

# The Spirit

*Tidings for the parish community of Saint Elizabeth*

## *Stewardship is so Much More than Sundays*

*Each one of us has received a gift; use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace (1 Peter 4:10).*

We all have gifts from God. A stewardship way of life recognizes that we have a duty to accept our gifts and use them to bless the lives of others. The USCCB pastoral letter on stewardship affirms: "The Christian steward is one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends to them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord." At Saint Elizabeth Church, stewardship is a core component of our parish mission and the heart of parish life. As we recite our Parish Stewardship Prayer at Mass, we reflect that we are called to be the stewards of the gifts that God has entrusted to us.

The Stewardship Council has led a multi-phased journey to encourage all parishioners to renew their call to stewardship. The **Living Beyond Sunday: Growing, Praying and Serving (GPS)**



*Parishioners who volunteer their time, talent and treasure receive a special blessing*

program emphasizes that many stewardship opportunities exist well beyond Sunday,

both within and beyond our parish community.

"Stewardship can happen any time, not just on Sundays, and in any community, not just within Saint Elizabeth," said Deb Romich, who serves as a member of the Stewardship Council. "You can be a steward of God's gifts by giving blood, coaching a team, or getting involved in a community group. At Saint Elizabeth, stewardship service comes in many



different forms, such as the various liturgical ministries, teaching children by becoming a catechist for the Elementary Faith Formation Program, or cooking a casserole for St. John's Hospice (among many others). We encourage all parishioners to grow their stewardship."

The **GPS** program consists of three key phases:

**Growing, Praying and Serving.** Each phase has a specific focus to nurture our lives as Catholic stewards. During the Growing phase, we were called to ask ourselves How

is stewardship a part of my life? During the Praying phase, we asked that the Holy Spirit guide us through our stewardship journey. Currently, in the Serving phase, we are challenged to extend our service to others in new ways.

Deb went on to say, "As a steward, you may feel called to work on one team, such as the Finance Council, and when your term is

(continues on page 6)

## Saint Elizabeth's Crafting Hands Ministry: They knit blankets and broken hearts, alike

A mother never fully recovers from losing a child, but maybe they can eventually heal and find peace.

That's the hope of the Umbrella Ministries, a nationwide network of mothers who have lost a child and are working to provide love and support to other broken-hearted, grieving mothers. Since its founding in 1996, Umbrella Ministries has helped thousands of bereft mothers around the country and now has both a West Coast and East Coast chapter. Recently, Saint Elizabeth's rapidly growing Crafting Hands Ministry provided 85 prayer shawls - small, crocheted blankets - to each mom who attended an Umbrella Ministries retreat.

The shawls were draped over each mother during a cathartic "say their name" ceremony. One of the shawl recipients later wrote our Crafting Hands team a heartfelt thank you note with details about her deceased child. Her son's name was Brandon. Unexpectedly, the Saint Elizabeth crafter who had made this mother's specific shawl also has a son named Brandon. At that realization, shivers, goosebumps, and an unearthly stillness permeated the crafters' meeting.

"This is more than a coincidence, this is the work of the Holy Spirit," said Deb Romich, co-leader of Saint Elizabeth's Crafting Hands Ministry and one of the origi-

nal members of Saint Elizabeth Parish. "We are touching people's lives in special ways, but we are just as touched by the experience of comforting others. There is such great need for this."



*Crafting Hands Ministry brings comfort to mothers attending an Umbrella Ministries retreat*

The Crafting Hands Ministry began at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Deb Romich and Mary Fontana held the inaugural meeting in September of 2020. "Honestly, we thought we would attract maybe 8-10 people to make a few blankets for the needy, but it has blossomed into something much bigger," explained Romich. "We now have more than 50 members with a variety of talents including sewing, knitting, crocheting, and jewelry-making (rosaries) plus a dedicated delivery team who transport the finished products all over the Philadelphia area and beyond."

Crafting Hands also has gone from serving four non-profit agencies to more than 30 such as Martha's Manor and Camilla Hall, to name just two.

"It's a wonderful group of people - mostly women, but of all ages," explained Mary Fontana. "We make baby blankets, 'lapghans,' baby booties, baby bibs, burp cloths, blankets, prayer shawls, and much more and deliver them to a wide range of recipients."

One of their recent projects involved making "baby-shower-in-a-bag" kits for six pregnant veterans at the Coatesville VA. Each kit included knitted baby items, and a baby t-shirt embroidered with the words "My Mom's a Hero." Their next delivery is being made this June.

"We make so many beautiful, and unique crafts - for instance, in addition to blankets for vets,

we make beaded rosaries for our First Holy Communion kids," Deb added. "But, we would love to expand the ministry to include additional forms of craft making."

The Crafting Hands Ministry is open to everyone, of any age and any ability - you don't need any special crafting skills. Experienced crafters enjoy teaching new members how to sew, knit, crochet and more, so it's also an opportunity to learn something new! Conveniently, crafters work on their items at home and bring them in on the fourth Thursday

(continues on page 4)



## Family Spirits: Meet the Donoghue Family

Pat and Patricia Donoghue both came from Catholic households. Patricia, the youngest of eight children, grew up in upstate New York in a German-American family, while Pat, the fourth of five children, grew up on Long Island, New York in an Irish-American family. The two met while attending the State University of New York at Albany and joke that it is located halfway between their family homes.

It snowed on their wedding day in 1990 at Patricia's home parish, Holy Trinity, in Webster NY (snow is not unusual in upstate New York during the first week of April!). They moved to Long Island while Patricia pursued a doctorate degree in Clinical Psychology at Saint John's University in Queens. Pat worked in advertising as a copywriter. The couple enjoyed the Philadelphia area on weekend visits and when an advertising agency in Devon was looking for New York writers, Pat was hired and they moved to Glenmoore in 1999.

Pat now works at DMW Direct in Chesterbrook as Associate Creative Director. Patricia works with adults and adolescents in her private practice in Chester Springs, as well as at the Saint John Vianney Center in Downingtown - an inpatient and outpatient behavioral health center that provides services for Christian clergy and religious.

Three years ago, the Donoghue's moved into an 1830 historic stone Springhouse home. "It has required lots of TLC," Pat said,

"but we really love it."

Back in the fall of 2000, when Saint Elizabeth Parish first started celebrating weekend Masses in the Lionville Middle School gymnasium, Patricia and Pat helped with chair setup/breakdown and sang with various choirs. Over the years, the whole family has participated in the Stewardship Day of Service on many occasions.

In addition to the choirs, Pat and Patricia have served Saint Elizabeth on the Pre-Jordan team and as lectors. Pat is also a 4<sup>th</sup> degree member of the Knights of Columbus, has been a greeter and has volunteered with the Sister Parish Team. He is currently on the Parish Communications Advisory Committee.

Patricia hosted and participated in Lenten Faith Sharing groups and has been an EFF catechist, a member of the Adult Faith Formation Committee, and part of the Sister Parish Team. She is currently on the Parish Pastoral Council.

The Donoghue's oldest son, Patrick, 23, was homeschooled until he attended Drexel University, graduating magna cum laude in Business and International Communication. Patrick has been a greeter and built a nature trail behind our buildings as an Eagle Scout project. "The parish has been a wonderful community" said Patrick.



The Donoghues practice a "Stewardship Way of Life"

Their daughter, Bridgit, now 21, graduates this spring from Temple University with a major in Advertising - Art Design. Except for two years at STEM Academy, she was also homeschooled until college. Bridgit has been an altar server, a lector, and helped with sister parish activities.

Patricia and Pat's youngest son, Cahal (his name means Charles in Gaelic), is 19 and graduated from Bishop Shanahan High School in 2020. He currently attends Temple University. Cahal has been an altar server, greeter, and member of Saint Elizabeth Cub Scouts.

Patricia offers this advice to new parishioners: "Saint Elizabeth is a big parish, but if you get involved, you will meet great people."

Many thanks to this active, stewardship family!

~ Lisa Sheronas



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**Are You With the Flock?**

Nearly 3,000 parishioners have already subscribed to Saint Elizabeth Parish's free Flocknote messaging system to stay in touch and on top of parish news.

This flexible, online communication tool keeps you connected in the format you choose— email and/or text. Parish-wide announcements, ministry updates, closings, emergency declarations, and a weekly digest of events and activities are just a few ways the Flocknote system conveniently keeps you well-informed and up-

to-date with parish life. Recently, Flocknote even played a large part in the success of the Disciple Maker Index survey project, as many of our parishioners chose to complete the survey online, resulting in an above-average participation rate here at Saint Elizabeth Parish.

Remember: it's free to sign up to receive timely communications along with the rest of the flock! Go to the "Communications" section on the home page of the parish website ([www.stelizabeth-parish.org](http://www.stelizabeth-parish.org)) for step-by-step instructions.

***Saint Elizabeth's Crafting Hands Ministry:  
(Cont'd from page 2)***

of the month for "show-and-tell," the opportunity to swap materials and ask crafting questions.

"It's a great time for fellowship and fun, but it's also an opportunity to share the joy and appreciation that we receive from the recipients of our gifts to the rest of the group," concluded Deb. "We hear from grateful people who have been



touched by the work of our hands and it's inspiring. The Holy Spirit is here, always, but the special

moments like with Brandon's mother - that's our gift in return."

~ Lisa Barbadora

## School Spirits: A Salute to the Class of 2022: Leaders through Troublesome Times

Saint Elizabeth Parish School's return to in-person learning this year was guided by two principles: first, the continuity of our academic mission; and second, protecting the health and safety of our community.

If there is any silver lining to be found in the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the fact that we have learned many lessons that are likely to remain with us and impact our future. More than anything, the importance of social connections that make up the Saint Elizabeth Parish School experience has been reinforced. In fact, our resilient 8<sup>th</sup> grade students felt a special responsibility to lead us through this period. With their modeling for our younger students, we emerged positioned to continue our mission as a parish school prepared for the future. This includes our challenge to make the world a better place.

We took baby steps as vaccination rates rose and positivity rates correspondingly dropped, easing up on our masking mitigations and social distancing at lunch. As our mitigations lessened, our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students – especially our Student Council and National Junior Honor Society members – took their leadership role seriously and looked for every opportunity to bring back beloved traditions. They were poised to lead with their unique gifts. Prepared with an ethical and moral compass, they helped their peers put their

values into action and worked assertively for what is right, focusing on bringing the student body together.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade class led the way in October, putting together gift carts for veterans recently discharged from the hospital. They



*Students of the Class of 2022 are unique and extraordinary gifts from God!*

encouraged students throughout the school to do their part with donations. Each cart had a personal thank you note from the class recognizing the veteran's service.

Our 8<sup>th</sup> graders worked with the Saint Elizabeth Council, Knights of Columbus (#13141), to deliver the gifts on Veterans' Day.

The Class of 2022 were caring "buddies" to our kindergarten and first-grade students, sitting with them, and celebrating our liturgies and prayer services together. It was joyous to be back in church as a full congregation. Our upperclassmen helped the younger students choose "just the right" book at the Book Fairs this

year. They modeled how to win and lose graciously, taking on the organization and execution of our Sport Days. Student Council dances in winter and spring were popular and gave students in grades



6, 7, and 8 a long-awaited chance to socialize together – both organized by the Student Council.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade students inspired us to begin our

Holy Week in a faithful and reflective way with the Living Stations of the Cross that was both reverent and inspiring.

When our graduates think about their time at Saint Elizabeth and reflect on their individual small gestures of kindness and leadership, we hope it will inspire them to remember every moment of their parish school experience. Whatever they might become and wherever they might go, we hope they will realize that their efforts mattered and that they were an integral part of a place devoted to the greater good.

Thank you, Class of 2022, for your leadership through difficult times. You are unique and extraordinary gifts from God!

~ -Dr. Diane Greco,  
Parish School Principal



## Stewardship is so Much More than Sundays (cont'd from cover)

complete decide you need to feed your soul in a new way and get involved with the Sister Parish, Creation Care or Interfaith Action teams. We all have spiritual gifts that we nurture at different times in our lives and everyone is called to use their gifts for the benefit of others. Many times, our gifts of stewardship extend outside our parish to the local community and beyond.”

As a thank you to our many stewardship volunteers, the Stewardship Council is also highlighting the ways that parishioners have practiced stewardship through various ministries. Parishioner Jen Cook, who is on the Stewardship Council Recognition sub-committee said: “We are committed to finding ways to recognize the many parishioners who give their time and talent so readily and selflessly. The team kicked off their efforts in March with a Mass and a blessing for stewardship volunteers, followed by a wine and cheese appreciation event. The reception was open to all parishioners who have ever served at Saint Elizabeth and was well attended! To continue recognition throughout the year, a group of ministries is being highlighted each month and their contributions will be recognized through various channels like Facebook, the parish website, Flocknote, the weekly bulletin and pulpit an-

nouncements. Our team is excited about the possibility of another event for active stewards in the fall, so stay tuned!”

A terrific example of stewardship in action was the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Stewardship Day of Service (SDOS) in April. More than 100 parishioners



*Saint Elizabeth parishioners celebrate gifts of stewardship*

of all ages spent the day sharing their time and talents with non-profit community organizations such as the Lord’s Pantry in Downingtown, the West Chester Senior Center and the ARC of Chester County, among others. “Our Stewardship Day of Service is a wonderful example of how our parishioners live beyond Sunday,” noted Anne Tymon, member of the SDOS Planning Team. “Volunteers went beyond Sunday worship in church and practiced stewardship in our neighborhoods, putting their faith into action by serving the needs of those less fortunate. It

is very apparent how much the agencies appreciate the work accomplished by parishioners. I



think everyone who participated was enriched as well, knowing they made a difference.”

Stewardship is truly faith in action. It is important to ask ourselves: How are we living beyond Sunday? How can we use the gifts God has given us to serve others? Stewardship is something that is open to all people, of any age or place in life. There is so much we can do, starting at our parish but extending well into the community at large.

To follow the **Living Beyond Sunday GPS** program throughout the year, visit the parish website homepage for updates and opportunities to put your gifts into action.

*Whoever brings blessings will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered (Proverbs 11:25).*

~ Julia Krumenacker



# Spring Renews the Heart of Saint Elizabeth Parish

God's love and the blessings of spring surrounded Saint Elizabeth parish and its people during the Lenten and Easter Seasons. From prayerful reflection to teachable moments (al fresco!) to joyful celebrations, here's just a sampling of how God nurtured our souls and renewed our hearts with what we needed!

Deacon Barry helped a fifth grade EFF class understand that The Passion of Christ is a story about faith, love and belief in God.



Parish children looked for treasures during an Easter-themed play date coordinated by the Elizabeth Ministry.



Father Kevin blessed water during the Easter Vigil, a reminder of our baptism and of our commitment to live a Christ-centered life.



Parishioners rolled up their sleeves for the annual Stewardship Day of Service.



Parishioners prayed for peace and justice for those involved in the Ukrainian conflict.



A Lenten tradition, the annual Fish Fry was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.



On Good Friday, parish youth made Easter lily deliveries to 22 parishioners grieving the loss of a spouse in 2021 and early 2022.



Eighth grade parish school students reenacted the Stations of the Cross.



Bishop John McIntyre visited Saint Elizabeth and celebrated Palm Sunday Mass.





