



The Belltower Beacon

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

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SCP WEEKEND 2023

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We celebrated the second annual SCP Weekend from August 25-27, and what a success it was! Last year, as part of our centennial celebration, our goal was to breathe new life into the annual block party and create a three-day community celebration. This year, we hoped to bring back some of the same “magic” from last year, as well as provide new features and entertainment. We were up for the challenge! With the support from the staff and parishioners, and since our visions align, Alex DiMichele and I agreed to plan and manage the event once again.

Friday night kicked off the weekend with a movie night featuring *The Super Mario Bros. Movie*. Families came equipped with pillows, blankets and picnics and were treated to free popcorn, cotton candy and beverages. Saturday began with a Prayer Walk and Fun Run sponsored by Walking with Moms in Need to benefit Sisters Haven. The rest of the day was jam-packed with activities galore, including an inflatables park, video games on a giant LED screen, carnival games, a cake walk, cornhole, basketball, bingo, trivia and even a euchre tournament!

We also enjoyed a few returning entertainers and were treated to some new talent as well. Nora the Explorer, the Magic Man, the Singing Angels, Iced Cherry, Hayden Grove and the Cleveland Jazz Orchestra and the Michelle Romary Trio provided hours of entertainment for all.

And the food ... the food may have been the best part of the weekend for many. Lunch on Saturday

was prepared by Boy Scout Troop #390. They mastered the cookout! After Mass on Saturday afternoon, we devoured a spectacular dinner catered by Italian Creations. People were raving! Our food options on Sunday included the Barrio food truck and the Pierogi Lady. Let's not forget the sweet treats! Thanks to Kona Ice, Oh Fluff Cotton Candy, Prayers From Maria ice cream truck and the McGee boys for their masterful mocktails. We also were thankful to have a parishioner donate her cotton candy machine for Friday night which was a huge hit!

For a little something different this year, we introduced a Beer Garden, where the adults could “chill” while enjoying adult beverages. Rocky River Brewing Company and Superior Beverage kept the drinks flowing on both Saturday and Sunday.

We were equally blessed with perfect weather for the parish's biggest event of the year. It was so special to be able to celebrate Mass outdoors on both Saturday and Sunday too. Our team spent countless hours planning for the better part of a year. They are the true heroes, along with the outpouring of volunteers needed to make this event a true success. Thank you to everyone who participated in any way, large or small, including our students and parents.

In conclusion, the weekend was fantastic, everyone had a wonderful time and memories were made. But, first, I'd like you to ask yourself: “What can I do to be a part of the SCP Weekend? How can I help make this an amazing event every year?” We are already looking for help for SCP Weekend next year; this parish has so many special people who could lend their time and talent.

We welcome your ideas, suggestions and anything else you might want to share. Please contact us at info@scpweekend.com so we can start collaborating.

Thanks again to everyone that attended, volunteered, supported, sponsored, promoted, prayed, and enjoyed SCP Weekend 2023. We truly hope to see everyone next year with new ideas and energy.

Kevin Tennant

Thank You OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

Presenting: Corrigan Krause

Stage: All Metal Sales

Gold: Ennis Court

Silver: Gayle Cilimburg

Bronze: Joyce Buick GMC and
Fr. John Chlebo

Carnival: Pat & Nancy Sullivan

Casino: Cleveland Ohio OMFS

Beer Garden: Rocky River Brewing Company

Movie Night: Patton Painting and
Robbie Anderson State Farm

Bingo: Busch Funeral Homes,
McGorray-Hanna Funeral Homes and
the Hyland Family

Basketball Tournament: Wagner Home
Improvement, Mike & Diane Kennedy, Ortho
West and Howard Hanna Aileen Fitzgerald Team

Cornhole: 911 Driving School,
St. Christopher Ladies Guild, Mike & Carmen
DeHaan and the Previts Family

General: Bonnie Bell Foundation

Thank You PARISHIONER PATRONS

Nector & Mary Castro

Melissa DiFini

Jenny Grod

Terri Pastura

Zac & Julie Patton

Gary Novak

Kevin & Hollie Tennant

Kevin & Melissa Walsh

Fr. Anthony Marshall

The Mallett Family

Friday:



Movie Night



Thank You SCP WEEKEND COMMITTEE

Kevin Tennant, *Event Chair*

Alex DiMichele, *Co-Chair*

Nector & Mary Castro, *Activities*

Jenna Bertin, *Finance*

Amy Gressell & Melissa Walsh, *Food*

Logan Feldkamp, *Carnival Games*

Molly Stefan & Sarah Pap, *Casino*

Colleen McKenna, *Signage & Photography*

Zac Patton, *Sponsorship*

Sharon Armstrong, *Volunteers*

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Melissa DiFinì, *Management Support*

Jim Shivak, *Basketball Tournament*

Allison Coale, Angela Rosati &

Kristen Post, *Fun Run*

Keri Bove, *Tickets*

Brendan Barker, *Alcohol*

Greg & Meg Hildebrandt, *Beer Garden*

Savannah P, *Youth Group*

Sue Pichotta & Sarah Warren, *Casino*

Terri Pastura, *Parish Promotions*

Congrats! RAFFLE WINNERS

\$1,000 WINNERS

Laura Nagele

Denio Leone

Mary Kleinert

Matthew Hecei

\$2,000 WINNER

Elaine Nemec

\$3,000 WINNER

Bob Olender

Saturday: Walk, Run & Prayer



Saturday: Boy Scouts Cookout



Saturday: Fun & Games



Saturday: Fun & Games



Saturday: Singing Angels & Mass



Saturday: Dinner & Beyond



Sunday Funday



Sunday Mass



Sunday: Hayden Grove + Michelle Romary Trio



Sunday: Raffle



SCP Weekend Highlights



Outdoor Mass + Michelle Romary Trio

JUNE 10 & JULY 9



EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO DEACON DENNIS

For the past eight years, our parish community has enjoyed the privilege of Deacon Dennis assisting at Mass and sharing his powerful homilies. On July 1, 2023, Deacon Dennis officially retired from the Diocese of Cleveland. His “farewell” Mass took place on the weekend of June 24 and 25. At every Mass, Fr. John Chlebo expressed his gratitude for the years of service Deacon Dennis provided to St. Christopher. He wished Deacon Dennis and his family the best during the retirement years. A “celebration of thanks” took place after each Mass that weekend. Deacon Dennis will return to St. Christopher as needed until he and his wife make a move south to be closer to family. He and Paula have been married 40 years. They are looking forward to this exciting new phase. The parish community wishes them safe travels, fun adventures and many holy moments along the way.

On the day of his celebration, Deacon Dennis bid us farewell and gave us the gift of a beautifully prepared homily based on the First Reading (Jer. 20:10-13). In part, his words cautioned us against being consumed by fear and reminded us to entrust our cares to God. His message beseeched us to follow Jeremiah’s advice by denouncing those who persecute us, standing together as a “herd,” following the Lord and his teachings, and standing our ground against those who seek to destroy our souls. He advised us to ensure that in our homes, workplace and life, we “promote Gospel values and not let ourselves become part of the culture that is trying to destroy that in which we believe. Jesus reminds us that each daughter and son of God is valuable to God. God loves and protects even the smallest sparrow, and we are worth more than many sparrows.”

In discussing his calling, Deacon Dennis states that it was shortly after he became married to Paula that he started having a recurring dream in which he was standing before the altar. Not understanding its meaning, Dennis ignored the dream. Over the next 25 years, as the dream continued to recur, Deacon Dennis finally decided that God was calling him. However, he had no idea what God was calling him to do. After conversations with his parish priest and deacon, he decided to apply to the Diaconate. After his ordination, the dream stopped. Dennis realized that he had not chosen to become a deacon, but that God had chosen him. Though the seminary taught him what is required to be a deacon, it was in serving the family of God during the ordinary and the special times of their lives that he really learned to be a Deacon. Just like our own families, it is in the Sacraments that parish families grow together and form those lasting memories. He leaves us with this important question to contemplate: “God might be calling each of us to some portion of His plan. Are we ignoring God’s request?”

Carmen Everett DeHaan

A NEW JOURNEY FOR FR. TIM



On July 1, 2023, Fr. Tim began a new chapter in his calling to religious life. He was granted permission to retire but stay at St. Christopher. Thanks be to God, the change in his duties does not mean farewell, and his presence at St. Christopher will continue. Stating that his time at St. Christopher has been “the highlight” of his priesthood, Fr. Tim ponders how quickly the past 20 years have gone. He recalls the challenges of coming to St. Christopher in 2002 while still being the Sacramental Moderator of Annunciation Parish in Cleveland. Admittedly, those first few years were “a real trick, especially during the winter.” He is grateful for the support and immense help of Fr. John Chlebo and Fr. Richard Bona during those early years. He explains that they were “all younger back then” and more readily able to meet the demands. Over 20 years later, Fr. Tim reports that he has lived with Fr. John longer than anyone else in his life. About Fr. John, he offers the following words: “Fr. John has been a good pastor and friend, whom I greatly appreciate. He continues to be an excellent brother priest and confidant.”

Fr. John had very kind words to say about Fr. Tim at each “farewell” Mass, including how happy he is to have Fr. Tim remain at St. Christopher. Their friendship is clearly a strong one with many shared experiences. Among the projects at St. Christopher that evoke fond memories for Fr. Tim is the 2008 renovation of the church. It was an extensive undertaking which resulted in a church environment that helps us to celebrate the Sacraments of our Catholic faith. Through the years, visitors from all walks of life have complimented on the beauty and brightness of our renovated Church. Fr. Tim proudly states that

“we do indeed have a magnificent worship space to give praise and thanks to our God.” On Wednesday mornings, Fr. Tim can be found presiding at 11 a.m. Mass. The regulars at this Mass (preceded by the Rosary) appreciate Fr. Tim’s powerful homilies and his prayers for “those who put on a uniform every day and place their lives at risk in order to protect and serve others.”

Another project very dear to Fr. Tim’s heart is being part of a parish that sponsored and continues to support the Kushnyr family, helping them escape from war torn Ukraine to the safety and security of the United States. Fr. Tim calls this “an act of genuine faith and charity by a parish that practices and demonstrates faith so vividly, a community that gives generously and abundantly to those in need as they witness powerfully to others.” Fr. Tim’s leadership of the Ukraine Welcome Circle has been instrumental in its huge success. In the words of Dmytro and Valeriia Kushnyr, Fr. Tim was an instant friend – welcoming, friendly and open. Upon meeting Fr. Tim, they felt that they already knew him. They were touched

by how loving he was to all of them, especially the love he showed their children from the start. “As we watched him hug the children, we realized that they were safe.” They see Fr. Tim as the definition of “a good person, someone who not only does good things, but avoids doing bad things. That’s what you realize when you talk to Fr. Tim or just stand next to him.” Fr. Tim has become a good friend, mentor and spiritual advocate for the Kushnyr family and the entire UWC team. All are grateful to him!

In closing, Fr. Tim sends a message to the people of St. Christopher. He is grateful for all the Sacraments he has celebrated with us, from baptisms to funerals, and for inviting him into the most intimate moments of our lives. “Honestly, it is a real privilege of my priesthood to be invited into those most cherished moments and into your family’s lives. I hope to be remembered as a man willing to listen and walk with others in faith as we journey together toward a fuller experience of the Kingdom of God.”

Carmen Everett DeHaan



JESUS IS WAITING FOR YOU!

This past June, we entered year two of the three-year Eucharistic Revival. Last year was the Year of Diocesan Revival, and this year is the Year of Parish Revival. The mission is to renew the church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. The vision is to inspire a movement of Catholics across the United States who are healed, converted, formed, and unified by an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist and who are then sent out on a mission “for the life of the world.” The Eucharist is the greatest gift that Jesus has given us because it contains his very self. The Eucharistic Revival is about the life of the Eucharistic Church, which centers on the celebration of the Eucharist. Our lives are meant to become a self-gift in imitation of Christ Jesus.

We will have Eucharistic exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Friday, September 8, from 11:30 until 3:30. It will continue on the First Friday of each month in the Prayer Room. “The worship of the Eucharist outside the Sacrifice of the Mass is a tribute of inestimable value in the life of the Church. Such worship is closely linked to the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The Most Holy Sacrament, when exposed, must never be left unattended.” (*USCCB Publication No. 5-595*) Everyone is invited to spend a few minutes or more in adoration of our Lord, who is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. We will arrange for at least two to three faithful to be present at fixed times. If you would like to sign up to commit to an ongoing Holy Hour or Holy Half Hour, please call me at the parish office at (440) 331.4255 x 105 or email me at mdifini@stchrisparish.com. There will also be a sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area.

“When we contemplate Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament, we are given the opportunity to thank him for his passion, death, and

glorious resurrection. Christ draws near to us, more intimate with us than we are with ourselves. He strengthens our share in his divine life, the life that transforms us into his likeness and, in the Spirit, he gives us access to the Father.” (*USCCB Publication No. 5-595*)

What is the difference between perpetual adoration and perpetual exposition of the Blessed Sacrament? “The Blessed Sacrament may be adored while contained in the Tabernacle for an extended period of time; this is called ‘perpetual adoration.’ Perpetual exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is a liturgical act whereby the consecrated host is placed in a ciborium or in a monstrance outside of the tabernacle for an extended period of time so that the faithful may gather together to pray before the exposed Eucharist.” (*USCCB Publication No. 5-595*) St. Alphonsus Liguori wrote: “Of all devotions that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God and the one most helpful to us.”

This is your personal time with Christ. You can pray the rosary, read the scriptures, ask for intercession, write a prayer journal, and pray spontaneously. Remember to recognize that you are in God’s presence, and thank God for all the blessings God has given you. The Eucharist revives us and is the true presence of Jesus. Come and spend time with Him; He’s waiting for you.

Because we are a community of faithful believers, I asked several parishioners what Eucharist means to them. I encourage you to ponder the same question and think of ways to make your life a gift for others. Here are some of their reflections on the question:

“I have always felt the transformational power of receiving the Eucharist. My grade school teachers who taught me about the sacrament did a good job of explaining the sanctity, grace, and mysteries surrounding the Eucharist. Those teachings have carried through my experiences of receiving Christ each week. I recently attended the training to become an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. I am honored to have now the ability to extend this sacrament to the members of our parish community.” ~ Emily Mcgee.

“The Eucharist ties everything together. It is the focal point of all our activities that help us in our search for the Lord Jesus.” ~ Daniel Gauntner

“As a Catholic, I know Jesus is present in the Eucharist. But how do I feel this in my life? When I experience the Eucharist, I feel peace and comfort come over me, and I honestly feel that Jesus is encouraging me to be a better person.” ~ Kathy Rohn.

“In reflecting on what the Eucharist means to me: I feel the Eucharist is an opportunity to receive the gift of God in a tangible way. It makes me feel refreshed and renewed. It’s a source of comfort to lift my hands and receive the Body of Christ placed into them.” ~ Mara Myers.

“Receiving the Eucharist, the living presence of Our Lord at Mass, for me, is the central moment of each day. This spiritual connection with Our Lord and His mystical body is a gift beyond explanation. Receiving the Eucharist gives me a sense of Unity with the Lord, and my loved ones living and deceased. The Communion of Saints is our living legacy.” ~ Mary Ellen Grady.

“The Eucharist reminds me, each time I receive it, of the Last Supper where Jesus told his disciples “Do this in remembrance of me.” ~ Angela Rosati.

“The Eucharist is the presence and gift of Jesus Christ. It reassures me that Christ is with me always. Receiving the Eucharist is my acceptance of Jesus Christ in body and spirit.” ~ Chris Rosati

“Jesus comes to us and lives within us; it’s the Holy Trinity dwelling within us; it’s the summit of our Christian life.” ~ David McVean

*Continued blessings to you and your families,
Melissa DiFini*

WELCOME TO MUSIC DIRECTOR AND ORGANIST MAYUMI NARAMURA



New Music Director Mayumi Naramura began her ministry here at St. Christopher on July 1. If you've heard her play, her pedigree is apparent: she holds a degree in organ performance from the prestigious Oberlin College, as well as a master's degree in early keyboard from the University of Michigan. Interestingly, her first career was not in music, but in medicine.

Mayumi earned a medical degree from Kyoto University in her native Japan, where she worked in pediatric hematology/oncology for four years. She then decided to move into cancer research, which brought her to the United States. She began her research career in California, and as her career advanced, held subsequent positions with the Cleveland Clinic, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She shared that she has lived on the East Coast, West Coast, and Midwest – everywhere except the South – and has a special affinity for the Midwest. It was while in Nebraska that she joined the St. Cecilia Cathedral Choir as an alto chorister and started a journey that would ultimately change her career path.

When the music director of the cathedral choir discovered that Mayumi had played piano since the age of four, she invited Mayumi to play the cathedral's organ, giving Mayumi her first exposure to the instrument that would claim her heart. The Archdiocese of Omaha offered private music lessons through the Saint Cecilia Institute, and Mayumi took advantage of this program to study organ with the cathedral music director. As she progressed, it was suggested she consider studying organ collegiately. While going back to school was not something Mayumi had anticipated doing, she was intrigued.

Around that same time, three work colleagues passed away within one year. As you might imagine, this brought home the idea that life is short. After much thought, she decided to seize the day and explored programs in organ performance, ultimately choosing Oberlin College. She had previously lived in the Cleveland area when working for the Clinic and liked the area. Also, Oberlin's program is strong in the area of early music, which was her primary area of interest. So, she made the jump from medicine to music and didn't look back.

After completing her undergrad at Oberlin, which included a minor in German, she enrolled in the University of Michigan to study Early Keyboard Performance, which incorporated instruments such as the harpsichord, clavichord, fortepiano, and of course, the organ. Throughout her studies, she had several opportunities to perform in Europe and even played an organ from the 17th century in the Netherlands.

Church ministry is not new to Mayumi. She worked within the diocese as a part-time organist for Our Lady of Peace near Shaker Square and then Our Lady of Lourdes in Slavic Village – she even commuted on weekends from Michigan while completing her master's degree! As she was nearing the end of her program in Michigan, she happened upon the job posting for the position at St. Christopher. Although she wasn't actively looking for a change, the opportunity to serve in a large, active parish was "too good to pass up."

Mayumi is a fan of traditional music and shared, "I want to rediscover the treasure trove of church music. There is a lot of old music that has been passed down for a long time." She continued, "We need to perpetuate the art of organ music. Fewer young people are exposed to organ music, which isn't just church music." She's open to the idea of teaching organ so she can give young musicians the same opportunity afforded to her. She also hopes to explore the idea of organ or chamber music concerts at St. Christopher.

In her free time, Mayumi is an avid knitter. She lives in Oberlin with her small but mighty yorkie-poo, Boo. If you'd like to learn more about the choir or St. Christopher's music program, or to simply email a note of welcome, you can contact Mayumi at mnaramura@stchrisparish.com.

Beth Van Horn



1ST ANNUAL RAISE YOUR SPIRITS

We are planning a fall event that YOU and your girlfriends are sure to enjoy!

Save the date: Thursday, October 12, 2023



SCHOOL WELCOMES NEW STAFF

This fall several new faces will be part of the staff of St. Christopher School. Together, they will help to nurture the minds and hearts of students in our Blue Ribbon School, which is a place “where Catholic values, service, excellence, and community are shared with all by loving God, studying hard, and being kind to each other.” Read on for an introduction to the newest members of our St. Christopher School Community.



Kimberly Schwartz - 6th-8th grade English kschwartz@scsrr.org

Anyone connected to Saint Ignatius High School may already recognize Kimberly, our new English Teacher for 6th-8th grade. For the last 10 years, Kimberly has taught at the

Reaching MAGIS program at Saint Ignatius High School on Saturdays, a program for 5th through 8th graders designed to prepare them for the academic, social, and spiritual challenges they may encounter as students in a college preparatory high school setting. She is a seasoned English Language Arts (ELA) professional having taught previously at St. Vincent de Paul in Elyria for 16 years and at charter school Puritas Community School for 15 years.

She and her husband have three children and are lifelong parishioners of St. Patrick's in West Park, where she attended grade school, followed by high school at St. Joseph Academy, and then Cleveland State University for her teaching degree. In her free time, she loves to read, crochet, be outdoors, and walk her Siberian Husky, Echo.



Sarah Skodny - 1st grade sskodny@scsrr.org

Sarah graduated from Ashland University in 2022 with a Bachelor's Degree in Science Education, Early Childhood Education and Teaching, and is an alumna of St. Joseph Academy. Most recently she was head preschool teacher for Avon Montessori Academy.

Sarah shared that she was drawn to teaching largely due to two formative experiences. This first was in response to her own difficult experience with grade school bullying. This inspired her to become the advocate she wished she'd had then. The second experience was with a wonderful sixth grade teacher who spent countless extra time with Sarah to help her conquer math struggles.

“I am looking forward to working together with parents to build a safe and loving learning environment for their children,” said Sarah. “I hope to help the children of St. Christopher by showing them love and kindness and helping them learn to the best of their ability.”

An avid bowler and volleyball player as well as an animal lover, Sarah currently resides in Elyria with her dog and four cats. She is engaged to be married at Nativity Church in Lorain next June.



Taylor Loiacono - 3rd grade tloiacono@scsrr.org

Taylor was born and raised in Rochester, NY, home of the epicurean “Garbage Plate,” where she enjoyed spending time with her close-knit circle of family and friends. A product of K-12 Catholic education herself, Taylor recently

graduated from John Carroll University with a degree in Early Childhood Education and dual minors in Theology and Religious Studies and Leadership Development. She previously taught 3rd grade at St. Dominic School in Shaker Heights as a student teacher.

When asked what drew her to teaching, Taylor recalls an impactful 4th grade teacher. “She made me feel like I was such an important member of our classroom community and challenged me to be the best version of myself. The classroom community that she created was truly memorable and at a young age, she made me someone who wanted to foster that one day for kids like me. Now that I am the teacher with my own classroom, I hope to emulate that high level of student learning while making students feel included and valued in the classroom community while making learning activities fun.”

At St. Christopher, Taylor aims to build strong connections with her students, not just as their teacher, but also as a mentor and role model. She hopes to foster a sense of curiosity and a love for learning in her students, allowing them to explore their interests and passions while also developing the necessary skills to excel in their studies. Emphasizing kindness, compassion, and empathy will also be key.

“Ultimately, my goal is to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of my students, helping them grow into confident, responsible, and compassionate individuals who are well-prepared to contribute meaningfully to the world around them,” said Taylor. “I am thrilled to be part of the St. Christopher community and to work alongside my colleagues to make a difference in the lives of our students.”



Rebecca (Becky) Olp - Music rolp@scsrr.org

Becky graduated from Bowling Green State University with a Bachelor of Music Education degree in 2013 and began teaching at the Westside Community School of the Arts in Cleveland in February 2015. There she taught

K-8 music, band, and orchestra for nine years. She is also an accomplished harpist. She began playing the harp in elementary school, continued her studies through college, and has been playing for 25 years.

“I’ve had a love for music since a young age and loved how music brought joy to the people around me when I played the harp for them,” said Becky. “Since high school, I knew I wanted to be a teacher and share my love of music with children.”

Becky grew up in Broadview Heights and now lives in Willowick with her husband and 10-month old daughter. She is looking forward to sharing her love for God through teaching.



The Angel Scholarship Fund is a program established by the Ohio General Assembly, which provides Ohioans with a 100% income tax credit against the Ohio income tax liability for cash contributions to certified organizations that grant scholarships to students, including those attending Catholic schools. The maximum credit amount is currently \$750 (\$1,500 if married filing jointly where each individual contributes \$750). This is a permanent tax credit written into the Ohio statute.

During 2022, St. Christopher Parish attempted to communicate broadly the changes in the Ohio tax law through a variety of medium to a variety of audiences. We are thankful to the 152 families who elected to have their income taxes be allocated directly to St. Christopher School. These 152 families' elections resulted in St. Christopher receiving \$130,850.00 to apply toward scholarships to students attending St. Christopher School. Many students have benefited from these awards, allowing their family to continue to receive a faith-based education from St. Christopher School. However, many more students could benefit, if more parishioners took advantage of this income tax redirection.

A few facts to note. Of the 152 taxpayers electing their Ohio income tax go to St. Christopher School, only 99 taxpayers were parishioners of St. Christopher Parish who represented \$94,225 of the benefit received by St. Christopher School. For a Parish of over 3,000 families, many of whom pay Ohio income tax, the opportunity to provide for faith formation through a Catholic education at St. Christopher School is enormous. It's no secret that the cost of Catholic education is burdensome on most families who attend and unaffordable for those who choose to not attend. Clearly, as a parish, we have barely scratched the surface on the opportunity to take advantage of this Ohio income tax credit.

Again, a huge thank you to the families/taxpayers who elected to have your Ohio income tax dollars allocated to St. Christopher School for scholarships or any institution you elected. Thank you for taking advantage of the Ohio Income Tax code, which results in no out of pocket cost to you personally. Our plea is to the other 3,000 families who missed out on this opportunity in 2022. Please consider donating to the Angel Scholarship Fund by going to www.catholiccommunity.org/angel-scholarship-fund/ overview for a full list of FAQs to make your donation for 2023. Or, you can contact Joe Williams, Business Manager, at (440) 331-4255 or by email at jwilliams@stchrisparish.com.

Joe Williams

CHRISTMAS IN JULY WAS TRULY A BLESSING FOR TWICE BLESSED

Every summer the St. Christopher Social Concerns Committee sponsors a collection to benefit a local organization that supports those in need. This year it was Twice Blessed Free Store, a ministry of the Rocky River United Methodist Church. Located near St. Colman, Twice Blessed provides a large variety of clothing and household goods free of charge to needy families in the area.

A long wish-list of goods for Twice Blessed appeared in the St. Chris bulletins this summer—and generous parishioners fulfilled all of it! The halls of the parish center overflowed with clothing, toys, games, bedding, kitchen and bathroom supplies, strollers, baby items, and small appliances—the largest collection ever for any Christmas in July project.

On delivery day, a dozen volunteers loaded their cars with boxes, bundles, and bags full of donations, making two trips to Rocky River Methodist Church where volunteers gratefully accepted the bounty.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this project. Your generosity is both amazing and appreciated by all!

Jane Berkeley



St. Christopher School

DRAMA CLUB

St. Christopher School Drama Club presented *Dorothy in Wonderland* on May 4, 2023 at a school performance in the morning and a public performance in the evening. The worlds of Oz and Wonderland collide in a fantastically fun romp, cleverly and carefully adapted from the works of L. Frank Baum and Lewis Carroll. The 29 student thespians practiced since January for their performance under the direction of Miss Emma Beekman. Miss Beekman is a Music Theater graduate from University of Tampa. Her passion for theater goes back to her grade school days through her own school performances. Miss Beekman received directing assistance from St. Christopher School alumna, Emma Vega. Emma is currently a junior at Magnificat High School and very active in theater at school and in the community. The 4th-8th graders worked very hard in memorizing their lines and honing their skills as actors for the performance. The cast members were Carmen Castro (Dorothy), Olivia Shvak (Toto), Bea Kratt (Scarecrow), Keira Prevost (Lion), Jack Pichotta (Tin Man), Michael Caserio (Wizard), Savannah Paez (Glinda), Laura Pap (White Rabbit), Anna Rennell (Rose/Cheshire Cat 3), Lily Pussel (Tiger Lily), Shelby Watson (Tulip/Cheshire Cat 2), Natalie Lakarosky (Caterpillar), Peyton Delmonico (Humpty Dumpty), Ben Tozzi (King of Hearts), Brooke Wearsch (Pawn), Alyssa Sinchak (Rook/Frog Footman), Finn Lewis (Knight), Olivia Klocker (Tweedle Dee), Olivia Szy (Tweedle Dum), Jen Zagaria (Alice), Harper Brown (Mad Hatter), Evelyn Kennedy (March Hare), Remy Hood (Dormouse), Carmella Delmonico (Fish Footman), Mary Warren (Cheshire Cat), Sadie Fritz (Queen of Hearts), Noelle McGannon (Five), Maddie Walther (Seven), and Myla Prada (Knave of Hearts). Wonderful performance by all the cast members!

Mary Meler



ANDRÉ BERNIER VISITS



On Wednesday, May 24, 2023, Meteorologist André Bernier of Fox 8 News visited St. Christopher School for the installation of our school's new weather station. Our 6th and 7th grade students participated in a prayer service and blessing of the weather station by Fr. Anthony. The Ambient Weather Station was purchased through a science grant received from the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation. A smartphone phone app can be downloaded to your phone for personal use of the weather station. The app is Ambient Weather Network. The weather station data from our location is available for the public to view in real time.

After the prayer service and blessing, André Bernier met with the 6th and 7th grade students and shared information about his work and his life. Mr. Bernier has been friends with Father Anthony since Fr. Anthony was in 7th grade. Mr. Bernier has been a mentor to Fr. Anthony all these years. Fr. Anthony's keen interest in meteorology has been fostered by Mr. Bernier's passion for his work.

The new weather station will be incorporated into the science and STREAM classes during the 2023-2024 school year and used for years to come.

Mary Meler

UWC UPDATE: MAKING PROGRESS AND SETTLING IN



It is indeed hard to believe that the Kushnir family has been with us for almost four months. In this time, they have gone from being a sponsored family to being familiar and loved members of our St. Christopher community. These summer months have been pivotal for the Kushnirs – parents and children alike. It has also been a very busy and rewarding time for the entire Welcome Circle of volunteers and supporters. The transition to life in America and all that implies has been smoother and less traumatic due to the prayers, involvement and support of our parish community. They consider us family and want to share their life and their faith journeys with us. Dmytro, Valeriia and Dariush have chosen to participate in our Roman Catholic Sacraments and traditions. Aniela was recently baptized and will receive her First Holy Communion at the appropriate time. Whenever possible, they prefer to attend St. Christopher, where they feel comfortable and welcomed. With the Kushnirs' permission, the team has made it a priority to keep everyone informed of their progress through periodic updates.

The last few months have been a whirlwind of activity, especially during July with all the Independence Day celebrations. Though their schedules have included some fun activities, Dmytro and Valeriia have remained focused on learning English, studying for driver tests and finding employment. Speaking English is markedly improved for the adults and for Dariush. With the assistance of our volunteers, they will hopefully pass their driver tests and have a vehicle at their disposal. Hopefully, employment and added freedom will come in the near future. The fall will bring a new season to explore, second grade for Dariush and more normal family routines. We will continue to help celebrate their successes while walking with them through challenges. You are always invited to learn more about our sponsored family and assist in fulfilling their needs through our website, uwc@stchrisparish.com.

Carmen Everett DeHaan

UNBOUND MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND ELDERLY

The Unbound lay Catholic sponsorship ministry helps more than 300,000 individuals and their families in 19 countries. On the weekend of October 21 & 22 we at St. Christopher will have the opportunity to learn more about this organization and join in putting our faith into action and participate in the social mission of the Church through choosing a child or aging person to sponsor.

Unbound has taken a different approach to eradicating poverty, one that honors human dignity, where people don't have solutions imposed on them but choose their own path to a better life.

At all our Masses that weekend we will hear from Fr. Michael Rieder who will share the message of Unbound as well as Gayle Cilimburg, our pastoral associate who has personally sponsored individuals for the past 27 years.

Gayle Cilimburg

LITTLE FLOWER PROJECT



St. Therese of Lisieux inspired The Ladies Guild's Little Flower Project that began in 2021. 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, the 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, prayer card, and a little something (eg. coffee gift card, flower kit). This year, eleven Guild volunteers have congratulated over 55 families on the baptism of their child! If you are interested in joining this ministry, please contact Allison Coale at Allison.Coale@gmail.com.

Allison Coale

ST. CHRISTOPHER SPONSORS DIOCESAN YOUNG ADULT SOFTBALL TEAM



This summer St. Christopher sponsored the Westside Whitecaps, a team that participated in the inaugural season of the Diocesan Co-ed Young Adult Softball



The Westside Whitecaps finished the season at 2-4, good for sixth place in the league. Third baseman and cleanup hitter Tyler M. tied the league lead in home runs (3) and tied for third in batting average (.846). Both Tyler M. and teammate Tom B. tied for third in the league with 11 hits each. Tyler M., Tom B., and teammate Rachel F. were the three Whitecaps named to the all-star

League. The team was comprised of players from St. Christopher and other area parishes and was managed by Pastoral Minister Logan Feldkamp, who also served as the deputy commissioner of the league. The league's inaugural season boasted 8 teams comprised of over 140 young adults from around the diocese who squared off in a six-game regular season and ended with a four-team playoff tournament to crown the champions. St. Christopher parishioner, diaconal candidate, and Diocesan Director of Young Adult Ministry Mike Hayes served as commissioner of the league. The league's first year was a major success and received amazing reviews from all who participated.

game. Manager Logan Feldkamp was named one of the all-star team managers. The highlight of the season was when Dariush, the son of our Ukrainian family, joined the team as an honorary player for a game. He participated in warm-ups, threw out the first pitch, and helped coach the team to a victory. Dariush was also gifted with a jersey and equipment bag by various players throughout the league. The Whitecaps had a blast this season and looks forward to making a "splash" in 2024!

Logan Feldkamp

J+WALKERS SUMMER FUN!



The parish youth group has enjoyed an action-packed summer full of entertaining events! June kicked us off with a Party in the Park, where students enjoyed the beautiful grounds of Centennial Park. July hosted a night at Main Event Arcade in Avon where students played laser tag, bowling, and arcade

games. Later in the month we ventured to Huntington Beach in Bay Village where we foraged for sea glass, swam, and admired a stunning sunset. August brought our first ever overnight retreat, "Rooted," at St. Leonard's Retreat House in Avon. The retreat sought to connect students with the most fundamental, life-giving elements of their lives through thought-provoking metaphors found in nature.

A new addition to the J+Walkers lineup this summer were "Fireside Chat" nights held specifically for high school students. These nights combined a talk about a relevant topic, a fire in Centennial Park, s'mores, and opportunities for discussion. These events were well-attended and offered students a space to discuss relevant aspects of their lives. These events will continue monthly throughout autumn. We invite you to come and join our awesome group!

Logan Feldkamp



Religious Education

FALL PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Confirmation	Begins September 10	12:30-3:00	Pre-registration required
PSR Grades K-5	Begins September 17	8:30 a.m. or 10 a.m.	Pre-registration required
PSR Grades 6-8	Begins September 17 or 19	10 a.m. or 3:30 a.m.	Pre-registration required
C.L.O.W.	Begins September 17	10 a.m. Mass	No registration needed

JUNIOR HIGH PROGRAM "THE WAY"



THE WAY
ST. CHRISTOPHER PSR

We have an exciting new junior high (grades 6-8) PSR program starting on Sunday, September 17 or Tuesday, September 19. There are three components of the new program: group presentations/ age group breakout sessions, workshops, and a service component; all adding up to 32 hours to satisfy diocesan requirements for parish PSR programming.

We have noticed for the past several years that attendance in the junior high grades has fallen off. There are many factors that play into that, but we would like to offer some solutions that the diocese of Cleveland has offered, as well as our staff, parents, and teachers. We started by thinking outside the box to come up with a model that is different than the current model. If we give families more flexibility in scheduling, everyone wins. Families need to feel good about balancing their busy lives with their religious education.

This fall, grades 6-8 will be offered at 10 a.m. on Sundays in Mary's Room or 3:30 p.m. on Tuesdays in the atrium. There is still time to register!

this page: Sharon Armstrong



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2023

Vacation Bible School was almost back to its pre-COVID state. After three years of having to try new and innovative ideas to keep campers and volunteers "safe," our annual Vacation Bible School for ages three to 10 looked "normal" this summer. We couldn't have managed 83 campers without the help of our volunteers, especially from St. Christopher Parish. Thank you for your time and talent for a whole week of summer vacation!

Our VBS Mission this year was Sleep in Heavenly Peace, which is a national non-profit with a local chapter in North Olmsted. They build beds for any child in Cuyahoga County who are in need of a bed to sleep in. Each bed, with bedding, costs approximately \$250 and is delivered and built at the family's home. We raised \$6,100 during the week of Bible School for this worthy cause. That is enough to build 24 beds for children without them. We are so proud of the youngest members of our community for helping the least of our brothers and sisters. If you are interested in learning more about this organization or would like to make a donation, please visit the website: shpbeds.org. OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE THE BEST!



TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

It has been a very busy summer! I have been listening and asking questions and can offer you the following for an update on the St. Christopher Parish world of technology.

- Our server has reached the end of its useful life so we are currently migrating our information to a secure cloud location.
- This migration was the logical time to also evaluate our current database structure. The staff consulted on this matter in August. This could mean a return of a parish app with more features and operation integration. So watch for more news in the next few weeks.
- The wiring and hardware for extending our wi-fi signal is currently being installed. We will be installing screens for digital signage in the upper gathering area and outside of the school entry doors. Two other displays will be mobile so that we can use them in different areas around the campus.
- Once all the hardware and wiring are in place, we know that our groups will take advantage of these exciting new advertising opportunities. Groups will get more instructions from me in the

near future about the parameters of the displays. I have established a dedicated email tech@stchrisparish.com to handle requests and it was operational at the end of August.

- The school website is undergoing a facelift. Check it out!
- Work on the parish site is progressing a little more slowly. I will be contacting each of the groups to get updated information about their needs and will continue to make it more responsive.
- The tech@stchrisparish.com address will also be the place to send materials for posting on our website and Facebook pages. Again, operational at the end of August, you can submit information that is already in an uploadable format or raw data. I will format the material for you and let you know when the posts are scheduled.

I look forward to meeting more of you as these activities expand. If you have any questions, please contact me (440) 331-4255 x111 or email tpastura@stchrisparish.com.

God bless you all,

Terri Pastura

CENTENNIAL TIME CAPSULE

As part of the centennial celebration at St. Christopher, a time capsule committee was formed to memorialize our 100 years of service and commitment to the community. Traditionally, time capsules are buried in boxes in the ground or placed in the cornerstone of a building. They are often forgotten over the years and deteriorate. Nowadays, time capsules are more of a display, so people can see the items in the time capsule and look forward in anticipation to its future unsealing. Beginning in October 2022, the committee met monthly to determine what should be included in the time capsule.

We collected items, labeled them, and protected them for posterity. The perfect location for the time capsule was found in the Parish Center, a niche in the wall between the entrance doors and the cafeteria. Many of the items that can be seen are from our centennial celebration; the archival box contains papers and documents regarding our past. The next time that you are in the Parish Center, we hope that you stop by to peruse this historic cache of goods and information.

The time capsule committee members were:

- Kate Ptak: Chairperson, who kept us all focused and on track.
- Jenny Dieringer: President of the Cowan Pottery Associates and knowledgeable in early area history.
- Ginni Going: President of Rocky River Historical Society and knowledgeable in archival preservation.
- Dan Mazzola: Designer and builder of the actual time capsule cabinet.
- Rob Spademan: Creative director.
- Roberta Trutko: Assistant for organizing and collecting items, meeting notes, and photos.

Roberta Trutko



CHURCH CHATTER

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Remember to wish the following St. Christopher staff members a happy birthday: **Joe Williams** (Business Manager) on September 2, **Fr. Anthony Marshall** on November 27, and **Fr. Tim Daw** on December 2.

SUPER STUDENTS

Rocky River High School recently inducted students into the National Honor Society, including parishioners **Keira Arnold**, **Daniel Capka** (who also got a perfect ACT score), **Patrick Connelly**, **Reagan Connelly**, **Sienna DeMooy**, **Nick DiSalvo**, **Nick Hollabaugh**, **Chloe Holton**, **Ella Hopkins**, **Connor Kane**, **Caroline Kysela**, **Andrew Lang**, **Timothy Myers**, **Kathleen Nupp**, **Ava Patti**, **Julian Patti**, **John Perry**, **Margaret Pfahl**, **Grant Preto**, **Lilliana Roselli**, **Mary Sollars**, **Nicholas Tianello**, **Alexis Tisler**, **Sophia Vasiloff**, and **Lenore Wright**. **Connor Kane** was also inducted into the Spanish World Language Honors Society and plays on the football team. At St. Christopher, he is an altar server, Eucharistic minister, and is a member of J+Walkers. **Caroline Kysela** is an officer in the Drama Club, a member of the marching band Poms, and performs with the chorale and show choirs. At St. Christopher, she is an altar server, PSR volunteer, and is a member of J+Walkers. **Reagan Kane** received the Rocky River Middle School Principal's Award (all A's throughout middle school). Reagan is an altar server, lector, and a member of J+Walkers. Congratulations to all!

THANK YOU FOR BEING A FRIEND

We all know that Rocky River has an outstanding public library. Did you know that some of our parishioners are on the Board of the Friends of Rocky River Public Library? Recently voted in for the 2023-24 year are **Roberta Trutko**, Secretary; **Craig Rimlinger**, Treasurer; **Mary Horvath**, Membership Chairperson; **Jenny Dieringer**, Event Support; and **Noreen Vokic**, Member at Large. Keep up the good work!

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

One of St. Christopher's past parochial vicars, **Fr. Daniel F. Schlegel**, who is secretary and vicar for clergy and religious for the Diocese of Cleveland, was appointed administrator at Communion of Saints Parish in Cleveland Heights, in addition to his transitioning from his Vicar for Clergy and Religious duties.

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

SUMMER SOLSTICE TAI CHI

It was a beautiful evening and a wonderful setting in Centennial Park for our Summer Solstice in the Park Tai Chi hosted by the Ladies Guild and led by parishioner Mary Holtz. Georgene Cooper gave a warm welcome and informative update detailing the many events hosted by the Ladies Guild this year. Mary Holtz did a fabulous job incorporating mind, body and spirit within Tai Chi. Women lingered after Tai Chi and enjoyed refreshments and conversation.

Lori Alexander





**St. Christopher
Catholic Church**
20141 Detroit Road
Rocky River, Ohio 44116
440.331.4255

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www.stchrisparish.com

We welcome your ideas or comments.

E-mail: lmetro626@gmail.com Attn: Belltower

Newsletter Committee: Terry Martin (Chairman),
Lori Alexander (Editor and Producer), Amy Gressell (Publisher),
Carmen Everett DeHaan, Colleen McKenna, Roberta Trutko and
Beth Van Horn

Contributors: Fr. John Chlebo, Gayle Cilimburg,
Sharon Armstrong, Jane Berkeley, Allison Coale, Melissa DiFinì,
Logan Feldkamp, Mary Meler, Terri Pastura, Kevin Tennant and
Joe Williams

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 8, October 6 November 3, December 1	EUCCHARISTIC EXPOSITION	October 1	YOUTH MASS
September 10	CONFIRMATION CLASSES BEGIN	October 4	PET BLESSING
September 12, October 10, November 14	GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP	October 12	LADIES NIGHT OUT
September 17	J+WALKERS MASS	October 19	SCHOOL TRUNK OR TREAT
September 17	PSR BEGINS	October 26	PARISH TRUNK OR TREAT
September 17 or 19	JR. HIGH PSR PROGRAM (THE WAY) BEGINS	November 2	EVENING OF REMEMBRANCE
September 17	CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD BEGINS	November 5	PRE-BAPTISM CLASS
September 18	RCIA INFORMATION NIGHT	November 19	THANKSGIVING FOOD BOXES
September 25	RCIA BEGINS	December 2	ADVENT FAMILY NIGHT
September 30	POVERTY SIMULATION	December 2	SERVICE SATURDAY
		December 3	ADVENT BEGINS

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*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.*