

Dates of Interest

Labor Day Holiday
Monday, September 2
Mass at 9:00 AM

Saint Elizabeth Parish School
Opening Day for Grades 1-8
Tuesday, September 3

Youth Ministry Kick-Off
Sunday, September 8, 11:30 Mass

Elementary Faith Formation, K-7
Opening Prayer Services & Classes
M-T-W, September 9-10-11

Blessing of Catechetical Ministers
Weekend Masses,
September 14-15

Pre-Cana Program
Friday-Saturday, September 20-21

TOGETHER Retreat for Women
Friday-Saturday, September 27-28

Parent Forum for Penance & Eucharist
Saturday, October 12

TOGETHER Retreat for Men
Friday-Saturday, October 18-19

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

Forty Hours Devotions
Sunday-Tuesday, November 3-4-5

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Who is the New Priest?



In June, we welcomed Father Andrew Labatorio as the second Parochial Vicar of Saint Elizabeth Parish.

June marked the arrival of our new Parochial Vicar, Father Andrew Labatorio, known to us as Father Andrew.

So who is Father Andrew?

Born and raised in the Philippines and one of 14 children (he is number eight), he describes his family as crazy, but happy. Having a Baptist father and Catholic mother, he grew up practicing both faiths. His parents believed in providing a strong education, so he attended a Catholic school and had many Catholic friends. Following high school, he decided to enter the seminary, but was particularly drawn to missionary work.

Through the influence of the Dominican Nuns, his high school mentors, he decided to enter the CICM (the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary), an international religious missionary institute. Father Andrew was both baptized and confirmed on the same day, just a few weeks before beginning his seminary life.

“At first, I just wanted to be a missionary,” he explained. “I later agreed to try the seminary life, which was very much like a normal collegiate experience. I was allowed to go out with friends and socialize. At the same time, I had spiritual

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Who is the New Priest? *(Continued from cover)*

formation, and I eventually made the commitment to enter the priesthood.”

He admits his mother was not initially thrilled with his decision. “It was not like a fairy tale,” he said. “She wanted me to become an architect or to choose a career with better financial options. During a family dinner at one of my first breaks, I was very excited telling about my seminary experiences. My mother commented that I was just wasting my time. My father, always full of wisdom, defended me. His words remain a source of strength to me to this day. He said to my mother, ‘You have 14 children, can you not give one to God as a gift?’ His words put everything into the right perspective.”

After 12 years of formation he became a priest at age 30. The CICM requires mission experience outside of one's own country so Father Andrew traveled to Haiti, where he spent 16 years. The first two years was an internship and a time of discernment. “Those two years made me love the missionary life so I decided to take perpetual vows and a few months later I was ordained a priest” he explained.

When reflecting upon his time in Haiti, he noted that striking a balance between social work and pastoral work was his biggest challenge. “Haiti is a very poor country and people expected more from a missionary than the sacramental part,” he noted. “Their basic human needs were not always being met (particularly following the earthquake in 2010) so they needed someone to bring hope in terms of their physical well-being.

Yet, being poor, their faith was stronger. They trusted God more.”

Father Andrew ran clinics in Haiti that welcomed doctors from the United States as well as high school students on a mission trip. “I used to tell them, ‘This is not so much about what you can do for Haiti but what Haiti can do for you. Just because you have so much, it doesn't mean you have nothing to receive and just because someone doesn't have anything, that doesn't mean they have nothing to give. There is always an exchange of experience and these relationships can open up new ways of understanding and thinking about life. Many kids who came to Haiti from the United States were so inspired by the joyful and humble aspirations of young Haitians who had nothing. These students often experienced a 360 degree change in the way they looked at life.”

Now that he is in the States, Father Andrew looks forward to working as a parochial vicar. “I am here to serve in my own capacity, in my own way,” he said. “My time here will also serve as a learning experience for me. I hope to contribute to the spiritual well-being of Saint Elizabeth Parish. I learned from the people of Haiti how to envision solutions together, especially in times of crisis. I hope I can bring some of that experience to this parish and help Saint Elizabeth be a source of hope to other people. I hope I can bring people closer to God.”

In his spare time Father Andrew enjoys reading, fishing, nature and the outdoors. Welcome, Father Andrew!

~Julia Krumenacker

The CICM

CICM (the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary) is a Roman Catholic missionary congregation. Members devote themselves to serve the poor and marginalized people of foreign culture in order to bring the good news of Jesus Christ wherever it is most needed. Established in 1862, their motto, *One Heart and One Soul*, exemplifies their mission of living in solidarity with the people they serve. Over the past 150 years, more than 3,000 men have dedicated their lives to the CICM, leaving their familiar surroundings and integrating themselves into the lives of the poorest people, sharing in their hopes, dreams and sufferings. Their work is intended to create lasting spiritual and material transformation. More than 850 CICM missionary priests and brothers currently live and work in 20 different remote countries around the world. They continue the tradition of caring for God's poorest and most neglected people, sharing the hope and comfort of the Gospel.

~Julia Krumenacker



Preparing to Celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation in Grade 7

Our parish children have traditionally received the Sacrament of Confirmation in grade 6. Last year the Archdiocese of Philadelphia raised the preferred age of those celebrating the sacrament to grade 7 or grade 8. Saint Elizabeth, as well as most Chester County parishes, are now preparing children to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation in grade 7. "This decision provided an opportunity for us to look at our Confirmation preparatory programs both at the parish school and in our Elementary Faith Formation (EFF) program," says Gen Miceli, Director of Parish Services.

As a result, several changes were made to the religious education curriculum during the 2018-2019 school year. From September through December, grade 6 students in our parish school and EFF programs focused on the Old Testament. During the spring semester, January through May, specific Confirmation preparation began with a program called *Chosen* developed by Ascension Press.

Dr. Diane Greco, Saint Elizabeth Parish School principal, explains, "While designed to enhance peer discussion, *Chosen* also has a video component allowing parents to view the education segments at home and continue the conversation with their children."

This past spring, Confirmation candidates were also introduced to



an activities component of Confirmation preparation. "As the children prepare for their final Sacrament of Initiation, we hope to help them find the connection between learning about their Catholic faith in the classroom and living out their Catholic faith in their daily lives," says Anne Polese, Elementary Faith Formation coordinator.

Students were given a list of stewardship service activities and prayer/worship experiences and asked to participate in at least one selection from each category. Prayer/worship options included attending a Saturday Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, attending a retreat at Bishop Shanahan High School, going to the Lenten *Living Stations of the Cross* or participating in Holy Week liturgies,

to name a few. Stewardship service activities listed items such as participating in the Martin Luther King or Stewardship Days of Service, assisting the Good Works team, helping with the Lenten Soup Supper or Knights of Columbus clothing drive, lending voices to a parish choir, and many more.

This September, sacramental preparation for the grade 7 Confirmation candidates will continue with both classroom and activity related programming. New this year, students who participate in the EFF program have the option of Confirmation classes on Sunday mornings from 10:30-11:30 AM. This scheduling will allow candidates and their families to attend Mass together at either 9:30 AM or 11:30 AM.

For more information, check out the EFF section of the parish website: www.stelizabethparish.org. Go to the Education menu and select Elementary Faith Formation. At the 9:30 AM Mass on Sunday, January 12, 2020, there will be a special blessing for all those preparing for Confirmation and at 11:00 AM on Saturday, March 28, 2020, Bishop Michael J. Fitzgerald will celebrate Confirmation for Saint Elizabeth candidates.

May we support with our prayers all the young people who are preparing to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

-Amy Giampietro

School Spirits: NEW: Parish School Welcomes Pre-Kindergarteners!

Saint Elizabeth Parish School is excited to expand its scope with a new Pre-Kindergarten program for the 2019-2020 school year. Open to all children who reach age 4 by September 1, 2019, the program offers high-quality early learning, enriched with an introduction to the Catholic faith.

“We believe that faith nurtured early lasts a lifetime,” said Principal Dr. Diane Greco. “Children effortlessly give and receive love at this age, which allows them to quickly develop a deep relationship with God and a commitment to the Catholic faith. Because our school is a family-based community, the Pre-K4 program will naturally reinforce these notions at an earlier age.”

Children attending the Pre-K4 program this year will gain exposure to creative arts, language and literacy, math and science, in addition to social and emotional development. Each day will provide a balanced variety of learning opportunities. Children will engage in both individual and social play time, pre-reading and writing activities, mathematics and physical development, as well as lunch and prayer time.

The curriculum will emphasize age-appropriate and active, project-based activities, all under the umbrella of the Church. Celebrations of important Catholic seasons and feasts will be introduced, along with faith concepts presented in a developmentally relevant style.

“Our students will engage in faith-based, cross-curricular learning that develops their Catholic identity,” added Dr. Greco. “They will be exposed to God's word through bible stories and many of the sacramentals as they begin to understand the meaning behind Catholic doctrine and a better understanding of Church traditions.”

The Pre-K4 program is also flexible, affording parents several different scheduling options, including five full days a week; three full days; five half days or three half days.

Visit the school website at www.stelizabethparishschool.org/prek4 to learn more



about the exciting Pre-K4 program at Saint Elizabeth Parish School. You can review the readiness guidelines and class objectives, or submit an admission inquiry form. You may also call 610-646-6540 to schedule a tour.

-Julia Krumenacker

Dates of Interest (Continued from cover)

*Bereavement Ministry
Memorial Mass
Friday, November 15*

*Confirmation Forum for
Candidates & Parents
Saturday, November 16*

*K of C Blood Drive
Saturday, November 23*

Family Spirits: Meet the Beccone Family

Tom and Anne Beccone have been parishioners at Saint Elizabeth from the very beginning, attending Mass in the Lionville Middle School gymnasium, the synagogue and the local fire hall, as well as in the Bishop Shanahan High School auditorium. They were members of Saint Joseph Parish in Downingtown when our parish was founded and have been very busy devoting their time, talent and treasure to our parish community ever since.

Anne and Tom met at the Newman Center at West Chester State College (now University). After they married they stayed in the local area to pursue teaching careers. At the time there were limited opportunities in the profession, so Tom joined the Campus Police Department at West Chester State and Anne took a part time office position, while raising their three children. After 15 years of police work, Tom activated his teaching certificate and was hired by the Downingtown Area School District where he taught United States History for 25 years.

The Beccones are currently enjoying retirement and time spent with their son and two daughters, all of whom still live in the area. Their favorite pastime is babysitting their two grandchildren, Henry (3 years old) and Vivian (7 months old). Retirement, however, is only a figure of speech!

Tom joined the Adult Choir after the 10th Anniversary of Saint Elizabeth Parish. Shortly after

joining, he talked Anne into being a part of Adult Choir as well. "We take to heart the saying that when you sing you pray twice," said Tom. Anne and Tom get a great deal of enjoyment singing with a great group of musicians, especially during the Easter Vigil. "It is such a joy being a part of the special day for those being received into

the full communion of the Catholic Church," said Anne. Tom also gives occasional presentations at Senior Adult Ministry Lunch and Learn events, participates in the parish Adult Bible Study and was a member of the men's *Christ Renews His Parish* retreat team after attending the first retreat in 2013.

Anne is the chairperson of the Family Life Ministry Team. "Parish family life programs encompass so many aspects of the lives of our parishioners, from Pre-Cana marriage preparation, to preparing for the Sacrament of Baptism (Pre-Jordan), to various family support programs, to a compassionate group of bereavement ministry volunteers," said Anne. "Our work is truly a labor of love."



Tom and Anne Beccone have been parishioners of Saint Elizabeth Parish from the very beginning!

Anne was a catechist at Saint Joseph Parish for 15 years and thought her commitment was fulfilled when she joined our newly forming parish. "Once the call was sent out for volunteers to be catechists at Saint Elizabeth, I answered the call, teaching for another eight years," said Anne. "Forming our children in the Catholic faith is so rewarding. Many times they give catechists much more than we can give to them; being a catechist has certainly helped to strengthen my own faith."

Through their stewardship service, Anne and Tom Beccone have met and formed close friendships with many parishioners of Saint Elizabeth. "The fellowship we share with our parish 'family' is a true joy!" they said.

~David Guthrie

Introducing TOGETHER - Saint Elizabeth's Newly Created Retreat Program

Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20) When Jesus is in our midst, great things happen - this is what Saint Elizabeth's new retreat program is all about!

Retreat

TOGETHER is designed to unite us with our Catholic faith, with Christ and with the rest of our community of believers. It replaces the *Christ Renews His Parish* retreat program which engaged nearly 300 parishioners since October 2013. The TOGETHER program offers a more flexible program design and allows participants greater flexibility in how to spend their time.

Separate retreats are planned for men and women to grow in faith, meet others within the parish community and unplug from the pressures of life. The TOGETHER retreats run from 6:30 PM to 10:30 PM on Friday evenings, and 7:30 AM through the 5:30 PM Mass on Saturday evenings.

Unlike the previous retreat program, participants may now choose either to sleep at home on Friday night or to stay onsite for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (sleeping accommodations are provided at the parish for those staying onsite). The overall length of the program has been reduced by three hours. Meals and snacks are provided

TOGETHER

Fall 2019 Retreat Dates:

Women's Retreat:

Friday/Saturday, September 27-28, 2019

Men's Retreat:

Friday/Saturday, October 18-19, 2019

during the retreat. There is no cost to attend.

Parishioner Chris Hill has participated in every *CRHP* retreat at Saint Elizabeth since 2013 and has worked with a team of parishioners to design the new program. "Weekends are precious time, and we get that. So, we decided to remove the major barriers to participation like the overnight stay and the longer time commitment," Hill explained. "But it's worth it - in fact, I call a retreat like TOGETHER spiritual jumper cables. They always re-energize my faith life."

Presented by Saint Elizabeth Parishioners

The TOGETHER retreat is a special time to step away from a busy life to focus on your Catholic faith and your relationship with God. It includes prayer, sacraments, group activities and an opportunity to form new friendships with other Saint Elizabeth parishioners.

The goal is to provide an open, comfortable environment where

parishioners can learn from others and grow in their Catholic faith.

"Wherever you are in your spiritual journey, there is a spot at the table for you," said Hill. "You don't need to attend Mass every day or have a master's degree in theology to enjoy this experience."

TOGETHER features guided reflections on various topics, such as The Father's Loving Care, Scripture, Eucharist and Catholic Community. There are small-group activities, too.

"All you have to do is be present," Hill added. "There is no pressure to share your faith with others unless you chose to do so. Parishioners on the retreat team will give witness to their experiences and Catholic faith during the sessions."

Feeling the Tug?

If you are feeling that little tug, drawing you toward a retreat, listen! TOGETHER is a brand-new program designed specifically for you. As Hill said, "Trust your gut, and go in to the retreat with an open mind. You'll be incredibly rewarded. The experience is really pretty awesome."

For more information and to sign up, visit the parish website www.stelizabethparish.org and look for the TOGETHER logo, or call the parish office.

~Lisa Barbadora

Calling Men of All Ages to Knighthood

As a student at Saint Elizabeth Parish School, Nick Cambria was impressed when Knights of Columbus Council #13141 member Phil Forlano arrived in his Knights regalia and more importantly, wearing his ceremonial sword, for the annual K of C basketball Free-Throw contest in the parish gymnasium. That impression stayed with Nick as he grew up in a family that actively participates in parish life here at Saint Elizabeth. When he was a senior at Downingtown West High School, Nick received an invitation to join the Knights from parishioner Bill Schell, a former Grand Knight, and Nick quickly decided to apply.

During the admission process an applicant learns the history and fundamentals of what the Knights of Columbus do for the Church and for the community. Applicants participate in projects and when accepted as a first-degree Knight, make promises to continue the work of the Knights of Columbus and begin to attend regular council meetings.

"The worldwide organization was founded in 1882 by (the now, Venerable) Father Michael McGivney at St. Mary's parish in New Haven, Connecticut," explained Grand Knight, Martin Gagne. "The Knights started with a philanthropic purpose to provide what amounted to accident, life and job compensation funding for families of injured or deceased men, ensuring their basic survival." That practice evolved into the Knights of Columbus Insurance Company, one of the

largest in the world. The philanthropy continues through the service that the Knights offer today.

Nick, a senior at Penn State who is majoring in Aerospace Engineering, is the youngest 4th Degree Knight in the Saint Elizabeth Council. He is active in the Neumann Club on campus and works on K of C projects when he is home for vacations. He said, "The true bonds of comradery and the opportunity to learn more and practice my faith are what keep me active with the Knights of Columbus."

Grand Knight Martin expressed feeling a sense of duty and a call to serve others. "The Knights offer the opportunity for me to follow that call," he said. A chef and owner of his own restaurant, one of his first activities with the local council was to participate in a day making casseroles to be distributed to Saint John's Hospice in Philadelphia. "Another aim of all Knights," Martin emphasized, "is to support the priesthood. Council #13141 responds through prayer for vocations and in supporting current seminarians throughout the year."

Both Nick and Martin encourage the men of Saint Elizabeth Parish to consider joining the Knights of Columbus. They say that the brotherhood, prayer and good works projects are the most rewarding aspects of membership. Council #13141 sponsors fundraising events each year to support the work started



**ST ELIZABETH COUNCIL 13141
UPPER UWCHLAN, PENNSYLVANIA**

so long ago by Father McGivney, keeping his fraternal spirit of service alive. For further information about the Knights of Columbus or Council #13141 go to their website at kofc13141.org.

~Lisa Sheronas

"The Spirit" Staff

Editor-in-Chief

Lisa Barbadora

Director of Communications

Deacon Barry Midwood

Communications Coordinator

Sara Richardson

Contributors

Lisa Barbadora

Amy Giampietro

David Guthrie

Julia Krumenacker

Father Thomas M. Mullin

Lisa Sheronas

Photos

Mary Damian

Layout and Graphics

Sara Richardson

Other Staff

Sue Morgan

Jerry Wojcik

2019 Parish Census

The 2017-2021 Pastoral Plan challenges us to identify and understand more clearly the current demographics of the parish as part of an overall effort to communicate more effectively with our members, to engage parishioners more actively in the life and ministries of the parish, and to become a more informed and connected parish community. The **2019 Parish Census** is one concrete step in responding to this challenge.

As of June 30, 2019, we now have 2,933 registered households and some 10,420 individuals listed in our parish data system. However, we have not conducted a formal census update of parish membership since 2001, so it's

about time to update the parish data system!

A special mailing sent to all our registered households a few weeks ago includes a letter from the pastor, a **2019 Parish Census Form**, and information about the Flocknote messaging system. Please complete and return the census form to the parish office in a timely manner, **no later than September 30**. This updated information will assist our parish staff and ministry teams in developing parish programs in response to the changing needs and life situations of our parishioners.

Thank you for your prompt cooperation with this project!

~Father Thomas M. Mullin



Have you noticed the new banners now hanging on the light posts at the entrance roads? They announce a word of welcome and remind all of us of our parish vision: We are called by Jesus Christ to grow as a community of disciples, deepen our faith and be grateful stewards of God's gifts.

Rev. Thomas M. Mullin, Pastor
P.O. Box 695
Uwchlan, PA 19480-0695
Phone: 610-321-1200
Fax: 610-646-6513
E-mail: steuucc@stellizabehparish.org
Website: stellizabehparish.org
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