

The Spirit

Tidings for the parish community of Saint Elizabeth

Nothing Compares to Being There

“When suddenly you seem to lose all you thought you had gained, do not despair. You must expect setbacks and regressions. Don’t say to yourself ‘All is lost. I have to start all over again.’ This is not true. What you have gained you have gained... When you return to the road, you return to the place where you left it, not to where you started.”

~ The Inner Voice of Love,
Henri Nouwen



We are together in person and in communion with Christ

The pandemic stopped us all in our tracks, made us re-evaluate our priorities, and urged us to confront what we took for granted in our daily lives. Yet, as Nouwen showcases, as our lives begin to pick up again, we are not to despair in the time lost, but instead, to take comfort in recognizing what we’ve already accomplished through God’s grace during the past months as a parish family and where the Lord is leading us now.

All of us know instinctively that nothing compares to in-person engagement. Whether it’s being at a friend’s wedding, sitting down to have a heart-to-heart

conversation, comforting family members while they are grieving, or watching as your baby takes their first steps, we all know that being physically present makes all the difference. The same logic applies to our life as Catholics. Especially when it comes to Mass. Truly, nothing compares to *being there*.

In a recent letter to the faithful of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Archbishop Nelson Pérez put it this way, “The words spoken at the Consecration of the Mass resonate deeply in our souls. ‘This is my Body which will be given up for you. This is the chalice of my Blood...which will be poured out for you.’ At every Mass, we bear witness to Christ’s sacrifice

on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Through the gift of the Eucharist, which the Lord instituted at the Last Supper, we receive His pure and boundless love over and over again. As Catholics, we believe that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ. Such a precious gift deserves our reflection and appreciation. It’s not something we can experience virtually.

Christ’s presence in the Eucharist is real and our personal presence is required to receive it.”

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25th Anniversary Capital Campaign for Saint Elizabeth Church is SO CLOSE TO THE GOAL!

Certainly, 2021 has brought many challenges, yet many blessings to all of us.



For our parish, some of those blessings have come in the form of good works by good people, who have offered their time, talent and treasure to our Anniversary Capital Campaign. Since the time of the last newsletter, the 40-member volunteer campaign team has collaborated to share the details and significance of the campaign with fellow parishioners.

While maintaining the best practices of philanthropy and stewardship, the team responded to the impact of the pandemic by making dramatic changes to the traditional campaign events which were initially envisioned. With social gatherings restricted, they designed and hosted more than 20 virtual “Zoom” receptions for hundreds of parishioners in lieu of in-person events. In each reception, volunteers spoke warmly and personally about their commitment to their faith and the impact that meaningful participation in Saint Elizabeth Church has had upon them and their families. Parishioners responded in kind, taking time to share more about themselves and getting better acquainted with others.

Father Mullin, whose recorded video presentation was shared at each reception, has received numerous complements and wonderful stories from parishioners

who joined in the receptions. Their gift of time, together with the efforts of the volunteer team, has already led to an overwhelming response to the campaign!

In fact, the *Moving Forward in Faith – Extending God’s Light* campaign has raised close to \$4.3 million — that is 86% of our overall goal of raising \$5 million as we look forward to the celebration of the parish’s 25th anniversary in 2025!

Last spring, all registered parishioners received a letter from Fr. Mullin inviting and encouraging their participation in the anniversary campaign. The mailing included an informational brochure and a pledge form to be completed as they prayerfully discerned their level of financial commitment to the campaign. Since the inauguration of the campaign late last year, many parish families have responded with great generosity. Gifts at every level have been gratefully received and continue to come into the parish office. Some are making pledges to be fulfilled over 3-5 years, since the campaign pledge period continues into 2025. Other parishioners are making one-time gifts, often indicating that they may add to their initial gift in the coming years. Whatever way parishioners choose to participate, we are very grateful to all who make a commitment to the anniversary campaign.

This fall, the campaign team is planning to host several in-person receptions in the parish social hall for parishioners who

have not yet had an opportunity to learn about the campaign while they socialize with fellow parishioners. Specific arrangements for these receptions will be communicated on the parish website and social media pages.

If you have not yet participated in the Anniversary Campaign, you can truly make a difference and help Saint Elizabeth Church reach and cross our \$5 million goal!

Gifts at any level may be made in honor or in memory of loved ones. You may also be eligible for a matching gift from your employer for the Parish Education Fund, which is being supported by the campaign. In addition to cash, gifts may also be made via stock or other appreciated assets; a number of our donors have chosen this option. To do so, please contact Sam Venuti at 610-321-1200 or svenuti@stelizabethparish.org.

If you have any questions about the anniversary campaign, please call the ministry center to speak with Fr. Mullin or with one of the campaign volunteers. Continue to watch the bulletin or check the website for the latest details.

Most importantly: pray each day for the success of the campaign for Saint Elizabeth. May all of us continue *Moving Forward in Faith and Extending God’s Light* in the years to come!

~ Kathy Caliendo/Fr. Tom Mullin

Family Spirits: Meet the Stauffer Family

The Stauffer Family have become synonymous with stewardship service since they moved to Chester County and joined Saint Elizabeth Parish in August 2000!

David and Laurie both grew up in York, PA, and attended the same high school, but did not meet at that time since they were four years apart in their schooling. They were introduced by their mothers, who were co-workers. At the time, Dave worked in Manhattan and Laurie still lived at home. After a long-distance courtship, they were married on July 31, 1993 at Saint Joseph Church in York.

Dave, a chemist, currently works for a pharmaceutical company. Before becoming a stay-at-home mom, Laurie was a Spanish translator. She currently works part-time in a doctor's office.

Both Dave and Laurie have been very active parishioners over their years at Saint Elizabeth. Dave has served on the Stepping Forward Together capital campaign team, was involved with Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) and the Men's Spirituality Ministry.

Laurie is currently a vocalist for the Guitar Group and participates in the Crafting Hands Ministry. She also participated in the CRHP program.

The Stauffers are blessed with four active children, who all attended Regina Luminis Academy. Andrew, 25, also attended Devon Preparatory School and graduated

from Christendom College in 2019, where he studied Philosophy and Theology. He is a vocalist and has offered stewardship service as an altar server and in the TAPistry choir.

Their daughter, Elena, 23, is a licensed massage therapist and has an interest in martial arts. She previously served as an Elementary Faith Formation catechist, a lector, and a vocalist.

Son Peter, 18, also has an interest in music and martial arts. He is a singer and pianist, and has also served with TAPistry. (See our special sidebar about what's next for Peter!)

Youngest son Thomas, 15, currently attends Downingtown East High School. He is a singer and guitarist, and also enjoys martial arts. He currently is a member of the High School Youth Group.

"The most fulfilling groups I have been a part of are the CRHP Men's Renewal team and the ongoing Men's Spirituality Ministry," Dave said.

Laurie also has had a positive experience with several of our parish ministries: "First is the Guitar Group. I've always loved to sing, and I joined the group in December, 2000. Over the years, our group has become like a family. Being together lifts my spirits



The Stauffer Family at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary

every time! I find that singing is truly a prayerful experience and as a cantor, I find fulfillment in leading the congregation in worship," she said.

"Second is my experience in both attending and presenting at the CRHP retreat weekend. I learned a lot about myself during the weekends and during my discipleship experience in preparation to present the retreat to others. These women are among my most beloved friends, and we have continued to gather over the past four years to share faith, friendship and fun!" Laurie added.

We are inspired by the Stauffer family for their great examples of stewardship to the parish and thank them for their devoted service!

~ Sara Richardson

Uber Eats for Catholics: Saint Elizabeth Delivers Holy Communion around Town

Early in the pandemic before lockdowns were mandatory for all, my friend's son was a driver for Uber Eats. He was remarkably busy, as so many folks were stuck at home and desperate for a break from the same-old meals prepared by Chef Mom at Chez Abode. In fact, food delivery companies, including DoorDash and GrubHub, did record-breaking business during the pandemic as millions of homebound Americans turned to their smartphone apps to order food from favorite restaurants. It was dinner-on-demand.

What about *Uber Communion*??! Long before COVID-19, members of the Home and Hospital Team at Saint Elizabeth, under the coordination of Deacon Barry Midwood, have been providing a different kind of nourishment, the Holy Eucharist, to our homebound parishioners and to parishioners who are unable to get to church in person during recuperation from an illness.

Our parish is situated in an area that is booming with senior adults, many of whom struggle to get to Mass, even post-pandemic. Across Chester County, nearly 20% of the population is age 60 or older, and is the fastest growing demographic, ballooning 37% just since 2010. Likewise, senior communities are sprouting up seemingly everywhere, including not only older facilities like Hankin House and Potter House in

Eagleview, but also newer facilities like Eagleview Landing.

"We have many Catholic residents, and some that are members of Saint Elizabeth Parish, so I spoke to Deacon Barry about a way to bring Holy Communion to them," explained Brent Watkins, Eagleview Landing's Active Living Program Director. "We started in May 2021, as soon as the pandemic eased.



Father Kevin celebrates Mass for Eagleview Landing residents

One of the Eagleview Landing residents added "I am so thankful for weekly Holy Communion and I encourage other residents to attend the prayer service because I don't want them to discontinue providing the service. I chat with the deacon and he is always so friendly and kind."

Saint Elizabeth volunteers provide Holy Communion to Eagleview Landing residents every Wednesday at 9:30 AM and Father Kevin typically celebrates Mass there once a month. "They spend time with our residents and have inspired them to continue faith sharing - one resident now leads

scripture readings every Sunday morning and hosts rosary prayer services on Mondays," explained Watkins.

"Maintaining that personal connection to their parish and their faith life is so important," Watkins added. "It's a true blessing, since most of our residents are not able to drive or get to church on their own. The Church comes to them now. We all deeply appreciate Saint Elizabeth - especially after a year like 2020."

A weekly prayer service with Holy Communion and a monthly Mass continue at Hankin House on Wednesdays, too. Long-time Hankin House residents Mary Grace and Frank Esposito have been members of Saint Elizabeth Parish for 12 years. "My wife and I receive Holy Communion every Wednesday," said Frank. "We also attend the monthly Masses along with about 15 to 20 other residents and enjoy the sense of community with other like-minded Catholics."

Mary Grace, 89, added, "I love being a Catholic and it makes me happy to still participate in faith life. I'm also a prayer warrior so receiving Holy Communion nourishes me with what I need to keep soldiering on!"

Wow, thank you, Mary Grace - that's not just Uber Communion. That's Uber Awesome.

~ Lisa Barbadora

School Spirits: Parish School Launches Two New Organizations

During the 2021-2022 academic year, Saint Elizabeth Parish School is introducing two important initiatives designed to support and strengthen its educational mission and community life.

A *Board of Limited Jurisdiction (BLJ)* was inaugurated in early August. The Board's primary goal is to promote and advance the mission of the parish school with regard to the education and the faith development of its students. In collaboration with Father Mullin and Dr. Diane Greco, the parish school principal, the BLJ will work to ensure that the parish school fulfills its purpose of assisting all students to reach the fullness of Christian life, as well as ensuring the health of school finances to secure the appropriate course of education prescribed by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Appointed members of the board include school parents as well as professionals with relevant expertise who will provide policy direction to the school in areas of advancement, financial planning, strategic planning, administrative and personnel decisions.

"In the past, our parish school had an advisory council which acted as an idea generator," explained Dr. Greco. "The new BLJ will broaden this scope as we bring together professionals in education, finance and corporate leadership who will take ideas and execute solid policies to maintain and support the direction of the school."



The Home and School Association (HSA) aims to build a strong, cohesive educational community by facilitating communication and collaboration between parents and the parish school faculty and staff. This newly formed group will work to increase the active involvement of parents in the life of the school community, while supporting the long-term viability and growth of the school.

"The HSA will provide school parents with more of a voice and broader involvement and participation in our school community," commented Dr. Greco. "We will concentrate on getting as many families involved as possible, focusing on the social aspects of school life. Our leadership team will create opportunities for social interaction and community building among parents, students and school staff." Dr. Greco added that the association is not a fund-raising organization; its mission is directed at fostering community and creating aware-

ness and appreciation for the value of Catholic school education among parish school families and within the parish community as a whole.

Both organizations meet regularly during the current school year and are now planning several special events for parish school families and for parishioners at large in support of the parish school.

With hopeful expectation, Dr. Greco concluded: "We look forward to building the school community, connecting with more families and providing support and strength to our school through these new exciting initiatives."

~ Julie Krumenacker

Bringing the Love of Christ to the People

For Saint Elizabeth parishioner Tim Murphy, the road to the Permanent Diaconate has been a journey of patient persistence in several ways. Ordained at the Cathedral Basilica in Philadelphia on June 12, and now assigned by Archbishop Pérez to serve at Saint Thomas More Church in South Coventry, Tim is at peace and filled with hope about this new phase of his life.

Tim first pursued his calling to serve Christ back in 2000, but the idea had been on his mind and in his heart for a long time. “Back then, it was naively all about me and what I was going to do for God and the Church” says Tim. He was living in New Jersey at the time and his initial acceptance into the diaconate formation program was deferred. While greatly disappointed and struggling with the truth about his call to the diaconate, some life changes occurred, and God’s grace and providence brought him, his wife Corinne, and their youngest daughter Grace, to Pennsylvania. “It was like an Exodus time in our lives: a time in the desert,” reflected Tim.

Still, God persisted in his call and cleared the roadblocks that previously held Tim back so that he could start the process again—six years later—in Philadelphia. More importantly, Tim’s approach to the diaconate formation completely changed the second time around. “I was more focused on God’s call, more relaxed, and took one little step at a time,”

he said. “As a result, the entire process changed me, deepened my marriage, and did all sorts of great things for my outlook on life.” Conflicts along the way, juggling family obligations and work, and a heavy study schedule can be taxing. “But in the midst of all the chaos, there is also a sense of peace,” he said. That’s how Tim knew that he was still on the right path.

As he neared the end of the seven-year formation journey, Tim followed Father Mullin’s advice and explored the surrounding parishes to observe how other pastors and parishes operate. In that quest, Tim coincidentally connected with Father Lawrence Kozak, the pastor at St. Thomas More Church, and Tim’s ecclesiology instructor at Saint Charles Seminary. Last fall Tim began assisting at weekend Masses there and is thrilled that the archbishop assigned him to St. Thomas More after his diaconate ordination.

“One thing I’ve figured out along the way is that God wants our hearts and our minds, our wholeselves,” Tim said. It is one of the reasons he could not ignore God’s call. “I believe people are seeking the truth of Christ, and they know it when they hear it. I hope and pray that I can be a good deacon and bring the love of Christ to the people.”

~ Amy Giampietro



Deacon Tim Murphy

The Spirit Staff

Editor-in-Chief

Lisa Barbadora

Director of Communications

Deacon Barry Midwood

Contributors

Lisa Barbadora
Kathy Caliendo
Amy Giampietro
Julia Krumenacker
Fr. Tom Mullin
Lindsey Ranstrom
Sara Richardson

Photographs

Mary Damian

Layout and Graphics

Julie Sellers

Nothing Compares to Being There (cont'd from cover)

Live-streamed Masses, committee and faith formation Zoom sessions and conference calls have allowed us to retain some sense of connection in isolating times, but it is time to “return to the road.” Our participation in the Sacraments, together with the faith community at Saint Elizabeth Church, acts as a compass; the Holy Eucharist, being in a deeply personal communion with Jesus Christ, is our true North. Active participation in the liturgy is such a privilege. To be able to raise our voices in answering Fr. Kevin’s greeting that “God is good all the time...and all the time, God is good,” takes on an enlivened spirit when done as one voice with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Fr. Chamber’s reflections on the scripture readings at the beginning of Mass become a personal invitation to receive the Word of God more deeply. Fr. Mullin’s reaching the people at eye-level as he shares his homily resonates more deeply, more intimately, when done in the light streaming through the stained glass windows as opposed to the pixelated reflections on our computer screens. And our collective recitation of the *Parish Stewardship Prayer* acts as an encouraging reminder and renewed commitment that our works of stewardship service accomplish great things in Jesus’s name.

As we get back on the road, we take courage in knowing the progress that’s been made, our

Peter Stauffer Begins Formation at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary (cont'd from page 3)

Peter Stauffer, a 2021 graduate of Downingtown East High School, started his journey of priestly formation at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia on August 19.

Peter first felt the potential calling to the priesthood when he was 10 years old.

“I was on a pilgrimage to Fatima with the Archdiocesan Boy Choir of Philadelphia when our chaplain, Father Stephen DeLacy, asked some of us if we would feel open or even called to the priesthood,” he explained. “I expressed an openness and even potential call to the priesthood that day. Since then, I have felt the call off and on, year after year. It was just in the past year that I took real action by applying for admission to the seminary, and praise God for my acceptance!”

Peter’s main consultant was Father DeLacy, as he guided him through discernment last year. “Through him, everything seemed like a green light to enter the seminary, and that is where I am right now.”

He said some of the best advice Father DeLacy gave him was when he explained to him that just as marriage is a vocational call, so the priesthood is very much a call to self-sacrifice for the

Church. “He showed me how the seminary is a place to seriously discern the priesthood, which has definitely made my decision much clearer, and I feel confident with this path,” Peter stated.

Peter is looking forward to growing as a man at the seminary. “I am really looking forward to letting God make me humbler, more caring, stronger, smarter, deeper in love, and bolder in proclaiming the Gospel. I don’t know yet all that God has planned for me at the seminary, but I couldn’t be more excited to find out,” he said.

His parents are very excited as Peter starts his journey. “We’ve encouraged all of our children to be open to the priesthood or religious life since they were young. We understand that his time at the seminary will be a time of discernment, listening for God to direct his path. It’s gratifying to know that Peter wants to serve God in some way and is continuing to mature in his faith. We are also very appreciative of all the well wishes and prayers from our parish family,” the Stauffers said.

Peter, be assured of the prayers of the Saint Elizabeth community as you start at Saint Charles! God bless you on your journey!

~ Sara Richardson

abilities to pick up where we left off, and how we can do so much more when we are together in person and in communion with Christ through the Sacraments we celebrate together.

~ Lindsey Ranstrom

Dates of Interest

Labor Day Holiday

Monday, September 6
Mass at 9:00 AM

Saint Elizabeth Parish School

Opening Day for Grades 1-8
Tuesday, September 7

Elementary Faith Formation, K-7

Opening Prayer Services
M-T-W, September 13-14-15

Pre-Cana Program

Friday-Saturday, September 17-18

Blessing of Catechetical Ministers

Weekend Masses, September 18-19

**25th Anniversary
Capital Campaign**

Wine & Cheese Reception,
Friday, September 24, 7:00 PM
Family Friendly Brunch,
Sunday, September 26, 12:30 PM
Zoom Reception,
Wednesday, September 29, 7:00 PM

**Forum for Parents of First Pen-
ance & First Eucharist Candidates**

Saturday, October 23, 8:30 AM

Parish School Fall Festival

Sunday, October 24, 12:30 PM

All Saints Day Mass

Monday, November 1, 7:30 AM

All Souls Memorial Mass

Tuesday, November 2, 7:00 PM

Forty Hours Devotions

Sunday-Tuesday, November 7-8-9,
Evening Prayer & Benediction,
7:00 PM

**Forum for Confirmation
Candidates & Parents**

Saturday, November 13, 6:30 PM

Knights of Columbus Blood Drive

Saturday, November 20,
8:00 AM-1:00 PM

Thanksgiving Day Mass

Thursday, November 25, 9:00 AM

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Rev. Thomas M. Mullin, Pastor
 P.O. Box 695
 Uwchlan, PA 19480-0695
 Phone: 610-321-1200
 Fax: 610-646-6513
 E-mail:
 steuucc@stelizabethparish.org
 Web site: stelizabethparish.org
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 If you would like to join
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 Mullin Ministry Center