we reached out to parishioners to find ushers who would assist in all that was involved to keep people safe each weekend and enable them to feel comfortable being here. By the time you read this we will have accomplished this for 53 weekends. In addition the ushers assisted with the Masses on Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil. Many times some responded to my urgent call to serve at multiple Masses. On Easter they also served in the Parish Center. Through it all they kept smiling and warmly greeting people.

Our ushers began their ministry by arriving a half hour before Mass. As people arrived they guided them to an appropriate place for an individual or multiple family members. Once people were seated for social distancing, the job was not finished. When it came time for communion they invited individuals out of their pew when 6-foot distancing allowed for it. At the end of Mass they guided people out of the pews one row at a time and put on gloves to pass out bulletins as people left the church.

It is now a year later and these ushers are still serving in this key liturgical role, still happily greeting people and making them feel welcome when they arrive for Mass. They continue to seat them to maintain social distancing and keep them safe. Our parish staff is grateful for their service and hospitality to those who are here each weekend. A big THANK YOU to all of them. They are pictured below.

Gayle Cilimburg

Other ushers not pictured: Chris and Laura Nortz, Jim Bergquist, Kate Anderer-DiMichele, Karen Conroy, Crystal Arnold, Bob Tablack



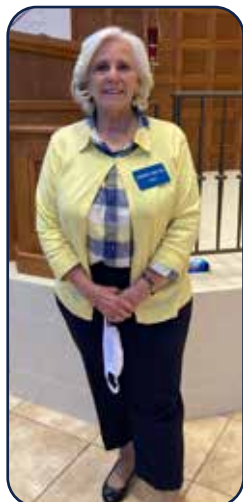
Patrick Kelly, Jim Sweeney, Tom Seskar, Theresa Francis, Judy Rieke, Kim Kelly



John Burke, Sheila Mannix, Roberta Trutko, Vid Lutz, Denio Leone



John Lackey, Marcy Hawkins, Chris Rosati, Bill Blough



Cheryl Selak



Doug Hawkins



Marilu Norena, Bonnie Twitchell



Kate Ptak

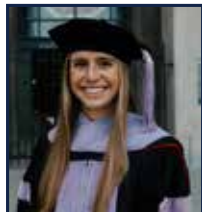


Ken Szabo



Craig Rimlinger

CHURCH CHATTER



MAKE SMILES BRIGHT

Best wishes and congratulations to new dentist **Dr. Mallory Alexander, D.D.S.** Mallory is a graduate of St. Christopher School Class of 2009, as well as Magnificat High School Class of 2013, The Ohio State University Class of 2017, Bachelor of Science, and The Ohio State University College of Dentistry Class of 2021. We wish her well as she starts her new career!

BIRTHDAY WISHES

Happy birthday wishes go out to Pastoral Minister, **Logan Feldkamp** (June 6), Director of Religious Education, **Sharon Armstrong** (August 3) and Business Manager, **Joe Williams** (September 2).

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

Congratulations are extended to **Maire Kelly**, Rocky River High School senior, who was inducted into the National Honor Society. Other parishioner inductees from St. Ignatius High School Class of 2022 include: **AJ Fletcher**, **Brendan Hunt**, and **Charlie Polito**. Congrats to Magnificat seniors **Sarah Booth**, **Anna Goecke** and **Mia Schwind**, who were also inducted.

FAMILY TIME

The **Norena family** experienced what many of us did during quarantine: disappointment as plans were canceled. But, we all soon grew to be thankful for family, health, jobs, and enjoying kids at home. Moises had a creative period with his paintings and photos, which you can visit at donmoi.com. With conditions improving this spring, the family drove west to enjoy several national parks. Happy travel plans to all.

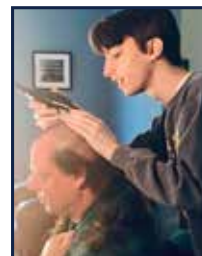


SCC UPDATE

Social Concerns Committee members **Dolores Badar**, **John Hosek** and **Jeanette and Tom Nappier** met with Congressman Anthony Gonzalez's staff in May to discuss poverty and environmental issues.

ST. BALDRICK

For 16 years, **Joe Kovach** has been annually shaving his head for this worthwhile charity. His current title is "Crusader for the Cure" and he is the captain of the West Park "Bored of Hair" team. Joe's son, **Keegan**, had the honor of shaving his father's head. Joe raised \$2,400 for University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children. Way to go, Joe!



SENIOR SERVERS

Thank you to our young parishioners, who have served during Mass. Even though the pandemic halted their last year of serving, we wish to thank **Claire Bulic**, **Tom Capka**, **Matthew Goodman**, **Emily Hollabaugh**, **Catherine Hunt**, **Lucy Ripepi**, and **Emilie Tobin**.

THE FEST

The **FEST** is a free, Catholic family festival to be held on August 8 in Wickliffe. It features live music, games, activities, and much more! The day ends with Mass and a fireworks display. It's an opportunity to come together as a people of faith, celebrating the wonderful things God has done in our lives and in our world. The Fest will be in person, as well as online. Visit www.thefest.us to learn more.

Share your joyous events with us! Please forward submissions for Church Chatter to Roberta Trutko at (440) 263-7894 or roberta32red@hotmail.com.



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Nancy Sullivan

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 4 EIGHTH GRADE
GRADUATION

June 8 KINDERGARTEN
PROMOTION

June 9 LAST DAY
OF SCHOOL

June 20 FATHER'S DAY



July 25 ST. CHRISTOPHER
FEAST DAY

July 26-30 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

August 15 FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION
OF MARY

August 28 BLOCK PARTY

*We are the people of St. Christopher Catholic Church, a spirited community of faith dedicated
to ... Welcome, Celebrate, Care, & Grow ... in the image and likeness of Jesus.*