

**Dates of Interest**

**Sacrament of Reconciliation**  
9:00 AM – Saturdays in chapel  
[No confessions on Confirmation  
Saturday, March 12 nor on  
Holy Saturday, March 26]

**First Penance/Reconciliation**  
7:00 PM – Wednesday, March 2 &  
Monday, March 7

**Communal Reconciliation Service  
with Individual Confessions**  
7:00 PM – Wednesday, March 16

**Stations of the Cross & Benediction**  
7:00 PM – Fridays, February 12,  
19 & 26; March 4 & 11  
*Living Stations of the Cross*  
Friday, March 18 – 1:30 & 7:00 PM

**Confirmation Ceremonies**  
10:00 AM and 2:00 PM  
Saturday, March 12

**Holy Week Services**  
*Palm Sunday, March 19-20*  
Mass – 5:30 PM, 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM,  
11:30 AM  
*Holy Thursday, March 24*  
Mass of the Lord’s Supper – 7:30 PM  
*Good Friday, March 25*  
Solemn Passion Service – 3:00 PM  
*Holy Saturday, March 26*  
Blessing of Easter Foods – 11:00 AM  
Easter Vigil Liturgy – 8:00 PM  
*Easter Sunday, March 27*  
Mass – 8:00, 9:30 & 11:30 AM  
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**His Mercy Endures Forever**

On December 8, 2015, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis formally inaugurated an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy that will extend until Sunday, November 20, 2016, the solemn feast of Christ the King. To begin this jubilee year, the Holy Father opened and crossed the threshold of a Holy Door in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome that remains sealed except during jubilee years. The Catholic Church practice of proclaiming a jubilee year every 25 years began in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and has its roots in the Old Testament (see Leviticus 25). The purpose of the jubilee year is to call each generation of believers to return to a life of greater holiness and faithfulness.



Extraordinary jubilee years are called “extraordinary” because they are proclaimed outside the typical twenty-five year cycle and are initiated by a pope in response to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. During this Jubilee Year of Mercy, Christian believers around the world are being called by Pope Francis both to look inward, reflecting upon their own experience of God’s mercy, and to look outward, extending true mercy to others.

In an interview with Vatican reporter, Andrea Tornielli, Pope Francis was asked: “What are the most important things that a believer should do during the Year of Mercy?” The Holy Father emphasized two major points: First, he said, believers should “open up to the mercy of God, open their hearts and themselves, and allow Jesus to come toward them by approaching the confessional with faith.” Second, Pope Francis stated, “believers should try to be merciful with others.”

*(continues on page 5)*

## Knights of Columbus Extend Mercy

**F**ounded on four principles - Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism – members of the Knights of Columbus strive to live out the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy every day and bring them to life in our parish and the surrounding communities. Pope Francis has called mercy the “bridge that connects God and man.” With that in mind, this is a good time to reflect on the many activities of the Saint Elizabeth Council, Knights of Columbus, and their stewardship service to others.

The Saint Elizabeth Council began in 2002 with 10 parishioners; membership has grown to more than 180 men today. The group meets on the first Tuesday of each month to plan activities that extend God’s mercy to many in need. Membership is open to men 18+ years of age. Through “Ceremonies of Commitment,” held throughout the year, new members pledge to follow the tenets of the Knights and to participate in service to others. The Saint Elizabeth Council includes members of the first three Degrees and the Fourth Degree Knights, who wear the familiar regalia (plumed hats and black tuxedos) while standing as a Color Guard at various functions here at Saint Elizabeth and elsewhere in Chester County.

The Saint Elizabeth Council of the Knights of Columbus supports Birthright of Coatesville with baby supplies and our Sis-

ter parish, Visitation BVM in Kensington, with “Coats for Kids,” (a national Knights of Columbus charity). They prepare

our members and provides personal spiritual enrichment.” In addition to annual dues, the Knights raise the funds they



*On Sunday on February 7, the Knights escorted the Cub Scouts of Pack 61 as the following awards were given out during Mass. Light of Christ Award (Tiger and Wolf Scouts): Nicky Fiore, Gabe Sinkiss and Nick Snyder. Parvuli Dei Award (Bear and Webelos Scouts): Andrew Ehgartner, J.D. Fiore, Raphael Sinkiss and Benjamin Steppke. Scout Danny Patterson received the Parvuli Dei Award at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul on January 30. Saint John Neumann Emblems were presented to Mary and Tom Dominiecki (far right, front row), in recognition of their dedication and commitment to Catholic scouting.*

Thanksgiving dinners for both Visitation BVM and the Sisters of Saint Joseph Welcome Center in Philadelphia. The Knights plant and harvest almost a ton of potatoes each year for The Lord’s Pantry in Downingtown and recently supplied 224 casseroles for St. John’s Hospice in Philadelphia. The Saint Elizabeth Council also conducts an annual Blood Drive to support the American Red Cross and a clothing drive each summer to help those in need.

Family members of the Knights often join in the service activities. John Fiore, Grand Knight of Saint Elizabeth’s Council, whose family participates frequently, explains, “we have fun and enjoy all the activities, plus it builds a true sense of brotherhood among

need to be financially independent by running a golf outing, our Lenten Fish Dinner, and a basketball free-throw competition each year.

As you can see, the men and families of the Saint Elizabeth Council of the Knights of Columbus are very generous with their time, talent, and treasure. They truly strive to live out the Works of Mercy every day and respond to the needy wherever and whenever they can. Thank you, Knights, for all you do!

For more information, contact John Fiore at 610-212-5806 or [www.kofc13141.org](http://www.kofc13141.org).

~ Elisa Sheronas

## Bridge of Hope - Mentoring to End Family Homelessness

If you can be a friend, you can be a mentor! This is what several parishioners learned when they attended a presentation given by *Bridge of Hope* at Saint Elizabeth Church last May. Parishioner Paul Gillam learned of *Bridge of Hope* when he was searching for ways to help the many homeless mothers and their families here in Chester County.

*Bridge of Hope* was founded in Coatesville in 1987 to help end and prevent homelessness for single mothers and their children. Their model is based on a three-way partnership between single mothers, social workers, and church-based mentoring groups. During the 12 to 24 months a mother is involved in the *Bridge of Hope* program, she works toward attaining permanent housing and financial stability as well as developing a supportive network of friends from a church in her community - this is where Saint Elizabeth fits in!

Our parish now has 11 generous families volunteering on two mentoring teams - each group mentoring a local at-risk single mother with encouragement, emotional support and friendship in a loving Christian environment.

After attending an initial training session and meeting the mom and her family, mentors begin their support with ongoing communication to see how the family is doing. It might be a phone call to see if the mother

needs any help or just to talk, or it could be a one-on-one outing that friends do together. In addition, whether at an ice cream social, over pizza and board games, or while hanging Christmas lights, mentoring teams and families (both adults and children) get together every month and connect with each other in a special way.

"The team dynamic is amazing," raves Paul, "The diversity of the

for a specific reason, but the relationship develops into so much more. Everyone, at every stage in life, brings something to the table. God brought us together for a reason - He is so involved in this ministry."

As the mother gains a crucial support system and a place where she can feel a sense of belonging, love, and hope, the mentoring team gains an appreciation for the hidden struggles so many people

face. "We are all being helped in so many ways," affirms Paul. "We are more aware of the blessings we have and, therefore, better able to put our own lives in perspective."

With the strong connection they're already

developing with the mothers and their children, mentors believe they will continue these relationships long after mom has graduated from the *Bridge of Hope* program. After all, it is a ministry of friendship.

*If you are interested in learning more about Bridge of Hope, visit [lancasterchester.bridgeofhopeinc.org](http://lancasterchester.bridgeofhopeinc.org); to find out how to become a mentor at Saint Elizabeth, contact Paul Gillam at 610-715-1490.*

~ Rhonda Jones

"Initially, we become intentional friends," summarizes Paul. "The mother and her family plus all of the team members come together



*Saint Elizabeth's Bridge of Hope ministry recently hosted a social at Carmine's. Bridge of Hope's mission is to call and equip compassionate people from our parish to exemplify Christ's love to homeless women and children.*

## Advent Giving Tree Recipients - The People Behind the Tags

**D**uring Advent, many focus their efforts on practicing the Corporal Works of Mercy - *feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give drink to the thirsty*, to name a few. Here at Saint Elizabeth, parishioners extend God's compassion and mercy by participating in the Advent Giving Tree program which began in 2000. Taking a tag from the tree and purchasing a gift for someone with material or physical needs certainly makes us feel as though we are doing God's work, yet many of us don't think beyond the simple gesture. Where do all of those gifts actually go?

This year parishioners provided gifts for nearly 2,000 individuals. Parishioner Kim Slattery coordinates the team of helpers that distribute the Christmas gifts. "I just coordinate this effort, but the people of the parish make it a success," she says. "It's overwhelming. All the tags always go, and some people request extra tags. The room where we store the gifts is always jam-packed because our parishioners are so generous. We begin making the gift tags during the summer. I create an Excel spread sheet matching donations to the recipients, and in the three weeks following Thanksgiving, the gifts pour in and we bring it all together."

All giving tree recipients are part of organizations from the local community, including: Angel of Hope, serving families from the Downingtown and Coatesville area; Saint Mary's Shelter in Phoenixville; The Lord's Pantry in Downingtown; Safe Harbor of West Chester; Saint Agnes Day

Room in West Chester; National Human Services of Coatesville; the Devereaux Foundation and



*Parishioner Kim Slattery, program coordinator, says the tags always go and some people request extra.*

Eagleview Senior Housing. "We also support our sister parish, Visitation BVM in Kensington, and Joseph's People, a ministry that assists parishioners who are unemployed," says Kim.

Over 100 individuals from Human Services of Downingtown, an organization which supports adults with mental health issues, receive gifts each year. Saint Elizabeth parish supports the clients of Birthright of Coatesville with diapers, wipes and other baby products. Several parishes throughout Chester County also receive gift donations. "Many people may not realize that we are supporting people in our own community, and the recipients are so appreciative of everything," explains Kim. "These gifts are like gold to people who have very little. Often, there are mothers who ask for toys or gifts for

their children, but don't ask for anything for themselves. We usually have some extra gift cards to hand out that allows them to buy food for Christmas dinner. This is huge."

Kim went on to say, "we provide duffel bags to help people leave Safe Harbor of West Chester with dignity, and we provide household items like pots, pans and mixing bowls to aid people who are moving out on their own from Saint Mary's Shelter. We also give canned goods, socks, mittens, coats and blankets to the homeless shelter in Pottstown, which helps the many people who live in tents along the Manatawny River."



*This year, parishioners provided gifts for nearly 2,000 individuals.*

Each year, the Saint Elizabeth Advent Giving Tree program provides thousands of precious gifts to people throughout the Chester County area. The tree is not simply a long-standing tradition in our parish; it is a reminder of our blessings, and how a small effort can make a big difference.

~ Julie Krumenacker

## Mercy cont'd

Father Mullin explained in a homily at the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Mercy that the first point emphasized by Pope Francis encourages us to take the Sacrament of Reconciliation more seriously, for it is an important way to experience God's mercy firsthand. In doing so, we can be transformed to be more merciful towards others. "This is a special time to become more aware of, to reflect upon, to pray about God's mercy toward us and put into practice our responsibility to extend that mercy towards others," he said.

Father suggested a third aspect of mercy: to be merciful toward oneself...to be patient with our own weaknesses and be ready to forgive ourselves and let go of our past failings, just as God does not hold our past sinfulness against us. "This may be the most difficult challenge for many of us," concluded Father Mullin, "God's mercy endures forever - our mercy towards others and towards ourselves should endure forever, too."

Works of Mercy, both corporal (body) and spiritual (soul), are the traditional way that we Catholics respond to our experience of the mercy of God. As parishioners celebrate the Jubilee Year of Mercy and put into practice the corporal and spiritual Works of Mercy through the many stewardship service activities and pastoral ministries at Saint Elizabeth, it's more than simply committing to do acts of charity. We become God's mercy for others and experience His mercy in return.

~Sue Morgan

## How Will You Participate in the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy?

The Saint Elizabeth parish website, [www.stelizabethparish.org](http://www.stelizabethparish.org) has many helpful ideas, resources and links to information provided by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to support your active involvement in the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Here are some ways to experience God's mercy this year:

- **Encounter Mercy** through the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist.
- **Enter Into Mercy** by making a pilgrimage and passing through a Holy Door. (On the parish website link, you can find Holy Door locations throughout the Philadelphia area, which will be open for the duration of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy).
- **Contemplate Mercy** by attending a Holy Hour of Mercy. (Dates, times and locations are listed on the parish website.)
- **Discover the Truth about Mercy** by studying the Church's teachings (resources on the website).
- **Live Mercy** by practicing the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

### Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed the hungry  
Give drink to the thirsty  
Clothe the naked  
Shelter the homeless  
Visit the sick  
Visit the imprisoned  
Bury the dead

### Spiritual Works of Mercy

Admonish the sinner  
Instruct the ignorant  
Counsel the doubtful  
Comfort the sorrowful  
Bear wrongs patiently  
Forgive all injuries  
Pray for the living and the dead



# School Spirits: Generation X doing their best to help shape Generation Z!

“Kids these days,” is a phrase that my late grandfather used to grumble every so often, and it always annoyed my mother. Much to my surprise, lately I often hear my 78-year-old mom echoing the same sentiment, which of course, now irks me.

It seems that the generation or two before always has a bone to pick with the new one being formed. It's like these 'adults in training' can never measure up to the exemplary social graces, relentless work ethic, and all-around good virtues of those before them. The good news is that history proves this is untrue. Each generation is simply different than the one before and the one to come. Each generation is shaped by things largely outside of their control - i.e., my children may never see a war like WWII, and, therefore, may occasionally take for granted their freedom, but my grandfather couldn't possibly comprehend the pervasive, ever-present, frightening war on terror that today's generation lives through every single day.

At Saint Elizabeth Parish School, Generation Z is forming - and, like it or not, it is a product of the generation that came before. Luckily, their 'Gen X' parents recognize the benefits of a Catholic School education where caring teachers and administrators help to instill Catholic values that will be the foundation for the indelible mark they will make on the world. Saint Elizabeth students are, indeed, living

## GENERATION Z

★ BORN 1995-2009 ★

out these values in small and big ways. In fact, the next time someone says “kids these days,” maybe an apt response is, “yea, kids these days...aren't they great.”

Here are just a few examples of how the community of Saint Elizabeth Parish School - multiple generations, in fact - are working together to unabashedly spread Christ's light to the world.

**Integrated Stars in Service** - Saint Elizabeth's *Stars in Service* program has been active for more than five years but has matured most notably this year with dedicated service periods integrated into the curriculum. Each month students participate in an age-appropriate project ranging from sorting donated clothing to making cards for service men and women.

**Grade 8 - Easter Baskets** - New this year, the eighth grade students at Saint Elizabeth Parish School are collecting and creating more than fifty Easter baskets for children who might otherwise not receive one. They will deliver them to Grade 1 students in our

sister parish, Visitation BVM, in Kensington.

**National Junior Honor Society** - Newly minted NJHS members are working diligently this year to establish a peer tutoring project, and are always willing to help out with various Youth Ministry projects throughout the parish, such as a Family Bowling Night.

**In-school & Extra-curricular Activities** - The Saint Elizabeth chapter of *Girls on the Run* is not just setting new speed records, but also challenging themselves



*Saint Elizabeth's Girls on the Run pose after a 5k run last spring. The club empowers girls to be independent and set reachable goals.*

to empower all girls to be independent, setting reachable goals along the way. Our Girl Scouts did a 'clean air' service project, donating new greenery to every classroom and office to reduce indoor air pollution. And, throughout the school year, upper grade students pair with younger buddies to help teach

*(continues on page 7)*

## Gen X and Z cont'd

and celebrate the traditions of the Catholic Church in a way that only kids can understand.

Pope Francis has given us all an invitation to offer love, kindness, and unbounded generosity to others throughout this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, and 'Gen Z' at Saint Elizabeth Parish School has accepted. There are so many ways that our students 'act as Jesus would,'...like sitting next to the new kid who is alone on the bus (true story); taking time out of their own lives to attend other students' competitions (team spirit); and holding a kindergarten student's hand all recess-long (just because). So, if you ever wonder: why Catholic school...or, why



*As part of a Stars in Service project, students finished fleece blankets by tying double knots around the outside. The blankets were donated to Birthright of Coatesville and Saint Mary's Shelter for Homeless Families in Phoenixville.*



*The fourth grade Girl Scout troop at Saint Elizabeth donated and packed 18 boxes to support Operation Christmas Child. The boxes were filled with personalized notes, toys and toiletries for needy children around the world.*

Saint Elizabeth Parish School in particular?

These are the reasons why – and, best of all – there are hundreds of reasons more.

~ Lisa Barbadora

### Dates of Interest

cont'd from cover

#### Adult Faith Formation Presentation

7:00 PM – Sunday, April 3

*Rediscovering Jesus in this Year of Mercy*

Presenter: Father Thomas Mullin

#### Stewardship Day of Service

8:30 AM – Saturday, April 9

You did it!  
*Congratulations*



*Saint Elizabeth's CYO Varsity Boy's basketball team are CYO Region 17 Basketball Champions!*



*Great job to the Saint Elizabeth Future Cities Team of Thanh-Lan Dinh, Scott Hoffman, Owen Kell, Bridget Kowalski, Owen Lawlor, Ty Louangaphay, and Andrew Schaeffer who won the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineering*

*Award for Most Sustainable Food Production System. Future City is a program that gives middle school students an opportunity to do the things that engineers do: identify problems, brainstorm ideas, design solutions, test-retest, build, and share their results.*

## Mark Your Calendars: Saint Elizabeth Stewardship Day of Service is April 9, 2016

Registration is now open for this year's Stewardship Day of Service. Join us on Saturday, April 9, 8:30AM to 1:00PM, as we work together to help more than 25 local service organizations. Tasks at most sites include yard work, spring cleaning projects, and other small jobs. The whole family is welcome to participate. In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, this is a great opportunity to extend God's mercy to others. Registration is open until March 27. Go to [www.stelizabethparish.org](http://www.stelizabethparish.org) and click on the Stewardship Day of Service link for complete details and to register. If you have questions or need more information, please call the Parish Services Office at 610-646-6550.



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