



The Belltower Beacon

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

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SCP WEEKEND 2024

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effort that everyone puts into this event to plan and coordinate is likely beyond anyone's comprehension, but if you take a minute and think about what transpired over the weekend, you will come to realize that the amount of work it takes is enormous.

This year Alex and I wanted to have a fresh feel to the event and really reconceptualize the plan from the previous years. I think there was an even balance as we brought the community together in a casual environment to gather and commune with each other. Hopefully the success of this event will entice parishioners to come back next year and encourage them to get involved. I honestly feel we met our goals in one way or another and could not be happier for the turnout and overall outcome of the event. We are also incredibly thankful for the weather that we were blessed with.

The third year of SCP Weekend will be one to remember! As I think back to the weekend and the many months of planning, so many thoughts come to mind. Blessed ... Thankful ... Community ... Camaraderie ... Bless this Wonderful Parish Community!

This year's schedule consisted of a Friday night and all-day Saturday festival, concluding with Sunday Mass and a community pancake breakfast. A really cool, hopefully new tradition that happened this year was an all-school Mass on Friday afternoon under the large tent to get the energy flowing for the weekend. This was a great idea from Fr. John and something that has never been done before. It was a huge hit and several families, parents and parishioners attended.

Alex DiMichele, my co-chair, and I started planning this year's SCP Weekend back in October. There is no shortage of work that goes into planning this event, but we do it because we love getting this community out to celebrate in hopes that it will spark a light deep in people to stay active and vibrant throughout the year. We truly have a passion for this annual celebration and want it to be the best that it can be and continue happening, hopefully, at a greater level each year.

We had a packed schedule of activities, ensuring there was something fun and engaging for everyone, regardless of age. A water balloon toss, multiple bingo sessions, the return of the Kid's Fun Run, a basketball tournament, corn hole tournament, cake walk, hula hoop contest, limbo contest, and a very educational trivia session are just some of the offerings. But we weren't done there! Balloon creations by request, airbrush tattoos, three different inflatables,

We were very blessed to have an AMAZING planning committee, some new and some returning. Either way the team was ready for the task at hand, and I think everyone did a fantastic job. The amount of time and



continued ...

video games, putt-putt, pop-a-shot, giant Connect Four; the list goes on. We also had several carnival games with winners awarded fabulous prizes.

The big feature of the weekend was the BBQ pulled pork, which our committee smoked in batches for four days. Also available during the weekend were “world renowned” burgers, hotdogs and pizza. Fr. John even claimed it was the best burger he ever had! Our mixology team was back with non-alcoholic drinks named after some of the parish staff, plus the Octoberfest-themed and beautifully decorated beer garden offered a variety of beverages. To wrap up the weekend, we provided a complimentary Pancake Breakfast Sunday after the 11:30 Mass.

The entertainment this year really kept the stage moving and grooving. Acts that took the stage, in no particular order were the Amazing Jeffrey Magic Show, Nora the Explorer’s Animal Show, Rick Smith Jr. Magic, Riley and Flanagan Band, Burke School of Irish Dance, the Follow the Sun Band, Erny Nunez Jazz, and last but not least, our own Michelle Romary Band. We also have to thank our fantastic emcee for the weekend, Deacon Mike!

I would like to thank our sponsors, donors, parish staff, school staff and PSR staff, the very dedicated planning committee and each and every volunteer that offered their time and talents to

SCP Weekend. I mean it when I say, without the people this event does not happen, and the people are the most important part of this event’s success.

If you wish to relive the weekend and see photos from the various elements of our celebration, you can always visit scpweekend.com. There you can also contact our committee if you want to consider getting involved for next year.

Thanks to everyone who attended this year! We hope you had a wonderful time and we look forward to seeing you all again at the next SCP Weekend.

Kevin Tennant

Thank You OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

Presenting: Joyce Buick GMC

Blue: The Sullivan Family
St. Christopher Athletic Association

Orange: AJ Bertke
Corrigan Krause
The Caserio Family
Timothy & Catherine Hyland
PATHS

White: Fr. John Chlebo
Gayle Cilimborg

Bronze:
Busch Funeral Homes
The DeHaan Family
Howard Hanna–Aileen FitzGerald Team
Magnificat
McGorray-Hanna Funeral Homes
Neighborhood Drummer
Patton Painting
Rocky River Brewing Company
The Tennant Family

Thank You PARISHIONER PATRONS

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Suzanne Malak
The McGannon Family
The Mulya Family
The Norena Family
The Novak Family
Old Carolina Barbecue Company
The Pichotta Family
The Sorensen Family
The Tabar Family
The Van der Oord Family
The Vecchione Family
The Wearsch Family

Thank You SCP WEEKEND COMMITTEE

- Kevin Tennant, *Event Chair*
- Alex DiMichele, *Co-Chair*
- Sharon Armstrong
- Brendan Barker
- Kristy Bertke
- Mary Castro
- Robert Crook
- Mary Kay Curtis
- Logan Feldkamp
- Betsy Fritz
- Annette Kleman
- Emma Krejci
- Dan Rooney



Congrats! RAFFLE WINNERS

- \$1,000 WINNERS**
Dan Gaertner, Noreen Vokic, Athena Scrofano, Sean Joyce and William Rieke
- \$2,000 WINNER**
Geraldyn Tomsik
- \$3,000 WINNER**
Kate Dempsey



Friday Fun & Games



Michelle Romary Band



Kids Fun Run



Saturday Fun & Games



Saturday Fun & Games



Cake Walk



Irish Dance



Magician & Nora the Explorer



Follow the Sun Band



Trivia & Bingo



Raffle Drawing



5 o'clock Mass



Family & Friends



Sunday: Mass & Pancakes



DIOCESE SENDS 250 DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS, INCLUDING FOUR PARISHIONERS



From July 17-21, the Diocese of Cleveland sent 250 delegates along with our two Bishops, to the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, IN. This marks a high point in the Eucharistic Revival that has been taking place in the United States over the past few years to encourage devotion to the Eucharist and promote catechetical teaching on the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Among the diocesan delegates were three of our St. Christopher Parishioners, Tim Caulfield, who just joined the parish a few months ago, our Seminarian Thomas Byrne and myself, your erstwhile Deacon. Also attending was Emily Ahlin, the Diocesan Archivist and a member of our parish's young adult softball team.

We travelled by bus getting to Indianapolis in time for the opening procession, where icons of various Saints were placed in Lucas Oil Stadium were processed in by the "perpetual pilgrims" – young people who walked around 1,000 miles from the four corners of the country to arrive at the Congress.

Our days were long, starting with getting a bus from our hotel about a half hour away from the stadium. Starting with the Rosary around America in the Morning that led into

the Morning Mass, we sat among the 50,000 delegates from around the United States.

Each of us participated in an "Empower" session in the late morning each day; the sessions were designed to prepare us to be Eucharistic Missionaries after our return home. Bishop Joe Espilliat, an enthusiastic Auxiliary Bishop from New York, who speaks three languages: English, Spanish and "Street," led one of our sessions and reminded us of the enthusiasm we have to have to bring Christ to others. "Too often, we have long faces," he said, paraphrasing Pope Francis, "We need enthusiasm."

That enthusiasm was found by our delegation each day by the joy among us as we encountered Jesus in the Eucharist.

"I think the only way I can describe the Congress as a whole is through the lens of the disciples on the road to Emmaus – Luke 24:32, "Were not our hearts burning within us?" By the final night, I could only describe my desire to watch Jesus enter Lucas Oil Stadium as a burning hunger. My friends suggested sitting in the comfy lounge chairs in the stadium and watching the Congress on the TVs in said lounge and when I arrived there with them, I was like "you guys I can't stay here. I want to be in the bowl – I want to see Him." Even now, days later, I still feel this burning ache – Jesus was there. I saw the risen Lord in the Eucharist. I can't even describe a particular moment – it just happened."

The Deacons were seated in the upper decks of the stadium for morning Mass because we were assigned to be Eucharistic Ministers throughout the stadium. The Seminarians had an up front seat. That up close view gave Thomas Byrne an opportunity for reflection.

"My key takeaway about the Eucharist from the Congress was rekindling Eucharistic amazement," he said. "The Eucharist, being the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus, is a gift of infinite value. Our God loves us so deeply that

we can participate in the paschal mystery daily through the Eucharist. I hope to be constantly amazed at the Eucharistic celebration, even as it becomes 'ordinary' in my daily life."

We were asked to attend the Empower sessions during the late mornings which were marked by high energy praise and worship along with three speakers detailing personal reflection, catechesis and evangelization opportunities around the Eucharist. I'd add that these sessions drew participants into closer quarters where they had more opportunities to meet new people and to rekindle old friendships. Emily found an old friend: "I had a chance to reconnect with, in particular my friend Monica Skrzypczak, an incredibly talented and mostly self-taught sacred artist who had a booth in the exhibit hall at the Congress where she was selling her drawings and paintings and handmade rosaries. We went on a 'nun run' together with a few others when we were in college. She studied scene design and technical theater at Carnegie Mellon University, which was just up the street from where I went to school at Pitt. Her art is so high quality and well done and her love for the Lord inspires me – be sure to check out her store, Outpouring of Trust!"

Emily also played a valuable role in the conference as the Diocesan Archivist. In 1935, Cleveland held a Eucharistic revival and Emily gathered a lot of archival material that the Congress used throughout the week in video presentations. Asked about what she learned about the 1935 conference, she remarked, "Ever since I learned more about the 1935 Eucharistic Congress and worked with our collections that document that event, I couldn't enter a stadium with a large crowd (sporting event, Taylor Swift concert, etc.) and not think about what it would be like to be in a crowd that big for Jesus – and this experience blew me out of the water. There are no words to describe the sheer beauty of 50,000 people falling to their knees as

Jesus emerged from the Indianapolis Colts locker room to be with us. Based on my knowledge of the 1935 event from our collections, and my first hand knowledge of this event, there weren't very many differences. Each day there were sessions for different groups of people to connect, just like there were in 1935, there was lots of time for prayer and Mass for a variety of groups, Eastern Rites were included, there was a procession – the timing on many things might have been different, but at the core these were essentially the same event.”

Two of the bigger highlights that we all noted were the large Eucharistic Procession through the streets of Indianapolis to the Indiana War Memorial and Museum and each evening we heard more of the “Catholic Famous” speakers followed by adoration. Ahlin noted, “In all honesty, I could've gone to Mass in the morning, done whatever the rest of the day, and just gone to the evening revival sessions. Each of those speakers was on fire and it was amazing – in particular, I really enjoyed Fr. Mike Schmitz, Sr. Josephine Garrett, Gloria Purvis, and Bishop Barron. Cardinal Tagle had an awesome homily on the last day and was just so full of joy. If I had to pick one, though, I think I enjoyed Sr. Josephine Garrett's Friday night revival session the most, because she reminded us all that the prosperity Gospel is false. We are going to be hungry in this valley of tears. The Eucharist is our foretaste of Heaven – we don't get to experience the fullness of joy right now, and I really needed that reminder. I also appreciated her exhortations at the end, and how she didn't forget about us single Catholics as the Church often seems to do. I was inspired to keep showing up even when it was hard and I didn't feel like I had a place to belong.”

I particularly enjoyed Gloria Purvis' talk myself. A podcaster from America Media, Purvis emphasized unity, which was also noted by Cardinal Christophe Pierre at the start of the Congress. Purvis noted that there are signs of disunity among some when they begin to distance themselves from Pope Francis: “We talk about the



pope being a visible sign of our oneness. It is disunity when we reject the pope. We step outside of the church. We step outside of how God ordered our church. We are here. We love the Eucharist. We are happy to have Mass and adoration. All of that happens under the authority and permission of the Holy Father. Let us remember that. I had the blessing of being able to meet the Holy Father in Rome. I was part of a delegation from America Media that had a two-hour sit-down interview with the pope. And I must tell you, I just don't think we know who he is. I don't think we understand how much he longs for our bishops and priests to just have the heart of a shepherd, to go to the sheep, to tell them they are loved by the Lord and to accompany them in their walk, in their struggle.”

Thomas also was inspired by the evening sessions. “My favorite speaker was Fr. Mike Schmitz. I've watched his videos since high school theology classes and was excited to see him in person. His message focused on the idea that ‘you can never have a revival without repentance.’ Fr. Schmitz encouraged the stadium to return to the love we had at first for Jesus and his Church. He called us to repent for any way we have acted without being rooted in love of God.”

I would add that I had a particular moment during adoration on the final night where I realized that my parents, now of happy memory with God, gave this faith to me and that each time I receive the Eucharist, I am united to them again by Christ. It gave me a great desire to seek unity with others because of this great gift that Christ gives us of Himself. Our divisions can be

healed if we remind ourselves that Jesus can heal our brokenness.

The procession through the streets of Indianapolis was incredible. I processed with the other Cleveland Deacons and it was moving to hear people shout their appreciation for our vocations to us from the sidewalks. As we approached the War Memorial, we could see an imposing sea of people awaiting Christ in the Eucharist and it was hard to not be inspired by that. I've been to a few ticker tape parades in my life, but this was so prayerful and energetic and I'm sure I won't forget it anytime soon.



Thomas Byrne, added his experience of the procession, “Thousands of first communicants, sisters, seminarians, deacons, priests, and bishops led the way for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament for a

mile-long journey. Tens of thousands more lined the streets of the route. I remember the crowds having a spontaneous mix of cheering, laughing, and singing. This moment was a reminder that the Church is joyful and already victorious, filled with hope as our Lord is truly present in the Eucharist. I believe the procession was a taste of Jesus' triumphal entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.”

Of course, now the real work begins. This was not just a nice time away. We have been called to give of ourselves now as Christ gave Himself to us. As the new Diocesan Eucharistic Missionaries, we need to bring this experience into our parish community. Thomas Byrne, had these thoughts: “My biggest hope regarding the follow up to this conference is that true devotion to the Eucharist is spread to every parish. From this devotion, I hope that each parish becomes full of parishioners who are hungry for holiness. I believe

continued...

NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS, CONT'D



that more Christians responding to the call to holiness with their lives will lead to churches that are full and vibrant, so

each Mass may be as awe inspiring as a full stadium.”

Ahlin concurred, “I think my biggest hope post-Congress is that everyone who went and experienced the power of the real Presence is able to find community to help continue to fan the flame of love for the Eucharist. I would love for people, one hundred years from now, to look back and point to the 10th National Eucharistic Congress as one of the real moments of renewal for the Church, and for it to be the catalyst for parishes across the country to be set on fire and for the conversion of this country. But none of that can happen if we forget to spend time with each other and live in community and invite others to join

our community, so community must come first. We must not forget the people that went on this journey with us and continue to meet and encourage each other forward in the life of discipleship.”

I, too, hope that we can now become the Christ for others that we experienced in the breaking of the bread each day where we were inspired by those around us to experience and more importantly to seek the experience of Christ present in the Eucharist, the source and summit of our faith. Stay tuned for more this coming year as the Missionaries hit the road to bring Christ to the lives of those most in need of Jesus’ presence.

Deacon Mike Hayes

ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL WELCOMES NEW 4TH GRADE TEACHER



Taylor Plagens has joined the staff of St. Christopher School as the 4th grade homeroom teacher. Taylor will teach 4th grade reading, English, religion as well as 4th and 5th grade math. For the past seven years, she taught the same subjects to 4th graders at St. Barnabas School in Northfield.

Taylor shared that when she was in 4th grade her “all about me” project proclaimed that she would be a teacher someday, and she has never wavered from that goal. “The teachers I’ve had made a huge impact in my life. I’ve always wanted to impact others in a positive way, and teaching is a great way to do that. I love to build relationships and motivate kids to be individuals and life-long learners,” said Taylor.

Her family moved from California to Copley, Ohio when she was just five years old, and she’s now a full-fledged Buckeye. Taylor is a 2017 graduate of The Ohio State University and holds a degree in early childhood education as well as a 4/5 general endorsement (expanded credentials specific to teaching grades 4-5). After Ohio

State, she met her husband, Johnny. Taylor and Johnny are avid Cleveland sports fans, so you may see them at a game rooting for the Guardians, Cavs or Browns. They were married at St. Christopher Church last New Year’s Eve and currently reside in Bay Village with their yellow labrador, Addy. Her husband coincidentally attended St. Christopher School, and his family members have been lifelong parishioners of St. Christopher.

Taylor shared that her move to St. Christopher School “Seems like the perfect fit and timing and that God was leading me on this path.” The closer commute from Bay Village is also a welcome bonus!

Taylor said that she is looking forward to joining the St. Christopher community. “I like to be present, and part of the fabric of the community,” said Taylor. “For example, I’d like to attend student sporting events or participate in Parish activities outside of school. I hope to be a part of the St. Christopher community for a very long time.”



Beth Van Horn

CHURCH-IN-THE-CITY PROGRAM



I recently discovered that one of the objectives outlined in our Parish Pastoral Plan for 2021 was to “Enhance the visibility and level of engagement in our Church in the City partnership with St. Colman.” On Thursday, July 11, I visited St. Colman to tour the church and parish office. I had the pleasure of meeting their friendly office manager, Elena Latorre, the sole full-time employee who performs many roles. She kindly allowed me to take photos of the empty pantry. The pantry is urgently in need of cereal, jelly, tuna, hearty soups, canned vegetables, fruit, rice, macaroni and cheese, juices, bottled water, granola bars, raisins, cookies, breakfast bars,

pop tarts, fruit roll-ups, fruit snacks, peanut butter, and cheese crackers. Please make sure the items you donate aren’t expired. Unfortunately, Elena often has to turn away individuals seeking packed lunches. She mentioned a need for reusable grocery bags to pack their lunches. There is an important need for bus tickets as well. Additionally, the outreach ministry requires laundry soap, dish soap, cleaning detergents, toothpaste, toothbrushes, bar soap, razors, shampoo, and deodorant for their outreach program. These items are not covered under food stamps.

On July 31, I had a meeting with the Social Outreach Team from St. Angela Merici to understand how they run the St. Colman Neighborhood Meal. We are currently planning the 2025 calendar to determine the Saturdays when we can provide meals. We typically serve between 80 and 100 guests, and the meals are served in a restaurant-style manner at the tables. Please keep an eye on the bulletin for any upcoming updates. They are excited about the opportunity to work together with us as we have in the past.

As I was reflecting on this, my mind immediately went to the scripture verse Matthew 25: 35-36, “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.” It’s time to act and help those in need in our backyard. Jesus goes on to tell us in verse 40, “Amen I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” What are you willing to do for Jesus? Pope Francis asks us, “Where does Jesus send us? There are no borders, no limits: he sends us to everyone. The Gospel is for everyone, not just for some. Do not be afraid to go and to bring Christ into every area of life, to fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent. The Lord seeks all, he wants everyone to feel the warmth of his mercy and his love.”

Here are some ways you can help:

- If you are a leader in a ministry in our parish, you can volunteer your group to plan, organize, and serve a meal.
- Drop off the pantry items listed above in the bin in our church’s Upper Gathering Area.
- Deliver the items to St. Colman when the bin is full.
- Volunteer to lead a team to serve a meal.
- Volunteer to cook and serve a meal with your family.
- You can make a monetary donation by writing a check to St. Christopher Parish, writing St. Colman on the memo, and placing it in the collection basket.

If you have ideas or questions, don’t hesitate to get in touch with me at the parish office at (440) 331.4255 x105 or by email at mdifini@stchrisparish.com.

Melissa DiFini

CHRISTMAS IN JULY PROVIDED MANY GIFTS FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

This year’s Christmas in July was a HUGE success. The Social Concerns Committee worked with the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH) to provide new and gently used items for those men and women struggling with homelessness. The list of needed items was given to the committee from NEOCH, posted in our bulletins, and fulfilled by many generous parishioners. Five car loads of donations were collected over a two-week period and delivered by committee volunteers to NEOCH’s office on Perkins Avenue in Cleveland.

NEOCH is a non-profit coalition with a mission to “eliminate the root causes of homelessness while loving our diverse community through organizing, advocacy, education and street outreach.” On delivery day, the volunteers had the opportunity to meet four members of the NEOCH team including the executive director, Chris Knestrick. They were very grateful to our parish for such a large donation.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this project.

Mary Ann Jurak



ADOPT-A-PLOT



Our St. Christopher landscape beds need your help! We are hoping our fellow parishioners will aid in rescuing the neglected garden beds. They need to be cleaned-out and maintained throughout the growing season. With your help, we can keep the grounds of our Church beautiful.

These areas will be posted on the community TV board in the Gathering Area. Sign-up sheets will be available after all Masses on September 8.



Although the growing season is passing quickly, we can clean out and prep for next year's planting. For more information feel free to call me at (330) 730-9815.

Carol Yellig

EDUCATIONAL EVENING

On Thursday, June 27, our Office Manager, Dawn Bloom, and our Pastoral Minister, Melissa DiFini, hosted an educational evening about Alzheimer's and Dementia facilitated by Bob Gallagher, a Parishioner and Community Educator with the Cleveland Area Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. The topic was The Ten Warning Signs of Alzheimer's. We learned how the disease causes memory, thinking, and behavior problems that interfere with daily living. In addition, we learned how to recognize common signs of the disease, how to approach someone about memory concerns, the importance of early detection and benefits of diagnosis, possible tests and assessments for the diagnostic process, and free Alzheimer's Association resources. A second evening was held on Thursday, August 15, at 6:30 p.m. in Mary's Room. The topic was Understanding and Responding to Dementia-Related Behavior. Both evenings were well-attended.

Melissa DiFini



NEW PARISHIONER MEET AND GREET

**Thursday, October 17 at 6:30 p.m.
in the Parish Center**

New parishioners, we are delighted that you have joined St. Christopher Parish. We appreciate you taking the time to visit our church community, and we hope you felt welcomed and at home with us. We are a Eucharistic community of faith dedicated to welcoming, celebrating, caring, and growing in the image and likeness of Jesus.

We would love the opportunity to welcome and celebrate you, get to know you better, and learn more about your spiritual journey. In September, you will receive an invitation to a Wine and Cheese Meet and Greet to welcome you to our family officially and allow you to meet the parish staff and members of various groups. All parishioners are invited to attend as well, but please RSVP. You can stay updated with what's happening at our church by following us on Facebook or visiting our website at stchrisparish.com. We look forward to seeing you!



Melissa DiFini

ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL ACHIEVES FULL STATE ACCREDITATION

St. Christopher School is chartered by the State of Ohio and meets or exceeds all minimum standards prescribed by the State Department of Education and the Office of Catholic Education.

The entire professional staff at St. Christopher School is licensed by the state of Ohio. Teachers participate in in-service training programs offered throughout the school year in both religious and secular education courses.

During the 2022–2023 school year, the St. Christopher School Community participated in a self-study phase under the direction of the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association (OCSAA). During 2023–2024, a new school improvement plan was written and approval from OCSAA granted in May of 2024. The staff will begin the four-year implementation of the plans beginning with the 2024–2025 school year.

Our accreditation status runs from May 2024–2030. The following are the Catholic Identity and Academic Performance Goals the school is implementing during the current accreditation cycle.

1. Catholic Identity – Students will apply the teachings of Laudato Si by engaging in service-learning opportunities.
2. Academic Performance – Students will become self-directed learners by analyzing achievement data to set academic goals.

For the Catholic Identity Plan, the faculty and students will be using a program called, Little Earthies. Little Earthies provides both teacher professional development and student seven-week course work on Laudato Si each year. The program will be implemented over the next three school years and culminate in the fourth year with a schoolwide program based on the teachings of Laudato Si. Little Earthies will give students and faculty an opportunity to engage and reflect on key messages of Laudato Si and their personal call to care for our common home.

For the Academic Performance students and faculty will take a deeper dive into our NWEA MAP Testing. Students and faculty will better understand the vocabulary and sub-tests of the standardized tests taken three times throughout the school year. The analysis of the student performance will help guide the students in developing their personal goals based on their strengths, weaknesses, and personal interests.

As a school community we look forward to the direction of our school programs. We continue to be grateful for the overwhelming support of the St. Christopher Parish Community in supporting Catholic Education.

Mary Meler



WESTSIDE WHITECAPS 2024 SEASON RECAP

Our young adult softball team, the Westside Whitecaps, wrapped up their 2024 season a few weeks ago, finishing with a league-best regular season record of 6-1. The team is coached by Pastoral Associate Logan Feldkamp and is comprised of parishioners from St. Christopher and other area parishes. The team competes in the Diocese of Cleveland Young Adult Softball League, which is comprised of 10 teams and over 180 players from around the Diocese. Whitecap Emily Ahlin (a St. Luke parishioner) was named the league’s co-Most Improved Player of the year and Logan Feldkamp was named the league’s Coach of the Year. The Whitecaps extend their thanks to all parishioners, family members, and friends who supported them this season. We look forward to the 2025 season!

Logan Feldkamp

LADIES GUILD UPDATE SUMMER 2024

Cleveland is blessed with an abundance of beautiful churches. High on that list is the Shrine Church of St. Stanislaus with its soaring Gothic architecture. In early June the Ladies Guild led an excursion to the Slavic Village for a tour of this historic landmark. Built by Polish immigrants and completed in 1891, St. Stanislaus is the largest Gothic Catholic church in Ohio, and among those in the United States, is second in size only to St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. After enjoying the splendor of the church's interior and an informative tour, the ladies enjoyed lunch and socializing at The Red Chimney. A future tour is planned for Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine in Euclid, Ohio on September 11. All parishioners are welcome to join the Guild for this half-day tour.



The clouds parted and the rain stopped just in time for the Ladies Guild third annual Summer Solstice Social in Centennial Park. Parishioner and Tai Chi instructor, Mary Holtz, led the ladies in a calming and rejuvenating Tai Chi practice. Focusing on breath and gentle movement, Mary guided the group in a meditation on the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. In the gentle movement of putting down symbolic burdens, Mary encouraged the Ladies to be present to the moment and attentive to their breathing, for that is where God dwells. Afterwards there was time for refreshments and fellowship on a beautiful June evening.



Upcoming Event: The Ladies Guild Book Club resumes September 18 with a discussion of *Girlfriends and Other Saints* by Therese Tomeo.

Join us on October 10 for Ladies Night Out!

Nancy Sullivan

J+WALKERS SOAK UP THE SUN

The Youth Group has been soaking up two things this summer: sun and love for Jesus! Our summer kicked off with a cookout that doubled as a celebration of Logan's birthday and was followed by fireside chat events and a water gun mayhem night. The definitive highlight of the season has been our two retreats: "Abide" for high school students and "Make a Mess" for 7th-9th grade students. "Abide" took place at a lakefront property near Alliance, OH with a small group of high school students. This retreat focused on the need to rest in Christ, unhurry our lives, and create a new discipline of sabbath rest. Students were able to reflect on these practices in a beautiful lakeside setting, culminating in an outdoor Mass with Fr. Lito. The "Make a Mess" retreat for middle school students was inspired by Pope Francis' command for young people to "make a mess" in the world. Students reflected on the messiness of life, the messiness of biblical figures, and how so many saints have a "messy" past. Students participated in clay sculpting and a messy boot relay race to help illustrate these lessons. We invite all students in grades 7-12 to come join us as we grow in faith, knowledge, and love of the God who loves us!

Logan Feldkamp



WHAT'S NEW IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE THIS FALL?

We welcome back all of our families to PSR, Children's Liturgy of the Word, Rite of Christian Initiation for Children, the Way, Confirmation, and First Communion. We've had a nice break, but we've missed you.

Confirmation started August 27 and 28 with the initial parent/student meeting. Please register for Confirmation online if you are in 8th grade or above.

CLOW, PSR, and the Way, all start on Sunday, September 15. PSR is at 8:30 a.m. and 10 a.m. The Way is at 10 a.m. in Mary's Room or on Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. Children's Liturgy of the Word is during 10 a.m. Mass starting September 15.

If you have a child that has not been Baptized Catholic or has not received any Sacraments and is above the age of eight-years old, they will need a special program, the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children. Please call the Religious Education Office for details.

With all of these programs starting up, we will be needing help. If you are in junior high through senior citizen we could use your help in the classroom, teaching, assisting, office help, craft help, CLOW leader, Special Education helper, and much more. If you have a gift or talent we can find a job for you.

A new year is always a blessing for us as administrators, Catechists, parents, and students. We ask that you pray for an abundant year full of health, blessings, and happiness.

Sharon Armstrong

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Vacation Bible School was amazing this year. We had 65 campers, 31 teen helpers, and 22 adult helpers from St. Christopher Church, Rocky River Presbyterian, and Rockport United Methodist. The theme was *Gone Fishin'*, where we learned about how to trust in God and become fishers of people. We also collected over \$5,250 for our mission, "The Shoes that Grows," an expandable shoe that grows five sizes. This non-profit organization provides these shoes for kids in developing countries that don't have their basic needs met. We learned. We made friends. We shared with others. We had fun! Thank you to the Vacation Bible School volunteers! We couldn't have done it without you!

Sharon Armstrong



 THE LADIES GUILD INVITES YOU TO



Raise your Spirits

Join Us for an Evening of fun & friendship

10.10.2024

at 7:00pm

Mary's Room

New lower price this year - \$30, reduced \$10!



For \$30:

- Wine & light appetizers provided by Lake Road Market
- Desserts by Kathy's Kolacke & Pastry shop
- An evening of friendship, laughs and fun!



Please register online with credit card by **October 1** by clicking [Donate Now](#) and selecting *Raise your Spirits*.
If you would prefer you can register in person at the Parish Office during business hours and pay with either cash or a check made payable to St. Christopher Parish.

All ladies who are current on their Ladies Guild dues can take an **extra \$5** off your ticket price.

Dues-paying members pay only \$25!

CHURCH CHATTER

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Remember to wish business manager, **Joe Williams**, a happy birthday on September 2. **Fr. Tim Daw** will celebrate his birthday on December 2.

WRITE ON Parishioner **Mary Kay Cabot** took first place as Best Sportswriter in the Ohio Associated Press Managing Editor contest. The 2023 finalists and winners were announced in July. We appreciate her highlights and insights into our Cleveland Browns over the years. Congratulations!

THANK YOU FOR BEING A FRIEND Did you know that six of our parishioners are on the Board of the Friends of Rocky River Public Library? Recently voted in for the 2024-25 year are **Vid Lutz**, Vice President, **Roberta Trutko**, Secretary; **Craig Rimlinger**, Treasurer; **Mary Horvath**, Membership Chairperson; **Jenny Dieringer**, Event Support; and **Nancy Seryak**, Member at Large. Keep up the good work!

CONGRATULATIONS The Belltower Beacon’s photographer, **Colleen McKenna**, recently accepted the position as Communications Coordinator for St. Christopher Parish. Her focus will be communication with the parish community through our website as well as all relevant media channels. Colleen and her husband, Jim, have been members of the parish for 20 years and volunteered for the Vacation Bible School this past summer. Colleen is also a teacher in our PSR Program. She will continue taking photos for this publication, as well as other parish events. Best wishes in your new position, Colleen!

PATRIOTISM Remember to exercise your right to **vote** on November 5. If you would like to donate a U.S. flag for our church’s flagpole, please deliver it to the Parish Office and include your name with the flag.



PERFORMANCE Centennial Park had the pleasure of hosting the **Gigi’s Playhouse Pulse Project** for a concert in August. Parishioner Jenny Dieringer’s niece, Elaina, is a member of the teen group. They did a great job and a good time was had by all!

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

NEW PARISH SOFTWARE TO BE INTRODUCED THIS AUTUMN

This title might appear as déjà vu to some of you, considering the parish completed a transition to a new software system back in the spring. After a few months with this software, the parish staff decided that it would be worthwhile to upgrade to a different product, one that would greatly enhance the user experience for both staff and our parishioners. Beginning in mid-August and continuing through September, we will be moving to a new parish database software called Ministry Platform. This product comes with many upgrades over our “old” software, including an integrated parish calendar and parishioner app. As this transition is finalized this autumn, please keep your eyes open for more information in the bulletin and parish e-newsletter for important developments.

Logan Feldkamp



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UPCOMING EVENTS

September 6, October 4, November 1	EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION	October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, November 7,14	GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP
September 8	CONFIRMATION CLASSES BEGIN	October 3	PET BLESSING
September 9	FIRST DAY OF PRESCHOOL	October 4	OHIO MARCH FOR LIFE TRIP TO COLUMBUS
September 10, October 8, November 12	MONTHLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP	October 6	YOUTH MASS
September 11, October 9	COFFEE AND THE WORD	October 10	LADIES NIGHT OUT
September 15	PSR BEGINS	October 17	NEW PARISHIONER MEET & GREET
September 15	CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD BEGINS	October 24	TRUNK OR TREAT
September 16	RCIA BEGINS	November 3	EVENING OF REMEMBRANCE
September 17	JR. HIGH PSR PROGRAM (THE WAY) BEGINS	November 17	PRE-BAPTISM CLASS
September 18, October 23, November 20	LADIES GUILD BOOK CLUB	November 24	THANKSGIVING FOOD BOXES
		December 1	ADVENT BEGINS
		December 7	SERVICE SATURDAY

*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.*