

Dates of Interest

Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation

Saturday mornings at 9:00 AM
[no confessions on Saturday March 8
and Holy Saturday, April 19]

*Communal Reconciliation Service with
Individual Confessions*
7:00 PM on Wednesday, April 9

Wednesday Confessions
6:30-7:00 PM on March 12, March 19,
April 2 and April 16

Stations of the Cross & Benediction
Fridays, 7:00 PM
March 7 – April 4

Living Stations of the Cross
Friday, April 11, 1:30 & 7:00 PM

Special Lenten Presentations
7:00 PM on Wednesday, March 19 –
Rev. Joseph Dieckhaus
Loving and Supporting the Divorced
and Separated Catholics Among Us:
Answering Your Questions

7:00 PM on Wednesday, April 2 –
Rev. Thomas Mullin
Getting ready for Holy Week –
A Walk through the Passion/
Resurrection Narratives

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**Renewal Program at Saint Elizabeth
Ignites a Spiritual Awakening**

If a retreat weekend conjures thoughts of guitar-led singing, sharing circles and a feeling of renewal that gradually ebbs, think again. For Saint Elizabeth Parish, the Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) renewal program means something much different.

CRHP involves a weekend overnight experience at the parish that includes individual and group sharing – activities designed to awaken and renew the presence of Christ in one’s life. The CRHP renewal was introduced to our parish during the past year by a supporting team of the Committee for the New Evangelization under the leadership of parishioners Tim and Corinne Murphy.



Registration is now open for the next women’s retreat, to be held March 21-22, where participants will prepare themselves for a joyous Easter season!

“This program is really a renewal event, rather than a retreat,” said Tim, who notes that it was evaluated and approved by the full Committee for the New Evangelization before the team offered the first overnight programs for men and women last fall. “It met the committee goal, which is to bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith, that in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others.”

The first overnight renewal for women was held on October 11-12, while the first overnight for men was held last November 15-16.

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From 2 to 82... There's Something for Everyone at Saint Elizabeth!

If you're looking for a place where young and old alike can use their time, talent and treasure to grow spiritually, socially and in service to others, Saint Elizabeth is the place to be! We really do have something for everyone.

With over 50 ministries to get involved in, there's sure to be one that appeals to every age and talent. Though most of the ministries don't discriminate because of age, there are some that are specific to youth and even one reserved just for seniors. Don't worry though, adults help with the youth groups and the senior ministry has events designed for children and families, enabling different generations to mingle and learn from each other.

From organized programs such as *CLOW - Children's Liturgy of the Word* beginning at age four, Elementary Faith Formation, sacramental preparation, youth group social activities and service projects, to scouting and CYO sports, there are plenty of ways to keep the youth of our parish learning and living their faith.

"It's never too early to get involved," said Saint Elizabeth eighth-grader, Erin Finley. "I've been active in the parish for as long as I can remember." Erin helps with the elementary youth group and participates in Mass as an altar server. She also

plays for Saint Elizabeth's Varsity regional basketball team and helps during the JV practices. "I strive to be a role model for younger children. I hope they see that helping out and sharing our faith is important and fun, too," she explained.

Members of SAM - Senior Adult Ministry also think it's important to set an example for younger parishioners and to show the importance of family and community. By sponsoring events such as an annual Reading Phillies Game family day and the "Sinatra in the Park" concert this past summer, they encourage parishioners of all ages to come together for social fellowship.

"SAM was developed to meet the needs of parishioners 60 and over," said Sylvia Fasano, a member of the SAM planning team. "Activities are geared around three areas: social fellowship, responding to human needs and faith formation." With activities such as monthly game days, quarterly lunch-and-learns featuring informative speakers and trips to places such as The National Centre for Padre Pio in Barto, PA, the senior members of our parish can stay active by socializing, broadening their knowledge and enriching their faith life.



Children's Liturgy of the Word—CLOW—is held Sundays during 9:30 and 11:30 Masses and is one of the 50 ministries to get involved in at Saint Elizabeth.

"It's great to see intergenerational activities in the parish," added parishioner, Tom Beccone. "The Stewardship Day of Service really stands out as an event that not only helps others and promotes service, but it also fosters fellowship among parishioners of all ages."

No fear if you've outgrown the youth groups but aren't quite ready to join SAM either; there are still plenty of opportunities for you. Whether you volunteer to lead a committee, assist at Mass as a reader, singer or greeter, prepare meals, use your carpentry skills for the Good Works Ministry, attend bible study or simply enjoy a fun night at a Social Fellowship event, you're encouraged to participate and everyone is always welcome – regardless of age. After all, you're only as old as you feel...so get involved!

~ Rhonda Jones

School Spirits – Saint Elizabeth Parish School Celebrates its Own Identity as a Compassionate Community

This “School Spirits” section of our newsletter delivers updates and news from the parish school, keeping parishioners up to speed on the wonderful things happening right here on our parish campus.

The nation's Catholic schools – facing increasing competition, rising costs and a diminishing core of potential pupils – have struggled to keep and find new students in recent years. Since 2003, the number of students attending a Catholic school has fallen 22%, according to the National Catholic Education Association's Annual Statistical Report on Schools, Enrollment and Staffing. But creative ideas in various urban environments, including Catholic schools in the City of Philadelphia that hired a private organization called Faith in the Future to help it fundraise and rebuild, are helping...and even reversing the downward trend.

At Saint Elizabeth Parish School, there's more good news: for the first time, said Principal Dr. Diane Greco, we will be at capacity (in classrooms but not students), with two 8th grade classes next year and two full Kindergarten classrooms.

“Across the country, there are still some schools that have waiting lists for admission, so it seems that things may be starting to improve with regard to enrollment. It helps that we are parish-based, as this seems to be the most successful model for Catholic schools. It closely

connects the school with a larger, committed community,” explained Dr. Greco. “Consolidated schools, like some in Philadelphia, have more challenges because they have to create a new identity within an existing community – it's hard to blend different parishes together without one central church to bind everyone tightly like ours.”



The progress that Saint Elizabeth and other Catholic schools have made was recently celebrated during Catholic Schools Week – this year, marking the 40th anniversary of the event, which was conducted across the country the week of January 26-31. Here at Saint Elizabeth, Catholic Schools Week was kicked off by a celebratory Mass on Sunday, followed by an Open House when families had the chance to

tour the education center and speak with teachers and administrators. Throughout the week, the parish school hosted various activities including a student appreciation day with ice cream sundaes, a teacher appreciation luncheon, a mini field day for students, a book fair, faculty vs. students volleyball tournament (always a big hit with the kids!), and parent's night out at the Brickside Grille on Friday evening (always a big hit with the adults!).

The theme for this year's Catholic Schools Week, *Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service*, was the focal point of reflection and celebration around the nation. “We try to encompass these concepts that are at the heart of a Catholic school,” said Dr. Greco. “We have wonderful faith-filled families that, together, create our community but also participate in the larger Catholic community flourishing in the world. I believe that families are looking for that kind of community atmosphere today and this is helping to bring people back...and will continue to do so.

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Renew Your Faith and Find Peace with Catholics Coming Home

Have you stopped coming to Mass? Has practicing your faith lost priority in your life? Perhaps you feel as though you no longer belong, or even have feelings of disappointment, confusion or resentment toward the Catholic Church.

Sometimes events in life can challenge, even deeply hurt, our faith. Or, for any number of reasons, we fall away from the Church and don't feel comfortable enough to come back. The parish Committee for the New Evangelization has introduced the program, "*No Greater Love*"- *Catholics Coming Home* to provide Catholics who have been away from the Church with a compassionate, non-judgmental invitation to return to the joys of practicing their faith.

This program aligns with the goals of the 2012 Synod of Bishops in Rome, which calls the Church to: "create, in every place and time, the conditions which lead to this encounter between the person and Jesus Christ." It also aligns with the key objective of the New Evangelization that calls for the design of outreach programs for those who have ceased being active in the Church.

"We have a wonderful team working together," noted Deacon Jim Bogdan, Director of Religious Education, who with

Deacon Barry Midwood and several members of the Committee for the New Evangelization designed the program now being offered at Saint Elizabeth. *Catholics Coming Home* is a seven-week series conducted three times each year: after Labor Day, after Christmas and after Easter. Deacon Jim explained: "The first two sessions are really an opportunity for attendees to express their feelings. On paper, and verbally, everyone has the chance to discuss their personal reasons for having left the Church without any one exhibiting judgment. The next sessions focus upon one's relationship with Christ, our Catholic faith today, Mass and the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and living one's faith in the world."

The program is simple and straightforward, with the goal of renewing faith and deepening one's relationship with Christ. Everyone is fully accepted, wherever they may be in terms of their faith, and in their lives. "Whatever someone's reason for leaving the Church, they are never judged," emphasized Deacon Jim, "In so many cases, people feel like outsiders and don't know *how* to come back. Some people may have fallen away because of a misunderstanding, feeling unworthy, or as a result of a bad experience."

Deacon Jim continued, "They may have misconceptions or misinformation about the Church, so this is a great venue to clarify information. One common misconception, for example, is that divorced individuals who do not remarry outside the Church are not welcome to receive the sacraments of the Church; this often separates people from the Church. This is absolutely untrue! We want people to know that no matter what they are feeling, and no matter why they have left the church, that they are missed and valued. We want to provide accurate information and loving support, to make their return easy and comfortable. Often people who attend the first session feel welcome, are compelled to return, and want to learn more about the Catholic faith."

If you or someone you know has experienced disappointment, or has been away from the Church, you're warmly invited to attend "*No Greater Love*" - *Catholics Coming Home* to discover the peace of being more deeply rooted in your faith. For more information, call Deacon Jim at 610-646-6535 or email jbogdan@stelizabethparish.org.

~ Julie Krumenacker

Christ Renews His Parish (continued from cover)



CRHP teams from Saint Andrew Church in Newtown led both programs for Saint Elizabeth parishioners.

Corinne noted that CRHP is not meant to be a “one and done” weekend. “Both teams continue to meet to build upon what was experienced during the renewal overnight and prepare to give back what they received to the next group of attending parishioners. We are building a trusting and loving group of disciples who desire to come to know Jesus in a deeper way through community,” said Corinne.

“I tried not to have any personal expectations and went into the weekend with an open mind,” recalled Tim of the men’s CRHP. “I was only hoping that the Saint Elizabeth men would have the same powerful experience I first had over 14 years ago. From the personal testimonies of the participants, those hopes and prayers were far exceeded.” Tim continued, “I asked most of the men at the beginning,

‘Do you know why you are here?’ Most had no idea. But, by the end of the weekend, every man had a smile and a comment about how they now knew why they were there.”

Similarly, Corinne said the women’s renewal was equally moving. “The full range of emotions from hearty laughter to heartfelt compassion was something I had not experienced in a long time. Sleeping in the Saint Elizabeth social hall only a few feet away from the Blessed Sacrament Chapel was my highlight. The final Mass with Father Mullin and his ‘sending forth’ really hit home for me.”

Participants agreed. “I had never attended a renewal weekend, so I really had no expectations going into it,” said Carol Kolimago. “It was without a doubt one of the most spiritually enriching experiences I’ve ever had, and I’m so excited to be a part of the team preparing to lead the next renewal for women in March.”

Corinne and Tim thanked a number of other individuals for their support in getting CRHP off the ground at Saint Elizabeth, including Deacon Jim Bogdan, John Laager, Sam Venuti, Leslie Kelso, JoyceAnn Husted and Ann Polese.

Two CRHP renewals are being held this spring: an overnight for women on March 21-22 and one for men on May 16-17. To register for either renewal, please call 610-646-6535 or email Deacon Jim via jbogdan@stelizabethparish.org.

~ Sue Morgan

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Have a story idea? Does your group have an event you’d like for us to cover? Want to nominate a family for Family Spirits? E-mail Sara Richardson at sararichardson7272@gmail.com.

School Spirits *(continued from page 3)*

In a parish school like ours, many areas of family life are blended into one to create well-rounded young people. This is a key strength of Catholic schools and is especially true here."

Speaking directly to building a 'community of service,' Saint Elizabeth Parish School continues to incorporate new-and-improved service programs into the curriculum. According to Dr. Greco, "One of the most significant areas where we have expanded recently is our *Stars in Service* program, which now includes all grade levels. It has really worked out well. The younger grades paint placemats for children in hospitals or make cards for the deployed armed forces, for example, while the older students tackle more demanding projects like sorting donated clothing, or wrapping toys and gifts for children during Advent. These activities, done during school hours, keep the idea of serving others top of mind, helping to develop compassion in our students and making service a natural part of their everyday lives. It's a powerful reflection of the Catholic Schools Week theme."

Dr. Greco has no doubts that we will continue to enjoy a full, vibrant and faith-filled school community for years to come.

"Since its beginning in September of 2006, Saint Elizabeth has built a strong

identity among the young people of the parish. The first graduating class (2009) has already moved through high school and onto college studies. And because we are still relatively new, we have freedom to develop unique new programs. We can be creative and forward-thinking ...explore new ideas, make adjustments and try something else until we get it right. Our parents still have a strong voice, too. And everyone – students, faculty, parents, administrators – are fairly active in the Church. It's the right mix and what a Catholic school is really supposed to be today," concluded Dr. Greco.

~ Lisa Barbadora

Dates of Interest

(continued from cover)

Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday, April 12-13
Mass at 5:30 PM, 8:00 AM,
9:30 AM, 11:30 AM

Holy Thursday, April 17
Mass of the Lord's Supper at
7:30 PM

Good Friday, April 18
Solemn Passion Service at 3:00 PM

Holy Saturday, April 19
Blessing of Easter Foods at
11:00 AM
Easter Vigil Liturgy at 8:00 PM

Easter Sunday, April 20
Mass at 8:00, 9:30 & 11:30 AM

Other Special Events

Confirmation Ceremonies
10:00 AM and 2:00 PM on
Saturday, March 8

First Penance/Reconciliation
7:00 PM on Wednesday, March 26
& Monday, March 31

Registration Reminder!



**2014 Stewardship Day
of Service is
April 5. Registration
deadline is March 23.
Register online at
stelizabethparish.org.**

**PLUS! Save the Date: June 7.
Catholic Relief Services
Food Packing Program returns!**

Pastoral Care – Extending a Hand to Parishioners in Need

All it takes is one call to the parish ministry center, and Saint Elizabeth parishioners in need of just about any kind of pastoral care – from transportation to emotional support to personal prayers – can get help from fellow parishioners who volunteer their time and talents. It's like one-stop-shopping for parishioners...well, except there's never any charge! Here's a summary of some of the ways that our parish extends both a helping hand and a caring heart to those who need it most.

For those who are unable to drive, either permanently or temporarily, rides are available to Mass, to a parish event, and sometimes to a medical appointment. Saint Elizabeth has more than 20 parishioner-drivers on call through the Transportation Ministry.

The Home and Hospital Pastoral Care Team visits homebound parishioners and those in hospitals and nursing homes to provide emotional and spiritual support. These compassionate stewardship volunteers can provide childcare while a parishioner visits a hospitalized spouse, or stay with a homebound patient while the caregiver goes food shopping or to a medical appointment. Home and Hospital volunteers can be

found reading to a homebound parishioner, listening to their stories or simply helping to push a wheelchair outside for a little fresh air.



Parishioner Carol Kolimago prepares to bring Holy Communion to a fellow parishioner.

Evidence of the spiritual support available at the parish can readily be seen at Sunday Mass when one or more Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion stand at the altar after the distribution of Holy Communion to receive a blessing and a pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament to take to parishioners who are too incapacitated to attend Mass. During their Sunday home visits, the ministers share the scripture readings of the day and often talk about the message of the homily that was delivered at the Mass they attended. After a short prayer service and the reception of Holy Communion, they often leave a copy of our parish bulletin to keep our homebound or hospitalized parishioners in touch with the community. On

Wednesdays, these generous volunteers also visit and bring Holy Communion to senior adult parishioners living at Potter House and Hankin House in Eagleview.

Another group, the One-to-One Ministry, prepares lunch and dinner meals for parishioners in need, including both individuals who have had recent surgery or chemotherapy and entire families when the primary caregiver has become incapacitated. On one occasion, this ministry supplied meals over the course of seven months to a family with newborn twins with respiratory problems!

Of course, all of these stewardship volunteers cannot help if they don't know about your particular circumstances. And, even though it is often difficult to ask for or to accept help, the parishioners who support these ministries extend a hand with a loving heart. They truly believe that their 'services' are a gift. If you or a family member, friend, or other parishioner is in need of some pastoral care, don't hesitate to contact the parish ministry center at 610-321-1200. All it takes is one call!

~ Kathy Link

Meet Rey Forgione - He Keeps Saint Elizabeth in Ship-Shape

Rey Forgione, Coordinator of Maintenance and Facilities, has been a familiar face among the Saint Elizabeth parish staff since July 2013. He is responsible for maintaining the buildings and grounds, the upkeep of all mechanical systems, and coordinating repairs and custodial services in the church, education center and ministry center.

Rey joined the staff after many years working as a facilities management consultant with various churches, schools and Fortune 500 companies. Rey has an Associate Degree in Architectural Engineering from Pennsylvania State University, along with several

professional certifications. He is also a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Rey and his wife, Jacqueline, have been married 28 years and have four children. They are members of Saints Philip and James Parish in Exton, where Rey currently serves on the Finance Council after several years of service on the SS P & J Pastoral Council. Rey enjoys hunting and fishing, and has been active in the Boy Scouts.

“I really enjoy my work here at Saint Elizabeth,” said Rey. When reflecting on one of his highlights – having the Kimberton Ladder Truck on site and using the vehicle



to inspect the chimneys of both the social hall and the gym – he smiled, “The kids at school thought it was pretty cool.”

It’s long overdue – but welcome to the Saint Elizabeth parish staff, Rey, and thank you for all you do!

~ Georgann Cindrich

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