

Dates of Interest

Monday, September 5
Labor Day Holiday Mass at 9:00 AM

Tuesday, September 6
Saint Elizabeth Parish School
Opening Day for Grades 1-8

Sunday, September 11
Saint Elizabeth Parish School
Welcome Back - Prayer Service
3:30 PM

M-T-W, September 12-13-14
Elementary Faith Formation
Opening Liturgy and
Parent Orientation

Saturday, September 24
K of C Blood Drive

Fri-Sat, September 30 - October 1
Christ Renews His Parish
Women's Overnight Renewal

Tuesday, November 1
All Saints Holy Day Masses
7:30 AM, 12:00 PM, 7:00 PM

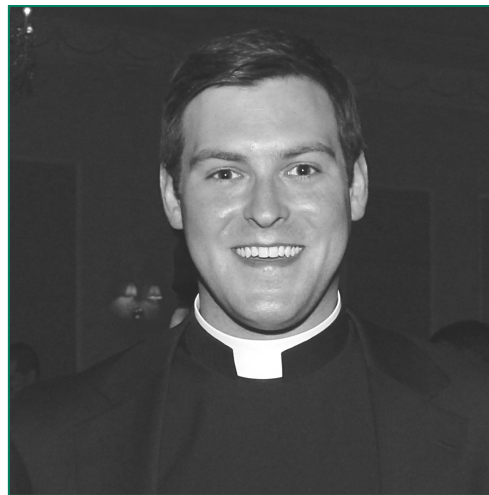
Sun-Tues, November 6-7-8
Forty Hours Devotions

Thursday, November 24
Thanksgiving Mass at 9:00 AM

Getting to Know Father John Stokely

This summer, parishioners welcomed Parochial Vicar, Father John Stokely, to our parish community. Father John settled in to his new home on Saint Elizabeth Drive in July, enthusiastic about entering a new stage of his priestly ministry as the assistant pastor of Saint Elizabeth Church.

A native of West Chester, Pennsylvania, Father John's journey to the priesthood began at a young age. He attended elementary school at Saint Aloysius Academy in Bryn Mawr, and high school at Bishop Shanahan in Downingtown. "I was very blessed to encounter many good



priests and religious sisters (mostly IHM), who inspired me to consider becoming a priest," he notes. "My childhood parish was Saints Peter and Paul Church in West Chester, and the pastor at the time was Monsignor James Foley. He was an early and very positive influence with regard to my vocation to the priesthood. I decided to become a priest because I realized how much God had

blessed me, and I wanted to share those blessings with others in a special way. It was apparent to me, through prayer and the encouragement of others, that God was calling me to share His blessings through the ministry of the priesthood. Becoming a priest was a response not only to fulfill a childhood dream, but to also fulfill the very purpose for which God made me. That is really what God has in mind for all of us – to seek His will and live it to the best of our abilities."

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"My mother and father, family and friends were very helpful and supported my vocation in ways that surpassed my expectations. I think my parents were less surprised than I was when I began to seriously consider this vocation! My good friends were likewise supportive, but in their own unique way. I often tease them, saying that their means of support was attempting to corrupt me throughout my seminary years. Hopefully they were not too successful!"

(continues on page 4)

Catholics Coming Home Provides a Welcoming Atmosphere to Reenergize Your Faith

Are you, a family member or friend looking to reenergize your Catholic faith? Is the Holy Spirit calling you to a deeper involvement? The *Catholics Coming Home* program may be just right for you.

Catholics Coming Home is a six-week evening program designed to welcome people who are exploring a return to a more active practice of the Catholic faith, explains Deacon Barry Midwood.

“Participants come with many different life stories and backgrounds, and they are at varying places in their faith journey,” Deacon Barry reports. “In common, they attend because the Holy Spirit is prompting them to return to a more active participation in their Catholic faith. And, thanks be to God, at the conclusion of the six-week program almost everyone expresses a reenergized relationship with Christ and His Church.”

One recent participant, Richard Dillon, recalled that a bit of Irish wisdom helped spur him to attend the Winter/Spring 2014 session. “In 2009, I was in the hospital recovering from cancer surgery, and a priest stopped by to visit. I told him I had been away from the Church for many years. In his best Irish voice, he said, ‘Don’t you worry. The Church is like your mother – you’ll come home someday.’”

Richard did just that, after seeing a sign posted outside the church

advertising the program. “I was most surprised by all the changes since I left, chiefly a more open, forgiving Church.”

Maribeth Shea-Droese, who participated in the fall of 2015, had a similar experience, surprised by the many changes to the Mass format and the role of deacons in the Church. “I learned much about Catholic doctrine that I never understood during my eight years of parochial school,” she says.

Both Richard and Maribeth say the experience has reenergized their faith. Maribeth said she feels more welcome at Saint Elizabeth Parish than the church she was attending when she got married. “I look forward to being a part of the community each week,” she says.

Maribeth explained that she was away from the Catholic church for many years, but active in a nearby Lutheran church where her children were baptized and confirmed. “I became ambivalent about attending the Lutheran church, followed by a transformative experience at the World Meeting of Families, when Pope Francis visited Philadelphia,” she says.

Catholics Coming Home is adver-



tised in a number of ways, including signs around the church campus, bulletin notices, the parish website and Facebook page, but Deacon Barry noted that the personal touch works best.

“The most effective way to make people aware of the program and welcome them to our community is through personal invitation,” he says. “Before each program we ask our parishioners to pray and consider inviting family members, friends or acquaintances who may benefit from exploring their faith anew through *Catholics Coming Home*.”

The next series will be held this fall. Anyone interested in attending should call the Parish Evangelization Office at 610-646-6526.

~ Susan Morgan

Summer's over. It's back to work, back to school, and back to church. Here's some suggestions to reenergize our faith.

~ Rev. John Patrick Stokely

After a busy year, we all attempt to slow down for the summer, and that's not always easy to do. It takes time to slow down—just like trying to stop the momentum of an Indiana Jones-esque boulder! But once we slow down, relax and begin to really enjoy the summer months... the next thing we know, it's over.

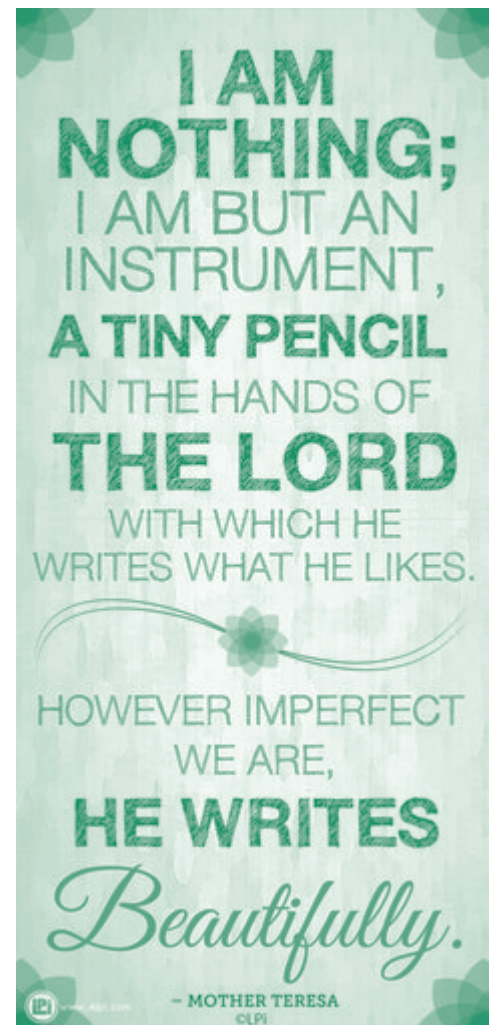
We need to get back to our activities, and that "relaxation-inertia" we worked so hard to achieve makes it difficult to get the ball rolling again!

So, feeling the same way myself, I am suggesting a few ways to reenergize our faith for the year ahead. Of course, these suggestions are not exhaustive of the many ways to breathe new life into our relationship with Christ. They are simply a few ideas.

Three Ways to Reenergize our Faith:

- **Do it now.** Many times when I make a new resolution, the plan is decided to inevitably begin tomorrow. Deciding to pray the Rosary, begin reading the Bible, or even add some sacred art or a crucifix to our home is something simple enough to do right away.
- **Do it yourself.** It is so tempting to believe that holiness and a deep relationship with Jesus is for "other people." You know who I mean... those "holy people" or people we consider "living saints." Believe it or not, that is what God has in mind for all of us. So we need to embrace our universal call to holiness as God's children.
- **Do it for others.** Reenergizing our faith is not merely for our own benefit. When we grow in faith, the whole community is enriched. It is also helpful to consider not only what we "get out of church" but more importantly, what we can bring to the table. Focusing on helping others and being good stewards is essential to having our faith strengthened.

I plan to take these three tips to heart this fall, and I hope they are helpful to you as well.



Shop with STARS Rewards

An easy way to support Saint Elizabeth Parish is through the STARS' Rewards program. Gift cards are available for sale after every Mass on Saturday and Sunday in the Ministry Center. Are you doing any home improvement? Get your Home Depot and Lowes cards! Was your child invited to a birthday party? Pick up a Barnes and Noble or Toys R Us card. From Acme to Zappos and every retailer in between, you'll find a place you like to shop!

Welcome Father John Stokely *(cont'd from cover)*

Father John entered Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in 2005, where he obtained three degrees: a Bachelor of Arts, a Master of Divinity, and a Master of Arts in Theology. He was ordained in May 2013 at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Philadelphia. Prior to coming to Saint Elizabeth Church, he served as Parochial Vicar at Saint Robert Bellarmine Church in Warrington, Bucks County.

"The biggest challenge in my career has been leaving one assignment and beginning another," he reflects. "As many priests will attest, a first parish is similar to a first love. Although the time is bound to end, it is still difficult when that time comes. On the other hand, I feel extremely blessed to be reassigned to yet another large, suburban, vibrant and loving parish. My initial impression of Saint Elizabeth was



Father John Stokely greets parishioners after Mass.

'Wow! Everything is so big!' The church, the education center, the ministry center, and the campus are all so large, yet it's the size of the parishioners' hearts that is truly impressive. I can see that this parish family is very involved and very generous, and I hope to learn a great deal from everyone here."

Father John says his first goal at Saint Elizabeth Parish is to share the love of Christ to the best of

his ability. "A priest is able to do this in some unique ways, namely, through the Sacraments and preaching," he says. "I hope to share much joy with the parishioners here in the everyday things as well. If I can assist in growing the love and joyful spirit of this parish, I feel that would be a great achievement."

In his spare time, Father John enjoys reading, music, attending concerts, and playing golf. Our parish community wishes him a warm welcome as we look forward to his valuable time with us. Welcome Father John!

~ Julie Krumenacker



A Special Invitation to All Female Parishioners

Be part of the next Saint Elizabeth **Christ Renews His Parish** renewal experience.

**Friday, September 30, at 6:00 PM through
Saturday, October 1, at 9:00 PM**

This **Christ Renews His Parish** Renewal Program is an overnight retreat for women who desire to grow in faith along with our church community. It is a gathering of ordinary women for an extraordinary experience.

Register today via www.stelizabethparish.org. For more information, contact Allison Shirker at 610-547-8104 or AShirker@verizon.net.

"You shall be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

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Family Spirits: Meet the Dominiecki Family

The Dominiecki family have been parishioners at Saint Elizabeth church for 10 years – years full of love, family, commitment, community service and faith. It is apparent in how they weave their Catholic faith and strong sense of community into their everyday living.

The couple met as undergraduates at Penn State, when they both joined a national co-ed service fraternity called Alpha Phi Omega. The three pillars of the fraternity are; Leadership, Friendship and Service. Mary jokes that while she was drawn to it for the “Service,” her husband may have had his eye on the prize! Needless to say, it sparked a friendship and love that would produce a beautiful family, blessed to be a blessing to many.

They were married in 1995, just six months after Mary graduated from college (and prior to embarking on her PhD), and a year after Tom finished his Master’s degree. They have been married for 21 years and have three boys: Michael (17), Joseph (14) and Anthony (11). Joseph recently graduated from Saint Elizabeth Parish School, where Anthony is currently enrolled, while Michael is entering his senior year at Bishop Shanahan High School in Downingtown.

Tom is a civil engineer who designs roads and traffic signals, while Mary works in healthcare market research. Her work is focused specifically in oncology. She works with pharmaceutical companies that develop drugs to

combat all types of cancer. They both love their work. Mary feels that in her small way, she is contributing to developing better treatments for these devastating diseases.

The Dominieckis lived in several places during their marriage, but decided to move back to this area in 2006, which coincidentally was also the year the Saint Elizabeth Parish School opened. Right

Mary was an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion for six years and sings with several choir groups at Mass. Both Tom and Mary recently retired from leadership roles with Cub Scout Pack 61, after many years of dedicated service.

This summer, Joseph and Anthony attended Summer’s Best Two Weeks, a camp where competitive sports and bible study are



The Dominiecki family pictured in Denali National Park, Alaska. From left: Joseph (14), Anthony (11), Mary, Tom and Michael (17).

away, they began to look for ways to contribute to their new parish community. Mary became a volunteer to help bring extra-curricular activities to the parish school including art, science, theater and photography clubs among others. This was the beginning of a very long list of stewardship opportunities in which Tom and Mary have participated. Tom has served on the Liturgical Life Committee and plays guitar and sings in the Guitar Group. He is also a member of the Knights of Columbus.

part of the agenda. They gained lifelong lessons in teamwork, while growing in their Catholic faith. Michael took a summer job at Chick-fil-A and is looking forward to his senior year in high school.

It is obvious to all who meet the Dominiecki family that they all live an energized life of love and faith.

~ Kem Odike

Could You Not Watch One (Half) Hour With Me?

The Saint Elizabeth Prayer Ministry is made up of volunteers who pray for people who have requested prayer for various intentions. Parishioners write their requests in an intention book located on the podium outside the chapel. The Pastoral Care Office also maintains a list of private prayer requests, for those who may not wish to make their intentions public.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (cc 2564) calls prayer, “a covenant relationship between God and man in Christ.” In a traditional definition, prayer is explained as, “lifting your mind and heart to God.” Whatever the definition, it is our unique way of connecting to God. Prayer can be an act of Adoration, because God is; of Contrition, because God loves and is full of mercy; of Thanksgiving, because God provides; or of Supplication, because God listens. The Church centers all of its communal activity on prayer and uses it to draw the faithful to a closer relationship to each other and to God. Traditions of prayer date back to the Old Testament days, long before Christianity. Jesus taught his disciples how to pray when he gave them, and us, the “Our Father.” Through the beautiful words of our Blessed Mother in “The Magnificat,” and with the Rosary, we learn that God has blessed her and will bless us when we ask.

As a devotion, many Catholics reenergize their faith through Eucharistic adoration. One of the first references to adoration is found with monks and religious



during the time of St. Basil (died, AD 379); Franciscan archives credit St. Francis of Assisi (died, AD 1226) with starting the practice. Lay people began the practice of Eucharistic adoration in Avignon, France, on September 11, 1226, in thanksgiving for the Church’s victory over the Albigensian Heresy. After the French revolution the feast of Corpus Christi (now the feast of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ) was instituted for the faithful to honor Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with outdoor processions.

Here at Saint Elizabeth Church, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for adoration every Monday throughout the year. Hours run from 8:00 AM until 4:30 PM between June and September and from 8:00 AM until 8:30 PM through the remainder of the year. Members of the Saint Elizabeth Prayer Ministry sign up for 30-minute time periods to bring the intentions of our parish family to the Lord in prayer. Many parishioners, who are not on the volunteer prayer minister list, also stop in throughout the day

to pray. “If you can’t commit to 30 minutes each Monday, come when you can,” says Mary Ann Nelson, one of the prayer volunteers. “Jesus is waiting.” She adds, “People don’t realize that a half hour a week in adoration can make such a difference in their busy lives.”

“Be willing to sit and do nothing; to become empty, so you receive something,” says Kellyanne Patterson. “You are changed when you leave.” Kate Hannum explains, “It is important that we are together with Christ. The monstrance immediately calls you to Jesus. What could be better?” Both are volunteer prayer ministers.

All parishioners are invited to become regular prayer partners with the Saint Elizabeth Prayer Ministry in whatever capacity fits their schedules. Sign up forms are located outside the chapel along with Spiritual Bouquet cards that are used to let others know that you have been praying for them.

For more details, go to “Get Involved” and “Ministries and Organizations” on the parish website at www.stelizabethparish.org. You can also contact Mary Ann Nelson (mnelson288@gmail.com; 610-321-2577) or Mary Damian (mkdamian@comcast.net; 610-551-4772).

~ Lisa Sheronas

*“Amen, I say to you: whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you will receive, and it will be given to you, says the Lord.”
(Mark 11:23-24)*

Reenergizing our Youth's Faith Through Sports

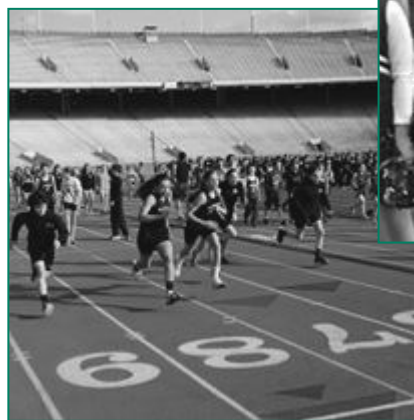
"Our Father, who art in heaven..." These words might not be commonplace at most youth sporting events, but ask any Saint Elizabeth Athletic Ministry participant what's unique about SEAM sports and most will mention that the events always begin with a prayer. No matter what prayer is prayed, it helps to foster the Catholic Christian atmosphere of this youth ministry.

Even though praying together might seem like the most obvious difference between SEAM and other sports programs, it's really just the beginning. As several Saint Elizabeth Parish youth participants explain, "Saying the prayer reminds us that we are here to be encouraging teammates, to show great sportsmanship, to have fun and to give everyone a chance to participate. There are more important things than winning."

"SEAM is more than just a sports program. It is a church ministry," shares the current Athletic Director, Bob Ferraro. The mission of the program is to give all children an opportunity to meet and play in a Christian environment where they are treated in a positive and encouraging manner by their coaches, parents and teammates. The goal of the leaders and coaches is to give witness to our Catholic faith and to lead by example in promoting healthy competition, good sportsmanship and responsibility to our parish community.

Athletes are encouraged to ap-

preciate and share their God-given talents with others; but also to respect those less gifted at the sport as they participate and improve. "I've seen children demonstrate their faith by encouraging and cheering for their teammates, no matter what their level of play," praises Andree Drouilhet, past SEAM board member, volleyball director and coach. "To me, this is being like Jesus to others, accepting and celebrating others as they are."



"It's not uncommon in track to participate against teams who have special-needs athletes," shares track and volleyball coach, Dale Jones. "It is a testament to our faith when the participants from every parish team line the track to cheer on those runners. The true joy that is expressed by everyone, not just the special-needs athletes, is heartwarming."

"I think the SEAM Sports program helps remind the kids and parents that they have a common bond that extends beyond the track, course, field or court," explains Carol Kolimago, cross

country and track coach. "That bond is faith. By incorporating our Catholic values into the sport, we begin to instill in the kids that their faith is just as important as the outcome of the event."

The SEAM sports program also serves as a way of uniting the children of our parish community. Through their participation, the youth get to meet other parishioners, both coaches and athletes. "I believe faith can be built, strengthened and reenergized through fellowship," stresses Dale.



As the players see teammates and coaches being visible participants at Mass and other parish functions, they gain a greater sense of community. "Being on a sports team may be one of the main ways a child becomes involved with our community," Andree adds. "Hopefully a positive experience with SEAM sports and a sense of belonging will lead to greater involvement in the parish and ultimately bring the participants to a deeper relationship with the Lord."

As the children play and grow, the lessons they learn from their coaches and teammates truly brings their Catholic faith alive. Remember, it all begins with a prayer!

~ Rhonda Jones

New this Fall SEAM Soccer!



Saint Elizabeth Athletic Ministry is adding soccer to its lineup of fall sports. There are 65 athletes participating, making up two coed junior varsity teams and two varsity teams.

The inaugural season will run through November.

Good luck to Director, Kyle Worrell, and all of the soccer coaches and athletes!

On page 7, read more about how our athletic ministry is reenergizing our youth's faith.

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