

Youth Ministry Gets an Unexpected Reboot

Megan Carey became the youth ministry coordinator at Saint Elizabeth Parish six months after the country locked down due to COVID-19. What should have been an exciting new-job experience filled with meeting colleagues and getting to know the many young people in our parish was instead eerily quiet, isolating, and lonely.

It was August 2020, and the new school year was about to start. Still operating in a virtual world, Megan didn't expect that all her initial ideas to re-invigorate the youth ministry program would gain too much momentum from the middle and high-school students in our parish during lockdowns.

She was wrong. In fact, the pandemic proved an unexpected adrenaline boost for the youth ministry program as a growing number of kids, isolated with most extracurricular activities suspended, joined the Saint Elizabeth youth group for the first time. Megan knew that God had handed her an important opportunity – and she grabbed hold of it with both hands!

"I knew that one of my biggest challenges in youth ministry would be fighting for teenagers' time," said Megan. "They are involved in so many different activi-



Saint Elizabeth youth group meets twice a month and offers organized stewardship opportunities at least once a month.

ties: sports, band, theater, clubs plus schoolwork. I needed to demonstrate why it was rewarding to make time for youth group, make time for God in their lives. Then, unexpectedly, COVID freed their schedules and kids got more involved with us."

It was a silver lining of the pandemic and an unexpected blessing amidst a very dark period, but Megan was determined to bring some light into the lives of our young people. So, Megan

gave the program a makeover, initiating new activities, fun events and opportunities for service organized around different themes each month.

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Stations Provide a Spiritual Pilgrimage During Lent

Looking for some quiet time to reflect prayerfully on the meaning of Lent and prepare for Easter? Consider attending Stations of the Cross, a deep and meaningful way to contemplate the passion of Jesus Christ.

A beautiful tradition practiced by Catholics for over 1,000 years, Stations of the Cross is a 14-step devotion commemorating Jesus' journey to Calvary. The 14 devotions (stations) focus on the significant events of Jesus' passion and crucifixion. Each station, usually depicted by sacred art, icons or images, presents a chance to carry out a mini-pilgrimage while pausing to pray, reflect and meditate on each experience.

This devotion has evolved over time. From the earliest days, followers of Jesus told the story of His passion, death and resurrection. Some traditions even hold that the Blessed Mother frequently visited each scene of the Lord's passion. During the fourth century, pious pilgrims visited Jerusalem and began to retrace Jesus' path, visiting all the holy places and following the *Way of the Cross*. The practice further developed when pilgrims who could not physically travel to the Holy Land wanted to reproduce the sacred scenes closer to their homes and enable them to visit them in a spiritual way. They created replicas with small shrines commemorating places along Jesus' route.

By the early 18th century, the Order of Friars Minor (the Franciscans) erected 14 shrines in their churches to evoke the feeling of being on the journey to Calvary along with Je-



Enacting the living stations of the cross in costume during Lent is a tradition for our eighth grade parish school children.



sus. Eventually, these shrines became the 14 stations which are now found in nearly every Catholic church worldwide. Stations of the Cross provides a way for anyone to practice the devotion as if on the actual pilgrimage.

The mosaic stations located in Saint Elizabeth Parish originated from the Church of the Transfiguration in Philadelphia, Father Mullin's childhood parish. At Transfiguration Parish, the mosaics were encapsulated in concrete. The concrete was removed when the mosaics were transferred to Saint Elizabeth Church when it was being built.

Traditionally, stations are placed

around the walls of a church with the first station to the left of the sanctuary, progressing counter-clockwise to the fourteenth station on the right. The contractor for our church building had three stations already installed when Father Mullin noticed they were placed on the right and moving clockwise around the church, so our stations are somewhat unique.

Saint Elizabeth will hold parish stations every Friday evening at 7:00 PM throughout Lent. Elementary Faith Formation (EFF) will host stations on Monday, March 7 at 4:45 PM and 6:30 PM. Additionally, Saint Elizabeth Parish School eighth-grade students will continue their meaningful tradition of a living stations on Friday, April 8 at 1:30 PM and 7:00 PM. All are invited to take part in this richly endowed tradition during the Lenten season.

~ Julie Krumenacker

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This Lent, take advantage of the many resources offered on FORMED!

Daily Reflections: Dr. Tim Gray offers a 5-minute Daily Reflection with a specific Lenten focus throughout the six weeks of Lent. When you sign up online, a link will be sent directly to your email inbox each day during Lent.

Into His Likeness is a six-part video series by renowned Catholic teacher, author and speaker Dr. Edward Sri. This series discusses how to grow as a disciple and become true imitators of the likeness of Jesus Christ.

FORGIVEN: The Transforming Power of Confession explores the grace and healing offered in Confession and shows how this sacrament of mercy reveals the depth and bounty of God's love. By looking at God's revelation of mercy in scripture and making a step-by-step examination of the Rite itself, *Forgiven* communicates God's invitation to each one of us to come experience his indescribable love in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Tears of Christ: Audio Meditations for Lent takes us to the heart of the interior life of St. John Henry Newman (1801-1890), from the treasures of which these meditations are offered as a Lenten devotional aid. Drawn chiefly from his sermons and gently modernized, these meditations offer a share in the fruit of his contemplation, that we might better enjoy with him the "one thing which is all in all to us," which is "to live in Christ's presence, to hear his voice to see his countenance."

LENTEN RESOURCES ON FORMED



Triduum: A Spiritual Pilgrimage is a beautiful, 30-minute contemplative documentary that cinematically walks through the locations of the Holy Week story. Immersed in the real and sacred places of the Holy Land, the pilgrim faithful are brought tangibly nearer to the story, the landscape and the reality of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. *Triduum* draws Catholics and those with open hearts and minds to experience a deeper understanding of these events and places. To journey along this spiritual pilgrimage is to be drawn more deeply into the life and love of God.

For Kids: Lent with Brother Francis: Learn and pray with Brother Francis this Lent. With several different seasons available, Brother Francis helps children learn more about what Lent is all about and why it is so important.

To sign up for your free FORMED account, visit <https://formed.org/signup> and type St. Elizabeth Uwchland in the search bar.

Dates of Interest

Stations of the Cross & Benediction
Fridays at 7:00 PM
March 4, 11, 18, 25 & April 1
Living Stations of the Cross
Friday, April 8 at 1:30 PM & 7:00 PM

Sacrament of Penance/ Reconciliation
Saturdays, 9:00-10:00 AM,
Wednesdays, 6:30-7:00 PM,
March 9, 16, 23 & 30
Extended Confessions:
Saturday, April 9, 9:00-11:00 AM
[No confessions on
Holy Saturday, April 16.]

Communal Reconciliation Service with Individual Confessions
Wednesday, April 6 at 7:00 PM

Holy Week Services
Palm Sunday, April 9-10
Mass at 5:30 PM, 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM,
11:30 AM

Holy Thursday, April 14
Mass of the Lord's Supper
at 7:30 PM
Adoration until midnight

Good Friday, April 15
Solemn Passion Service at 3:00 PM
Passion Prayer Service at 7:00 PM

Holy Saturday, April 16
Easter Foods Blessing at 11:00 AM
Easter Vigil Liturgy at 8:00 PM

Easter Sunday, April 17
Mass at 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM &
11:30 AM

Sacrament of Confirmation
Saturday, April 30
Mass at 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM

Holy Day of the Ascension of the Lord
Thursday, May 26
Mass at 7:30 AM, 12:00 PM, 7:00 PM

Memorial Day
Monday, May 30
Mass at 9:00 AM

Youth Ministry Reboot *(cont'd from cover)*



Above, the youth ministry group sang to local residents at Christmastime.

For example, Megan launched her “around the world” theme in September where the youth group celebrates a different saint from a different country each month. The 6th thru 12th graders learn about the selected saint and discuss his/her region’s unique Catholic traditions while enjoying food, games and other activities from that country. In October, the group celebrated Our Lady of Guadalupe and Blessed Elias del Socorro Nieves from Mexico by eating Mexican candy and playing some Mexican-themed games in honor of “Day of the Dead.” This spring, Father Kevin will lead talks about saints from various African countries.

Megan has also increased the number and variety of service projects. For instance, the first Saturday of every month is now called *Stewardship Saturday* and is open to all age groups. In October, they teamed up with the parish’s Crafting Hands ministry to make rosaries for donation. “I like teaming up with other ministries for service projects because it shows the kids that there are many opportunities

to participate in our parish even after they age out of youth group,” said Megan.

For example, the Youth Ministry worked with the Knights of Columbus to celebrate Veteran’s Day. In December, the students brought small gifts to Eagleview Landing community residents.

“I have been attending youth group for years, but Ms. Carey has really made it a great experience,” said Luke De Ocampo, a freshman parishioner who at-



Luke De Ocampo attends youth group meetings regularly and encourages other teens to join.

tends Downingtown East High School. “Youth group is much more interactive now with fun activities like scavenger hunts and socials. I’m really enjoying the around-the-world saint program – January focused on the Philippines, which is where my parents are originally from.”

Megan plans to continue expanding the program, especially as the world opens back up. “I’m hoping to add more activities off-campus so the kids can see their impact outside our bubble and

out in local communities around this multicultural area.”

Given the unique and relentless stress heaped on young people, especially these days, Megan hopes that she can provide a warm and judgment-free place for teenagers. “I try to plan activities that incentivize kids to come to us instead of turning to drugs or isolation. This is a place where young people can talk freely about anything and lean on their faith amidst like-minded peers.”

For Luke, the Saint Elizabeth Youth Ministry has aided in developing friendships. “It’s all about the people,” he explained, “I’ve made some close friends and we connect through faith so I know these relationships will last. I’d love it if even more kids would come to more events. They would see how good it feels to help others with the stewardship activities like when we sang at the senior center. We brightened their days, which brightened ours.”

Thank you, Megan Carey, for persevering in this most important mission – sharing our faith to connect our parish’s young people with God. The world needs more people like you and your youth ministry program to help guide the precious youth of America now more than ever. Godspeed.

~ Lisa Barbadora

Learn More!

- **Visit stelizabethparish.org**
- **Contact Megan Carey via 610-646-6534 or mcarey@stelizabethparish.org**

School Spirits: Why Catholic Education Still Matters

Saint Elizabeth Parish School is not just a learning institution. It is a deeply invested community.

In an often cold and demanding world, Saint Elizabeth Parish School's warm community of faith offers an immeasurably important springboard in children's lives, and in ours. Undoubtedly, the school prepares the mind, but it prepares the soul as well. During Catholic Schools Week 2022, we asked three Saint Elizabeth teachers to highlight unique ways that Catholic education enriches the lives of its students.

Building Friendship in Community

Mrs. Hogarth, a sixth grade home-room teacher, launched the Adventure Club in January 2022. Geared to upper grade students, the club is a monthly activity designed to promote a sense of school community while helping others and having fun, too. The "adventures" take students to places like Urban Air, Arnold's Family Fun Center, Bear Creek, and Marsh Creek.

Each trip is tied to a community service activity. In January, the students coordinated a school-wide Blessing Bag event where donations were used to create 210 Blessing Bags plus several boxes of supplies, gift cards, and Valentine's Day treats for two homeless shelters in Philadelphia. Saint Elizabeth school's Student Council and Adventure Club students assembled the bags for grateful recipients.

In February, the Adventure Club delivered Super Bowl "parties" to about 45 guests in homeless shelters in Phoenixville. In partnership with Acme Markets, students were excited to bring a Super Bowl party-in-a-box to shelter residents so they could enjoy good fun, football, and food on February 13!

Keeping the Arts Central to Learning

Art teacher Mrs. Schmalbach initiated a celebration of all the wonderful things that our parish school provides to our community, including the ongoing exposure to art and literature - manifested in the school's "Door Decorating Contest." The first-floor students,



Teachers Mrs. Schoen, Mrs. Hogarth and Mrs. Schmalbach offer unique ways to enrich our parish school children's lives through Catholic education.

PreK-4 to fourth grade, voted for the best door on the second floor, grades 5-8; and vice versa. The winning door on the first floor was third grade, Mrs. Nemic. It was inspired by the book "The Legend of Rock, Paper, Scissors" by Drew Daywalt. Mrs. Fraser's seventh-grade door won on the second floor. It was inspired by the popular "I Survived" series of historical

fiction for young adults. Students and teachers got creative with all of their door decorations. Pictures were also posted on Facebook.

Academic Excellence Doubles as Stewardship

Mrs. Schoen's unique "Extreme Coupon" challenge for the seventh-grade students showcases Math in the real world while also helping others in need. After learning what coupons are and how to use them correctly, the students took their coupons and \$10 to shop for great deals. They had about eight weeks to purchase as many deals as they could leveraging coupons. They shared deals with one another during "Coupon Days" in class and learned how to use store apps and websites to make the most of their money. At the end of the project, 12 students spent a grand total of \$84.96 and purchased 259 items worth a retail value of \$698.69. They saved an impressive \$613.73, or 88%! All purchases went to either The Lord's Pantry in Downingtown or the Veteran's Group of Philadelphia.

Special thanks to Ms. Quinn (grandmother of one of the students) who came in to talk to the students about using coupons and websites, and to Mrs. Oulton (parish school secretary) who delivered the items.

As a community, we celebrate our successes and achievements uniting in solidarity, and even challenge each other to become better reflections of the divine. We are made for community.

*~ Dr. Diane Greco, Principal
Saint Elizabeth Parish School*

Family Spirits - Meet the Kinmartin Family

Paul and Susan Kinmartin, along with their three daughters, have lived all around the world. But for the past 17 years, Saint Elizabeth Parish has been their home.

Paul, the oldest of eight children, is from West Seneca, NY and Susan is from Erie, PA. They married in May 1992 at Saint Philip the Apostle Church just outside of Buffalo, NY. Paul is a partner at accounting and consulting firm Baker Tilly US, LLP, and Susan is a stay-at-home mom. The couple were heavily influenced by their upbringings and Catholic education.

Work took the couple abroad shortly after Paul and Susan married. They lived in Milan, Italy, where their daughter Rachael was born, and then in Singapore, where twins Alyssa and Elayna were born. They repatriated to Downingtown in 2005, and started attending Mass at Lionville Middle School, right before our church building was completed.

Rachael is 23 years old and graduated last year from Temple University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Cellular and Molecular Neuroscience. She is now at the University of Pennsylvania studying to be a nurse practitioner. Alyssa and Elayna, fraternal twins, are 18 years old and seniors at Villa Maria Academy High School. They both plan to pursue nursing in college. All three Kinmartin girls attended Saint Elizabeth Parish School and Villa Maria Academy Middle School.

Stewardship has become an important part of the Kinmartin fami-

ly. Paul is a lector, serves on the Pastoral and Finance Councils, and is a CYO Basketball coach for their twin daughters' team. He has also been involved in Good Works. Susan has been an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and currently says the rosary at Saint Martha Manor with the Legion of Mary. The girls have all been altar servers as well.

"We chose to actively participate in various parish activities to give back with our God-given talents, but we also benefit from a stewardship way of life," Paul and Susan said. "I was a lector in high school and enjoy reading the Word of the Lord to others. And, professionally I advise clients on finances, so I enjoy doing that for the parish as well," Paul added.

"I found it rewarding and humbling to share the Body of Christ with others, and I enjoy interacting with the nursing home residents as a surrogate for my parents who were and are in a nursing home in Erie," Susan said.

They both find the best part of offering their stewardship is the satisfaction of giving back to the spiritual life at Saint Elizabeth, plus interacting with the clergy and meeting other parishioners. "It means being part of a larger

'family' that has the same values we do. We've made many close friends through Saint Elizabeth.



The Kinmartins have found that leading an active parish life has brought them the added benefit of being with an extended Catholic family that shares the same Christian beliefs.

We cherish the pastoral relationships with the current and former parish priests," the couple said.

The family is also very involved with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, where Paul is on the board of the Greater Delaware Valley Chapter. Susan shared that she was diagnosed with MS shortly before moving back to the United States. Paul has ridden in the annual Bike MS: City to Shore (to Ocean City, N.J.) for 16 years straight to raise money for MS research. Rachael and Alyssa have also participated in the Bike MS fundraiser. Paul is also on the board of Junior Achievement of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

We are grateful to have the Kinmartin family so actively involved in our parish!

~ Sara Richardson

A Day In the Life of Saint Elizabeth Parish

During any given week, you'll find Saint Elizabeth Parish buzzing with a wide range of happenings beyond just weekly Mass. Some of these meetings, events and gatherings help us grow in our faith, some give us an opportunity to serve God and our neighbors, while some nourish us with fellowship. Here's just a recent, random snapshot of our awesome parish community – and every age group – walking in a stewardship way of life!

Father Mullin spoke with First Penance candidates and their parents about the beauty of the sacrament.



Students created Valentine's Day cards for Sisters of Saint Joseph at Saint Joseph Villa in Flourtown.



Our crafting hands ministry worked on gifts of warmth, comfort, peace, celebration and strength.



Cub Scout Pack 61 learned about chemistry and science experiments.



Our parish youth spent part of Martin Luther King Day in service, making blankets and assembling food bags.



March for Life participants traveled by bus to Washington D.C. for the annual event.



Seniors enjoy a morning of fun as part of the Senior Adult Ministry's Game Day.



The Ice Cream Social was a favorite tradition during Catholic Schools Week.



Eighth-grade parish school students led a mini field day for fellow schoolmates.



15-Minute Survey Will Guide the Future

The Archdiocese is launching a *Called for More* Campaign to create a more vibrant faith and stronger parish communities. As part of this program, all the Archdiocesan parishes, including Saint Elizabeth, will participate in a parish-wide survey about discipleship during Lent.

A special survey entitled the "**Disciple Maker Index**" (DMI) is being conducted by the Catholic Leadership Institute in conjunction with the Archdiocese. All our adult parishioners are invited and encouraged to participate by taking the 10-15 minute DMI survey online.

The DMI survey asks you to reflect on your own spiritual growth and your involvement in Saint Elizabeth parish. It also enables you to provide feedback on our parish efforts designed to help you grow in faith. All survey responses are strictly confidential, and the parish will only receive information about the community as a whole.

The information gathered through the DMI survey will identify the parish's key strengths and areas for growth;

this will be a great resource to the pastor, the parish staff, the pastoral council and ministry group leaders as we plan together for the future of Saint Elizabeth Church in anticipation of our twenty-fifth anniversary in 2025.

Beginning on **Ash Wednesday, March 2**, a link to the DMI electronic survey and an optional printable version of the survey will be posted on the parish website homepage (stelizabethparish.org). Those who choose to complete the survey by hand are asked to return their response to the parish office in a sealed white envelope labeled **DMI STEL 2022**, no later than **Monday, April 4**.



The Catholic Leadership Institute will communicate the results of the DMI survey during the late spring or early summer and the information gathered will be shared with the entire parish.

For questions about the DMI survey or to request a hard-copy, please contact Matt Pfeiffenberger (call 610-321-1200 or email stedmi@stelizabethparish.org).

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