



The Belltower Beacon

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

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PAYING A DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO BUSINESS MANAGER JOE WILLIAMS



Calling it his “encore career,” our parish Business Manager, Joe Williams, says he answered his call to ministry in 2016 when he joined the staff at St. Christopher

Parish. Retiring after many years in corporate America, Joe found this second career incredibly rewarding; so much so that he was willing to drive from his home in Solon to his office in Rocky River. On July 1 of this year, Joe will once again retire, this time to pursue personal interests like time with family, more frequent travel and more time on the golf course. Along with wife, Lydia, they enjoy time with their five children (ages 32 to 44) and seven grandchildren. It is certain that Joe will find plenty to fill his days and evenings. Joe says that he traveled the world in his business career, but now he wants to travel exclusively for pleasure. Some of his favorite destinations include Tuscany, Italy, so international travel is close to the top of the list. However, his top priority is to spend more time playing with his grandchildren.

Joe and Lydia reside in Solon, where they have been members of St. Rita Parish for over 30 years. Joe was a member of their Finance Council and has participated in a number of parish ministries. He is also a board member for the Ohio Catholic Federal Credit Union. Joe graduated from Walsh University with a degree in accounting. He completed his Master's Degree in business administration at Miami University. He then became a Certified Public Accountant. Prior to joining St. Christopher, Joe held a number of senior financial and management positions in Northeast Ohio. Joe considers his

current career a ministry, stating “it is a different path which connects more closely to my moral compass.” According to Joe, it is rare to have a business person in church ministry, but it is also the perfect place to utilize his God-given time, talents and treasures. He believes in following the teachings of Christ, sharing his gifts, and finding opportunities to make a difference. Fr. John shared his deep appreciation for Joe's contribution to the parish. “Joe has truly shared his gift for business as well as putting his faith into action. His leadership has put our parish in a strong financial position through his stewardship in managing our sizable parish budget.”

During his years at St. Christopher, Joe came to appreciate the generosity of parishioners and their resounding response to the needs of others, near and far. He also spoke highly of our staff and of Fr. John's leadership style. He recalls that during the Covid pandemic, Fr. John was quick to address related issues. In addition, the leadership team ensured that the parish operated with strong fiscal responsibility. Joe also enjoyed being part of our successful capital campaign. In his role, he has worked closely with the Day School, Parish School of Religion (PSR), and our many organizations. His oversight spans a wide range of monetary contributions, from large bequests to the coins donated by school children. While chatting with Joe, as if on cue, two staff members came to deliver funds collected through some of the School and PSR Programs (i.e., Operation Rice Bowl). The currency and coins were delivered in boxes and containers. It was a striking visualization of the diversity and importance of Joe's duties as business manager. Joe's presence and expertise will be greatly missed; however, our entire church community wishes Joe and his family many years of good health and memorable adventures. Congratulations, Joe, and THANK YOU!

Carmen Everett DeHaan

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LENTEN RETREAT SHOWS THE BEAUTY OF THE EUCHARIST

"THE EUCHARIST IS MY HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN" – BLESSED CARLO ACUTIS



On March 28 and 29, dozens attended our parish Lenten Retreat, *The Eucharist and Our Faith*. Led by Deacon Mike, we took a deep dive into the meaning of the sacrament and the divine presence of Christ – body, blood, soul, and divinity.

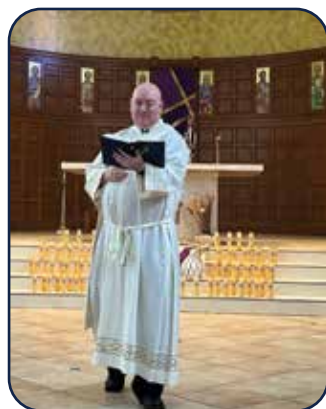
Friday evening embraced the beauty and reverence of Holy Communion, as more than 100 candles lit the stairs of the sanctuary! Deacon Mike provided an overview of what the Church teaches and how we can respond. His presentation was followed by Exposition of the Eucharist and Adoration. The quiet solitude of the evening provided time for reflection and contemplation.

Saturday's program was an opportunity to delve further into the teachings of the Church, how we become what we receive, and what this means in our daily lives. With ample opportunity for questions and answers, attendees discussed the biblical roots of the Eucharist and what happens during the Mass. Observing the essence of Christ entering our bodies as food, no longer "me" but Christ living

in us – a sacred meal, sacrifice, and real presence. We concluded the retreat with lunch catered by Italian Creations. The retreat was a beautiful way to gain a deeper appreciation for the Lenten season in fellowship and spiritual understanding.

If you are interested in additional one-day retreats, email Deacon Mike at mhayes@stchrisparish.com.

Deacon Mike Hayes



PIPE ORGAN CONSOLE UPGRADE

The organ was offline since the beginning of the year to refurbish and modernize the console. Leek Pipe Organ Company in Berea, OH undertook this project, which was completed in April, just in time for Holy Week. A more detailed report will be in the next issue of the Belltower Beacon.

Mayumi Naramura



Before



After

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER JEANNE KLIMA RETIRES



St. Christopher School kindergarten teacher Jeanne Klima is wrapping up her 38-year teaching career when retiring this June. Having spent 20 of those years at St. Christopher School (SCS), Jeanne shares, “St. Christopher is such a good place to teach. I’ve taught at many different schools and my heart is here at St. Christopher.”

Jeanne grew up in Lakewood and moved to Rocky River in her 20s. She and her husband Rick were married at St. Christopher Church, and their daughters, Katie and Christie—now grown—are proud SCS alums.

Throughout her tenure at SCS, Jeanne has inspired kindergartners and first graders, lovingly guiding them

as they develop foundational skills in religion, language arts and math. With patience and enthusiasm, she helps young learners build confidence and curiosity—laying the groundwork for a lifelong love of learning.

The escapades of family pets Stormy, a Siberian Husky, and Maisie Mittens, a rag doll cat, are popular with her students. “I will never forget teaching over zoom during COVID, and when Maisie walked behind me and appeared on screen, every single student went to grab their pet or stuffed animal, and the lesson turned into a show and tell. Fish, hamsters, you name it. It was hysterical. So much for zoom lessons for kindergarten!” Former students will remember that flexible and fun learning environment as a hallmark of Mrs. Klima’s classroom.

In retirement, Jeanne and her husband—who also recently retired—plan to travel and frequently visit daughter and son-in-law Katie and Andrew in Montana and daughter Christie in New York City. They are also enthusiastic Cleveland sports fans (Go Guardians, Browns, and Cavs!) and musical theatre lovers who enjoy catching Broadway touring productions at Playhouse Square.

While Jeanne says she’ll miss her students terribly, she’s looking forward to having more time to enjoy her hobbies, including reading, writing, cooking, and baking. And not to worry—she’ll likely return as a substitute teacher from time to time.

Retiring from a place she loves was an emotional decision. Jeanne reflects, “God lets us know when it’s time to make a change, and I’m looking forward to the next chapter. It’s been an honor and a privilege to be at SCS. I am grateful for every day I’ve spent here and want to thank our priests, principal, faculty, staff, parents, and especially my students, for making every day a joy.”

Beth Van Horn

LADIES GUILD UPDATE

The liturgical calendar gives rhythm to our lives. The Ladies Guild moves to that rhythm, providing opportunities for the women of St. Christopher to nourish faith and friendship throughout the church year. In February members of the Guild gathered at a Sunday Mass in honor of all the deceased and living women of the Guild. After Mass, coffee and muffins were served in the Gathering Area for all those in attendance. As the calendar turned to Lent, the Guild presented Mary’s Stations of the Cross which has become a beloved Lenten devotion for many parishioners. All were welcomed afterwards for light refreshments and fellowship in the Gathering Area. And, as the liturgical colors turn to the green of Ordinary Time, the Guild will host a Summer Solstice Social in Centennial Park on June 18. The Guild will

honor the sacred nature of time with a brief tai chi meditation led by parishioner Mary Holtz. The meditation will focus on gentle movement and awareness of the breath of the Holy Spirit within. Refreshments and conversation will cap off the long summer evening. Bishop Malesic says in his pastoral letter *A Flourishing Apostolic Church*: “Smaller groups provide the opportunity for us to receive and give support out of Christian friendship. They are where the Holy Spirit goes to work in given communities of faith, where people know each other more personally.” That has always been the mission of the Ladies Guild.

Nancy Sullivan

ONCE A KNIGHT, ALWAYS A KNIGHT



Psalms 96:1-6 “Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth! Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.” is an excellent summary of Mrs. Michelle Federico’s time at St. Christopher School and Parish.

Mrs. Federico began her service to St. Christopher Parish in 2000 as a cantor for Masses and events. In 2002, Mrs. Federico was hired as the school music teacher and youth choir director. She magnified the greatness of the Lord in each and every one of her music lessons. Her students not only learned to use their voices to sing the LORD’s praises but third and fourth graders learned to play recorders, sixth graders played chimes and middle school students strummed on ukuleles in order to foster and develop their God given musical talents. Many alum and students can look back and remember the various music performances they participated in under the direction of Mrs. Federico.

Mrs. Federico’s talents were not limited to music. Over the years, she organized many of the school’s Advent, Christmas and Lenten season reflections. As student government supervisor Mrs. Federico introduced Operation Christmas Child to the school as a school-wide service project. Operation Christmas Child is an organization under the foundation of Samaritan’s Purse that distributes Christmas presents and God’s message of love and the Good News of Jesus Christ to children around the world.

Three years ago, Mrs. Federico became the St. Christopher Preschool Director. Michelle followed Isaiah 30:21 “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.” As preschool director Mrs. Federico strengthened the growing 3 and 4 year old program in addition to establishing a Pre-K program that will expand to two classes for the 2025-2026 school year. Mrs. Federico’s creativity, enthusiasm, dedication, and love for her profession fostered an atmosphere for the SCS Little Knights to play, pray and learn.

Now it is time for Mrs. Federico to follow Proverbs 19:21, “Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” Michelle is leaving St. Christopher School and Preschool to become the office manager for the Federico family business, Federico Tire Pros located in Painesville. However, she is not ready to say a final goodbye to the St. Christopher community as she plans to continue cantoring for Masses, weddings and funerals. Thus, we do not say goodbye to Mrs. Federico but remind her: Once a Knight, Always a Knight.

“May the LORD bless you and keep you.” Numbers 6:24

Molly Fuerst



SENIOR WEEK

During Senior Week at Magnificat High School, Wednesday’s theme was “dress like your middle school self.” Students from the St. Christopher Class of 2021 came back to their alma mater, dressed in their finest blue and orange, to snap a few photos with principal Mrs. Meler and their middle school teachers, Mr. Thorne and Mrs. Dzurec. Students received a special surprise that morning – their former principal, Mr. Raiff, stopped by to congratulate the girls and wish them well in their future endeavors. Once a Knight, Always a Knight! Best Wishes to all the students from the St. Christopher Class of 2021!!

Susan Paez

STATUE OF ST. CHRISTOPHER



A beautiful new white marble statue of St. Christopher now sits at the top of the hill on the corner of Detroit Road and Lakeview Avenue. This statue replaces the original statue that was destroyed when last summer's August 6 tornado swept through Rocky River, knocking it from its pedestal. The original statue was dedicated in 1997, in celebration of St. Christopher Parish's 75th anniversary.

Skilled craftsmen at Artisan Granite, LLC in East Greenwich, Rhode Island carved the St. Christopher statue using both traditional hand tools and modern electric tools.

The statue depicts the story of St. Christopher, who carried the Christ child on his left shoulder while holding a budding staff in his right hand. Christopher dedicated himself to helping travelers cross a river. One day, he carried a child who grew mysteriously heavier with each step. Upon reaching the shore, the child revealed himself as Christ, explaining that Christopher had been carrying not just him, but the weight of the entire world!

Colleen McKenna



J+WALKERS

The rainy spring has failed to put a damper on the exciting events of J+Walkers Youth Ministry! In February, six young ladies participated in a small group retreat entitled, "I AM." This retreat experience sought to explore the beauty of God uniquely present within us and the dynamic relationship each believer has with God. The retreat included Mass at St. Mary Hudson, an excursion to SkyZone, karaoke challenge, and a beautiful letter-sharing experience. Retreat experiences such as these are supported by the generous donations our youth ministry received during the 2023 #WeGiveCatholic campaign.

During Lent, two members of our youth ministry, Sadie F. and Molly L., participated in the Living Stations of the Cross, a collaborative between St. Mark, OLA, and St. Christopher parishes. This moving performance of Jesus' last moments drew hundreds of people to experience the raw emotion of these events through the dramatic reenactment of our teenagers. This is the third straight year that St. Christopher has been represented in this production.

Our exciting event to celebrate the canonization of Blessed Carlo Acutis in late April was unfortunately postponed in response to the death of Pope Francis. We look forward to rescheduling our canonization party to coincide with the new canonization date that is set for Blessed Carlo Acutis when it is determined. The death of Pope Francis is a particularly notable loss for young people in the church. Francis was a strong advocate for the gifts and talent that young people could lend to our communities. He frequently wrote and spoke to young people, encouraging them to fill our Church with spirit and life. Francis notes, "We cannot just say that young people are the future of our world. They are its present; even now, they are helping to enrich it" (Christus Vivit, 64). May we, in the spirit of Pope Francis, continue to honor and uphold the dignity, talent, and worth of all young people.

Logan Feldkamp



THE ECOLOGY CLUB



The Ecology Club at St. Christopher School strives to help students understand the relationship of living things in their natural environment.

There is a direct link between humans and ecology (the study of how living things interact with each other and their environment). When they are in harmony; everyone grows and thrives. At St. Christopher, the Ecology Club is excited to learn about the living plants and animals in Rocky River, the state of Ohio, the United States and across the globe! For the past three years this club; lead by a volunteer parent, Marissa Burke-Lewis, has delved into topics such as trees, plants, soil, worms, bugs like the Hornworm Caterpillar, spiders that live in Ohio, the Monarch Butterfly and so much more!

Hands-on learning, in addition to live specimens and an engaging craft keep these meetings fresh and creative. The Ecology Club students at St. Christopher School have built worm houses, planted Milkweed to feed caterpillars, been up close with insects like crickets, centipedes, bumble bees and caterpillars, counted seeds in pumpkins, tasted a variety of apples grown in Ohio and grown Venus Fly traps. There's an infinite amount of possible topics for this monthly club, woven together with curiosity and joy.

There is still so much to discover!

Marissa Burke-Lewis



**POPE FRANCIS
THE PEOPLE'S POPE**
1936-2025



**HABEMUS PAPAM!
WELCOME POPE LEO XIV**

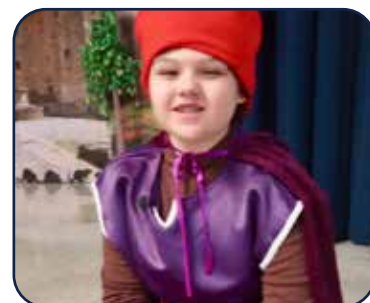


THE BEGGAR AND THE WOLF

On March 27, the lights went up on the St. Christopher School Drama Club's performances of *The Beggar and the Wolf* by Patrick Rainville Dorne. The play, a two-act comedy based on the popular 13th-century legend of St. Francis of Assisi and the wolf of Gubbio, featured 35 students from grades 1-7, who performed to packed houses and standing ovations in the Parish Center. Full of outrageous puns, slapstick humor, quirky characters, and high-energy scenes, the 50-minute production transformed the Parish Center stage into the medieval city of Gubbio, Italy and kept the townsfolk howling mad with a lone wolf who continuously invaded the town (and the audience). Ultimately, the town was saved by Francesco, a renowned holy beggar from the neighboring village of Assisi who is reputed to have a wondrous way with animals. With the help of the brave, good-hearted Fermin and his kind, generous mother, Francesco sagely negotiated a mutually beneficial bargain between the villagers and the wolf. Like the gurgling fountain at the heart of the town, hope did spring eternal, but not without many hilarious and heart-warming antics that prompted the audience to sit, stay, and roll over with laughter throughout the night.

While performance day was undoubtedly entertaining and exciting for everyone, a glimpse behind-the-scenes shows that the students gained much from the three-month rehearsal process that led up to the show's success. Beginning in January and the return from Winter Break, the Drama Club engaged in a fully-immersive, student-driven process that transformed the script from words on a page to a dynamic theatrical performance. The stage crew set out on the prodigious task of learning the art of stagecraft, set design, prop management, costuming, lighting and sound direction, while the actors had to master stage direction, improvisation, mannerisms, and artistic timing. Everyone worked to recreate an authentic representation of the medieval town of Gubbio, Italy, equipped with a real working fountain, fields of sunflowers, full stage lights, rats that raced down the audience aisle, period costumes, and a fully-operational sound system where every actor had a microphone. Throughout the process, each student, whether actor or crew, had the opportunity to make their own artistic contribution to the play and take ownership of a specific aspect of the production so that, ultimately, the final product was executed entirely by the students. When it came time for curtain call, the pride of accomplishment and beaming smiles on every students' face definitely stole the show.

Sarah Rish



LIVING THE LIGHT OF EASTER AS PILGRIMS OF HOPE

The Easter season is a time of joy, renewal, and hope. In our Easter liturgical celebrations, we proclaim with happy hearts and joyful voices: Christ is risen, alleluia! But this proclamation is not merely a liturgical chant; it is a way of life, a calling, and a source of strength especially in times of trial.

As a parish community here at St. Christopher, we have been journeying together through both lights and shadows. Like many faith communities today, we face challenges, spiritual, pastoral, and even practical. Some of us carry personal burdens like illness, loss, uncertainty. Despite of all these, we are reminded that we are a Church journeying with hope and going out into the world with the peace and courage of the Risen Christ. That is what Easter is about.

If we try to recall the past, the early Church knew suffering. They were a vulnerable, persecuted community. The apostles were hiding in fear. And yet, the Risen Jesus entered their midst with these words: "Peace be with you." He breathed in them the Holy Spirit and sent them forth, not as perfect people, but as forgiven, hopeful, and Spirit-filled witnesses. In the same way, Christ enters the locked rooms of our hearts, our fears, and our griefs. He offers

us not just comfort, but mission. He does not wait for us to be strong or ready; He comes to us as we are, offering His peace, His presence, and His power to renew.

As a parish community, Easter reminds us that we are not defined by our problems, but by God's promises. The tomb is empty. Death does not have the final word. And even when we feel overwhelmed, the Risen Christ walks with us, just as He did with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Let us continue the good work we have begun as a parish like caring for creation, deepening our sacramental and spiritual life, accompanying those in need, and inviting others into a living relationship with Christ. Let us support one another with patience and love, remembering that resurrection is not a one-day event. It is a season, a process, and a reality we are called to live every day as pilgrims of hope.

May the Risen Lord breathe on us anew, renewing our hope, restoring our courage, and reminding us that even now, in the midst of all we are facing, Christ is truly risen. Alleluia!

Fr. Lito Clemen

GOODBYE TO MELISSA DIFINI



Dear Parishioners,

I want to take a moment to share some important news with you. After much prayer and reflection, I have accepted a new position at my home parish, the Church of the Holy Angels in Chagrin Falls. This decision was not made lightly, as my time here has been incredibly meaningful and filled with cherished moments and spiritual growth.

Time is a gift from God and our most precious resource. As Proverbs 19:21 states, "Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." Currently, I spend 80 minutes a day commuting from Chagrin Falls to Rocky River, which totals 1,600 minutes each month in my car. However, the Lord has opened another door for me: my new position will be just five minutes from my home!

As I prepare to leave St. Christopher Parish, I am filled with mixed emotions. Being a part of this community has been a true blessing, and I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each of you.

Over the past three years, we have shared countless moments of joy, faced challenges, and experienced spiritual growth together. From joyous celebrations to more somber times of reflection, I have witnessed the strength and resilience of our parish family. Your warmth and support have made my time here truly special.

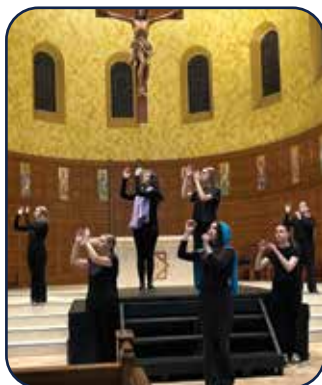
I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for your kindness and encouragement, and the opportunities you have given me to serve alongside you. I have learned so much from all of you, and I will carry those lessons and memories as I embark on this new chapter. I am especially grateful to Fr. John and the Pastoral Staff for their support and guidance during my time here. Working with such talented individuals who are committed to building God's Kingdom has been a true pleasure. I will take the skills and experiences I have gained into my future endeavors.

As I move forward, I will always hold Saint Christopher Parish dear in my heart. I encourage you to keep supporting one another and staying active in your faith. This community is resilient, and I am confident that you will continue to thrive. Allow the light of Christ to shine both in and through you.

Please keep me in your prayers, as I will keep you in mine. I hope our paths may cross again in the future.

*With all my love and gratitude,
Melissa DiFinì*

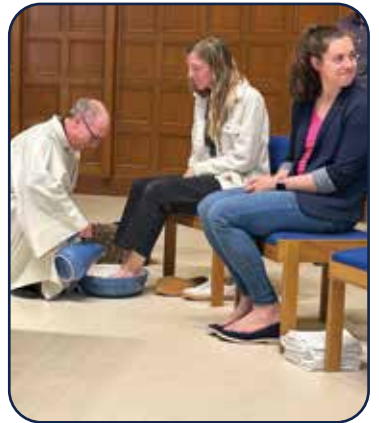
Living Stations of the Cross



Outdoor Stations of the Cross



Holy Thursday



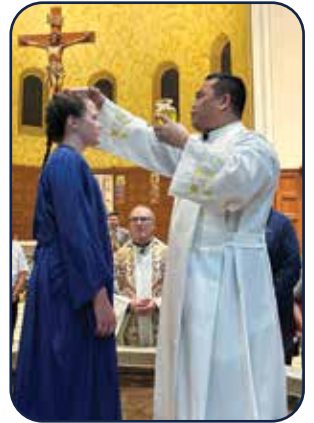
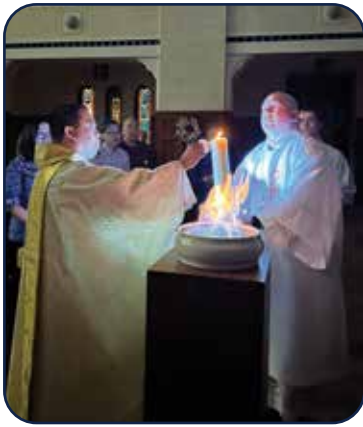
Good Friday



Mary's Way of the Cross



Easter Vigil



THE CONFIRMATION RETREAT

All 53 Confirmation Candidates attended their Confirmation Retreat on Saturday, March 22. The day was full of fun activities to help them to learn more about the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and prayer. Students had the opportunity to go to Confession during the Retreat as well as attend the 5 p.m. Mass to end their day. It was a great celebration to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Sharon Armstrong

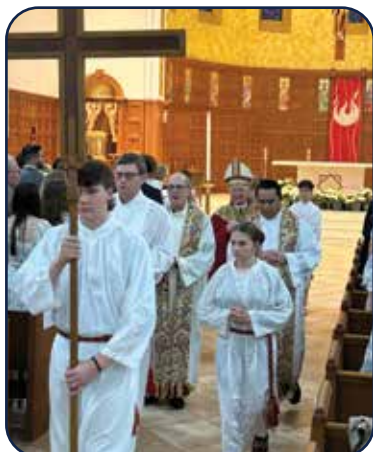


Confirmation

Confirmation was celebrated on Tuesday, May 6 with Bishop Amos and 59 Confirmation candidates. The Confirmation team worked with 53 students with an additional six adults prepared by the staff. 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 liturgy in the Church had ended. The entire evening was a proud moment for our Pastor and our "young Church." Thank you students, sponsors, parents, and our Confirmation team who made this day a great success. Congratulations !

Confirmation team: Sharon Armstrong, Marilu Norena, Ken Szabo, Nector Castro, Pat Roberts, Ross Pussel and Kate Anderer-DiMichele

Sharon Armstrong





A TRIBUTE TO DIANE (YOUNG) COLE:

Wife, mother, grandmother, and avid quilter



Diane was a vibrant, joy-filled and very active member of our St. Christopher community. She was also known for her smile, her generous heart, sweet disposition, artistic ability and her nickname, Bunny. Diane (nee: Young), age 84, was married to Gary Cole for over 58 years, and according to Gary, exactly 58.5 years at the time of her death from Alzheimer's disease in December 2024. These are also the years that the Coles belonged to St. Christopher. Early in their relationship, Gary converted to Catholicism, a decision he has always relished. He accepted an invitation from Diane and was encouraged by Fr. Prendergast (a former pastor, deceased). The couple met in 1965 at a Catholic Alumni Club picnic (though Gary was not yet Catholic) and married in 1966, and became "west siders" by moving to Rocky River. They raised three children in Rocky River (Jim, Merritt, and Kathy). In more recent years, they shared the joy of grandparenting Slade, now age 23, and Cole, age 11. During their marriage, Gary worked for NASA while Diane was a school teacher. When they started their family, Diane stayed home to raise their children and be involved in their daily activities. During their marriage, the Coles were active at St. Christopher, in Rocky River schools, and in their community (Gary remains involved).

While their daughters were at Rocky River High School (Jim went to St. Ignatius), Diane met a group of moms who were "quilters." With a fondness for sewing, she became involved, learned the art, and began her 30 years of quilting. She was a woman of many other hobbies which included square dancing, gardening and doing anything outdoors, like yard work.

Together, the Coles were Eucharistic Ministers and Lectors at St. Christopher; Gary also served at funerals. Diane ministered to the homebound by bringing Communion to them; she took great pleasure in spending time with them. For over 20 years, Diane was a catechist for our Religious Education Office; she was also a Brownie/Girl Scout leader. When their children were older, she taught and tutored at the middle school. Once she became comfortable in the art of quilting, she would personally deliver beautiful quilts in all sizes, shapes and patterns, including lap quilts, to veterans at the Cleveland VA. Diane has been described as an independent and determined woman. For eight years after her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, Diane visited her every day, sometimes more than once a day, and helped care for her.

With a birth name like Diana and her sense of humor, it was inevitable that Diane would tell others that her name was "like the princess." She graduated from Beaumont High School and then Case Western Reserve University with a degree in elementary education. Diane loved travelling with Gary and organizing their countless travel photos. She labeled and described the photo scenarios, leaving an extraordinary legacy for future generations. The Cole couple was devoted to giving back to their church, community and the needy. They also took advantage of opportunities to enjoy the many entertainment and social venues in the area. Even after Diane was diagnosed and started showing symptoms of Alzheimer's, Gary continued taking her to events where they could participate together. She loved music, so evenings at Severance Hall listening to the Cleveland Pops Orchestra were among their favorite dates.



Eventually, Diane more than learned the art of quilting, she perfected it. This resulted in a large collection of spectacular quilts which are displayed in their home, their children's homes, and on exhibit at places like the Rocky River Senior Center and the Carolyn L. Farrell Foundation for Brain Health at The Center for Artful Living, 26633 Detroit Road, Westlake. Diane was a long-time member of the Quilter's Legacy of Lakewood Quilt Guild. Several of her quilts are on display at (and some for sale to benefit) The Center for Artful Living (a 501c3 non-profit which serves families experiencing the effects of dementia and Alzheimer's disease). As Diane's illness progressed, Gary accompanied her to The Center for therapeutic activities and crafts designed specifically to improve brain health.

Gary recalls that Diane began showing signs of cognitive impairment ten years or more before her death. Eventually, she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. The couple were members of Kendal at Home, which provides the care and services needed for adults to stay safe in a supervised environment. Gary learned about The Center for Artful Living from the Kendal agency. He started taking Diane to the arts and crafts activities at The Center. These gatherings, sometimes called "memory cafes," offer a variety of mental, emotional and physical outlets for participants and their family members. Gary and Diane embraced new ways to spend quality time together as Diane found pleasure in dancing, learning and relearning things, and creating art in new and different ways. Gary's life with Diane

during those final years would have been much more difficult if not for the emotional support of programs that The Center offers free of charge (due to the generosity of private donors and specialized grants). The activities are facilitated by volunteers who are professionals in their fields and take place in an environment that is cozy, home-like and uplifting.

Gary has become an advocate for services that enable patients, spouses, and family to continue creating fond memories long after the disease has invaded their lives. He wants anyone from middle school students through adults to consider getting involved in one of the many volunteer opportunities. To learn more about Alzheimer's disease, brain health, and The Center for Artful Living on Detroit Road, go to www.farrellfoundation.org or email them at info@farrellfoundation.com.



Carmen Everett DeHaan

SOUP SUPPER

Lenten Soup Supper and Basket Raffle on April 1 raised over \$5,500 which will build three houses for the Balay sa Kabos (House of the Poor) Program in Fr. Lito's home diocese of Tagbilaran, Philippines. During the event, Fr. Lito gave a presentation raising awareness of the housing conditions in the Philippines and explaining the Balay sa Kabos program, which builds new houses for low-income families whose homes are damaged or unlivable due to storms and climate change.

Sharon Armstrong, our Director of Religious Education, planned and organized the successful Soup Supper and Basket Raffle. She brought together Confirmation and "The Way" students with the Social Concerns Committee to make it all happen. Confirmation and "The Way" students assisted in the kitchen, waited tables and participated in setup and clean up. Both the students and the Social Concerns Committee sold tickets in advance of the event, and collaborated on preparing and selling tickets for the gift baskets which were raffled at the Supper.

"The Soup Supper not only benefited the people of the Philippines, but the students gained a deeper understanding of their role in the church and the importance of contributing to the community," explained Sharon Armstrong. She continued, "This project also taught the students to prioritize the needs of others and to serve with humility and generosity."

Ennis Court Assisted Living Facility generously donated the chicken noodle soup for the event.

Colleen McKenna

THANK YOU

A heartfelt thank you to "The Way" program of Our Parish School of Religion for their generous support of the "Balay sa Kabus" (House of the Poor) program in my home diocese, the Diocese of Tagbilaran in the Philippines, through the Soup Supper activity. Your kindness and solidarity have made a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need, and your spirit of compassion beautifully reflects the love of Christ in action. A special word of thanks to Sharon Armstrong, along with all the kids and volunteers, for your big hearts and enthusiastic participation. May God continue to bless you all for the joy and hope you bring to others.

A sincere thank you to the Creation Care Team of the Social Concerns Committee of our parish for your generous support of the Balay sa Kabus (House of the Poor) program in the Diocese of Tagbilaran, Philippines, through their Fair Trade Sale. Your commitment to caring for the most vulnerable, both locally and globally, reflects the true heart of our faith and the call of Laudato Si' to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Your solidarity and generosity are deeply appreciated and have brought hope and comfort to many. May God bless you for all the good you do.

Fr. Lito Clemen

Soup Supper



Bob Gallagher volunteered as head chef in the kitchen and supervised The Way students Anthony Graziani and Ben Groza in the preparation of chicken noodle and beef barley soups.



Jesus Day Retreat

Our 2nd graders had the opportunity to attend the Jesus Day Retreat in April. It was a day of learning and celebration! The highlight of the day was bread making, which is everyone's favorite activity. We had many parents and teachers on hand to help with crafts and activities to highlight the Eucharist. Thank you to everyone who helped make this a special event!

Sharon Armstrong



First Communion

We celebrated 88 First Communions during the first three weekends in May. There were anywhere from 5-16 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, Kathy Rohn, Brendan Barker, Bob Bove, Bob Gallagher, Lindsay Barbicas.

Congratulations to all for a job well done!

Sharon Armstrong





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Ace Molar Band

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SUNDAY

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CHURCH CHATTER

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Birthday wishes go out to Pastoral Associate, **Logan Feldkamp** (June 6), School Principal, **Mary Meler** (June 12), Director of Religious Education, **Sharon Armstrong** (August 3), and **Colleen McKenna**, Communications Coordinator (August 12). Happy Birthday to all!

ST. BALDRICK

For 20 years, **Joe Kovach** has annually shaved his head in support of Childhood Cancer Research through the St. Baldrick's Foundation. He raised \$6,000 this year, adding to his 20-year total of nearly \$28,000. A highlight of this year was when his wife, Carolyn, and son, Keegan, executed the final shave. Way to go, Joe!



SENIOR SERVERS

Thank you to three graduating high school seniors, who have served during Mass and beyond. **Avery Paez** and **Vanessa Roth** have served at Mass since 5th grade. Avery has been a scorekeeper for our CYO teams and will attend Mercyhurst University to study Biology (pre-med track) and play golf. Vanessa is an Eagle Scout recipient who will attend the University of Cincinnati to study mechanical engineering. She was recognized with a \$500 scholarship from the Friends of Rocky River Public Library. A special shout out goes to **Addy McGee**, who has helped with Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) for several years, until taking on the leadership role. She was also an altar server in middle school. Addie is attending the University of Tulsa to study chemistry on a pre-med track. Best wishes!

NO-HITTER

Cheers to **Reagan Kane**, a sophomore at Rocky River High School, who recently pitched a no-hitter on the girls' softball team! In late April, she won pitcher of the week for Cuyahoga County softball. Reagan was recently inducted into the French World Language Honors Society. At St. Christopher, she serves as a Lector and as an altar server.

WELCOME CIRCLE

Fr. Tim and our Welcome Circle were instrumental in bringing the **Kushnir family** to our area. However, with their visas expiring soon, they are actively reaching out to officials to secure their stay in their new home. Please pray for their efforts to keep them in the USA.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A FRIEND

Some of our parishioners are on the Board of the Friends of Rocky River Public Library! Recently voted in for the 2025-26 year are **Nancy Ryan Seryak**, President, **Vid Lutz**, Vice President, **Roberta Trutko**, Secretary; **Craig Rimlinger**, Treasurer; **Mary Horvath**, Membership Chairperson; and **Jenny Dieringer**, Event Support. Keep up the good work!

HOLE IN ONE

The writer of this column is happy to add that her husband, **Jim Trutko**, had his first hole in one on May 12. The miracle occurred at Shale Creek Golf Club in Medina. Hole 15 is 112 yards. After the drive, it took a few bounces and went into the hole. Congrats!



ALUMNI

Michelle Sheehan has been recognized as the Cleveland State Law Alumni Association's Alumni of the Year. Fr. John was present and gave the invocation at the event. The Honorable Michelle Sheehan sits on the Eighth District Court of Appeals bench. She serves St. Christopher as a Lector.



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 3	KINDERGARTEN PROMOTION
June 3	GIGI'S PLAYHOUSE DRUM CONCERT
June 4	LAST DAY OF SCHOOL
June 6	EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION
June 9 - 13	VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
June 15	FATHER'S DAY
June 18	LADIES GUILD TAI CHI
June 21 & 22	ANOINTING OF THE SICK ALL MASSES
July 12 & 13	CHRISTMAS IN JULY COLLECTION
July 19 & 20	CHRISTMAS IN JULY COLLECTION
July 25	ST. CHRISTOPHER FEAST DAY
August 15	FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY
August 17	PRE-BAPTISM CLASS
August 20	FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
August 22 - 24	SCP COMMUNITY WEEKEND

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