



The Belltower Beacon

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

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CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME TO DEACON MICHAEL HAYES

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Congratulations to Deacon Michael Hayes on his May 4th ordination, his Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Christopher that evening, and his assignment to serve our parish community. He is an active member at St. Christopher, so we are grateful that

his assignment is here. While in the diaconate formation program, he served as the Director of Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Cleveland. His educational background and career path have prepared him to work closely with young Catholics, primarily in their 20s and 30s. From 2021 to May 2024, Deacon Mike assisted St. Christopher Parish as part of his formation. He was also assigned to St. Luke in Lakewood, St. Brendan in North Olmsted, and La Sagrada Familia Parish in Cleveland. With a moderate command of Spanish, he and the parishioners at La Sagrada Familia grew fond of each other. He hopes to continue visiting the friends he made there. Deacon Mike was born and raised in Yonkers (a suburb of NYC, just north of the Bronx), and most recently lived in Buffalo. His wife, Marion, was born in Brooklyn; the couple resided in Woodside, Queens, most of their married life. This year, they adopted their Russell-Terrier Poodle mix, Vito, who was born in Cleveland. Though a native New Yorker and NY Mets fan, Deacon Mike shares that he is "smart enough to root for Cleveland," adding "but every baseball fan can have a National League team, so I

can keep rooting for the Mets as well." The family is enjoying the many sites, parks and sporting events in the Cleveland area, most of them located a short and easy ride from their Lakewood condominium. Vito has enjoyed the frequent walks with Mike and Marion, especially exploring new paths, smells and local foliage. They had previously visited Cleveland in Mike's professional role, but now they are excited to call Cleveland home.

Mike has a passion for helping young Catholics grow their faith through individual spiritual direction, assisting in Christian Initiation for Adults, marriage preparation, working on radio programs, and sharing his many publications. He was the editor and co-ghost author of The World Youth Day Retreat Guide, which became the materials most utilized at The World Youth Days in Poland and Panama. He hopes and prays that his work with the Paulist priests has "changed the conversation of young adult ministry." He states that his favorite part is walking beside and guiding other Catholics. He agrees that the greatest need for young people today is to feel that they belong to a Church family that will accompany them on their journey and in their suffering. Deacon Mike and Marion both grew up in families of devout Catholics. Discerning the diaconate formation program was not difficult for them. In fact, Marion had an uncle, now deceased, who was a deacon. She understood the responsibilities of that calling and her unique role in this ministry as the wife of an ordained deacon. Marion pursued a career in education and is fluent in sign language. She taught both preschool children and deaf students.

continued ...



Deacon Mike has a long history of notable educational and professional achievements. He earned his bachelor of art's degree in English in 1992, followed by his master's degree in Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry in 2005, both at Fordham University, Bronx, NY. In 2013, he completed the course of study and certification to become a Licensed Spiritual Director through The Jesuit Collaborative. From 2016 to 2020, Mike studied at Christ the King Seminary in Aurora, NY. From 2021 to May of 2024, he prepared for the Diaconate at St. Mary Seminary and School of Theology in Wickliffe, Ohio. On Saturday, May 4, 2024, he was ordained by Bishop Edward Malesic at St. John the Evangelist Cathedral. His Mass of Thanksgiving took place at St. Christopher at 5 p.m. on the same day. In the presence of priests, deacons, lay ministers, pastoral staff, family, friends and parishioners, Deacon Mike celebrated his ordination and offered his first homily. With Fr. John presiding, a long line of priests and deacons, including his five classmates, joined the procession into the Church. Very appropriately, the entrance hymn was "Here I am, Lord," the perfect message for this occasion of Mike answering the call to serve as deacon. After proclaiming the Gospel of John wherein Jesus commands us to love one another as Christ loves us, Deacon Mike speaks with passion about living out this commandment everywhere we go and toward everyone we meet. Loving, listening and reaching out even when we are most worn out physically and emotionally, even when the person is our least favorite, is what Christ expects of us. If we love only those who love us and only when we feel up to it, we are not living out this commandment. We do not choose the time and place, Jesus does it for us. Deacon Mike reminded us that we answer the call to serve others and to lay down our lives for our friends (unlike the apostles who fell asleep when Jesus needed them most and even denied knowing Him). Drawing upon a popular Star Wars character, Deacon Mike explained that Yoda doesn't ask others to try but to do, "you either do or don't, there is no try." We are to apply the same principle in our lives of service to others. At the close of his homily, Deacon Mike sang a song about unconditional love. It was Frank Sinatra's "All the Way," with lyrics that included "when somebody loves you, it's no good unless he loves you all the way ..." and "So, if you let me love you, it's for sure I'm gonna love you all the way, all the way." Deacon Mike, your family, the community of St. Christopher, congratulates and welcomes you. May the force of the Holy Spirit be with you on this fourth and every day.

With a strong commitment to his calling, Deacon Mike believes that he serves his parishioners best by helping them to "know the way, show the way, and grow the way," and ultimately his goal is to "go away" because they can thrive on their own without his continued assistance. He operates under the strong conviction that "God is a God of surprises." He considers the appearance of Jesus on the road to Emmaus as one of his favorite Bible stories. This account of the Resurrection of Jesus describes the apostles' hearts as "burning" within them after hearing Jesus declare that He was indeed the Messiah. Deacon Mike continues in his role as Director of Young Adult Ministry and has been named the Bishop's Delegate for Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs. In the



new assignment, the Diocesan Delegate helps to educate the faithful in the ecumenical directives and theology of the Catholic Church, which include reaching out to other Christian

Churches and other religions. As the Director of Young Adult Ministry, Deacon Mike draws upon more than 25 years of work with young adults. He has contributed significantly to the development of guides, projects and programs that are consistent with his vision of promulgating "missionary discipleship for people in their 20s and 30s across the diocese." He oversees and supports the work of diocesan professionals who minister to the needs of our young adult faith community. According to Logan Feldkamp, our parish Pastoral Minister/Youth Minister, who shares Deacon Mike's commitment to young Catholics, "Mike has been a great addition to our St. Christopher parish community. He is a very down to earth guy, someone who will show you Christ working in the daily events of your life. Mike is also a well-rounded minister, capable of performing ministry in different roles and settings. He is someone who can be counted on to deliver effective, relatable ministry."



Deacon Mike began his career in broadcasting in the 1990s when he served as producer and reporter for radio stations in his native New York. Confessing to be an avid "foodie," some highlights of his early career include reporting on food and sporting events, including the 1996



World Series for National Public Radio (Yankees beat the Braves). As an expert and specialist in podcast and media platform development, he has made significant contributions to professional manuals, journal articles, blogs, books, newspapers, and online resources. He is one of the founders of the popular, award-winning BustedHalo.com, a Catholic web-media initiative. Busted Halo continues to have a web presence, but also conducts a Catholic radio program on Sirius XM channel 129 hosted by Paulist priest Fr. Dave Dwyer. You can find all aspects of Busted Halo media at BustedHalo.com, Sirius XM, and wherever you access your podcasts. Deacon Mike served as the associate director of the entire ministry for its first 10 years. Mike is happy to retain his “broadcasting chops” by hosting and producing a video series, “5 Questions with the Paulists.” Rooted in hopefulness, the Paulists have as their mission “to introduce the Good News of Jesus Christ to people beyond the Church walls, and to accompany Catholics

who feel apart from the Church ...” With Deacon Mike’s involvement, they also hope to welcome those who feel excluded; invite more women into leadership and ministry; and engage young adults in their 20s and 30s. Their goal is to provide a more meaningful experience of Catholicism that positively impacts people’s lives.

At the present time, Deacon Mike produces the podcast, Question of Faith, with Fr. Damian Ference, the Cleveland Diocese Vicar of Evangelization. Each week, Deacon Mike and Fr. Damian “tackle one question of faith from people throughout the Diocese of Cleveland.” He



has also served as a consultant for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the Vatican’s Dicastery for Communications. Deacon Mike’s accolades and awards are too numerous to mention in this space; however, they are available on Twitter, Instagram @Godgoogler, Facebook at mhayesjr, and Threads @godgoogler. As a published author, additional information is available on Amazon.com and at bustedhalo.com. He can be reached at mhayes@stchrisparish.com.

Carmen Everett DeHaan

SCS TEACHER MARY DECKELMAN RETIRES



“It’s been a great run and so much fun,” said Mary Deckelman when asked about retiring from her 20 years of teaching 4th grade at St. Christopher School.

When Mary was hired by former principal Sister Pat Twohig, CSJ in 2003, she felt honored to be working at one of the top schools in the area and

one to which three generations of her family had close ties.

Mary earned her undergraduate degree in Business from Cleveland State. When her two children, David and Brian, were young, she began night classes to earn her teaching certificate and started working as a long-term substitute. When a position opened at St. Christopher, it may have been fate. Mary attended St. Christopher when her family moved to Rocky River from Bay Village her 8th grade year, and her mother subsequently taught 3rd grade for SCS. Coincidentally, Mary’s current classroom is

the same classroom in which her mother taught. Her children attended St. Christopher as well.

Mary said that it is her colleagues, her students, and their families – the essence of the school – that she’ll miss most. With too many memories to count, some of her favorites include every first day of school, Classroom Dollars, the Living Rosary Prayer Service, Hale Farm and Village field trips, Marble Jar Parties, Pep Rallies, the “Awesome Person” board with the accompanying Christian music “Awesome Song,” the Math and Knitting Clubs she moderated, Dress Down Days, Catholic Schools Week Events, and of course, the end-of-the-year picnics.

While retirement may be bittersweet, Mary said, “It’s time.” She and her husband, who is retired, have plans to travel. And they are happily expecting their first grandchild in July. She plans to fill her free time with knitting and walking with the family’s springer spaniel, Belle.

When it’s all said and done, Mary hopes she instilled in her students a love of reading and a realization of the importance of math in our world.

Beth Van Horn

SERVICE IN SCHOOL – ALL IN JESUS' NAME

Throughout every school year, the children at St. Christopher School have a variety of opportunities to serve others. Each service opportunity is the action of helping others.

When Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter come each year, the students in grades K–5 make greeting cards for our parishioners who cannot attend Mass each week. The children take pride in making the cards and include in each greeting that the children are praying for those who will receive the cards. For the children, one of their favorite parts is when they receive a letter from the recipient of the greeting card.

In December, our school coordinates with Rocky River Assistance Program in making Blessing Bags for the residents who use this outreach program. Children in Preschool through 8th grade collect items such as small toys, socks, gloves, hats, coloring books, crayons, puzzle books, toiletries, and snacks for a week before Blessing Bag Assembly Day. On the day of the assembly, the Parish Center is filled with Christmas music and the children partner up with their Angels or 3rd–5th graders with a preschooler to decorate their bags, fill the bags, and make cards to go inside the bag. The blessing bags are delivered to Rocky River Assistance Program by some parents and their children. Assembly of the bags occurs on the monthly pantry opening date. The children love working with other students to do their best work for people less fortunate than themselves.

Also in December, the 2nd and 8th grade children made no-sew blankets for those in need. The students collected money to buy the fleece material, cut the fleece, and tied the fleece to create blankets. The blankets were donated to the Westside Catholic Center.

The kindergarten through 4th grade class retreats had one station called “Project with a Purpose.” The students learned about sharing our joy knowing God takes care of those who are living with homelessness. The students made grab ‘n go bags for St. Augustine Center. The bags contained a juice box, water bottle, fruit snacks, salty snack, granola bar, napkin and other treats. The bags were decorated by the students first, then filled, then a personalized card. The retreat team helped organize all the items and worked with the students to make this special treat.

For a wonderful way to welcome spring, the second-grade children painted flower pots and made flowers to create centerpieces to adorn the tables at The Normandy. The spring treat for our senior citizen friends is a beautiful way to share the joy of God with others.

Mary Meler



LIGHT WITHIN: LEARNING THE ICON



During Lent, Max Giorgi presented on iconography, titled “Light Within: Learning the Icon,” which was very thought-provoking. The evening began in a dimly lit room that was illuminated by candles. We watched the flickering light bounce off the displayed icons of Jesus and Mary. Max sang the verses from Holy Scripture 1 John: 1-5 and guided us to reflect deeply on the message of the verses.

The verses were the foundation of Max’s entire presentation, which opened a new door for those who attended.

Max explained that the icon is a theological image that conveys to us a truth about salvation and what lies beyond this world. Instead of seeking to please the sense of vision like most art, the icon purifies the sense of vision by reminding our senses that there is more to someone or something than meets the eye. Iconography is a strict theological tradition that uses paintbrushes and paint to create a liturgical image through which the faithful are transformed by God’s grace. He shared a quote from a theologian named David Fagerberg: “Liturgy...is how God sees us.”

Max explained that the goal of the Christian life is to move toward the perfection of how God sees us. Just as the liturgy orders creation through its praxis, so does the Icon. He also went on to explain the meaning and beauty of the icon and how to pray with it. Max said, “Iconography helps us quiet our senses and rearrange our aesthetic appetites so that we more readily focus on objective beauty, which God creates within to help us to quiet our senses.”



During the presentation, Max provided an opportunity for silent prayer. At the end of the presentation, three parishioners won mini icons of Jesus as door prizes. We are grateful to all those who attended and to Max for sharing his gifts and talents with our parish community. I want to close with a final quote that Max shared, “External beauty is perishable, while spiritual beauty is deep and imperishable” (Constantine Cavarnos, 19).

Melissa DiFini

J+WALKERS “SPRINGS” AHEAD WITH NEW ENDEAVORS!



The return of warm days in 2024 has brought with it exciting new growth for J+Walkers Youth Ministry! It started in April with the welcoming of a large 6th grade class. Over 20 6th grade students have attended multiple J+Walkers events and are excited to become fully-fledged members in the near future. This was followed by a “Parent’s Night Out” that brought together 25 parents to learn about the mission of the youth ministry program. These parents enjoyed the opportunity to gather, converse, and discuss how they can further their role as the primary educators of their children in faith.

As J+Walkers nears its second anniversary of formation, we are excited to announce two areas of expansion for our ministry taking place over the summer:

1. Establishing consistent “parent’s nights” for parents to gather and discuss topics related to the raising of Catholic children.
2. A consistent offering of high school-targeted activities with a refreshed identity.

As more and more students become frequent attendees of J+Walkers events, we are excited to welcome them into our community of faith and fun, journeying together in the mission of Christ!

Logan Feldkamp



Stations with the Music of Bach



Creation Stations



Living Stations of the Cross



Outdoor Stations of the Cross



BAKE SALE FOR WALKING WITH MOMS IN NEED MINISTRY



On Sunday, May 5, the Social Concerns Committee and Walking with Moms in Need held a successful bake sale and Equal Exchange Sale in the lower gathering area of our church. The sale was open to parishioners before and after all the liturgies. The Equal Exchange products sold at the sale are fair-traded

and sustainably produced, which means purchasing them helps farmers feed their families while caring for God's creation.

The funds raised at the sale will benefit moms and infants with emergency financial needs. The aim of WWMIN is to create a safety net for these moms and their children so that they do not fall back into homelessness. Affordable housing, including utilities and day care, especially in case their child is sick, are the significant barriers to sustainable self-sufficiency for moms who have been to shelters.

We raised an impressive amount of \$2,032. We would like to express our gratitude to the Social Concerns Committee and everyone who helped make the bake sale and Equal Exchange Sale a success. We appreciate the efforts of all those who baked, sold and donated cookies. Many helping hands were involved, and it wouldn't have been possible without your generosity. The Gospel of Life is at the heart of Jesus' saving message to the world. If you want to join the WWMIN ministry, please contact me at mdifini@stchrisparish.com. If you would like to donate, please visit our website at stchrisparish.com.

Peace and blessings, Melissa DiFini



LADIES GUILD UPDATE

The Ladies Guild gathered in the church in early Lent to pray *Mary's Way of the Cross* by Richard Furey. This moving interpretation of the stations of the cross through Mary's eyes has become a beloved Lenten tradition for the Guild. It is a way to enter more deeply into Jesus' passion. Afterward, the women shared light refreshments and fellowship in the Gathering Area.

On April 11, the Guild hosted an evening with parishioner and Guild member Judge Donna Congeni Fitzsimmons (retired). A full house listened intently as Judge Fitzsimmons regaled them with the history of the mob wars in Cleveland back when it was known as "Bomb City USA." Appointed as the U.S. Dept. of Justice Organized Crime Strike Force prosecutor in the 1983 trial, Fitzsimmons and a dedicated team of police detectives and FBI agents worked tirelessly to secure convictions of Cleveland Mob Boss Angelo Lonardo and his five subordinates to remove these dangerous men from the streets. At only 29-years old and as one of the few women prosecutors in the nation at that time, Fitzsimmons was undaunted by the disparaging label of "naïve

lawyerette" or even the death threats that were thrown her way during the long trial. Ultimately, because of these convictions, Angelo Lonardo turned state's witness and his testimony brought down the five Mafia families who controlled crime in New York City. Judge Fitzsimmons described the many twists and turns of the trial with humor and grace, keeping the audience spellbound. It was an entertaining evening and an inspiring example of how God works in history (herstory) when brave and talented people use their gifts in the service of community and the greater good. The daughter of a carpenter, Judge Fitzsimmons spent much of her teenage years watching trials at the Justice Center where her father worked. She knew at an early age that she wanted to work in the courtroom. We are thankful that she followed her calling and are grateful for her years of service, most of which were in the Rocky River court.

Come join the Ladies Guild on July 26 for its third annual Summer Solstice Tai Chi Social at 7 p.m. in Centennial Park!

Nancy Sullivan

History of the Cleveland Mob Wars



Mary's Way of the Cross



SOUP SUPPER

After a pandemic pause, the Lenten Soup Supper and basket raffle was held this year on March 12 with a new look. Chef Jeannette Epley prepared minestrone soup, and, with the help of Bob Gallagher, Ennis Court donated the chicken noodle soup for the 100+ people who attended the event, as well as for the 40 takeout soup orders. Confirmation and “the Way” students assisted the chefs, waited tables and participated in setup and clean up. The students and the Social Concerns Committee collaborated on preparing and selling tickets for the 10 gift baskets which were raffled at the Supper.

The speaker for this event was Erin Hathaway from Zelig’s Home, whose mission is to provide “a caring community that empowers pregnant and parenting women to take positive and effective action on behalf of themselves and their children by providing physical, emotional, spiritual, and professional support.”

Zelig’s Home’s two current locations in Garfield Heights and Lakewood evolved from the Zechariah House, which was established in 2009 in Parma, as part of the Maggie’s Place family based in Arizona. In 2020 the Zachariah House established Zelig’s Home, which embodies the spirit of Maggie’s Place, but better serves the needs of Cleveland area moms and babies.

Erin pointed out that the women served by Zelig’s Home often did not learn parenting skills from their family of origin. She outlined their programming, which provides for stepwise growth, and gave examples of success stories.

The combined Soup Supper and Basket Raffle raised over \$2,600 for Zelig’s Home. Additional donations may be made at zelieshome.org/donate.

Sharon Armstrong



"THE WAY"

Our brand-new junior high program, "the Way," has completed its inaugural year. The team and students have been inspirational in their effort and presence. Flexibility and student interests seem to have been the key elements of our success. It's been great to get to know the students one-on-one in the workshops and service opportunities in smaller groups. These are fantastic kids, willing to give of themselves – the future Church. We will be excited to see their growth next year. It was sad to see the 8th graders leave. While Confirmation was beautiful, we will miss them.

Our team of catechists was key to our success this year. We had seven seasoned educators who had excellent ideas that culminated in this positive, engaging program that has set these junior high students on fire for the Lord. We can hardly wait to start planning for next year. Join us in praying for our students to have a safe and happy summer. If you would like to join this inspirational team please call the Religious Education office for more information. If you have a specialty and would like to teach a one-hour workshop on a certain topic, please let me know. Thank you to our workshop presenters: Fr. Lito, Jeanette Nappier, Gwen Hullman, Mary Holtz, and Melissa DiFini's two parish presentations.

Thank you to this special team: Julie Patton, Johna Graziani, Eric Perusek, Pat Roberts, Mary Castro, Bob Tablack and Carmen Castro.

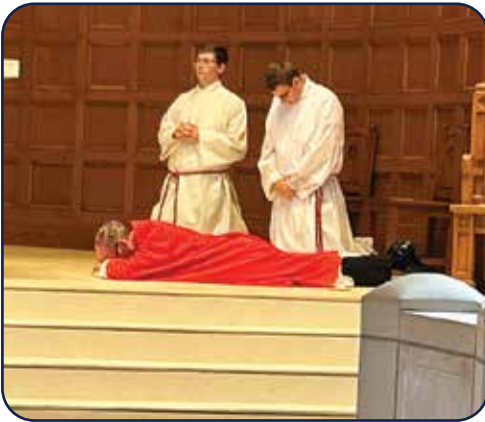
Sharon Armstrong



Holy Thursday



Good Friday



ENTERING INTO THE JOY OF EASTER 2024

In the vibrant parish life of our St. Christopher community, it appears that there is always a new initiative unfolding, a new family to introduce, new members to welcome, Sacraments to celebrate, and so much more. Over the years, St. Christopher has been blessed with a growing number of young families who create an environment that is thriving on spiritual, personal, and social levels. In addition, we are fortunate that every year a new group of catechumens and candidates decide to join the Church through the Christian Initiation for Adults, and sometimes Initiation for Children (who have not been brought up in the Church). This year there were 12 adults and two adolescents who celebrated the Sacraments during the Easter Vigil. Prior to Easter, the individuals were introduced and their steps toward full communion with the Church shared by way of our Sunday Bulletins. As a community of believers, we embraced them through prayers, greetings, letters of support, and our presence at Mass. When we welcome new Catholics into the Church at the Easter Vigil, there is nothing that compares to the holiness of this celebratory occasion. When the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation – take place in our presence, they draw us closer to one another. Each year on Holy Saturday, the Church is full of family, friends and parishioners who come to witness and to participate.

Beginning in the fall of the year, the adult catechumens and candidates meet to read Scripture, study the tenets of our faith, pray together, and grow together. The youth are catechized separately to ensure they understand the journey in a setting that is more comfortable for them. Several times during the year of preparation, all of them are introduced to the parish community so that prayers can be said on their behalf. On Holy Saturday evening, the catechumens are baptized, receive the Eucharist, and are confirmed. It is an atmosphere of solemnity, joy and holy anticipation. The Easter Vigil, though longer than a Sunday Mass, is extraordinary in the richness of the music, readings, chants, and ancient

traditions. Only the beaming faces of the Catechumens capture the full impact of these Catholic rites of initiation. Our Lenten and Easter seasons are enriched by the presence and participation of these soon-to-be Catholics.

The adults come to discern and ask questions for a variety of different reasons. They finished this part of the race and now can enjoy the fruits of the Holy Spirit every day. The two children, Bryce and Collette, were brought to weekly classes to learn, discern, and prepare for the Sacraments. They asked great questions and engaged wholeheartedly in the process. After they received the Holy Sacraments at the Easter Vigil, they were beaming with the joy and peace of being an integral part of the family of God. In sharing his experience later, Bryce stated that his favorite part was “being baptized in the font and coming out cleansed.” He feels that he “now belongs” to our Catholic family, and that pleases him. For his younger sister, Collette, “being around the altar and seeing the priest turn bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ” was her favorite part. They were also pleasantly surprised at the ceremonial parts of the Mass - processing in the dark with only a fire pit burning in the center aisle and sharing the light of Christ by lighting the congregation’s candles. Joined by seminarians and lay ministers, Fr. John, Fr. Tim and Fr. Lito concelebrated while lectors read multiple readings from the Old and New Testaments. Under the direction of Mayumi Naramura, our musicians, choir, and cantors retold our story through songs and chants. Fr. Tim delivered a Gospel reading and homily that were extraordinary and left a lasting impression. He mentioned Fr. Anthony’s determination to bring others into the Church by placing a large yard sign on the corner of Lakeview and Detroit. That effort did indeed bring calls of inquiry and then commitments to participate in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. Fr. Tim recalled that in November of last year, the candidates and catechumens participated in the tradition of pounding on the back doors of

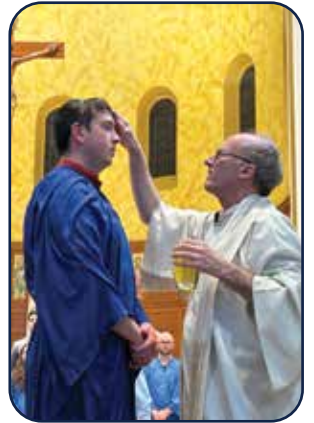
the Church while Mass was about to begin. When the doors were opened and they were asked what they wanted, the group responded loudly that they wanted to come in. Fr. Anthony, who was presiding, responded “The doors, let the doors be open, let all those who wish to enter life in the Catholic Church enter in ...”

At the Easter Vigil, the catechumens processed into Church wearing blue gowns that would be worn into the baptismal font. After being baptized, they changed into white gowns which symbolized Baptism washed away their sins. Fr. John did the honors of entering the baptismal font and immersed and anointed those to be baptized and confirmed. There were humorous moments as the taller individuals attempted to fit into the pool and others went a bit deeper than they had planned. Receiving the Eucharist also made a huge impact upon those doing so for the first time. They were confirmed by Fr. Lito (his first time in this role). The entirety of the Easter Vigil is available on the St. Christopher website and Facebook page. Whether you were in attendance or not, it is definitely worth viewing.

Over the months of preparation, especially during Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, the catechumens were kept busy. A journey which brought them through these holy liturgical seasons and our powerful Triduum services is only the start of an even more powerful future in the Church. Our hope and prayer is that they (and we) continue to keep the light of Christ burning brightly within us. May we share that light every day in every way with every person that crosses our path. We have been told and we believe that living a life centered on the love of Christ will undoubtedly yield the joy, love and peace of the Holy Spirit. As a family of Christ, let us seek out, congratulate, welcome and embrace our new Catholic family members.

Carmen Everett DeHaan

Easter Vigil



SCP Easter Egg Hunt



ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL CHRIST BEARER AWARDS

According to legend, St. 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 2023-2024 School Year:

Mary Meler

September 2023	November 2023	January 2024	March 2024
K – Seline Stiffler	K – Avery Werner	K – Nolan Strachan	K – Caleb Previts
1st – Emma Shvak	1st – Domenica Duniec	1st – Emma Lavin	1st – Anton Dolenc
2nd – Allison Lakarosky	2nd – Abigail Previts	2nd – Katherine Miketo	2nd – Alex Bertin
3rd – Brayden Hubka	3rd – George Szy	3rd – Landon Robison	3rd – Saddle Kratt
4th – Liam Bertke	4th – Felix Budiman	4th – George Lewis	4th – Leo Coale
5th – Noelle McGannon	5th – Ben Buddie	5th – Laura Pap	5th – Shelby Watson
6th – Lily Kowalski	6th – Nash Sorenson	6th – Sophia van der Oord	6th – Tristan Smith
7th – Aela Betters	7th – Brooke Wearsch	7th – Vivian Williams	7th – Molly Laudolff
8th – Evie Roth	8th – Maeve Lewis	8th – Macy Watson	8th – Savannah Paez

October 2023	December 2023	February 2024	April 2024
K – Charlie Gertz	K – Luke Bertin	K – Charlotte Tabar	K – Ryan Rodriguez
1st – Priscilla Pease	1st – Hazel Briscoe	1st – Conner Vandervort	1st – Antonio Cassidy
2nd – Heidi Robison	2nd – Lucy Dorenkott	2nd – Emmett Churavy	2nd – Cullen Conroy
3rd – Charley Pussel	3rd – Liliana Vasquez	3rd – Regina Arcos	3rd – Will Strachan
4th – Tess Burke	4th – Megan Pap	4th – Emily Byrne	4th – Oisin Smith
5th – George Rish	5th – Cora Al'len	5th – Mary Warren	5th – Maeve Burke
6th – Coleson Paez	6th – Olivia Szy	6th – Henry Norman	6th – Josie Rish
7th – Colin Warren	7th – Peter Lin	7th – Caroline Wise	7th – Carmella Delmonico
8th – Owen Klocker	8th – Carmen Castro	8th – Addy Haylor	8th – Keira Prevost



PLATINUM ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to long-time parishioners, **Marty and Jean Linn**, who celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary last year!



IN LOVING MEMORY

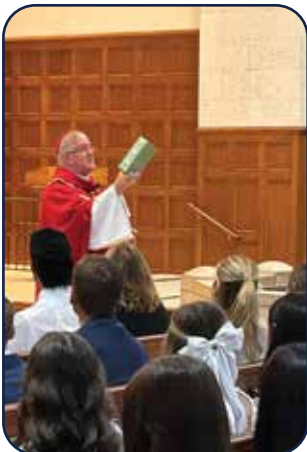
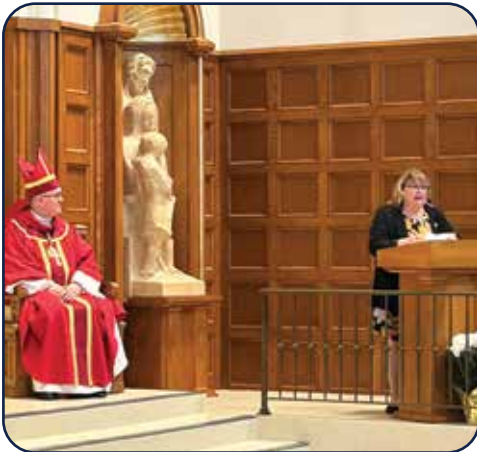
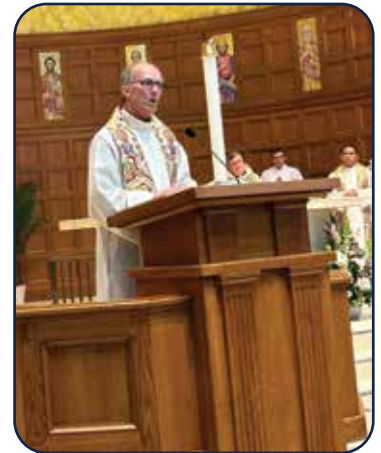
St. Christopher mourns the loss of **Terry Martin**, the chairman and founder of the Belltower Beacon, who passed away in April. We remember Terry as a kind, compassionate, and gentle soul. His presence touched all who were fortunate enough to be part of his life. Our prayers are with Terry's family.

Confirmation

St. Christopher Parish celebrated Confirmation on Monday, May 6 with Bishop Woost and 56 Confirmation candidates. The Confirmation team worked with 52 students with an additional four adults prepared by the staff. The students started their evening in the Parish Center before Mass to have a discussion with Bishop Woost for last minute instructions. Mayumi Naramura, 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 “young Church.” Thank you students, sponsors, parents, and our Confirmation team who made this day a great success. Congratulations!

Confirmation team: Sharon Armstrong, John Burke, Nector Castro, Ken Szabo, Marilu Norena, Eric Perusek and Kate Anderer-DiMichele

Sharon Armstrong





First Communion

We celebrated 74 First Communions during the second two weekends in May. There were anywhere from 3-16 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: Robin Seedhouse, Marilu Norena, Lindsay Barbicas, Brendan Barker, Bob Bove and Bob Gallagher.

Congratulations to all for a job well done!

Sharon Armstrong





TECH TALK WITH TERRI

Time flies! A year ago, the following points were on the horizon and now they truly have become a foundation for a growth plan for communications.

1. **Digital Signage** is putting a graphic edge on keeping the parish up to date on the activities of the parish. Our print presence isn't going away ... but this additional media supplements, reminds and highlights our news. If you haven't been through the upper and lower gathering spaces lately, check it out.

2. **Revitalization of the St. Christopher Media Presence:**

- Some layout changes to the website have been well received, but we are still working on improvements. Analytics have shown that the front page, Mass Schedule and items involving photos and registrations get the most traffic. Watch for more ease of use in the future.
- The activity of Facebook has increased substantially. Using this both as a tool for advertising and evangelization, the goal is to engage more people in the life of the parish. Put us on your list of things to check out on the web! facebook.com/StChrisParishRR/
- St. Christopher YouTube Channel is still primarily being used to facilitate our Mass livestreaming, but we have included other seasonal items on it as well. youtube.com/st.christopherparishrockyr1681

• Speaking of livestreaming, did you realize that, with the permission of families, we are broadcasting funerals? Our families and friends are often living in multiple areas of the country and the world. Sometimes, it is simply the weather or a mobility issue or a schedule conflict that prohibits our physical presence with mourners. But these broadcasts expand access to our prayer and community support during difficult times. We have reached mourners from Ireland to the Philippines! For those who may have attended the service but were so overcome with grief that they missed the consoling words of the homily, the opportunity to listen to the message again has brought comfort as well. stchrisparish.com/sacraments/funeral-videos/

3. **Integrating processes:** As we roll out the new Realm Connect app you will find that we can streamline registration process for events and religious education. Our parish groups will be able to stay in touch with members without getting their messages lost in the sea of daily marketing messages so many face. You can find more information at stchrisparish.com/parish/realmconnect/. Be sure to go to your app store and download the Realm Connect app appropriate for your device(s). You can use it to manage data now and activity and communication as we grow.

Terri Pastura



ST. CHRISTOPHER PARISH WEEKEND

The community gathers to CELEBRATE OUR PARISH!!

The Weekend will consist of FUN for ALL ages; highlights include:

Live Music • Raffles • Carnival Games • Food • Outdoor Masses
Beer Garden • Inflatables • Fun Run • Magic Show

Visit scpweekend.com or scan the QR code to learn about the event, RSVP, register to VOLUNTEER, become a SPONSOR and more!



CHURCH CHATTER

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Birthday wishes go out to Pastoral Minister, **Logan Feldkamp** (June 6), School Principal, **Mary Meler** (June 12), Director of Religious Education, **Sharon Armstrong** (August 3), and Business Manager, **Joe Williams** (September 2). Happy Birthday to all!

ST. BALDRICK

For 19 years, **Joe Kovach** has annually shaved his head for charity. As "Crusader for the Cure," he raised \$2,398 this year for University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital. Way to go, Joe!

SENIOR SERVERS

Thank you to all our young parishioners who have served during Mass. We especially acknowledge our four graduating high school seniors. At Rocky River High School, **Caroline Kysela**, is in the River's Edge Show Choir and Chromatix A Capella group, and is a National Honor Society member. She is also active in J+Walkers. She will major in music theater in college. **Connor Kane** is also a J+Walker. At RRHS, he played football and was on the track and field team, specializing in shot put and discus. At Ohio State University, he will be in the honors engineering program. **Nick Hollabaugh** has been an altar server since 5th grade. At RRHS, Nick was in Model UN and played baseball. He also works at Mitchell's Ice Cream. He will attend the Ohio State University. **Ian Roth** has been an altar server since 5th grade at St. Christopher School. While there, he joined Boy Scout Pack 390 and continued on to earn the rank of Eagle Scout as a member of BSA Troop 421. While at St. Ignatius High School, Ian was a member in the marching band, symphonic band, pep band, jazz ensemble, and was in the pit orchestra for this year's spring musical. He looks forward to continue playing the trombone while pursuing his electrical engineering degree this fall. Best wishes to our senior servers!

WELCOME CIRCLE

Did you see the March/April 2024 issue of Northeast Ohio Catholic? The cover story featured our own Fr. Tim and our Welcome Circle, who were instrumental in bringing the **Kushnyr family** to our area. This riveting account of their journey from their Ukrainian homeland to northeast Ohio is truly a tale of courage and faith. Once again, we welcome this family to our community.

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Parishioner, **Steve Suran**, was recently named Volunteer of the Month at the Rocky River Senior Center. Helping in the Silver Linings Café, he graciously greets all visitors with his warm smile and brews fresh coffee. Last year, Steve volunteered at the St. Christopher Parish Weekend celebration and is planning to do so again this year. He also participates in Coffee and The Word, led by Pastoral Minister Melissa DiFini. Congratulations, Steve!

MASTER'S DEGREE

A special congratulations is extended to our Pastoral Minister, **Logan Feldkamp**, as he graduated in May from Ursuline College with a Master's Degree in Theological and Pastoral Studies. The degree builds on his previous undergraduate education and has included coursework at the seminary.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Fr. Joshua Trefney was recently appointed chaplain to Lake Catholic High School in Mentor; he continues as the parochial vicar at St. Gabriel Parish in Concord Township. **Fr. Anthony Marshall**, administrator at Communion of Saints Parish in Cleveland Heights, was recently incardinated into the Diocese of Cleveland. He also received his Doctor of Ministry degree from St. Mary's Seminary in May.

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



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UPCOMING EVENTS

June 4	KINDERGARTEN PROMOTION
June 5	LAST DAY OF SCHOOL
June 6, 13,	WEEKLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP
June 7, July 5, August 2	EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION
June 10-14	VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
June 16	FATHER'S DAY
June 18, 25, July 2, 9, 16	THE CREED STUDY GROUP
June 22	OUTDOOR MASS AT 5 P.M.
June 26	LADIES GUILD TAI CHI EVENT
June 26, July 10, August 7, 28	COFFEE AND THE WORD
June 27	ALZHEIMER'S PRESENTATION
July 6 & 7, July 13 & 14	CHRISTMAS IN JULY COLLECTION
July 9, August 13	MONTHLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP
July 25	ST. CHRISTOPHER FEAST DAY
July 27	OUTDOOR MASS AT 5 P.M.
August 15	FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY
August 18	PRE-BAPTISM CLASS
August 20	FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
August 23-25	SCP COMMUNITY WEEKEND

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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.*

Save the Date



ST. CHRISTOPHER PARISH

Visit scpweekend.com or
scan the QR Code to
access event hub!

RSVP, REGISTER to volunteer,
BECOME a sponsor & more!

