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ST. CHRISTOPHER PARISH

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The Belltower Beacon

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

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June 2022

CENTENNIAL MASS WITH MOST REVEREND EDWARD MALESIC

During one of the most celebratory weekends of the history of St. Christopher Parish, we are blessed with a reading from the Book of Revelation, which includes the beautiful words “The One who sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. (Rev. 21:5a).” On May 14, we came together as a community to start our New Century of Service and celebrate the last 100 years. Our community was joined by His Excellency Edward Malesic, other Diocesan representatives, parish priests, Rocky River civic leaders, parishioners and visitors. It was a Eucharistic celebration that featured extraordinary worship music under the direction of Music Director Bob McMurray. Deacon Dennis Conrad joined Bishop Malesic in the Liturgy of the Word and a homily by the bishop followed. Using humor and a personal approach, Bishop Malesic left us with a powerful message ending with the same words “Behold, I make all things new.” Assuredly, we now begin a new faith journey of loving God and one another. We do this by worshiping, participating in the Sacraments (especially Eucharist and Reconciliation), and serving all of God’s people, particularly those in greatest need. With a unique display of praise music and participation at the 5 p.m. Centennial Mass, followed by a lovely reception in the Parish Center, we remain above all else a humble faith community whose Eucharistic celebration is at the center of everything we do. We therefore honor those who were steadfast in starting our parish community and building our Church exactly 100 years ago today (May 14, 1922). As we journey into the next 100 years, we hope our legacy continues to be sharing our faith, preparing youth to be Church of the future, and continuing to be good stewards of our resources.

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CELEBRATING FR. JOHN’S 25 YEARS AS OUR SPIRITUAL LEADER



Installation as pastor in 1997

In the midst of our summer-long 2022 Centennial celebration, we also celebrate Fr. John’s 25 years as Pastor and spiritual leader of our parish community. Fr. John has

been a priest for 42 years, and 25 of those have been at St. Christopher. On July 1, 1997, Fr. John Christopher Chlebo became pastor of St. Christopher, one of the largest and most active parishes in the Diocese. Yes, his middle name is Christopher! For 17 years prior, he served in different Diocesan positions, including associate pastor. No matter how diligently one prepares to lead, there are still many unexpected and unknown circumstances that present themselves. This is especially true when changing parish communities. A day school/parish school of religion like ours and the large number of students preparing for the Sacraments can add to the complexity. It also adds to the joy of seeing

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CELEBRATING FR. JOHN, CONT'D

the faithful mature spiritually. With his calming demeanor, Fr. John is especially gifted in assisting families grieving at the time of death and funerals. He considers it an honor to accompany people during their most difficult times. In one of our traditional Catholic prayers, we pray that God will give our priests “the grace to persevere in faith, hope and love” and “inspire them to be good shepherds of their flock.” Becoming pastor of St. Christopher was the perfect opportunity for Fr. John to lead God’s people into closer communion with Christ.



St. Christopher 75th anniversary in 1997

According to those who work with and around Fr. John, he is known to be humble, approachable, considerate of others, and is fully dedicated to this community. He strives to live out his motto that he is not above the people, he must be with the people. He has been willing to listen, discern, and make changes that improve the spiritual and social environment of our community. Fr. John has a calming influence in handling situations, focuses on the positive, and maintains a supportive presence. According to Saint John Vianney, patron saint of priests: “After God, the priest is everything.” Under Fr. John’s leadership, our parish grew in number (over 3,300 families), physical space (Parish Center, capital improvements, Centennial Park) and spiritually (religious education, pastoral ministry, visiting the homebound, prayer groups, Bible studies and much more). During these 25 years, our parish established its Mission Statement, enhanced our Block

Party and introduced this Belltower Beacon. Most importantly, opportunities to give back to the Diocese, to community organizations and to those in need have remained robust. Fr. John supports our many groups and charitable programs, locally and globally (El Salvador, Catholic Relief Services, etc.).



Receiving doctor in ministry in 2003

June 7, 1980, Fr. John was born on May 17, 1954 and was raised in Cleveland by devout Catholic parents. He knew early in life that he was meant to be a priest. He received his Master of Divinity at St. Mary Seminary and in 2003 he received his Doctor of Ministry. Fr. John affirms that the key to staying motivated and inspired from day to day lies in his complete faith in God. He draws daily inspiration from his pastoral and support teams, parishioners and students. He knows that God calls us by name, tells us not to fear and loves us beyond measure. He believes that when a church leader displays trust in God and courage, the community does not fear the future. Fr. John stresses the importance of asking for input and seeking advice. He strives not to be a micromanager but prefers to delegate and seek collaboration. Fr. John thanks God every day for parishioners who are kind, caring and generous with others.

As the shepherd of our flock, Fr. John realizes that it is crucial for him to follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Like sheep, we can sometimes feel lost, weak and powerless. We need someone who will guard and lead us on the right path. Fr. John has become

Those closest to him affirm that even with his very busy schedule, he makes himself available and is ready to tackle the next project.

Ordained by Bishop Hickey on

known for his meaningful homilies which “hit the spot” as they teach, uplift and challenge us. He enjoys speaking directly to parents bringing infants for Baptism, young First Communicants, our Confirmation students, young couples preparing for marriage, and newly initiated Catholics. When the teens in Confirmation Class were asked what they liked most about going through the program, some were quick to say that they really enjoyed Fr. John’s homilies because he spoke directly to them, making them feel special. In the words of Bishop Malesic, our Catholic youth are our “future church.” It is important that we prepare them well now, so they can carry this Eucharistic community of faith into the next Century of Service. Fr. John’s words help the catechists reach their students.



Dedication of the Parish Center in 2001

Our familiarity with Fr. John reminds us (the sheep) of the words of Jesus in John 10:1-10, “... the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out ... he walks ahead of them and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice.” This is a huge responsibility that requires a shepherd who is God centered, keenly aware of and engaged with all aspects of his parish community. A prayer by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI concerning the role of priests asks Jesus: “May they preach the Gospel with pure heart and clear conscience. Let them be shepherds according to your own heart, single-minded in service to You and to the Church, and shining examples of a holy, simple and joyful life ... draw all priests and the flocks entrusted to their care to the fullness of eternal life ...” Fr. John has a great appreciation for his flock, the people of this parish. He realizes that we are all

in this together as declared in our Parish Mission Statement: "We are the people of St. Christopher Catholic Church, a Eucharistic community of faith dedicated to Welcome, Celebrate, Care & Grow in the image and likeness of Jesus."



Celebrating 25th year as a diocesan priest in 2005

One of the highest compliments for someone assuming a leadership role is to hear that he or she has "grown into" that position. We can confidently say that Fr. John has come to know his parishioners well, has faced obstacles head on and has become our greatest advocate for overall growth, past and present - and now laying the groundwork for the future. As we join him in celebrating his 25th anniversary as pastor, we also applaud his hard work through the years. One of his many accomplishments includes our Centennial Park, a project that was planned, built and financed by parishioners. It has already

become a vital part of the life of the parish. Representing our first century of serving God, it is also part of the next 100 years. We give thanks to Fr. John and his leadership team for being able to participate in Mass and other events on our televisions and electronic devices during the pandemic. This technology continues to be crucial in staying connected with our parishioners who are sick, homebound and for other reasons unable to come in person. Also advantageous is the ease by which we can stay informed through email and website, the ease of enrolling in programs, and the ability to make our Sunday offering and donations online.

The Easter season, which includes Good Shepherd Sunday, presents us with Scripture readings and songs that speak to the role of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. They are rich in meaning and instruction for the ordained and all followers of Christ. In June 2021, Pope Francis urged pastors to be "shepherds with the smell of the sheep," meaning that they are to consider the environment in which they will be working as well as the people entrusted to them. Pope Francis added: "Pastors should be capable of living, laughing and crying with people ... priesthood isolated from the people of God is neither a Catholic priesthood nor a Christian one."

Mission trip to El Salvador 2015



Holy Land pilgrimage in 2012



Mass in the Church of the Nativity in 2012



Dedication of Centennial Park 2020



Breaking ground for the Parish Center in 2000

We congratulate Fr. John on his 25 years as pastor and express our heartfelt appreciation for his years of dedicated service. We also look forward to officially celebrating with Fr. John on August 6th and 7th (details to be announced). If you have not gotten to know him, our other priests, and the entire staff that ministers together, you are encouraged to do so. They are a visible presence, very approachable, and care deeply for the sheep of this parish family. The events planned for this Centennial summer will provide plenty of casual and fun opportunities to meet and share ideas. Please plan to attend some or all of them.

Carmen Everett DeHaan



Mission trip to El Salvador 2015



CENTENNIAL MASS, CONT'D

At the start of Mass, the bishop took a moment to compliment the musicians for their exceptional entrance hymn. With amazing instruments playing in the background, we sang “Joyful, joyful, we adore you, God of glory, Lord of love ...” It was indeed a joyous occasion, and the Church was full of rejoicing. Before starting his homily, Bishop Malesic expressed how pleased and happy he was to share in our celebration. He applauded the hard work of our staff and all those who made the evening so special. He gave those assembled a brief history of St. Christopher Parish that started in a small space where Tartine Bistro now operates to what it has now become – a welcoming Church environment with a large campus of indoor and outdoor space. Bishop Malesic reminded us that the courage and perseverance of those with a dream grew into the strong community presence that is now enjoyed by all of Rocky River and nearby communities. Growing from the initial 41 families in the 1920s, we now serve over 3,300 families. Comments made by the bishop, Pastor John Chlebo and Pastoral Associate Gayle Cilimburg stressed the words of our Mission Statement – that we are “... a Eucharistic community of faith dedicated to Welcome, Celebrate, Care and Grow in the image and likeness of Jesus.”

From the entrance hymn to the Recessional, “Jesus Christ is Risen Today,” the faithful of all ages responded in unison and sang with enthusiasm. These were the happy sounds of a community grateful for its many blessings. Planning and hosting the Centennial Mass, social gathering and historical displays took many months of hard work by dedicated staff and volunteers. In addition, the Church decorations, printed programs, St. Christopher bookmarks and menu items had to be decided and ordered. It was a huge undertaking but with exceptional results. At the conclusion of the Eucharistic Celebration, the attendees moved into the Parish Center for a variety of catered, fancy hors d’oeuvres and beverages (for children and adults).

The general consensus is that all aspects of this celebration of the century were memorable and exceeded everyone’s expectations. (Keep in mind that the normal, daily functions of the Church – the expected and unexpected – had to be fulfilled in addition to all the extra duties.) Fr. John took the time to express gratitude to all those who made the evening possible, including staff, volunteers, group representatives, and the many parishioners that were in attendance.

Though the current St. Christopher Church has nothing to do with the founding of the first, it is truly divine that the date fell within the Easter season. After the Resurrection, we enjoy some of the richest accounts of our Christianity. As they speak about starting anew in the kingdom of Christ Jesus, we find ourselves celebrating the old and welcoming the new. We simply could not have chosen more perfect readings for this anniversary weekend. The words of the Gospel glorify God and give us a new commandment, to love one another. Jesus tells us: “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for another. (John 13:34-35)” Bishop

Malesic used in his homily a verse from the song, “They’ll know we are Christians by our love,” by pointing directly at us, issuing a strong reminder that others will know we are Christians by our love, and challenging us to live a life of sacrificial love.

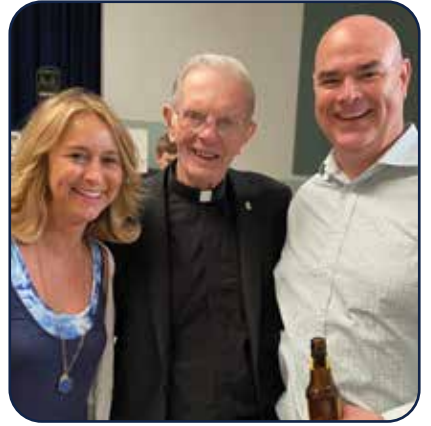
This weekend was a grand celebration of our first century, kicking off many more months of gatherings, activities, and fun for the entire family. To commemorate the occasion and honor our patron saint, bookmarks were distributed featuring a photograph of our new St. Christopher sculpture on the front and a prayer on the back. As the centennial celebration continues and we embark on summer, we can pray some of those same words for safety and protection: “Saint Christopher, the Christbearer, I ask you to guide me as I sojourn toward the promise of the heavenly kingdom. As the patron saint of travelers, lead me along the gospel path and carry me safely home.” We are grateful to call the St. Christopher community our home and long to share our joy with others.

Carmen Everett DeHaan





Centennial Reception





CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION UPDATES

This issue of the Belltower Beacon is filled with stories and pictures of our Centennial Celebration. A major part of the celebration took place on Saturday, May 14 with Bishop Malesic presiding at our Centennial Liturgy. A reception followed and the celebration continued the next day at all the Masses. However, the celebrating has just begun! Listed below are some of the events yet to occur throughout the coming months. All are welcome and we hope many will take time to participate, share memories and hopes with parishioners and friends, and view the historical pictures and memorabilia that will be available in the Parish Center throughout the summer months. Watch the weekly bulletin, parish website and Facebook page for details.

UPCOMING CENTENNIAL EVENTS

Saturday, June 18 Outdoor Mass at 5 p.m. followed by a Cabaret Night

Saturday, July 16 Outdoor Mass at 5 p.m. followed by a Michelle Romary Trio concert

Sunday, July 24 Blessing of cars and other modes of transportation from 1-3 p.m. in the main parking lot. Flowers For Maria Ice Cream Truck will also be there for treats!

August 26-28 St. Christopher Parish Community Weekend

Tuesday, October 4 Blessing of Pets in Centennial Park at 7 p.m.

CENTENNIAL MEMORY BOOK

In order to capture the highlights of our Centennial Year, we are planning to publish a Memory Book later this year, just in time for Christmas, and we will make it available for all our parishioners. It will include a brief history, some shared memories, and many pictures to capture the events of the centennial. To support this effort, the Centennial Committee would like to invite parishioners, former parish members, friends of the parish and business patrons who would like to have their name listed in the book to do so by **making a donation.**

In celebration of 100 years, the suggested donation is \$100. However, any amount is welcome to have your name included. You may choose to include your own name, your family name or, perhaps, in memory of or in honor of someone special. Those interested in making a larger donation or a business donation for special recognition can contact Fr. John at the Parish Office for more information. Please send your donation to the Parish Office marked "Memory Book" and clearly indicate how you would like your name to appear. An envelope will also be available in the monthly mailings of July, August and September. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Fr. John Chlebo

Centennial Celebrations



Our History

Special thanks to our Archives Committee for the months of dedicated research putting together these timelines and memory boards!
Stop by the parish center to learn more about our rich history!



SCS HOLY THURSDAY TRADITIONS

St. Christopher School students celebrated Holy Thursday with two time-honored traditions – the 8th grade performance of the Living Stations of the Cross and participating in school-wide retreat activities. The 8th graders’ performance of the Living Stations of the Cross has become a much anticipated event at SCS. This year’s production was an especially memorable one, with dramatic student performances, excellent narration and outstanding singing and music. The 6th graders provided musical accompaniment with chimes and bells. Cantors Sadie Fritz, Hollie Tennant, and Carmella Delmonico led the congregation in song between each station. Eighth grade students portrayed all of the roles in the Passion story with Alex Miller playing the role of Jesus. Narrators Michael Torek and Jonathan Ghobrial did an outstanding job leading the assembly during the performance. The SCS community is grateful to Mrs. Federico for her efforts in preparing the students for this production and to the many parents and community members who were present. A big thanks as well to the many students who worked hard to prepare and present this spiritual and prayerful experience for our school community.

After Living Stations the middle school students participated in a day-long Holy Thursday retreat. Activities included a Last Supper skit, craft making, creating doodle prayers, meditation, and reflection. Each grade also met with their “paired Angel” primary grade for prayer and Last Supper/art activity. These multi-grade-level collaborative times are always a highlight for our students. Working with the younger students provided the older students with an opportunity to witness their Faith and develop their mentoring skills. Younger students always show greater enthusiasm and active participation when engaged with their middle school “angels.” The retreat provided both preparation for the celebration for Easter and helped our school community to become closer and more connected. Thank you to the middle school team teachers for planning and implementing this prayerful and collaborative experience for our students.

Scott Raiff



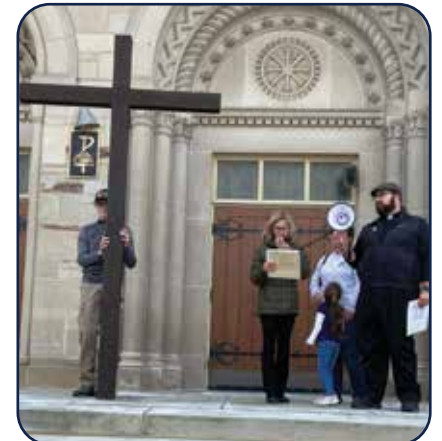
Holy Thursday



Good Friday



Outdoor Stations of the Cross



Easter Vigil



OUR LENTEN CALL TO MISSION: COME, LET US ADORE!



Were you there when? In one of the most popular songs of Lent, we are asked to ponder a great question. Though we sing it every year as we approach Good Friday, we are still impacted by the challenge. We can imagine being present with Jesus and his mother as we pray (and follow) the Stations of the Cross and hear the words of Scripture

being proclaimed. With the many diverse opportunities offered by our parish, perhaps the better question for us is “were we here?” There was an extraordinary effort to keep us connected to God and to one another. Those who were unable to come in person had the advantage of online services. Every aspect of the Lenten journey was honored, and there truly was something for everyone. This year it was particularly meaningful to worship in person after gathering in community was deprived and then restricted due to COVID.

We started Lent with a Parish Mission focusing on the Eucharist. It was a powerful three days of remembering Jesus in a special way through Scripture, commentary, prayer, music and adoration. The first evening led by Fr. Anthony focused on praise and thanksgiving. The second evening, also led by Fr. Anthony, focused on social justice and charity. The final evening, which was facilitated by Fr. John, was titled The Eucharist – Mercy and Compassion. It was a time of reflection and paying homage to our Lord. Each evening we sang the songs of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction. Instrumental background music was provided by Bob McMurray to help with the reverent mood of each evening. Incense added to the solemnity of each night as it symbolizes the prayers of the faithful drifting up to heaven. In a world that once again has become so loud and busy, the timing was perfect for the gift of sitting quietly in God’s presence.

On the topic of praise and thanksgiving, we recall the Jewish prayer called the Shema in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) and The Great Commandment in the New Testament (Matthew 22:36-38). We affirm that God is our one and only God, that we shall love God above all things with all our heart, all our soul and all our might. Furthermore, as Christians we proclaim our belief in the Risen Christ, who has become the source and summit of our Christian faith. We therefore celebrate Eucharist as the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ at every Mass throughout the world. Eucharist comes from the Greek word for thanksgiving, Eukaristia, emphasizing that our participation in Eucharistic celebration is an act of praise and thanksgiving. In Psalm 113:2-3, we pray “Let the name of the Lord be praised, both now and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised.” Kneeling before the Eucharist during Mass and in silent Adoration helps us to live out this Commandment.

During the second evening we discussed Eucharist in relation to social justice and charity. Fr. Anthony read the accounts of the Washing of the Disciples’ Feet and the Last Supper in John’s Gospel to demonstrate the command that we are to be charitable to one another. On Holy Thursday we are given a perfect example of what is expected of those who wish to follow Christ and call themselves Christian. Following the washing of feet, Jesus gave us his body and blood in the form of Eucharist, thereby making a direct connection between himself and selfless love. On the very next day, Good Friday, we witness the intense sacrificial love that Jesus endured for us. We were thereby commanded to do likewise for our brothers and sisters, especially those in greatest need. There is inevitably a social dimension to the Eucharist in that we gather around the table that nourishes us so we can go forth and serve others. Social justice and almsgiving go hand in hand with being charitable and loving. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church #1397, we are told that “The Eucharist commits us to the poor. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren...” As God has been so generous to us, we also look to imitate his Son’s endless generosity. We give ourselves as gifts and as offerings of food, clothing, shelter, and all manner of resources which God has bestowed upon us. According to St. Teresa of Calcutta, “if we have no peace it is because we have forgotten that we belong to one another.”

The final night of our Parish Mission was led by Fr. John on the topic of Eucharist – Mercy and Compassion. God’s endless mercy is mentioned repeatedly in the Old and New Testaments. In Matthew 6:14-15, we are told: “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” God loved us enough to sacrifice His only beloved Son in order that we may have eternal life. The primary message of Jesus Christ all the way to his Crucifixion is one of unconditional love and forgiveness. “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do” were some of his final words from the Cross. Compassion, along with the virtues of humility and kindness, are big parts of forgiveness. Matthew tells us in his Gospel that we are to forgive seven times 70, to signify that there is no limit to how many times we are to forgive one another. God judges us more kindly than we judge ourselves. We tend to be harsh and unforgiving critics of our own behavior, unable to let go of past sin. God always shows forgiveness and compassion toward us regardless of our transgressions.

In order to encourage us to forgive ourselves and others, the Sacrament of Reconciliation was offered several times during Lent, as it is year-round at St. Christopher. A special effort was made by our priests to extend the invitation and their hours of availability. Many took advantage of these opportunities to find the freedom of absolution and the peace of a fresh start. In the words of Pope Francis, “... Confession is not about ourselves and our sins, but about God and His mercy.” With all the beautiful events this Lent, the question remains “were we here” to participate, to support and to benefit spiritually? God always shows forgiveness and compassion toward us regardless of our transgressions.

Carmen Everett DeHaan

CONFIRMATION MAY 2022

The Confirmation class of 2022 completed their preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation in early May. This is the first eighth grade class to celebrate Confirmation as one large group with Bishop Malesic as the celebrant since the pandemic began in March 2020. The 73 candidates met with the Bishop for 35 minutes before the Mass began at 7 p.m. He was impressed with the attentiveness of the group, as well as their ability to answer the barrage of questions he asked to test their knowledge. The students were well prepared and eager to meet their sponsors in the Church for Mass after this meeting with Bishop Malesic. The choir and instrumentalists, led by Bob McMurray, did an exceptionally beautiful job to add to the prayerfulness of the Mass. Confirmation students, sponsors and their guests were invited to a reception in the Parish Center to take photos with the Bishop after the festivities in the Church had ended. The entire evening was a proud moment for our Pastor and our “young Church.” Thank you students, sponsor, parents, and our Confirmation Team who made this day a great success. Congratulations!

Sharon Armstrong







FIRST COMMUNION 2022

We celebrated 80 First Communions during all the weekends this past May. With the pandemic still in full-force last fall when we needed to determine the schedule for Communions, we hoped to be able to be as “normal” as possible. It was decided that we would attempt to go back to pre-pandemic form but limit the number of families at each of the weekend Masses. Each communion was a special celebration for the Parish.

Thank you, 2nd grade team, for your hard work and compassion. Congratulations to all for a job well done!

**Robin Seedhouse | Marilu Norena | Lindsay Barbicas
Brendan Barker | Bob Bove**

Sharon Armstrong



YOUNG FAMILIES EGG HUNT

The St. Christopher Young Families Ministry hosted an Easter egg hunt on the second Sunday of Easter. Over 25 children attended, all of them successfully finding eggs filled with goodies! The Young Family Ministry is a group of parents, grandparents, and other caretakers of children under five. They meet weekly on Wednesdays to play and grow together. To learn more, visit their page under the “Ministries” section of the parish website.

Logan Feldkamp



EVENTS FOR YOUNG ADULTS ARE “SPRINGING” UP EVERYWHERE!

There is no shortage of events in the Diocese of Cleveland for those in their 20s and 30s! St. Christopher belongs to the larger “West Side Young Adult Pod” that gathers parishes in Lakewood, Rocky River, Fairview Park, and the Kamm’s Corner neighborhood. St. Christopher organized a Bowling and Billiards night in April that was attended by over 25 young adults at Madison Square Lanes in Lakewood. In May, St. Christopher hosted a “Cinco de Mayo Casino Night” complete with professional table games/dealers, a magician, Mexican-themed catering, and a professional bartender. West Side Pod events have also included a service night at St. Luke and prayer opportunities at Transfiguration Parish. Stay tuned to parish communications regarding upcoming events for young adults and contact Logan Feldkamp at lfeldkamp@stchrisparish.com with any questions.

Logan Feldkamp



LADIES GUILD



St. Ignatius encouraged his retreatants to use contemplation or imagination to more fully enter a Gospel story. He believed that through imagination one could engage with Jesus, Mary, and the disciples at a deeper, more personal level. Ignatian contemplation enables us to experience stories we may have heard countless times before through new eyes. During Lent the Ladies Guild met in the church to pray Mary’s Way of the Cross by Richard Furey. It was a beautiful and profoundly moving way of entering into the Stations of the Cross through Mary’s eyes. The Guild plans to make this an annual Lenten event.



Another Doctor of the Church, St. Therese of Lisieux, inspired The Guild’s ongoing Little Flower Project. St. Therese said: “Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love.” In this loving spirit, Guild volunteers reach out to families who recently had a baby baptized at St. Christopher. The new little ones are welcomed with a surprise delivery of a personalized note and prayer card as well as some homemade muffins or granola. Since June of 2021 the Guild’s volunteers have congratulated some 80 families on the baptism of their child. If you are interested in this ministry, please contact Jen Sheridan at jesh Sheridan6@gmail.com.

Join us for the Guild’s next gathering June 22 in the Centennial Garden as we celebrate the summer solstice with a contemplative Tai Chi class. Watch for details to come through our email and the church bulletin. As always, the Guild welcomes your ideas and involvement. Contact Cindy McDonough at cindymcdounoughcpt@gmail.com with your suggestions.

Nancy Sullivan

SOCIAL CLUB LUNCHEON

The Social Club luncheon has been a fixture at St. Christopher for the past few years. Held on the last Friday of the month after the 11 a.m. Mass, it has been a fun social outing for many of our loyal parishioners. The lunches have been happily sponsored by Ellen Miner and Eileen McGunagle of *Daughters with Degrees* and Jane Vitou of Keller Williams. And so it is with some sadness that we are announcing that the May lunch is the last lunch that we will be hosting. Hopefully some other group will pick up the tradition and carry it on.

Jane Vitou



TEN40 CONCERT



THE LIVING STATIONS

On Palm Sunday evening, our parish had the privilege of welcoming the Living Stations of the Cross written and performed by the St. Mark (Cleveland) Youth Group. The group is comprised of students in grades 8-12 and has been reenacting the Stations for 15 years. The students wrote prayers and reflections and chose contemporary music to accompany each Station.

About 150 people attended these Living Stations. Reverent silence and the use of tissues was prevalent during the performance, then a standing ovation at the end. News 5 Cleveland was present and aired the piece that evening. Comments heard after the performance were: “moving,” “touching,” “sincere,” “special,” “hope more parishioners, young and old, will be able to attend next year.”

If the Youth Group returns next Lent, please put it on your calendar as an event not to miss. The Living Stations are a powerful, visual aid for us to witness Jesus’ suffering and love, cumulating in His rising. Alleluia!

Roberta Trutko



INTRODUCING PASTORAL MINISTER MELISSA DIFINI



Melissa DiFinì joined St. Christopher as Pastoral Minister on Valentine’s Day and has loved every moment since. “I’ve had a very warm welcome and I definitely see the face of Christ in everybody I’ve encountered at St. Christopher,” shared Melissa. In a part-time capacity, she is currently visiting the homebound of the Parish, helping with funerals, serving as a lector and eucharistic minister, and will soon oversee the Ministry of Praise prayer ministry.

Melissa and her husband Joe are members of Divine Word Church in Kirtland, where Melissa has served as a Parish Council member, catechist for Children’s Liturgy of the Word, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, and Communion minister to homebound,

nursing homes, and hospice houses. She also served as a catechist for PSR for eight years and holds an Advanced Catechist Certificate.

After a career as a hairdresser and salon owner, Melissa felt God’s call into full-time ministry. She spent four years in formation and academic work through Ursuline College and St. Mary Seminary and Center for Pastoral Leadership and became a Certified Lay Ecclesial Minister for the Diocese of Cleveland last October. She also currently serves in a part-time ministry position with Catholic Cemeteries Association as a Minister of Consolation and substitute Grief Support Leader.

Melissa and Joe enjoy long walks in the Metroparks with their dog, a yellow Labrador named Boomer, and end their day reflecting on the Gospel and praying together.

Beth Van Horn

OVER \$5,000 RAISED FOR ZELIE'S HOME FROM LENTEN SOUP FUNDRAISER

The annual Lenten Soup Supper was held on April 7 as a takeout-only event and was a sold out success!

Over \$5,000 was raised to benefit the nonprofit Zelig's Home, supporting expectant and parenting mothers and their babies.

Zelig's Home Board members and John Hosek, SCC Chairperson, spoke at each of the weekend Masses one weekend in March with an overwhelming response from parishioners. They lined up in the gathering area after Mass to preorder soup and buy raffle tickets for two Easter baskets. A large number of parishioners just dropped money and checks into the donation box. Others donated money for Zelig's Home directly online. Congratulations to Marge Tarr, winner of the gift card basket and the Tom Schlosser Family for the Easter Family Activity basket.

A special thanks to Pete Mayer, our chef who has volunteered his time and ingredients for many years, serving two delicious soups, beef barley and potato. With the more than double demand from previous soup supper events, Social Concern Committee (SCC) members helped Chef Mayer peel potatoes and chop vegetables using the St. Christopher kitchen. Elmwood Bakery in Lakewood graciously donated all the bread for the event. Volunteers also prepackaged quarts of soup and bread for pickup, with Confirmation students helping on pickup day at the Parish Center.

The Hoseks and their granddaughter presented the check to Executive Director Erin Hathaway and staff member Christina. They expressed their deep gratitude for the generous donations from St. Christopher. Staff member Chrissy gave a tour of the living room, bedrooms, chapel, and computer room areas. Zelig's Home is filled with examples of community support with baskets of books donated and brightly colored homemade quilts on the beds.

On the day of the visit, young men from St. Edward High School volunteered for the day to do heavy lifting tasks. "A tree of life" greets all on the walls of each floor. One tree contains names of all the babies who stayed there. Paper leaves were scattered throughout the walls with inspirational sayings or quotes, like this one from Pope Francis, "A spark of the divine is within each of us."

We could certainly feel "the spark of divine" at Zelig's Home and in all the parishioners who contributed so generously to help the mothers and babies there. SCC sponsored the Lenten soup take-out event. If you are interested in more ways to volunteer or donate, you can access the St. Christopher Social Concerns Committee Facebook page or email John Hosek at jjudehosek@gmail.com.

Sharon Hosek





St. Christopher Parish Community Weekend

St. Christopher Parish
Community Weekend

August 26, 27 & 28, 2022

Mark your calendars now for this family-friendly, 3-Day Community Weekend Event. Carnival games, tournaments, live entertainment, food and more! All are welcome ... invite your neighbors and friends to join in this celebration honoring 100 years of the St. Christopher Parish in Rocky River.

Watch the bulletin and social media for updates!



**Movie Night Under the Stars –
Disney’s “Encanto”**
at 7:30 pm in Centennial Park



Carnival-Style Games, Activities, Live Entertainment *
Beginning at 12:00

Outdoor Mass at 5:00 pm in Centennial Park

**“Iced Cherry” Band at 6:00 pm performing popular dance music
from the 80s, 90s, Motown, Classic Rock, Country and more!**



Carnival-Style Games, Activities, Live Entertainment*
Continue beginning at 12:30 pm. Highlights include:

- Hayden Grove: Croons the Classics
- “Magic Man” Keith Heidenreich: On-Stage Magic and Balloon Creations

****More activities and entertainment are being added.***

Interested in performing: contact Alex - (440) 521-9879 or email: stchrisparishweekend@gmail.com

Join in the Fun: Volunteers Needed!

Help to make this celebration a success!

- Do you have an hour to staff a carnival booth?
- Would you love to help set up?
- Do you have a few hours to sell tickets?
- Help with the water balloon toss?



Over 300 volunteer hours with a wide range of opportunities available.

Use the QR code check out the SignUp Genius and find a spot that works for you.

**For more information contact Sharon Armstrong: sarmstrong@stchrisparish.com
or Julie Patton: pattonjulie@sbcglobal.net**

CHURCH CHATTER

HAPPY BIRTHDAY 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). Happy Birthday!

MAGNIFICAT ALUMS Congratulations go out to **Mary Kay Curtis**, who received the True Blue Volunteer of the Year Award and to **Ann Litzler Coyne** and **Terry Coyne**, who received the Magnificat Award, at the Magnificat High School Gala this year. Mary Kay is a graduate of St. Christopher School (1987) and Magnificat (1991). Her sons Henry and Will and daughter Anna graduated from St. Christopher and Abby is finishing 5th grade. She has also volunteered at St. Christopher School as a room mom, assisting with graduation and other events. Ann graduated from St. Christopher School (1984) and from Magnificat High School (1988). She, along with husband Terry, have supported Magnificat in various roles: on the Board of Directors, chairing the Magnificat Gala, and co-chairing a capital campaign. They are proud parents of three alumnae daughters: Claire (2015), Emily (2018), and Elizabeth (2021). All three daughters were altar servers at St. Christopher.

ST. BALDRICK For 17 years, **Joe Kovach** has been annually shaving his head for this worthwhile charity. As “Crusader for the Cure,” Joe is the captain of the West Park “Bored of Hair” team. He raised over \$2,200 for University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children’s Hospital. Way to go, Joe!

SENIOR SERVERS Thank you to our young parishioners, who have served during Mass. We especially acknowledge **Jake Fehrenback**, who has served since 5th grade. As part of his ministry, Jake mentored younger servers and assisted in special liturgies. After graduating from Rocky River High School, Jake will attend Bowling Green State University and study exercise science. Best wishes!



SCIENCE OLYMPIAD **Evan Mathewson**, a Rocky River High School sophomore, is part of the Science Olympiad team, that went to the state finals in April. He also participates on the cross-country and track teams. Congratulations to this budding, non-mad scientist.

SUPER SWIMMER The Rocky River High School girls swim team made it to the state tournament, and junior **Cora Mathewson** was part of that team. During the summer, she works at the Rocky River Recreation Center as a lifeguard and swim coach. Congratulations to Cora!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL St. Christopher is joining Rocky River Presbyterian Church June 13-17 to hold Vacation Bible School. It is open for children ages 4 through grade 5. Volunteers are also needed. Please call Sharon Armstrong at 440.331.6226 for details.

FOREVER HOME On April 10, The Plain Dealer published a full page on the story about the home of **Craig Rimlinger** and **Laura Johnston**. It was an inspiring piece, highlighting the renovations of a 109-year-old farmhouse. Craig has served St. Christopher Parish as an usher, PSR teacher, and on the Centennial Capital Campaign. Laura is assisting in the publicity of our upcoming Centennial Celebration weekend in August. Craig and Laura have two children, Adam and Lane. The article can also be accessed at cleveland.com.

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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Beth Van Horn

Contributors: Fr. John Chlebo, Gayle Cilimburg,
Sharon Armstrong, Logan Feldkamp, Sharon Hosek,
Nancy Sullivan, Scott Raiff and Jane Vitou

UPCOMING EVENTS

- June 2 KINDERGARTEN PROMOTION
- June 3 LAST DAY OF SCHOOL
- June 13-17 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
- June 18 OUTDOOR MASS & CABARET CONCERT
- June 19 FATHER'S DAY
- June 22 LADIES GUILD SOCIAL
- July 16 OUTDOOR MASS & MICHELLE ROMARY TRIO CONCERT
- July 24 CAR BLESSING & WASHING PLUS
FLOWERS FOR MARIA ICE CREAM TRUCK
- July 25 ST. CHRISTOPHER FEAST DAY
- August 6-7 FR. JOHN'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
- August 15 FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY
- August 21 PRE-BAPTISM CLASS
- August 26-28 COMMUNITY WEEKEND (FORMER BLOCK PARTY)



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

*Sponsorship
Opportunities
Available*



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**St. Christopher Parish
Community Weekend**

August 26, 27 & 28, 2022

Contact Zac Patton at
zac@pattonpainting.com
for more information