



# The Belltower Beacon

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

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## ST. CHRISTOPHER UKRAINE WELCOME CIRCLE

### *Welcomes the Kushnyr family to America*

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America?" This was his daily question and plea as his mom, Valeriia Kushnyr, tried to balance life in Poland where she had escaped to deliver their second child safely. Her husband, Dmytro, remained in Ukraine for a year and Valeriia found herself without the support of family, friends and coworkers. In a very short and violent period of time, everything that was familiar and dear to them was gone. One sad description of their hometown is that it "now looked like a pancake," completely flattened by the atrocities of hatred and war. As soon as she was able, Valeriia began applying for a sponsor family to help them come to America. As soon as Valeriia was made aware that they were being considered by the St. Christopher Ukraine Welcome Circle, the hope of bringing her children (six-year-old son Dariush and infant daughter Aniela) to safety and freedom brought the courage she needed to continue to persevere. Her resilience and strength paid off when after a year without her children's father, Dmytro, the family of four was approved to come to Cleveland. Dmytro had joined the family in Poland after a year apart from them.

Ultimately, the family was notified on April 21, that they had been authorized to travel to the

United States. Airline tickets were purchased immediately, and they prepared to fly from Warsaw to Amsterdam and then Cleveland. Dariush's dream of coming to America was about to unfold. At 2:21 a.m. on Thursday, April 27, the grateful family of four was received at Hopkins International by members of the UWC team. Team member and Russian interpreter, Rob Jamieson of St. Mary Church in Elyria, came to the airport to ensure the family's communication needs were met. After long hours in the air (plus delays in Atlanta, GA), they arrived with warm smiles, eager to meet our group and see their new home. The smiling faces of the children and Dariush clutching his stuffed Spiderman toy made all the effort worthwhile. In the wee hours of the morning, the most important thing that all shared was immense gratitude. The family was driven to their fully furnished and well stocked home in Parma's Ukrainian Village. The Kushnyrs' gratitude and surprise were expressed nonverbally as well as verbally. With a few words they had learned in English (including "wow") and tears of joy, they once again let the team know how grateful they are for all that the community of St. Christopher has done for them. In his homily on the day of their arrival, Fr. John updated those in attendance. In God's awesome way, the Responsorial Psalm on that day acclaimed "Let all the earth cry out to God with joy." Fr. John surmised how relieved and full of joy the family must be to finally arrive here safely.

The success of this endeavor was and continues to be possible only by the prayers and support of our three priests and the entire pastoral team. It is also crucial to utilize online communication programs and our Sunday Bulletin to reach all parishioners. A member of the UWC team handled publicity with the aid of Pastoral Minister Logan Feldkamp's technological skills.

continued ...

Office Manager Dawn Bloom made sure updates were published in a timely manner. As a result, parishioners were invited to become an integral part of this historic event. As usual, the people of St. Christopher answered the call in a huge way. Ensuring that every room was beautifully furnished and decorated was parishioner Tiffany Barker. Volunteers cleaned the home from top to bottom. The children's bedrooms feature safety equipment, bedding, new clothing and age appropriate toys. Parish ministries including the Social Concerns Committee and Ladies Guild reached out to lend a hand assuring that the cupboards and refrigerator were stocked with enough food (meeting dietary and allergy restrictions) for a good start. In addition, other parishes who had gone or were going through the process offered advice and emotional support. On moving day, St. Christopher parishioners loaded furniture and a ministry team from St. Basil Church, Brecksville (called St. Joseph's Fixit Friends) pulled up to the house to help. With donuts, laborers and prayers, they helped unload the moving vans full of household goods that had been donated and stored in the Rectory basement. The show of support from groups near and far is priceless and St. Christopher's team is forever grateful. There are also individuals who helped make this a reality and choose to remain anonymous.



The response from parishioners has been nothing short of remarkable. The fact remains that the most important part of this journey is being lived out now – the family needs us more than ever. From the very start of this sponsorship journey, the community of St. Christopher has been supportive and prayerful on the family's behalf. From preschoolers to senior citizens,

countless individuals participated in raising funds through initiatives like the Ukraine Welcome Circle Box during Lent. Continued donations are needed as we work to meet the family's needs in the coming months. In addition, the family was kept in the minds and hearts of the community through frequent mention at Mass (homilies and in Prayers of the Faithful).

Updates will keep coming for the foreseeable future through the designated web page ([stchrisparish.com/uwc](http://stchrisparish.com/uwc)), parish email, bulletin announcements and the Belltower Beacon. We realize that welcoming the Kushnyrs to Cleveland is just the first step. Interacting with the family and helping them assimilate into the community will require more support, which will certainly be rewarding as well. Implementing a detailed Welcome Plan required by the Diocese, the team is helping them secure physical, dental and mental health medical services, language skills and school enrollment, and job readiness/employment opportunities. The family will be accompanied to appointments, translators made available and babysitting arranged as needed. A long-time member of the Ukrainian community, Alex Hooke, whose native language is Russian, has been active in our Welcome Circle. He is committed to

helping us to help them for as long as necessary. In case you might be wondering, they do have "down time" where they can just relax and visit fun places like the Cleveland Zoo, the MetroParks, Nature Centers, etc. There will also be a trip to St. Christopher in the future so you can meet the family in person.



It is truly amazing that this journey, which began with a call to action by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Cleveland Diocese, then ultimately to our parish community, led to the formation of our Ukraine Welcome Circle. Just a few months ago, Fr. Tim and the core team started meeting to work through diocesan and governmental

requirements. Many meetings later, all requirements were met and we began preparing for their approval. A big step in the process (and the UWC team's favorite part) was the selection of a young family desperately hoping to escape their war-torn country of Ukraine. Perusing the many families who were seeking to enter the U.S., the team knew that our parish (being so family oriented) would appreciate one with children. Through an online translation/interpretation program, team leader Mary Joan Papajcik began frequent communication with Valeriia. Maintaining direct contact with her and receiving photographs of the children helped everyone to stay patient and hopeful. At our end, the team continued to advocate for the family's authorization to travel. There were many detailed requirements imposed by U.S. and Ukrainian authorities as well as Catholic Charities of Cleveland (who has oversight) during the several months of waiting. The Parish Community was kept informed and prayers were offered for God's continued grace. Only through the grace of God and the community's assistance did this become a reality.

On Easter Sunday, Fr. Tim's homily was a beautiful summary of how much the Ukrainian people were suffering and the attempts our parish was making to alleviate the devastation for at least one family. He expressed gratitude and reminded us to pray for the victims of this war and to also pray for the many individuals who were working non-stop to help as many of them escape to safety. We must also remember the many homes in Poland and other regions that are housing those displaced by war. Shortly after the couple's arrival, Fr. Tim visited them and blessed their home. As we continue this Easter season, we continue to walk with our brothers and sisters in need. We live out God's greatest commandments when we love God and love our neighbors every day of our lives. In the words of Pope Saint John Paul II, "we do not pretend that life is all beauty ... we are aware of darkness and sin, poverty and pain ... but Jesus has conquered sin." So it is said that we must actually live like Easter makes a difference in our lives by taking care of each other. Please know that your support of the Kushnyrs is appreciated more than you'll ever know.

*Carmen Everett DeHaan*

## LENTEN MISSION 2023

### *Eucharist: The Whole of Him in the Whole of Us*



On March 26, parishioners and friends of St. Christopher parish welcomed Auxiliary Bishop Michael G. Woost as facilitator and presider of this year's Lenten Mission. For three evenings Bishop Woost inspired us, led us in prayer and brought his sense of humor to the large group gathered in the Church. Each evening featured its own readings, music, and commentary by Bishop Woost. Time for quiet reflection and

a symbolic gift were part of each session. Accompanied by Music Ministry Director Bob McMurray, our cantors added their beautiful voices to each evening's message. The objective of the three-day Mission was to guide us into a deeper appreciation of the Eucharist given as Holy Communion. This in turn enables us to live in communion with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and with one another as the Body of Christ, the Church. We were blessed with a Parish Mission that hopes to renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, the source and summit of our Christian lives. According to Bishop Woost, "Nothing is more important or life-giving!"

*[Please note that the three days of the Parish Mission are now on our parish website, [stchristparish.com](http://stchristparish.com). There is no way to capture in writing the full essence and holiness of this experience. You are encouraged to pray with this extraordinary message. As it changes your life, you move into a more intimate relationship with God. Be not afraid.]*

The first evening focused on what it means to be in communion with God, how much God loves us and wants only good for us. Bishop Woost asked those in attendance to contemplate how the gift of Eucharist can help to bring us into closer communion with God on a daily basis. Jesus gives us his example of always praying and praising God first. By doing so, we come into closer communion with God on a daily basis. This occurs when we listen to Christ, when we believe that Christ is present and will speak to us. Quoting St. Benedict, Bishop Woost encouraged us to "listen with the ears of your heart," meaning that we are to be receptive to the voice of God and the needs of God's people. We are to trust that God will speak to us in some or many ways. Jesus waits for us to call upon him, he does not worry about our stench (sin) and loves us without partiality. Do we believe that God will touch us in some way, that Jesus is near and will answer our prayer?



Since the presence of God abides within us, we become tabernacles. He is among us and will never reject or stop believing in us. During this first evening, we were all given small sponges. During this first evening we were invited to come forward and dig our hand in holy water and bless ourselves. Then we received a small sponge to take home as a reminder to soak up God's love each day. It is impossible to separate us from God's love, so we surrender our concerns to God. On this first night, each of us wrote down the one thing that keeps us from surrendering ourselves entirely. The notes were collected and placed at the front of the Church, where they remained for the three days. Bishop Woost assured us that he as well as the priests and seminarians of the diocese would be praying for our needs. Incense was used generously throughout the three evenings of the Mission to symbolize our prayers going up to God.



On night two, we left Church with a small votive candle and instructions to "be light to others ... we are the light of the world, the light of Christ to others." In the story of the multiplication of fish and loaves, Jesus tells the apostles (and us) to feed the hungry that have gathered and to transform them by giving of ourselves entirely. Jesus is key to living life to the full. Just as he took, he broke, he blessed and he gave, we are to do the same. Together we "feast upon the divine presence, the body and blood of Christ." In this manner, we invite the Lord to draw near as we become more aware of God's presence. We offer ourselves to God by praying radically, go forth with reverence and become Eucharist to each other. Bishop Woost warned us that "praying radically can be dangerous," in that we must respond to God's answer to prayer. Referring to Psalm 23, those at the Mission were reminded that God invites us to encounter the Risen Christ in our midst. We need not be afraid to draw near to God, and we can be radical about God dwelling within us because he mingles his life with ours. Citing the works of St. Therese of Lisieux, we were encouraged to see ourselves as living monstrances, so that the presence of Christ can be seen.

Bishop Woost revealed the theme of the Mission on the second evening – Christ lives in each one of us. In the writings of St. Ephrem the Syrian (4th century writer, poet, song writer and theologian), we find that "in the Sacrament of the Eucharist our bodies are newly mingled with the heart of Christ. His voice is in our ears, and his brightness is in our eyes." As newly created beings

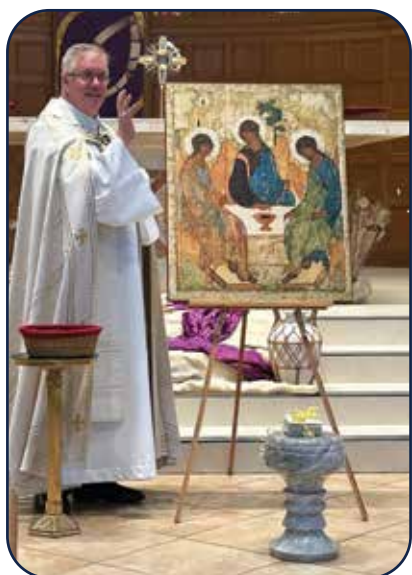
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mingled with Christ in Eucharist we become noticeably different. Christ lives in us in a way that is powerful enough for others to see, because we are on fire, our hearts are burning within us at the sound of His voice. With our voices lifted up in prayer, these three days also brought the gift of song. Members of our music ministry led

us in songs like “Taste and See” and “Behold the Lamb,” words that speak directly to the Mission’s theme of joining our bodies with the body of Christ every time we partake of the Body and Blood, the whole of Jesus embracing the whole of us.



On the final day, the Gospel reading came from Luke 24:13-35, as Jesus joins two of his disciples walking on the road to Emmaus. Ultimately, Jesus reveals himself through the breaking of bread. As the eyes of the apostles were opened, their strong desire became that Jesus not leave them. After Jesus disappears, the apostles ask each other: “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road ...?” Just as with the disciples, the whole of

Christ embraces the whole of us. He still allows himself to be seen by us every day in so many ways. Eucharist is the only food that changes us in this complete and powerful way. When we pray, we do well to ask ourselves “who is it that we’re approaching?” God is our dwelling place, and He will always gaze upon us with love. At the Mission’s closing, Bishop Woost guided us through a reflection centered on a sacred icon by Russian artist Andrei Rublev (ca. 1411 or 1425-27) titled “The Icon of the Holy Trinity.”

To end the evening, those in attendance were given the privilege of approaching the Altar, presenting our prayers and needs to the God who loves us. In response to the Trinity’s invitation, we honored in our own way the very table where at every Mass we celebrate the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist – body, blood, soul and divinity – under the appearances of bread and wine. A prayer by St. Elizabeth of the Trinity, O.C.D. (1904), helped us bring closure to an amazing Parish Mission. From her personal notes, the prayer reads in part:

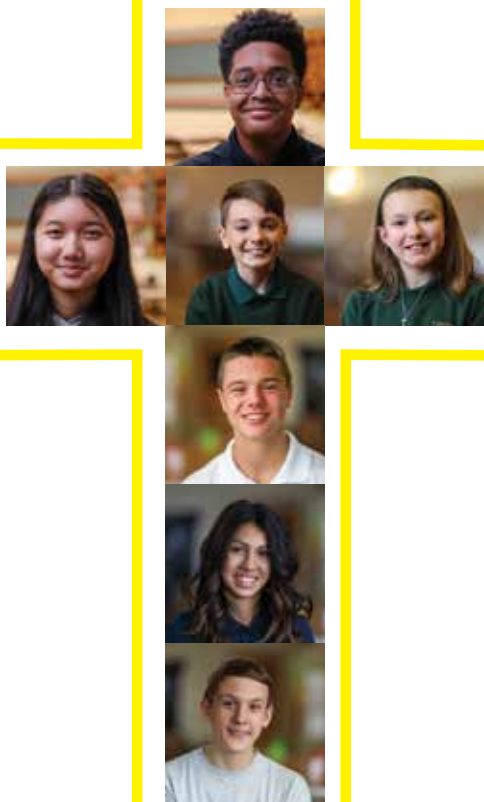
O CONSUMING FIRE, SPIRIT OF LOVE,  
COME UPON ME,  
AND CREATE IN MY SOUL A KIND OF  
INCARNATION OF THE WORD:  
THAT I MAY BE ANOTHER HUMANITY FOR HIM  
IN WHICH HE CAN RENEW HIS  
WHOLE MYSTERY ...  
O MY THREE, MY ALL, MY BEATITUDE,  
INFINITE SOLITUDE,  
IMMENSITY IN WHICH I LOSE MYSELF,  
I SURRENDER MYSELF TO YOU AS YOUR PREY...  
BURY YOURSELF IN ME  
THAT I MAY BURY MYSELF IN YOU  
UNTIL I DEPART TO CONTEMPLATE  
IN YOUR LIGHT  
THE ABYSS OF YOUR GREATNESS.

*Carmen Everett DeHaan*



## Next Steps...

# Keeping the Faith



- Keeping the Faith is the Diocese of Cleveland's strategic planning process to promote and ensure the future vitality of Catholic elementary schools in the diocese.
- The vision of Keeping the Faith includes every parish in the diocese collaborating in tangible ways to support a Catholic elementary school or schools in the parish vicinity.
- Locally, the pastors, principals and business managers, from the Western suburbs are working together to pilot creating a local plan to embrace the vision of Keeping the Faith, that includes every parish in the two counties formally associating with a school with their time, talent, and/or treasure and ensuring the schools are strong a viable by collaborating with each other, sharing resources and leveraging talent.
- We are partnering with the Meitler Consultants, a national Catholic consulting firm, to help guide and implement this collaborative planning process.
- We are now gathering and analyzing data in all areas of the strategic plan and will use this to lead us in visioning a strong and exciting plan.
- Watch the bulletin, website and social media for more information.
- For more information on the Keeping the Faith process, go to: <https://www.dioceseofcleveland.org/offices/formation-education/catholic-schools/keeping-the-faith>



*Fr. John Chlebo*

## WELCOME, TERRI PASTURA



Terri Pastura is a native of the southwest side of Cleveland. She began her service in the Catholic Church at the age of 16 working in the office of St. Francis de Sales Parish in Parma.

She has her B.A. in Applied Sciences from Ursuline College and M.B.A. in Management from Baldwin-Wallace University. In addition, she has completed 36 semester hours in Theology coursework through St. Mary Seminary, John Carroll University and Ursuline College. Currently she is studying digital marketing for non-profits.

Terri is a certified Lay Ecclesial Minister for the Diocese of Cleveland. She has held both local and national leadership positions in the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, National Association of Lay Ministry and the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commission. In ministry, she has served the Church in the Dioceses of Cleveland, Ohio; Toledo, Ohio; Orlando, Florida; Houston, Texas; and Lansing, Michigan.

Terri enjoys travel and handcrafts. She is excited to be a part of the vibrant St. Christopher Parish family.



## J+WALKERS STROLL INTO SUMMER



The weather is heating up and so are things with our Youth Ministry! J+Walkers has enjoyed plenty of exciting spring activities, including helping to lead the outdoor Stations of the Cross, experiencing a Mardi Gras night, and painting their spirit rock with a rosary for May, the month of Mary. We recently welcomed current 6th grade students to join us and learn what J+Walkers is all about!

We have many exciting events planned for the summer, including an overnight retreat, party in Centennial Park, a beach prayer night, and more. Every J+Walkers meeting incorporates our four pillars: Play, Pray, Learn and Grow. We play together building friendships; we pray together in thanksgiving and intercession; we learn together about the beauty of our faith; and we grow together, often by enjoying some yummy snacks!

Interested in learning more about us? Check us out online at [stchrisparish.com/jwalkers](http://stchrisparish.com/jwalkers) or on Instagram @JWALKERSSCP

*Logan Feldkamp*



## AN "EGGCELLENT" TIME FOR YOUNG FAMILIES!

Young Families of the parish gathered for the second annual St. Christopher Egg Hunt on the Second Sunday of Easter. Holding this event after the celebration of Easter Sunday reminds us that the Easter season includes seven full weeks of celebrating Christ's resurrection! Over twenty-five little ones gathered to chase down eggs scattered around Centennial Park. We were blessed to enjoy beautiful weather for this activity. The combination of sunshine and candy put a smile on all faces, parents and children alike! Our next event will be a "Party in the Park" in early June, featuring cookout food, the playground, and other games and activities. We hope to see you there!

*Logan Feldkamp*



## BIDDING FAREWELL TO BOB MCMURRAY

After nearly 34 years of working in the Diocese of Cleveland, Bob McMurray, our beloved Director of Music Ministry, will be retiring on June 30, 2023. Bob has twice blessed St. Christopher with his musical leadership, initially from 1998-2004, and then returning in July 2019. Bob shared that he looked forward to returning to St. Christopher after 15 years away to reconnect with the families and that he enjoyed the unique experience of playing for the weddings of kids who had been in his children's choir.



Many may not know that Bob holds an accounting degree from The Ohio State University and started his career as an accountant with Price Waterhouse in NYC. So how did he end up as a career musician? Love. Love of music and a love of serving the people of God through the ministry of music. During his time in New York, he visited a cathedral in New Jersey and asked if he could play the organ in between Masses. He was hired on the spot, and through this experience realized "this accounting thing wasn't going to work" and the rest as they say, is history. Bob has worked extensively within the Diocese of Cleveland, including as an organist at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. He holds a master's degree in Organ Performance from Cleveland State

University as well as the professional certification of Colleague of the American Guild of Organists.

Bob is an advocate for the promotion and survival of the art of organ playing. His love of and facility with the performance of music of varied eras and genres has been apparent throughout his time at the helm of St. Christopher's music ministry. What's more, Bob is a people person who has nurtured the musical growth of our cantors, adult choir, children's choir, instrumentalists, and most importantly, our congregation. He shared that he has loved working with his many volunteers over the years.

Other loves in Bob's life include his dear mother, his new pup Louie, as well as his dear Lulu who has crossed the rainbow bridge but holds a special place in Bob's heart.

The first weekend after his retirement, Bob will strangely find himself without weekend church commitments for the first time since he was 14, which will be a new and welcome change. However, don't think for a moment his music-making has come to an end. Bob has plans for some unique creative musical collaborations with the use of organ and other instruments. Stay tuned to Bob's Facebook page for more to come.

Bob is deeply and eternally grateful for the love and kindness shown to him by his volunteers and members of the congregation, not only here at St. Christopher, but throughout the Diocese since 1989.

*Beth Van Horn*



## CONFIRMATION 2023

We celebrated Confirmation on Tuesday, May 2 with Bishop Amos and 91 Confirmation candidates. The Confirmation team worked with 83 students with an additional eight adults prepared by the staff. The students met their sponsors in Church before Mass to have a brief chat with Bishop Amos for last minute instructions. Bob McMurray, the music director and Pat Walsh, cantor, did an exceptionally beautiful job with the music 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 celebration in the Church had ended. The entire evening was a proud moment for our pastor and our "young church." Thank you students, sponsors, parents, and our Confirmation team who made this day a great success. Congratulations!

*Sharon Armstrong*

## THANK YOU TEAM!

Sharon Armstrong

John Burke

Carmen DeHaan

Ken Szabo

Marilu Norena

Eric Perusek

Kate Anderer-DiMichele



## CLASS SCHOOL RETREATS 2022-2023



The 6th, 7th, and 8th graders experienced the NET (National Evangelical Teams) Ministries Missionaries for their yearly class retreat. NET Ministries is an organization that has been around for 40+ years. NET sends out missionary teams in groups of 8-12 to proclaim the Gospel to Catholic youth. These missionaries' range in age from 18-25 years old. The theme of this retreat was *Love One Another*. Through skits,

witness talks, games, celebration of the Eucharist, and prayer, the junior high students of St. Christopher School learned that there is nothing that can separate them from the love of God. It was reported that one student went home very quiet. The parent kept asking if something was wrong. The student kept saying "nothing." Later that night, this child went to the parent and said, "nothing is wrong, something is right." The students said, "It was a "fulfilling" and "special" day. The student wasn't looking forward to the retreat other than dress down, but it ended up being so fun. The student continued, "But something in me changed today, I felt it. I know it was Jesus growing in my heart and body because he was showing me that he loves me and I really felt it, instead of just knowing it." The plan for future school years is to continue to have NET Missionaries present retreats to the 5th-8th grades.

Thirty-five of the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders took what they experienced in their class retreat and became the retreat leaders for the kindergarten through 5th grade retreats. The theme of the retreats for the younger grades was *God is With You Wherever You Go*. Again, through praise songs, prayer, skits, science experiments, Bible Story of Joseph's wrongful imprisonment, and even snacks, the older students presented to the younger students that our loving, merciful, and compassionate God is with us wherever we go! The junior high students met weekly to prepare the activities and materials needed to pull off three successful retreat days for the younger students. This model of retreats will continue for future school years. The leadership opportunity for our junior high students and the opportunity to share their faith and relationship with God with the younger students is priceless.

From April 26-28, 15 of the school's 6th graders attended the Faith and Science Retreat at Damascus Catholic Retreat Center in Centerburg, Ohio. They traveled there for a 3-day, 2-night retreat

experience. The group was blessed with beautiful weather the first two days and the rain on the last day did not hinder the ability of the students to live the adventure of the Catholic Faith. Here is a snapshot of the faith and science topics taught on the retreat. Our faith is included in all the science experiences!

For Science – the students moved through nine different stations within the Damascus campus – four stations the first two days and one last station on the last day. These High Adventure activities touched on the topics of orientation (using compasses), physics (rock wall and high swing), aquatics, geology, wilderness survival training, and care of creation (two different hikes).

For Faith – The children learned about the four relationships: self-God, self-others, self-self, and self-creation. The children learned that they are each a Child of God and that God is a good, good Father. They were introduced to different forms of prayer and how to hear God speaking to them. They learned the form of prayer called, *Lectio Divina*. They learned that Worship means to give "worth." We spend a lot of time on things that we value and give worth – school, sports, our family & friends. Worship of a loving God, demonstrates our worth of that relationship. We prayed the greatest prayer – the Mass! Fr. John Chlebo lead all 150 participants on retreat in celebration of the Eucharist! The children were so grateful for his presence at Damascus! The children also received a prayer journal used on retreat and for continued use after the retreat. The students were shown all this through skits, witness talks, singing, and small groups with their assigned missionaries.

Mrs. Meler had the blessing of accompanying the group as the liaison between Damascus and St. Christopher School. For her, it was a JOY to watch the children experience our Catholic Faith in fun and freeing way. Watching them happily together as a group was a true gift. The students have already asked to return to Damascus next year for the Leadership Retreat and they hope to encourage other classmates to join them in living the adventure of the Catholic Faith! The students pray this continue to be an opportunity for future St. Christopher School 6th graders to grow in their faith and their personal relationship with Jesus Christ!

Mary Meler





## ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL CHRIST BEARER AWARDS

According to legend, Saint Christopher devoted his life to carrying the weak and poor across a river. One night, when he was carrying a child, he felt his burden grow heavier with each step. When questioned, the child declared that he was Christ and that Christopher was thus bearing the weight of the world. Each month a student from each homeroom is selected as someone who is an example of carrying the light of Christ to others in the classroom and throughout the school community. Many students do this through small acts of kindness, good work ethic, and thinking of others before themselves. Here are the recipients of the Christ Bearer Award for the 2022-2023 School Year:

Mary Meler

September 2022	November 2022	January 2023	March 2023
K – Louie Groza	K – Connor Vandervort	K – Neil Mackey	K – Antonio Cassidy
1st – Alex Bertin	1st – Liam Monache	1st – Zaydan Hromjak	1st – Nathan Tjan
2nd – Landon Robison	2nd – Charley Pussel	2nd – George Szy	2nd – Lilianna Vasquez
3rd – Megan Pap	3rd – Noah Monache	3rd – Tess Burke	3rd – Sam Dorenkott
4th – Noelle McGannon	4th – Mackenna Keckan	4th – Natalie Lakarosky	4th – Maeve Burke
5th – Greta Gollinger	5th – Bea Kratt	5th – Olivia Szy	5th – Sophia van der Oord
6th – Carmella Delmonico	6th – Will Pichotta	6th – Colin Warren	6th – Molly Laudolff
7th – Grant Gollinger	7th – Colin Boehm	7th – Maeve Lewis	7th – Cami Kramer
8th – Ellen Dorsey	8th – Madison Bolas	8th – Nora Carr	8th – Ben Stefan
8th – Jackson Pichotta	8th – Clare O’Leary	8th – Christopher McGee	8th – Aaron Poretsky
October 2022	December 2022	February 2023	April 2023
K – Priscilla Pease	K – Emma Shivak	K – Emma Lavin	K – Marino Coale
1st – Lucy Dorenkott	1st – Mary Grod	1st – Emma Yax	1st – Abigail Previts
2nd – Amelia Cull	2nd – Stefan Montoya	2nd – Eliza Pope	2nd – Sadie Kratt
3rd – Leo Coale	3rd – Tucker Trunko	3rd – Felix Budiman	3rd – Evy Polantz
4th – Caius Glover	4th – Ben Buddie	4th – Finn Lewis	4th – Patrick Conroy
5th – Henry Norman	5th – Coleson Paez	5th – Gavin Post	5th – Emma McManamon
6th – Kateri Myers	6th – Margaret French	6th – Ryan Rennell	6th – Lily Pussel
7th – Evie Roth	7th – Isla LaPorte	7th – Savannah Paez	7th – Owen Klocker
8th – Jimmy Myers	8th – Colin Buddie	8th – Mae Steigerwald	8th – Taylor Bolas
8th – Anthony Coale	8th – Julie Destiny	8th – Jude Norman	8th – Anabelle Watson



## LENTEN LAMENT FOR CREATION



The Social concerns Committee hosted the West Side Creation Care Team's annual Lenten Lament for Creation on March 19. During this prayerful gathering participants reflected on the injustice and suffering of Christ's crucifixion and on today's injustices and suffering caused by complicity in failing to be good stewards of God's creation. Participants prayed for those who are especially impacted by pollution including children, the poor and persons of color. The gathering concluded with joyful thanks for the gift of god's creation and with a renewed commitment to study, pray and act for environmental justice.

*Jeanette Nappier*

## STATIONS OF THE CROSS BY YOUTH OF ST. MARK AND ST. CHRISTOPHER PARISH





## SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION EFFORTS

Pastoral Associate Terri Pastura joined the St. Christopher team to coordinate social media and communication efforts. The scope of these tasks is multi-level and will continue to evolve, but these are the jumping-off points for the work at hand.

**Digital Signage:** We are reviewing hardware and software options for the installation of four digital signage venues on the campus. The proposed locations are in the Parish Center, the entrance to the School, and the Upper and Lower Gathering Areas. The signage will offer general parish/school/religious education news along with promotion of particular activities.

### Revitalization of the St. Christopher Media Presence:

- Our web page is beautifully branded and full of vital information, but it needs a graphic facelift. New tweaks have made the calendar more accessible and moved some time-sensitive materials into higher visibility slots. The ultimate goal is to make sure that the parish, religious education and school pages are informative, attractive and easy to navigate.
- The activity of Facebook has increased. Using this both as a tool for advertising and evangelization, the goal is to engage more people in the life of the parish.
- St. Christopher YouTube Channel is primarily being used to facilitate our Mass livestreaming. Expansion of content is on the horizon.
- These three platforms require people to come to us. Hopefully in the future we will expand our resources to digital platforms and push text opportunities that will reach out to members directly.

**Integrating processes:** Efforts have begun to streamline registration process for events and religious education. This is going to take a little time since it involves the integration of calendar, financial, census information.

**Support of volunteers:** Over the summer, Terri will be reaching out to parish organizations to see what direct support can be provided for their work.

### Service Opportunity:

- As the video production expands and our marketing efforts shift, there will be opportunities for interested parishioners to add their time and talent to the mix. Look for further information in the weeks ahead.
- The safety of our children is a priority. Terri will continue to work with staff and volunteers to keep us in compliance with the Virtus training our Diocese requires.

**To Be Announced:** Listening to the needs of the community is vital to where this all goes. We are off to a great start!

*Terri Pastura*

## SINGING HOOSIERS CONCERT



## CATHOLIC ANNIVERSARY



On April 16, 2023, I celebrated 365 days as a Catholic. I was baptized, confirmed and received holy communion on Easter Vigil of 2022 at St. Christopher Parish after going through the RCIA process for many exciting months. St. Christopher responded to my interest in learning about the Catholic faith immediately and has been a home away from home for me the very moment I stepped through the doors. The openness that I felt at St. Christopher, and the love I grew

in of Christ and the faith, led me to pursue a deeper relationship with Him through my education at Franciscan University of Steubenville. I changed my major from nursing to theology, quite the leap, and started my academic career away from home knowing that St. Christopher Parish would always be praying for me and walking with me on my journey of faith.

Immediately when I got on campus, I felt called to get involved and form communities on and off the hill Franciscan is built upon. I joined a household, on campus groups of men or women that share unique charisms, pray together and grow in sisterhood or brotherhood, my own sisters growing in love of God through the intercession of St. Joseph. I went to the Works of Mercy fair and signed up for a variety of different outreach opportunities such as sidewalk counseling on freezing Saturday mornings outside abortion facilities or heading to Pittsburgh on Thursday evenings to volunteer and encounter the homeless. Through all these opportunities, I was able to grow in my own faith and desire to love people as I had been loved by God and others.

The Lord about a month into my first semester offered me the chance to go on mission in the Bronx. I had never thought of going on a mission, but a friend of mine told me to come to the fair because she was leading another team that spring. Hesitantly, I had agreed to go. The leads James and Anne gave a brief talk

about Bronx mission. We would do ministry of presence, subway ministry, homeless ministry and work closely with the CFR friars, Con-Solatio and the Missionaries of Charity. I was interested, and after a conversation with James and prayer in our campus adoration chapel, I was determined to go on Bronx mission. I applied and was accepted three days after my interview to the team, unsure of how I was going to make it all work out but trusted that if God had truly desired me to go, he would make a way.

To serve our friends in the South Bronx, all the missionaries would have to fund raise. It was a stressful challenge. I reached out to St. Christopher curious if they would be able to help and once again was met with the same generosity and love that I had encountered when I first came to Mass in 2022. Through the generosity of those at St. Christopher, I was able to meet the deadline and serve our Lord and His people in the South Bronx. On March 11, 2023, we left at four in the morning for New York.

During preparation for mission, I had many questions about why the Lord called me to Bronx team. After going and returning home, I see clearly now why. I believe that God wanted me to pass on that love and compassion that I encountered from Him and St. Christopher to the many people in the South Bronx who are lacking in it. A woman on the subway told me that I was the first person to smile and speak to her on the metro in the fifty years she'd lived there, and I thought of the warm smiles of my parish family when I first was welcomed on Sunday. I was given the chance to love and encounter many individuals in their suffering, to enter more deeply into the Passion of Christ and the sorrows of Our Lady of Sorrows by making friends with those who did not have anyone to comfort them. I was shown the love and mercy of Christ through others, and the Lord offered me the chance to pass it on in a way that has forever changed my life. This life changing experience was thanks to St. Christopher Parish, and for that and all the kindness they have showed me, I will forever be grateful.

*Pax et Bonum, Sydney McCain*

## FIRST COMMUNION 2023

We celebrated 86 First Communions during the first three weekends in May. There were anywhere from one to 15 students per Mass. The weather held out for most of the Masses so we were able to process outside before the beginning of each Mass. Every communion was a special celebration for the parish. Please pray for all of the young people who will be making their subsequent communions this summer.

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

*Sharon Armstrong*

## THANK YOU

Robin Seedhouse

Marilu Norena

Lindsay Barbicas

Liz Hjort

Brendan Barke

Bob Bove



## LADIES GUILD UPDATE

After the monochrome palette of winter, the first appearance of color in the neighborhood from the crocus, daffodils, and forsythia is a boost to the spirit. As the Rev. Virgil Kraft said: "Spring shows what God can do with a drab and dirty world." The Ladies Guild welcomed the change of season with a spring social featuring interior designer Barrie Spang, proprietor of Sapphire Pear. Barrie gave a lively and informative presentation on "How to Freshen Your Home for Spring." Her tips were simple, inspiring, and inexpensive. From "bringing the outside in" with flower arrangements to "adding pops of color" with vibrant pillows, lamps, and picture frames, small changes can bring new life to a tired décor. Several door prizes were donated and given away, including an in-home consultation with Barrie. Afterwards, there was plenty of time to socialize and enjoy fruit infused water and chocolate chip cookies from Blackbird Baking Company.

As Holy Week drew near, the Ladies Guild gathered in the church to pray Mary's Way of the Cross by Richard Furey. This was the second year the Guild presented this unique and powerful form of the Stations which seeks to give Mary's viewpoint at that first Way of the Cross. It is a beautiful and prayerful way to enter more deeply into the sufferings of Christ and has become a Ladies Guild tradition.

The Guild welcomes the newest members of our parish through its Little Flower Ministry. The families of newly baptized babies receive a card welcoming their little ones into the Catholic faith and the community of St. Christopher. Eight baptisms were recognized in March, including a set of twins. If anyone would like to participate in this ministry, please reach out to Allison Coale at: [allisoncoale@gmail.com](mailto:allisoncoale@gmail.com).

On June 21 at 7 p.m. the Ladies Guild will welcome summer with its second annual Solstice Social in Centennial Park. Instructor Mary Holtz will once again lead a relaxing and restorative session of Tai Chi, no experience necessary. Come enjoy a fun evening with the women of St. Christopher.

*Nancy Sullivan*



## UKRAINE WELCOME CIRCLE BOWLS



In January our parish started looking into sponsoring a family from Ukraine to come to the United States from their war-torn country. The

Diocese of Cleveland had asked parishes within the diocese to consider sponsoring a family. A committee was formed by Fr. Tim and research was started into how we could make this happen. It was suggested that instead of taking part in the Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowls for our annual parish Lenten project, that we do something to collect donations for a potential Ukrainian family. After a few weeks of discussion at our pastoral staff meetings, it was decided that we would hand out a bowl similar to the CRS Rice Bowls we had used in years past. There were hundreds of unused "rice bowls" in the Religious Education Office – how could we use what we already had to recycle these bowls? We put our heads together as a team and came up with an ingenious idea to turn the existing boxes inside out. Then we gave the boxes a new identity with a sticker.

We needed to come up with a way to get 1,500 boxes ready in two weeks. It was a tall order, but we had the family in mind to keep us inspired. We had 6 ladies help start the process: Bonnie Twitchell, Carol Yelig, Cheryl Selak, Maggie McIntyre, Marilu Norena, and Colleen McKenna. They prepared the boxes so that 20 Confirmation volunteers could assemble them so the Ukraine Welcome Circle boxes were ready to hand out on Ash Wednesday, Lent Family Night, PSR, and St. Christopher School.

The collection for the UWC boxes was to run from Lent through the Easter season. The students in grades K-8 were asked to look for change, do extra chores, or give up something for Lent and give the extra money to the UWC boxes. So many students donated, even if it was just a few pennies, they wanted to give to "the least of our brothers and sisters." The children of the parish, as of April 30, had collected \$5,782 and the adults of the parish collected \$2,188 with the bowls plus (money donated online and in the collection basket); making a grand total of (\$75,000) collected so far. We are still accepting donations and will continue to do so. We have had such a positive response and appreciate every single penny that has been donated by each and every contributor.

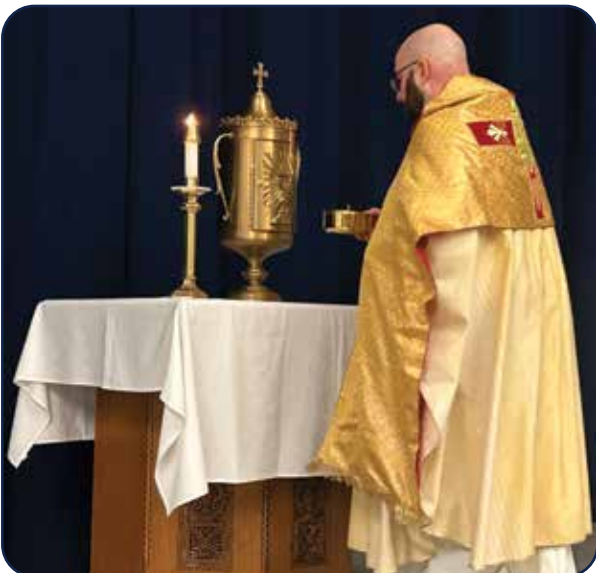
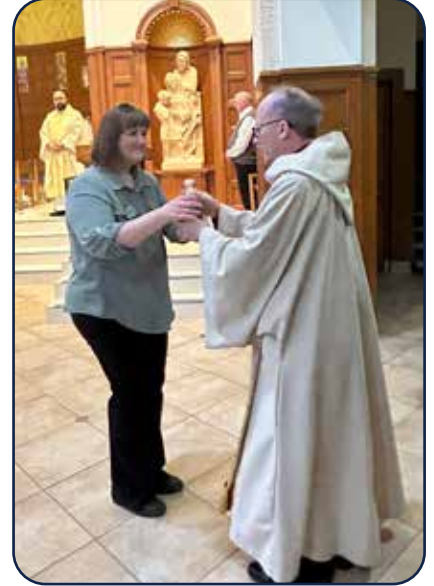
Thank you for your heartfelt generosity. Our family from Ukraine arrived on April 27 at 2:21 a.m. at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport where they were met by members of the team and taken to their home in Parma! Welcome home to Cleveland. We can't wait to meet you!

*Sharon Armstrong and Colleen McKenna*





## HOLY THURSDAY





## OUTDOOR STATIONS OF THE CROSS





## GOOD FRIDAY



## EASTER VIGIL





## EASTER VIGIL





## EASTER VIGIL



## ST. CHRISTOPHER PARISH COMMUNITY WEEKEND



St. Christopher Parish Community Weekend returns this year on August 25-27 and is bringing back many favorite events and activities from last year including carnival-style games, the cake walk, an exotic animal show, Magic Man Magic Show and Balloons, Hayden Grove and the Cleveland Jazz Orchestra, Michelle Romary Trio, and Iced Cherry Band.

SCP Weekend will be keeping it fresh with some changes and new additions to the schedule. Both the Saturday 5 p.m. and the Sunday morning 11:30

Masses are scheduled to be outdoors on the Performance Stage.

There will be a "Just for Fun Service Walk/Run & Prayer in the Garden" highlighting Walking With Moms in Need (WWMIN). WWMIN is a new ministry at St. Christopher Parish with the mission of supporting the women emotionally and spiritually while guiding the women to existing community resources and supporting these resources with fundraising efforts and donation drives. This year the Service Walk/Run & Prayer and WWMIN will be showcasing Sisters Haven in their efforts to reach pregnant and parenting women on the west side of Cleveland who need support.

Watch the bulletin and the SCPWeekend.com website for updates on this initiative as more details become available.

Also new this year, The Singing Angels will perform on Saturday afternoon, parishioners will dance to their own beat at a Silent Disco Party Saturday night and will show off their talent at the "St. Chris has Talent" show on Sunday afternoon. Contact Alex DiMichele at [entertainment@scpweekend.com](mailto:entertainment@scpweekend.com) if you want to participate in the talent show. Hurry – deadline to sign up for the talent show is July 15 and space is limited.

Sponsorship opportunities for 2023 have been revamped with new sponsorship levels available including Gold, Silver and Bronze Sponsorships and the Parishioner Patron Sponsorship. Parishioner Patron Sponsors can sponsor in any amount. All patron sponsors will be entered for a chance to win unlimited free game play all weekend! Patrons contributing \$100 or more will receive an SCPW t-shirt as well as recognition on SCPWeekend.com. More information on all levels of sponsorship are available by emailing Zac Patton at [sponsorship@scpweekend.com](mailto:sponsorship@scpweekend.com) or go to the website at [scpweekend.com](http://scpweekend.com).

Complete plans for SCP Weekend are still ongoing. To learn more or to volunteer, email Kevin Tenant at [info@scpweekend.com](mailto:info@scpweekend.com) or go to the website at [scpweekend.com](http://scpweekend.com)

Colleen McKenna

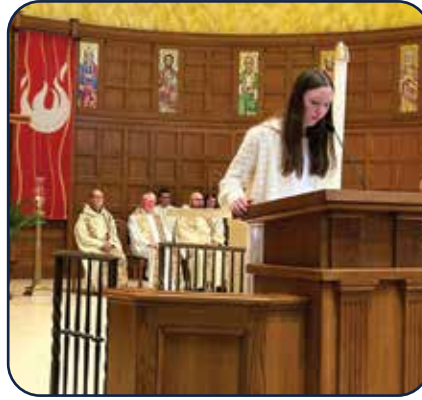


## FIRST COMMUNION





## CONFIRMATION



## 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 to all!

### ST. BALDRICK

For 18 years, **Joe Kovach** has annually shaved his head for charity. As "Crusader for the Cure," he raised over \$2,200 for University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital. Way to go, Joe!



### SENIOR SERVER

High school senior, **Isabella Paez**, has served during Mass since fifth grade. At Magnificat High School, she played on the varsity golf team and went to the state tournament for the past two years. Isabella will attend The Ohio State University and study finance. Best wishes!

### VOLUNTEER

Long time parishioner, **Toni Holtzhauser**, has been named Volunteer of the Year at the Rocky River Senior Center. Helping wherever needed, she is best known for organizing and refereeing chair volleyball there. She is also Vice President of the Seniors Council. Congratulations, Toni!

### SUPER STUDENTS

Kudos to the acting, singing and dancing of **Caroline Kysela**, who was the lead actress in the spring production of "Bright Star," at Rocky River High School. Caroline is active in the J+Walkers and is an altar server. Rocky River High School junior, **Evan Mathewson**, recently competed in the Science Olympiad, Northern Ohio Region. He and his teammate placed second in Wi-Fi Lab and fourth in Cell Biology. In swimming, his sister, Cora, a senior, placed fifth in the 200m Free Relays in state finals. At Kensington School, **Lane Rimlinger** achieved first place in Service Learning Challenge for Destination Imagination, Region 16 Tournament, and her team finished fourth in the state tournament. Congratulations to all!

### LUCK O' THE IRISH

**John Lackey** was named Man of the Year by the area's Irish community, due to his participation and leadership in numerous related events, programs, and organizations. John has been a parishioner for over 50 years and serves on the Hospitality Committee as an usher. He and his wife, **Eileen**, have three children and six grandsons. Another parishioner, **Mark Owens**, received recommendations from Irish businesses and communities, and went through a process of approval by the department of foreign affairs, to be named Irish Honorary Consul General in Ohio. Mark's appointment is a recognition of the historic and enduring links to develop cultural and economic ties between Ohio and Ireland. Comhghairdeas (that is Irish for congratulations)!

### MAGNIFICAT HONORS

Parishioner **Mara van der Oord Myers** was recently honored as Magnificat High School True Blue Volunteer of the Year. Due to her efforts, critical financial funds have been raised to further Catholic education for a new generation of young women. Another parishioner, **Mary Clare Fanta Oberst**, was also honored with the Alumnae Award of Excellence. This award recognized her dedication to faith formation service, and outreach. Well done, ladies!

### PATRIOTISM

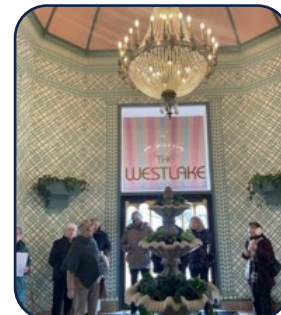
Three cheers for the red, white, and blue! If you would like to donate a U.S. flag for our church's flagpole, please deliver it to the Parish Office and include your name with the flag.



## CHURCH CHATTER

### THE PINK HOTEL

Parishioner and Cowan Pottery Museum Associates' President, **Jenny Dieringer**, recently conducted a brief tour of The Westlake, better known as the "Pink Hotel," here in Rocky River. It was built in 1923, using a combination of Old Florida and Art Deco, with the signature pink exterior. Many historic figures stayed at the hotel while visiting Cleveland and celebrities have called it home. Visit [cowanpottery.org](http://cowanpottery.org) for more information about this interesting local group.



### CLEVELAND MOB

In March, the Rocky River Historical Society welcomed guest speaker and St. Christopher parishioner, **Donna Fitzsimmons**, to its meeting. In the 1980s, she was the lead prosecutor of Cleveland mob boss Angelo Lonardo and several of his subordinates. Her presentation included photographs, which led to a lively discussion. Since 1994, she has served as judge of the Rocky River Municipal Court and has received numerous awards. At the end of this year, Judge Donna will enjoy a well-deserved retirement. This was just one of many

interesting programs hosted by the Historical Society, whose President is another parishioner: **Ginni Going**. Visit [rockyriverhistoricalsociety.org](http://rockyriverhistoricalsociety.org) for upcoming events.

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

One of our past parochial vicars, Fr. Daniel Schlegel, has been appointed spiritual adviser to the Christ Child Society of Cleveland. This appointment is in addition to his assignment as Secretary and Vicar for Clergy and Religious. Congratulations, Fr. Dan!

### VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

St. Christopher Parish joins Rocky River Presbyterian Church June 12-16 to host **Vacation Bible School**. It is open to children ages four through 4th grade. Volunteers are needed. Please email Sharon Armstrong at [sarmstrong@stchrisparish.com](mailto:sarmstrong@stchrisparish.com) for details.

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).

## QUIRE PATER NOSTER





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Jeanette Nappier, Terri Pastura and Nancy Sullivan

## UPCOMING EVENTS

June 2	8TH GRADE GRADUATION
June 6	KINDERGARTEN PROMOTION & LAST DAY OF SCHOOL
June 10	OUTDOOR MASS AT 5 P.M.
June 12-16	VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
June 18	FATHER'S DAY
June 21	LADIES GUILD T'AI CHI EVENT
July 8-9, 15-16	SOCIAL CONCERNS CHRISTMAS IN JULY COLLECTION
July 9	OUTDOOR MASS AT 11:30 A.M.
July 25	ST. CHRISTOPHER FEAST DAY
August 8	MONTHLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP
August 15	FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY
August 20	PRE-BAPTISM CLASS
August 22	FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
August 25-27	SCP COMMUNITY WEEKEND

save the date



ST. CHRISTOPHER PARISH  
Presented By

Corrigan  Krause  
CPAs and Consultants

Sponsorship Opportunities  
Available:

Contact Zac Patton at  
[sponsorships@scpweekend.com](mailto:sponsorships@scpweekend.com)

*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.*