

## Lent: A Prayerful Journey to Easter Hope Saint Elizabeth Offers Many Lenten Opportunities

The oft-heard Lenten song tells us, "In these days of Lenten Journey, we have seen and we have heard, the call to sow justice in the lives of those we serve." We are invited to show mercy and peace, compassion and care by nurturing a renewal of faith during this season of penance.

This year, Lent began on Valentine's Day, February 14. How fitting that the preparation for the greatest act of love in the history of mankind began on that day this year! During his lifetime, Jesus was the perfect model of compassion and love for the suffering and the poor. As we journey through this 2018 season of Lent, we have the opportunity to pledge to be his hands and his feet, and bring his love to all those we meet. In Jesus' ultimate sacrifice dying on the cross, he gave us an everlasting example of the New Commandment: "Love one another, as I have loved you." (John 13:34)

This Commandment is a tall order for us today, during this harried period chock-full of distractions and division. However, there are many opportunities at Saint Elizabeth Parish to help us re-focus on our Lenten journey with Jesus, to strengthen our Christian commitment and celebrate an Easter of hope made possible by love.

In addition to the Ash Wednesday services and the Lenten Soup Supper held in February, there are numerous opportunities to reflect, pray and prepare for Easter during Lent.



### Dates of Interest

#### *Reconciliation – Chapel*

Saturdays – 9:00 AM  
March 7 & 14 – 6:30-7:00 PM  
*No confessions March 31 and April 28*

#### *Communal Reconciliation Service with Individual Confessions*

March 21 – 7:00 PM  
*Extended Confessions*  
March 24 – 9:00-11:00 AM

#### *Stations of the Cross & Benediction*

March 2, 9 & 16 – 7:00 PM  
*Living Stations of the Cross*  
March 23 – 1:30 PM & 7:00 PM

#### *Holy Week Services*

*Palm Sunday, March 24-25*  
Mass – 5:30 PM, 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM  
*Holy Thursday, March 29*  
Mass of the Lord's Supper – 7:30 PM  
*Good Friday, March 30*  
Solemn Passion Service – 3:00 PM  
*Holy Saturday, March 31*  
Blessing of Easter Foods – 11:00 AM  
Easter Vigil Liturgy – 8:00 PM  
*Easter Sunday, April 1*  
Mass – 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM

#### *Stewardship Day of Service*

April 14 – 8:30 AM

#### *NEW: Dramatic Gospel Presentation by Frank Runeyon*

*"Luke - Stories on the Road"*  
April 22 – 7:00 PM

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## Introducing our New Catholics

**B**ecoming Catholic is a joyous experience. Some receive this gift when they are baptized as infants. Others, when they are older. The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) and for Children (RCIC) prepare individuals, wherever they are in their spiritual journey, to receive the Sacraments of Initiation.

Catechumens are non-baptized persons who become members of the Catholic Church upon receiving the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist. Candidates, those that have been already baptized in another Christian tradition are welcomed into the full communion of the Catholic Church and receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and first Holy Communion. At the Easter Vigil this year Saint Elizabeth will welcome four catechumens and five candidates – extending our community one person at a time.

Please keep this year's catechumens and candidates in your prayers throughout Lent.

**Roxanne Barrett** is a catechumen in the RCIC. She attends Lionville Middle School and participates in the school's choir and vocal ensemble. She will be in the upcoming school musical, "My Fair Lady."

Roxanne feels the Holy Spirit guided her to become curious about religion and to answer God's call to be baptized and

come to the Catholic faith. One special moment for Roxanne in the RCIC was when the group watched a video about what do you want out of life. "Happiness is not possessions," she said. "It is God's love, faith and family."

Roxanne is looking forward to the Easter Vigil Mass. "I am most excited to be baptized and experience being reborn as a daughter of God," she said.

**Jennifer Citrullo** is a catechumen in the RCIA. She did not grow up with any formal religion but felt drawn to become a member of the Catholic church. After moving to Chester Springs, Jennifer and her husband



*David Gober and Roxanne Barrett are RCIC catechumens.*

Anthony began attending Mass at Saint Elizabeth, "We knew this was our church," she said. "We love everyone here, and especially Father Mullin."

Jennifer has enjoyed and learned a lot on her journey. "Interestingly, almost everyone in this year's RCIA program is married to a Catholic," said Jennifer. "We are all different ages and in different places in



*Jennifer Citrullo and her son, Liam, will be baptized at the Easter Vigil.*

life, so it makes for a unique and memorable experience."

Anthony will sponsor Jennifer (who will choose the name Nicholas) for confirmation. Both Jennifer and her new baby son, Liam, will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. "It is incredibly special for me to be baptized with my baby boy," she said.

**David Gober** is a catechumen in the RCIC. David attends the Collegium Charter School, where he participates in a variety of sports, martial arts and horse-back riding.

David noted the impact of the Rite of Acceptance last month when his sponsor made the sign of the cross over his eyes. "This really opened me up and brought me closer to God," he said.

"This has been an amazing experience. I really like learning about God with others and don't want it to end," smiled David. David is

*(continues on page 7)*

## New Communications Coordinator: Sara Richardson

This past August, Sara Richardson started as the new Communications Coordinator for Saint Elizabeth parish and parish school. The part-time position was created with input from the Parish Pastoral Council and Parish School Advisory Council to coordinate the development and use of various communications vehicles, including the parish and parish school websites and Facebook pages, print communications, press releases, and related social media tools as they are developed.

"I'm very excited to help build our communications outlets – not only to attract more people to be a part of our church and school community, but to also encourage existing parishioners to become more actively involved in parish life," Sara said.

Sara has been very busy during the last several months. On the parish side, she has worked closely with the website developer on many initiatives, including adding individual *Spirit* newsletter articles as a prominent feature on the homepage, regularly updating newflash items, publishing the online bulletin, making the parish calendar more prominent and creating announcement banners for important parish events.

"I leverage our Facebook page to reinforce bulletin notices. I also develop advertisements, especially if there is a big event coming up that needs an extra boost from social media. Our Facebook page provides reminders about events, meetings and activities," Sara said.



*Sara Richardson helps keep Saint Elizabeth parishioners in the know, both online and in print.*

At our parish school, Sara worked with Angela Colasanti to implement a brand new school website. Sara keeps the website regularly updated by maintaining the school's calendar, developing special event pages, such as a page for Catholic Schools Week, publishing weather delays and closings, and helping committees develop sign-up forms for various programs. Sara also works closely with school principal Dr. Diane Greco to coordinate posts on the school's Facebook page.

"We like to post photos of students at work, especially when they are offering stewardship service or achieving big accomplishments. We feel it is important to keep the parents informed about all the great things the students are doing during the school year," Sara explained. "The teachers have also been very receptive to promoting our school on social media, and they send me their photos and ideas."

In addition to the websites and Facebook pages, Sara manages

print initiatives for the parish and school. "Even though it is 2018, not every parishioner is online or using social media. So, we still make printed materials a priority to ensure our entire parish is informed," Sara explained.

Sara has been a parishioner of Saint Elizabeth since she married her husband, Mike, in 2009. Their daughter, Michaela, is a kindergarten at Saint Elizabeth Parish School. Sara is a native of Buffalo, N.Y. and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication in 2002 from Saint Bonaventure University. Over the last 15 years, she worked in the print journalism field as a reporter, writer, and editor for newspapers and specialty magazines.

"I fell in love with Saint Elizabeth very early on and was drawn to stewardship service," said Sara. "When I joined *The Spirit*, I was happy to bring my working world talents to the newsletter committee. I felt I got to know the parish so much better, and learned about all the great things that Saint Elizabeth offers."

When the new position for Communications Coordinator became available, Sara says she felt a calling. "I really prayed hard about it, and I'm still praying! I truly want to do all that I can to help our parish, and to help our school. In today's world, I believe that if we communicate effectively by using more of the tools available to us, we can not only help our parish and school to survive, but to thrive," Sara said.

~ Deacon Barry Midwood

# School Spirits: Parish School Students Celebrate Catholic Schools Week, Prepare for Lent

Saint Elizabeth Parish School students, along with Catholic schools around the country, celebrated National Catholic Schools week (CSW) in late January. This annual celebration focuses on the value that Catholic education in the United States provides to young people, as well as its contribution to the Church, local community and the nation.

This year's theme – "Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed." – encompassed core values that can be found in Catholic schools nationwide. The official logo, an open book made up of multi-colored pages with a cross in the center, symbolizes how all areas of Catholic schools blend together, with faith at the forefront.

At Saint Elizabeth Parish School, the week encompassed events that demonstrated learning and growing in faith, striving for high academic standards, serving the community and celebrating the parish. "Here at Saint Elizabeth, we like the universality of the Catholic Church to come through during CSW," noted Principal Dr. Diane Greco. "We strive to help our students recognize they are part of something much bigger than just our school."

Students engaged in prayer-partner activities, recognition of community organizations, teacher appreciation day and fun-filled events like mini field day and an ice cream social. A book fair was held; an art fair and science fair showcased the students' work and talents. The week was capped off with the school's popular Pizza Bingo night where students, teachers and families gather together and play for small prizes. Also, eighth-grade



student council officers wrote essays titled "What Catholic School Means to Me," some of which were shared at weekend Masses.

"Each student is unique and has a different experience in Catholic school," explained Dr. Greco. "These essays highlight the many

"As we enter this new season in the Church, students are now focusing on an increase of service activities, prayer and sacrifice, and growing spiritually," noted Dr. Greco. "This puts us all into the mindset of changing our hearts, while underscoring the notion that we are part of something larger than our own self, our own school and our own community."

~ Julie Krumenacker



Catholic Schools Week included a mini field day, an ice cream social and a book fair.

diverse qualities that make Catholic school so successful. Along with being a celebration, CSW is a reflection as to why being part of a faith-based school is important and how this translates to the community and society as a whole."

The celebration of CSW was also a preparation for Lent.



## Family Spirits: Meet the Whitaker Family! Their Love Story Begins with “I Do”

**O**n November 2, 2013, Laura and Brian Whitaker joined hands and said “I do” in front of Father Mullin at Saint Elizabeth Church. Not only was this the start of their marriage, but it was also the beginning of their journey as Catholic stewards and active members of our parish community. Today, Laura and Brian participate in a growing Pre-Cana marriage preparation program at Saint Elizabeth. They are also first-time parents to a bouncing baby boy named Montgomery Patrick, who was born at the end of December.

The Whitakers met on the dance floor at a local pub in downtown Philadelphia. Not long after, Brian was down on one knee! Before getting married, they attended the Pre-Cana program at Saint Joseph Parish in Downingtown. “We had a great experience, so when we discovered that Saint Elizabeth was starting its own program, we wanted to get involved,” explained Laura. “It is so important to talk about what really matters in marriage – not the flowers or seating arrangement. Pre-Cana helped us discuss long-term plans and dreams beyond our wedding day. Likewise, we wanted to help shape the Saint Elizabeth Pre-Cana program to put couples at ease and create an environment where they can share openly.”

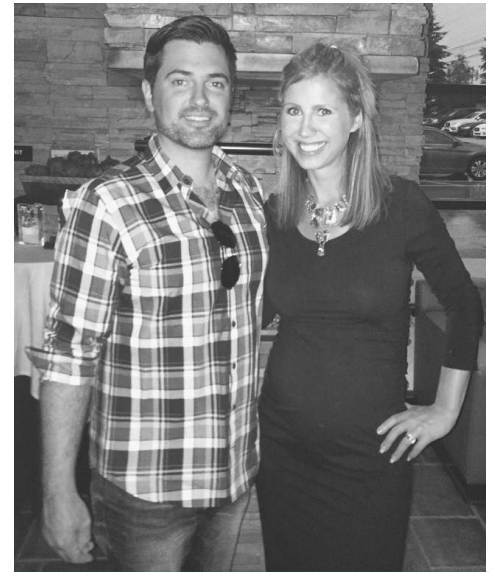
Less than one year later, the Whitakers became the leaders of the parish Pre-Cana program, launched in early 2014. Brian added, “We start off the program with refreshments and a light-

hearted ice breaker to make everyone feel more comfortable. We want to reverse the stereotype that Pre-Cana is a chore and make it a program couples look forward to doing together. So far, the feedback has been very positive. Many attendees write ‘it wasn’t what we expected’ and that’s just what we want to hear.”

Laura grew up outside of Reading and attended West Chester University, graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in Mathematics. She was the first female at West Chester to graduate with an Actuarial Science concentration and helped found the program. She now works as an actuary for Voya Financial, where she authored a paper published by the Society of Actuaries.

Brian grew up in Fort Washington, started his college career at Valley Forge Military Academy and then graduated from Widener University with a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration. While at the Academy, he was inducted into the Anthony Wayne Legion Guard, reserved for the top 1 percent of cadets! Today he is successful as the director of business development at Acosta.

When this dynamo couple isn’t publishing papers and saving the world, they are learning to be parents – their biggest, most important challenge yet. If given an extra two hours of free time, Brian would likely spend it doing home improvement projects in their Chester Springs home while



*Laura and Brian Whitaker are founding members of Saint Elizabeth’s Pre-Cana program.*

Laura might prefer indulging her passion for fashion, sneaking in a trip to the King of Prussia Mall!

The Whitakers plan to continue their life of stewardship through Saint Elizabeth’s Pre-Cana program – which is earning an excellent reputation throughout the area. “Saint Elizabeth is so welcoming and filled with love. Every single time you step foot in that church, you come out feeling light, joyous...truly blessed. You walk out a better person with a clearer mind,” said Laura.

Brian added, “We had difficulties trying to conceive at first, and received amazing counsel and support from Father Mullin. Laura and I truly believe that everyone’s prayers have gotten us to where we are today. We feel blessed to be a part of this special community.”

The feeling is mutual, Whitaker family.

~ Lisa Barbadora

## Lent: A Prayful Journey

(Continued from cover)

Here are a few:

- EFF Stations of the Cross, which will be held on March 5 and 7 at 5:00 PM, and March 6 at 6:30 PM
- Special EFF Lenten classroom activities
- Parish School Lenten Prayer Service, held on March 28 at 11:00 AM in the church
- Join in the online Lent preparation program called *A Lent to Remember* on Formed.org. (more info on page 7)
- Participate in "Operation Rice Bowl" throughout Lent.

Lent ends with the Triduum, a period lasting three days, during which we celebrate the Paschal Mystery of the death and resurrection of the Lord. It is a beautiful time of solemn reflection and begins on Holy Thursday with the Mass of The Lord's Supper. The Triduum continues through the solemn observance of the Crucifixion and veneration of the Cross on Good Friday and reaches its high point with the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night. The Easter Season continues with the eight-day celebration of the Octave of Easter and concludes on Pentecost.

Please see the Dates of Interest on the cover page for liturgy times.

Saint Elizabeth Parish provides many ways to make Lent a season for conversion of the heart in preparation for the solemnity of the Triduum and the joy of the Resurrection at Easter.

~ Lisa Sheronas

## Stewardship Day of Service is April 14!

Our Stewardship Day of Service brings life to our mission statement. Saint Elizabeth parishioners will go into the community to provide services for a variety of worthy organizations and serve as God's hands. Please join us.

### Schedule for day:

**8:30 AM:** Mass at Saint Elizabeth. Event T-shirts will be distributed.

**After Mass:** Light breakfast and brief site meetings in the social hall then travel to individual work sites.

**10:00 AM-1:00 PM:** Work at your site location. If you are interested in working an extended day (until 3:00 PM), you will be able to request this option when you register.



### Work locations:

We will be working at over 20 locations in the Chester County area. See the parish website for details.

Register at

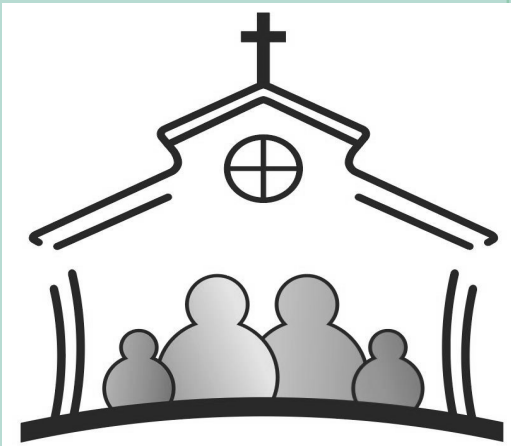
[www.stelizabethparish.org](http://www.stelizabethparish.org) through April 1. If you have further questions, contact Gen Miceli, Parish Services, 610-646-6550.

## Saint Elizabeth 2021: The Pastoral Plan, Our Future

Parishioners attended an interactive workshop on Saturday, February 24 called "Saint Elizabeth 2021: The Pastoral Plan, Our Future."

The workshop focused on putting the 2017-2021 Pastoral Plan into action, both in our individual lives and as a parish community.

The pastoral plan, supporting information and links to Father Mullin's homilies regarding the plan



are all available on the parish website at:  
[www.stelizabethparish.org](http://www.stelizabethparish.org).

## New Catholics

(Continued from page 2)

looking forward to the Easter Vigil when he will be initiated into the Catholic Church and become a member of Saint Elizabeth parish.

**Mia Shannon** is a candidate in the RCIA. Tim and Mia Shannon have four children and moved into the Saint Elizabeth Parish area in 2016.

Mia grew up in the Presbyterian faith tradition, but did not regularly attend church until she married Tim. "I have attended Mass for 30 years and we have raised our children Catholic, but I only felt a calling to become Catholic after moving to this community," explained Mia.



*Mia Shannon will be confirmed alongside her youngest son, Luke, at the Easter Vigil Mass.*

Coincidences started happening in Mia's life that led her join the RCIA. "In our new house, we could only get a Christian radio

station," she said, for example, "but attending Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) brought things home for me."

Mia has learned a lot about our Catholic faith through the RCIA program. The group discussions about the scripture and personal experiences have been especially rewarding. But, being confirmed at the Vigil Mass alongside her youngest son, Luke, may prove the most fulfilling yet.

Many blessings to all of our catechumens and candidates.

~ David Guthrie

## Experience A Lent to Remember and More Through FORMED

**S**aint Elizabeth Parish has purchased a gift for you...a free subscription to FORMED, an incredible online gateway to the best Catholic content, all in one place! It's free and easy to register! Go to <http://STE.Formed.org>.

Click on "REGISTER NOW." Enter your e-mail and create a password (you will need this to log in later). After that, you can explore all the Catholic content available on demand: videos, audio books, studies, fiction and non-fiction eBooks, youth content, and more. Think of it like a Catholic Netflix!

One of the programs featured on FORMED is a great four-part series called *A Lent to Remember*. The series explores the ways God reaches out to each of us with his mercy.



Through Christ's suffering on the cross in the Paschal Mystery and his perpetual reception of his people in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God makes his love, his very self, present to us in the world. By reflecting on the Paschal Mystery and making a step-by-step examination of the Rite of Confession, *A Lent to Remember* communicates God's invitation to each one of us to come experience his indescribable love this Lent.

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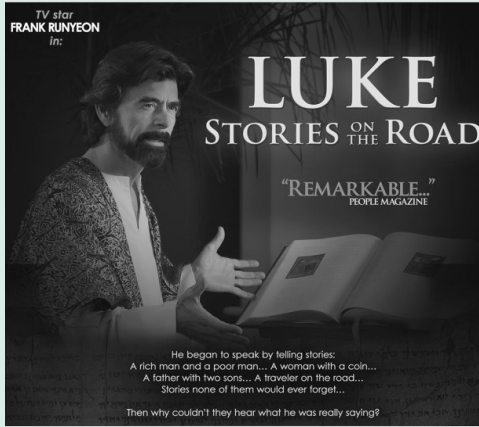
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## Luke – Stories on the Road: Sunday, April 22 at 7:00 PM



In an evening that is both entertaining and eye-opening, Frank Runyeon performs the famous parables in Luke's travel narrative, and then pauses to reflect on how we hear each story. In many ways, we are like Luke's first audience – affluent Greeks raised on academics and theater. It's hard for us to "have ears to hear" these stories.

So Runyeon does what Luke himself did. He starts with Jesus speaking in the synagogue at Nazareth, and takes us on a journey to Jerusalem, so we can hear these famous stories in order, and begin to hear what Jesus was really saying.

Sharing stories from his own life and his friends' lives that are both funny and deeply touching, Runyeon helps us to see what we have been missing. And he encourages us to respond to these parables by entering the story

God is telling right now, and coming to know the joy that Luke wrote about in his Gospel.

Frank is a graduate of Princeton University with a degree in Religion. After studying acting in New York and Los Angeles for 15 years, he attended Fuller Seminary in preparation for the writing and performance of his first one-man play. He continued his studies at Yale Divinity School and General Theological Seminary, from which he received his Masters, with honors, in 1994. He workshopped his first productions in cooperation with the faculty of Holy Cross College in Worcester and the University of Dayton. Frank has now translated and adapted six Biblical texts for performance as one-man dramas.

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