

Dates of Interest

Monday, September 3
Labor Day Holiday
Mass at 9:00 AM

Tuesday, September 4
Saint Elizabeth Parish School
Opening Day for Grades 1-8

M-T-W, September 10-11-12
Elementary Faith Formation
Opening Prayer Services

Friday-Saturday, September 28-29
Christ Renews His Parish
Women's Overnight Renewal

Saturday, October 6
Knights of Columbus
Blood Drive

Friday-Saturday, October 19-20
Christ Renews His Parish
Men's Overnight Renewal

Thursday, November 1
All Saints Holy Day
Mass at 7:30 AM, 12:00 PM
and 7:00 PM

Sunday-Tuesday, November 4-5-6
Forty Hours Devotions

Thursday, November 22
Thanksgiving Holiday Mass
at 9:00 AM

**Father Chambers Celebrates
40 Years as a Priest**

This past July our devoted weekend Pastoral Assistant, Father Francis Chambers, OSA, celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his priestly ordination. Ordained on July 29, 1978 at Our Mother of Good Counsel Church in Bryn Mawr, Father Chambers has spent most of his working years in higher education at Villanova University, in the departments of Student Life, Campus Ministry, Teaching, and for the past 25 years, Admissions. He has attained several post-graduate degrees, including a Master's Degree in Counseling from Villanova, a Master's Degree in Spirituality from Duquesne University, a Master's Degree in Theology and a Doctorate of Ministry from the Washington Theological Union. In addition to putting in a 40 hour (often more) work week at Villanova, Father Chambers is quite active as a priest, celebrating Mass not only at Saint Elizabeth Parish, but also in a variety of other places he is frequently called to serve.



Our weekend Assistant Father Francis Chambers, OSA, recently celebrated the 40th anniversary of his priestly ordination.

Despite his extraordinarily busy schedule, Father Chambers recently took some time to answer a few questions regarding his time as a priest and as a member of the parish community at Saint Elizabeth.

How did you receive your calling to the priesthood?

Well, of course, we believe as Catholics that we are called by God to a particular vocation, but God also uses circumstances and people to make this known. I grew up in a rather Catholic culture. I went to Catholic elementary school, high school, college and graduate school. But people also played a role. In my case my family, in particular my father, were very devout Catholics (though, like all of us, not perfect). God speaks through circumstances and people, and as long as we develop a listening heart we find The Way.

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Father Chambers Celebrates 40 Years as a Priest *(Continued from cover)*

What drew you to the Augustinian Order?

I attended Monsignor Bonner High School, which the Augustinians staffed. I was touched by their focus as well as their approachability, especially when dealing with so many adolescent boys. I also knew the Augustinians from my home parish, where they would come for Masses on the weekends much like I do here at Saint Elizabeth.

How would you describe the mission and lifestyle of an Augustinian Friar?

Two words come immediately to mind: interiority and community. Saint Augustine put a great deal of emphasis on these concepts. Interiority is listening to the voice of God within. There are so many voices that surround us and distract us that it's easy to miss the voice of God. Interiority emphasizes listening to that voice. Saint Augustine reminds us, "Let me know myself, and let me know you." (Soliloquies 2,1).

Community is another hallmark of the Augustinians. We come to know ourselves through others. Living a strong community life assists us in coming to know ourselves and whom God has called us to be.

What have been the most challenging, as well as rewarding aspects of being a priest over the past 40 years?

Probably the most challenging has been to be the person God has called me to be as a man, as a Christian, as a religious and as a priest. In a word, to be faithful. The most rewarding aspect of the priesthood is administering the sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is quite humbling.

What was the best advice you were given early in your career?

Be yourself. God calls us all uniquely with gifts and shortcomings. Give it all to God and let God work through it all. You don't have to be anyone else.

Besides Saint Augustine, do you have a favorite saint?

Actually, I don't. Saint Augustine was such a great thinker and writer (over a million of his words still exist) that I could spend the rest of my life pondering his thoughts over and over (as well as the Gospel).

What is the most valuable lesson you have learned over the past 40 years?

I have learned that life is not always black and white; there is a lot of gray. So I have learned to be as flexible as possible without undermining my responsibilities as a priest.

What are your goals for the next 40 years?

Well, I doubt I have another 40 years ahead. But whatever time I have, I hope to be a faithful priest and pass on the gift of priesthood.

How does your time at Saint Elizabeth connect with your vocational journey?

Well, in 40 years I have served as a priest in many varied situations. Saint Elizabeth is unique and I would say the most rewarding of my 'weekend work.' The values that Father Mullin has focused on here at Saint Elizabeth: faith, service, community and availability are basically Gospel values. It is so uplifting to be among people who share that vision and mission and are, for the most part, enthusiastic about it.

The parishioners of Saint Elizabeth greatly appreciate your time and contributions over the past 17 years. What has kept you committed to our parish?

The other day I was going over some old notes from my seminary days (imagine I still have them!). I ran across some notes from a class that was discussing commitment, and the message was that prayer affects commitment. When prayer goes, commitment goes. I think that is what has kept me committed to Saint Elizabeth. But think about that in any vocation – married, single, religious, priesthood.

What is the best advice you can offer to young adults who may be struggling with their Catholic identity, or find Catholicism challenging, given our current culture, media influences, etc.?

Be a critical thinker. Be careful to whom you listen. Not everyone's opinion is of equal value. Also, it is all right to have questions; we all do, or have. But what you do with those questions and how you resolve them is important.

What would people be surprised to learn about you?

I wasn't always the best student, especially in high school. After high school, I went to Malvern Prep for a post-graduate year and that really turned it around for me.

What do you and Father Mullin debate about?

Villanova or Saint Joe's? Guess who is which? Guess who wins?

Congratulations to Father Chambers on his many years of dedicated and caring ministry, especially to the people of Saint Elizabeth Parish!

-Julie Krumenacker

Who Are the Augustinians?

The Order of Saint Augustine (OSA) is a religious order within the Catholic Church whose mission embodies an emphasis on community life, prayer and service. The OSA originated in the 13th century in Tuscany, Italy, when numerous priests were drawn to a monastic and community life inspired by the Rule of Saint Augustine. Saint Augustine practiced and preached charity toward God and neighbor, and was deeply dedicated to a search for knowledge, both divine and earthly. The Augustinian way of life is shaped by Saint Augustine's experience and counsel, and is characterized by three essential elements: the constant search for God by means of a deep interior life; the practical love of neighbor; and the constant pursuit of truth.

The Augustinian Order is divided into provinces in 47 different countries, with a total of approximately 2,500 Augustinian Friars throughout the world. In North America, there are three

provinces (East Coast, West Coast and Midwest/Canada), much like how a diocese serves a particular geographical area. The Eastern Province traces its beginnings to 1796, when the first Friars arrived from Ireland and established the Church of Saint Augustine (Olde Saint Augustine) in Philadelphia. In 1844, anti-Catholic rioters burned the church to the ground, along with the friary and theological library. In 1842 the friars re-established the center of Augustinian life at Villanova College (now Villanova University), under the patronage of Saint Thomas of Villanova. At that time, only 44 friars comprised the Province, serving more than fourteen churches in four different states. Today, the Villanova Province consists of approximately 195 friars, with several men in formation.

Traditionally, Augustinians served in education; however, they currently serve wherever the Church needs them – in parishes, in the missions, and in the preaching

apostolate and in other ministries. In everything they do, the intellectual life is very important to them. Saint Augustine believed that one comes to know himself through others, so Augustinians are also known for community life, a distinctive charism of their Order.

The OSA emblem is a flaming heart pierced by an arrow on the background of an open book. Saint Augustine is often portrayed holding a flaming heart, representing his great personal charity and his love of neighbor as the way to serve God. For Augustinians, the open book denotes a dedication to the pursuit of knowledge, while the arrow piercing the heart represents the Spirit of God piercing their minds and hearts, calling them to continual growth in faith, hope and love.

-Julie Krumenacker



Liturgical Ministers: Don't Just Go To Church...Be The Church!

Have you noticed? At every Mass there are teams of dedicated parishioners serving as liturgical ministers. They are the familiar faces of those at the ambo reading the Word of God, distributing Holy Communion, leading the music or maybe assisting someone in the back of the church.

Saint Elizabeth Parish has many opportunities for parishioners to be stewards of the gifts that God has

entrusted to them. These are the stories of some of the people that share their time and talent as a liturgical minister.

Ray Erfle has served as a Lector at various times throughout the last 50 years. When asked why, he said "After Vatican II, I thought it would be a wonderful way to participate more fully within a revitalized Church. Proclaiming the Word at weekend Masses continues to bring

me closer to the astounding richness of each Person of the Trinity." Ray explained, "Each time I try to put the message of a particular reading into practice in my own life I experience another depth of richness." Once, Ray was a Lector at Mass when a Cardinal was presiding. "My knees started shaking and didn't stop until the reading was done," he said. "I realized afterwards practice is the key to staying relaxed."

(continues on page 6)

School Spirits: Looking Ahead with Exciting New Programs

Faculty and students at Saint Elizabeth Parish School are jumping right into action this school year, with some exciting new academic and social initiatives.

Leadership development will be taken to a new level as officers and representatives of the Student Council and the National Junior Honor Society participate in a new program from Leadership Trainer and Motivational Speaker Chris Seifert. Students will attend monthly workshops with lessons in enthusiasm, motivation, team building, project planning, organization skills and presentation skills. "While our students have always had opportunities for leadership, this will add depth to their experience as they learn more about how to execute and organize ideas that serve the student body," noted Principal Dr. Diane Greco. "We are excited to be one of the first schools to utilize this faith- and service-based program."

Last year, teachers introduced *Wonders Balanced Literacy Program* in kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms. This program aimed to encourage and motivate students to develop an authentic love and appreciation for reading, while building strong reading and writing skills. *Wonders* incorporated the strongest elements of both language and phonics, integrated strategically and consistently on a daily basis. "We wanted a program that would create independent readers

and motivate students to continue reading, even when it became challenging," stated Dr. Greco. "We found the program to be so successful that we are continuing it this year. We also agreed to add a supplemental program that would reinforce foundational skills." This year teachers will incorporate the *Foundations* (based on the Wilson Reading System) program to round out the Language Arts curriculum. *Foundations* actively engages students in learning and utilizing multi-sensory techniques to support age-appropriate levels of reading, writing and spelling. These two programs will prepare students to meet grade-level standards for college readiness and equip teachers with the ability to identify students who may need extra support.

A total of twenty-five of this year's forty Saint Elizabeth eighth graders met the eligibility requirements for the Neumann Scholarship Test. This is an independently administered test sponsored by the Connelly Foundation through its Neumann Scholars Program. Four-year scholarships are given to students who excel in the test for tuition at any of the 17 Archdiocesan high schools. To qualify for the test one must have a final average of 92.0 in the seventh grade and a National Percentile Total Score of 90 or a Cognitive Skills Index (CSI) of 120 on the seventh grade Terra Nova



Leadership trainer and motivational speaker Chris Seifert will be working with members of the Student Council and the National Junior Honor Society in the upcoming school year.

exam, as well as a strong desire to attend an Archdiocesan high school.

Eleven alumni of Saint Elizabeth Parish School have been awarded Neumann Scholarships over the years since the school's first graduating class in 2009. At the end of September, twenty-one eighth graders will sit for the test.

"We are very proud that this year more than half of our eighth grade class met the eligibility requirements and accepted the invitation to take the test for this prestigious award," stated Dr. Greco.

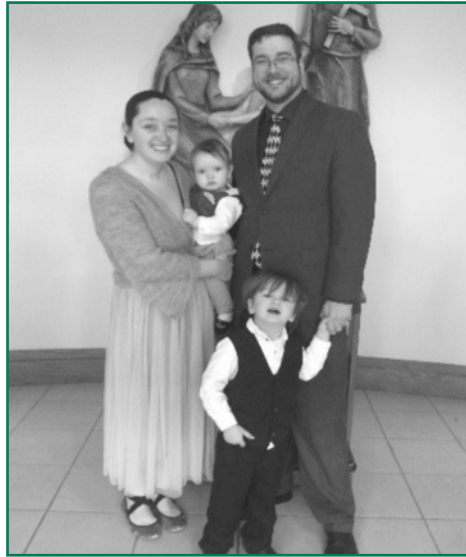
Scholarship announcements will be made at the end of November. Congratulations and best of luck to the eighth grade candidates!

-Julie Krumenacker

Family Spirits: Growing Into the Kopishke Family

Victoria Kopishke was in eighth grade when her parents, Maureen and Larry Bonito, moved their family from New Jersey to Downingtown, PA and into the brand-new parish of Saint Elizabeth Church. She attended Lionville Middle School where her family gathered for Mass in the LMS gym every weekend between 2000 and 2005. For more than 10 years, Victoria's mom has been serving on the Home and Hospital Team visiting the shut-ins of the parish and her dad (who died in 2009) was a member of the Saint Elizabeth Council of the Knights of Columbus. Victoria (a singer) and her sister Kathy (a keyboardist) used their talents in the choir. She recalls her initiation as a soloist at Mass in a classic case of "baptism by fire" when she and Kathy were the only members of the choir who were available one Sunday and they led the congregation in singing by themselves. Victoria was nervous, but that experience launched her into active participation in the parish Liturgical Music Ministry. Fast forward a few years, and now she is a soloist at many funerals and weddings and a frequent Cantor at Mass.

Victoria graduated from Downingtown East High School and went on to DeSales University where she studied Theater and English with a concentration in Secondary Education. There, in a theater



The Kopishke Family: Victoria (holding Connor), Owen and Aaron

class, she met Aaron Kopishke, who was double majoring in Theater and Math. They started dating as sophomores (after Aaron checked with her parents for approval) and they graduated in 2009. Both went on to study for their Masters' Degrees at Villanova University. He earned his in Math in 2011 and she earned hers in Theater in 2014.

Aaron and Victoria were married at Saint Elizabeth in 2011 and initially lived with her mother while saving for their own home. They now live in Bridgeport, PA. Victoria explains, "We requested and received permission to remain parishioners at Saint Elizabeth because, despite the 40-minute drive, no other church feels like home."

Aaron is an Implementations Analyst at SEI Investments.

In October 2010, he was welcomed into the full communion of the Catholic Church after participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program. He now offers his stewardship service as an Usher and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. Victoria is an Adjunct Professor of Theater at both DeSales University and Villanova University. She continues to participate in the Liturgical Music Ministry and serves as a Lector at weekend liturgies.

The Kopishkes have two little boys, 3-year-old Owen and 1-year-old Connor. Both were baptized at Saint Elizabeth and keep their parents and grandmother very busy and entertained.

Thinking back and given her varied experiences as a parishioner Victoria observed, "The spirit of Saint Elizabeth parish has not faded over the years and this sets the parish apart. Our community is more like a family. Father Mullin has always had a gift for making the church feel accessible. He has an immense gift and captured my attention as an eighth grader, so that growing up in the church wasn't hard at all."

All in all, the Kopishke family are a true stewardship family!

-Elisa Sheronas

Liturgical Ministers (Continued from page 3)

Tim Murphy volunteered to serve as a Sacristan when he heard about the parish's need for liturgical ministers. "My schedule is busy with family, work and formation studies for the Permanent Diaconate. Being a Sacristan is not very time consuming and it helps me stay involved at the parish," he said. "It also makes me more familiar with the set-up of Mass and some of the 'hidden' logistics I never observed from the pew. It has also enhanced my understanding of the liturgy, giving me the opportunity to ask questions of the priests and deacons who are at the altar." Tim has found it gratifying to be able to make a personal connection with so many people as they come to Mass and was surprised at the many details that go into making sure Mass runs smoothly. "Being a Sacristan is a great way to meet people and learn about the liturgy, too. When I started, the existing ministers were very helpful and made me feel comfortable in serving."

Colleen Cranney joined the Liturgical Music Ministry when Saint Elizabeth Parish was first formed. "I hadn't been involved other than attending Mass at Saint Joseph Church, and thought with the formation of a new parish, it was a good opportunity to become involved," she said. "I joined the Adult Choir, but it became apparent that my skills as a keyboard player were needed. I've been playing at the 8:00 AM Mass at least twice a month since the church was built." Colleen has made some great friends through the music ministry and as a result, feels much more engaged in the parish. "I feel more spiritually involved too and spend time reflecting on the weekly readings so I can select hymns that

are appropriate for the season. My hope is that my music can enhance the experience for people at Mass," she noted.

Chris Hill is an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. "I was not seeking this ministry," he said. "God came seeking me and I was open to it. In adoration, I kept feeling in my heart God asking me to, 'feed my sheep'." Chris finds that serving others has dramatically affected his personal relationships and "my relationship with Christ has never been better," he mentioned. "I am truly humbled with the awesome responsibility of allowing God to work through me, especially when assisting at Mass."

Carrie Mengel is one of the Liturgical Greeters who warmly welcome people before Mass. "I am surprised by how much I get out of it," she said. "I can have the worst day, but when I greet people my day improves at the door. There is always a take away from serving." When Carrie was new to the parish, she thought being a greeter was a good way to get involved. "Personally, it lifts my spirit and reminds me how blessed I am to be part of a faith-driven community and to be grateful for the gifts, talents and blessings I have received." One day when she noticed the church was filling up Carrie remembers, "I was breathless for a moment. I saw people on their knees. Tears filled my eyes with both beauty and compassion. I thought about how some might be praying for hope, health, strength or even faith; others might be giving thanks for something good they received. I could feel the Holy Spirit. I still turn around and look each time I am greeting before Mass. There is something powerful about that time."

Kathleen Bradlee serves as an Usher. "I really enjoy being part of those in our community who assist on the weekend," she said. "I had no idea how wonderful serving as an Usher would be. It makes it easy to meet people and gives me the opportunity to share a little deeper in the lives of those who attend Mass." Kathleen was surprised that her duties were much more than just seating people. "I believe the most important role is to make people feel welcome and part of the Saint Elizabeth family," she said. "Every Sunday someone new is coming to church hoping to find a community to call home or trying to reconnect to their Catholic faith. It made me realize how important it is for a parish to be warm and welcoming. As an Usher, there are hundreds of opportunities to help in small ways that make a big difference in someone's day."

Every weekend, Saint Elizabeth Parish is blessed with scores of parishioners serving as liturgical ministers helping to ensure everyone's spiritual, emotional and physical needs are met. "Serving is a way to find your faith, dig deeper within yourself and let God into your heart," said Carrie. "The gifts you get back are priceless." Chris said, "Serving as a minister is a great opportunity for everyone."

We need more stewardship volunteers for every liturgical ministry. We can accommodate your schedule and the personal rewards are great! For more information contact Gen Miceli at 610-646-6550 or by e-mail at gmiceli@stelizabethparish.org.

-Dave Guthrie

New Interfaith Action Committee Promotes Fellowship Through Diversity

How can something as personal as deepening one's faith involve those with other religious beliefs and traditions? That's just the kind of connection the Saint Elizabeth Interfaith Action Committee is hoping to stimulate.

The IAC promotes fellowship with and exposure to the diverse faith groups in our community at large. Learning about the beliefs and practices of others actually helps deepen an understanding of one's own Catholic Faith.

"While as Catholics we have a beautiful and rich faith tradition, we also find much common ground with our neighbor's beliefs," says Nick Rotoli, parishioner and IAC committee member. "Our Interfaith Action Committee activities build a spirit of openness, mutual respect and goodwill between Saint Elizabeth parishioners and the wider faith community in our area."

The idea for the IAC was born from our parish participation in the long-standing Exton-Lionville Ministerium and the more-recently inaugurated Interfaith Action Community of Chester County. While the parish is actively represented in both groups, the IAC also addresses the first goal in the Saint Elizabeth Parish Pastoral Plan: *Become a More Engaging Parish: Be a faith-filled, inviting Catholic community that welcomes and engages all people, wherever they are in their spiritual journey.*

"There was also great interest among parishioners in learning more about the faiths of others in our area, especially in light of the need for greater tolerance in society as a whole," says Nick. "When we begin to see that we as people are more similar than different, our faith is strengthened and our lives enhanced."

The Saint Elizabeth Parish IAC meets monthly to discuss and plan events. Several committee members also attend the monthly meetings of the Interfaith Action Community of Chester County, where many faiths are represented and opportunities to participate in presentations, tours and services of the various faiths are discussed. Their events through December include a sacred text panel at the Lionville YMCA on September 27, an interactive workshop hosted by Steve Treat on Having Respectful Religious and Political Conversations here at Saint Elizabeth on October 4, a sacred text discussion on the Talmud at Beth Israel Congregation of Chester County on October 11, an Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Service at Beth Israel on November 18, and a sacred text discussion at the Islamic Center in West Chester on December 13.

This year the committee plans to discover how many interfaith families are registered at Saint Elizabeth parish and how the parish might address their particular needs.

If you have an idea on how to engage with other faith traditions, to get more information or to join this committee contact Nick Rotoli at n.rotoli@gmail.com.

You might just find that opening your mind and heart to other faiths will strengthen your own!

~ Amy Giampietro



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Have you considered becoming a liturgical minister? Read more about the rewarding experiences of being a Sacristan (Tim Murphy, far left), an Usher, a Greeter (Carrie Mengel, top center), a Liturgical Music Minister (Colleen Cranney, bottom center), a Lector (Ray Erfle, bottom right) and an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (Chris Hill, top right) on pages 3 and 6! For more information and to sign up for any one of these ministries, contact Gen Miceli in the Parish Services office at 610-646-6550 or gmiceli@stelizabethparish.org

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 Be sure to follow us on any or all of these social media platforms (Facebook, too!) for the latest news and updates!

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