



ST. JOSEPH PARISH

NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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By Nathan Frankart

St. Joseph Parish
200 Saint Joseph Drive
Amherst, OH 44001
(440) 988-2848
stjosephamherst.com

Nativity of the BVM Parish
333 South Lake Street
South Amherst, OH 44001
(440) 986-7011

March 2021

RCIA PROFILE: Megan Campbell

A Journey Back Home to the Church

One could say that Megan Campbell's life reflects the beloved adage, "Once a Catholic, always a Catholic." Her spiritual journey back home to the Catholic Church is inspiring and testifies to the grace of God, vibrantly alive in the world today.

"I grew up in a Catholic home and was baptized by Fr. Martello," she says. "I attended St. Joseph Parish School in Amherst for a few years. I made my First Confession and First Communion while attending there. My grandmother was a member of St. Joseph's Parish and I would attend Mass with her on Sundays and holidays sometimes. But then I left the parish school to attend Amherst public schools, so I wasn't confirmed. I think this is why I ended up stepping away from the faith."

Awhile later, Megan returned home to the loving arms of Mother Church. On July 6, 2020, she received the Sacrament of Confirmation, along with the blessing of her marriage.

"My husband, David, and I have been married for about 10 years, and we have an 8-year-old daughter, Taylor," Megan says. "When we enrolled her in St. Joseph Parish School, I decided to come back to



Megan Campbell's spiritual journey back home to the Catholic Church is inspiring, and testifies to the grace of God, vibrantly alive in the world today.

the Church. I felt comfortable coming back to our parish because it was the community I initially started to grow up in. Therefore, I enrolled in the RCIA [Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults] program here."

Megan truly enjoyed the RCIA process, finding it to be educational and inspiring.

"It was a wonderful experience," she says. "There was so much information to

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Getting to Know Parishioner **MARIA MROSEK**

A Life Fulfilled with Stewardship and Service

Sometimes, it can be hard to quantify the impact that someone has had in our lives. But when reflecting, we see the plethora of ways in which their words, their example, and their priorities have shaped our own. For longtime St. Joseph parishioner Maria Mrosek, she credits that influence to her parents.

Born in Texas and raised in Pennsylvania until she was 14, Maria moved to Amherst in 1965. Her parents were faithful Catholics, who prioritized Catholic education for her and her seven younger siblings.

“I spent all 12 years in Catholic school,” Maria says. “As the oldest of eight children, my parents believed in the importance of a Catholic education, and I was so grateful for the opportunity and the sacrifices my parents made to make that happen.”

It was also her parents who instilled in her the value of stewardship. From a young age, Maria remembers knowing the importance of being involved in service to the parish community.

“My father taught us from a very young age that the Catholic Church is part of our community — that we are all God’s children and we need to give back to the parish and our neighbors, with the talents we have,” she says.

Over the years, Maria has served in a variety of different ways, from being a PSR and Confirmation catechist to singing in the choir, and serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. In retirement, she has taken advantage of the opportunity to be involved in even more ways, serving on the Stewardship Council, the Parish Council, and, most recently, organizing the 2020 Church Photo Directory for both parishes.



St. Joseph parishioner Maria Mrosek has enjoyed finding new ways to serve the parish community over the years.

“I love to help in any way I can,” Maria says. “I guess it’s just part of my nature to volunteer.”

“I was somewhat limited during my working years — I never had time,” she adds. “But now, in retirement, I have plenty of time.”

Through her involvement, Maria has enjoyed the chance to get to know her fellow parishioners as they work alongside one another, seeking the common goal of building up the Church.

“I love meeting new people in our parish,” she says. “I love meeting new people, and also learning from them — learning what their faith means to them, sharing the ideas about our faith, and praying together.”

Although she has been active in her faith since she was young, Maria sees the mission of stewardship in the parish as a key part of fully embracing service to Christ.

“Stewardship encompasses our whole way of life,” she says. “It helps us to be more loving and caring, by using all our talents.”

Maria encourages ministry leaders in the parish to reach out to new members and other parishioners to consider how they might use their gifts and talents to give back to the parish family in service.

“Actively engage others in your committees and groups,” Maria says. “Encourage new ideas — embrace change. There’s so much that we can do to bring our parish to a new level in stewardship.”

Thank you, Maria, for all the ways you serve our parish and community!

A Letter from Our Pastor

A Month and Year to HONOR ST. JOSEPH

Dear Members of St. Joseph and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parishes,

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ chose to enter the world through a human family. He came as an infant born into the marriage and home of the two holiest human creatures who ever lived — Mary and Joseph. At a time when our world and our Church needs family and faithful disciples now more than ever, could there be a more fitting time to venerate the man who gave his life and his love to the Blessed Mother and the Son of God?

Pope Francis has declared 2021 the Year of St. Joseph in honor of the 150th anniversary of the saint's proclamation as patron of the Universal Church. Our pope said he established the year so that "every member of the faithful, following his example, may strengthen their life of faith daily in the complete fulfillment of God's will."

As Christians, we are blessed to have Mary as our spiritual mother and Joseph as our spiritual father. Just as Mary guides us from heaven with loving devotion, St. Joseph also diligently provides for the needs of the family of God, the Holy Catholic Church.

Because of his special role as foster-father of the Child Jesus, St. Joseph has merited singular privileges in heaven unmatched by any saint aside from the Blessed Virgin Mary.

To give some modern-day perspective to the significance of this special year, Pope Francis has said the coronavirus pandemic heightened his desire to reflect on St. Joseph, as so many people during the

pandemic have made hidden sacrifices to protect others, just as St. Joseph quietly protected and cared for Mary and Jesus.

"Each of us can discover in Joseph — the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence — an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble," the pope wrote.

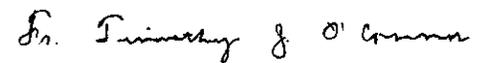
At the end of the First Vatican Council in 1870, Pope Pius IX declared St. Joseph the patron of the Universal Church. He is also the patron of carpenters, workers, fathers, and a happy death because he died in the presence of Mary and Jesus. The title of Joseph's March 19 feast day is "Husband of Mary." Pope Pius XII later declared May 1 to be the feast of St. Joseph the Worker to counteract the Communist May Day holiday.

As Catholics pray and reflect on the life of St. Joseph this year, they also have opportunities to gain a plenary indulgence or remission of all temporal punishment due to sin. An indulgence can be applied to oneself or to a soul in purgatory. An indulgence requires a specific act, defined by the Church, as well as sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, prayer for the pope's intentions, and full detachment from sin.

Special indulgences during the Year of St. Joseph can be received through various prayers and actions, including praying for the unemployed, entrusting one's daily work to St. Joseph, performing a corporal or spiritual work of mercy, or meditating for at least 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer.

As we devote 2021 to St. Joseph's honor, we will undoubtedly unlock many special graces — not only for our parishes but for each of the faithful who increase their devotion to him during this special year. There is no greater model than St. Joseph from whom we can learn how to live virtuously in imitation of Jesus and Mary.

Gratefully in Christ,



Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor,
Pastor

Pope Francis' Prayer to St. Joseph

*Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted His only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.
Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy,
and courage, and defend us from
every evil. AMEN.*

To read more about Pope Francis' declaration on the Church granting plenary indulgences for the Year of St. Joseph, visit —
www.bit.ly/StJoseph2021

THE CHURCH ENVIRONMENT MINISTRY:

Fostering a Prayerful Worship Space for All



When a guest or parishioner walks into St. Joseph and Nativity there is a feeling of home. But our churches are even more welcoming thanks to a group of dedicated parishioners at each parish. The Church Environment Ministry members at both Nativity and St. Joseph work hard to ensure that everything looks beautiful and welcoming throughout all the seasons of the liturgical year.

Marriane Pellittieri takes care of the decorating at Nativity, and Sue Cotton is in charge at St. Joseph.

“It’s like home at church,” says Marriane. “You want to keep your home nice.”

Marriane and Sue are both quick to mention that they don’t do all the work — they are blessed to work alongside a dedicated core group in which the members share their many talents.

For instance, one item that really adds to the decor at Nativity is the candles that were made a few years ago by Dee Darin. Marriane also loves to use the banners on the back wall to decorate for the color of each season, as well as placing flowers by Mary and Joseph. And, as Marriane notes, many of the plants that are placed around Nativity for Easter and Christmas are donated by a generous parishioner.

At St. Joseph, the newly enhanced space around the altar gives an opportunity for various approaches to decoration.

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“Our altar is our main focus. We change out the altar cloth for each season. We have older styles and newer styles, all to give more focus on the celebration of the Mass, and not to distract from the celebration of the Mass.” — Sue Cotton

Church Environment Ministry *continued from page 4*

“This entire year, we will explore different ways to utilize our newly enhanced sanctuary,” Sue says.

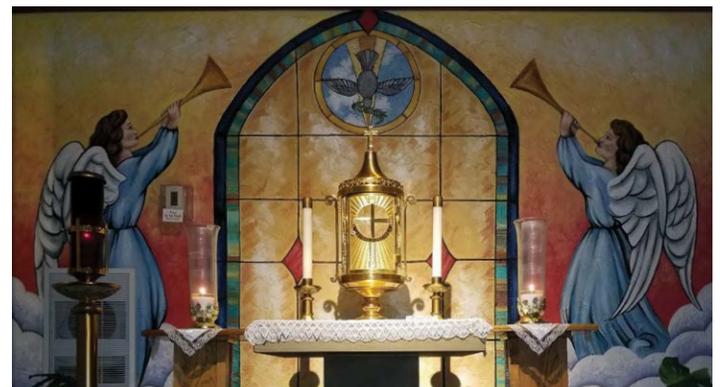
“Our altar is our main focus,” she adds. “We change out the altar cloth for each season. We have older styles and newer styles, all to give more focus on the celebration of the Mass, and not to distract from the celebration of the Mass.”

However, with the COVID-19 pandemic still a factor in parish gatherings, the Church Environment Ministry members are aiming to keep the decorations simple.

Both Sue and Marriane say Fr. Tim has a lot of insight into how the churches should be decorated. At St. Joseph, Sue makes sure to strike a balance between respecting the space and decorating. But whatever the season, both Marriane and Sue are so thankful to be doing this work, and to have the opportunity to witness all of the decor coming together throughout the year.

“It is an honor to be able to work in the background of the church and to create a welcoming place for our parish family,” Sue says.

Please refer to the bulletin for updates on times when decorators are needed. For more information, please call the church office at 440-988-2848.



Parish Happenings:

- Please take part in the discipleship survey that is being conducted by Catholic Leadership Institute. The survey will take about 10-15 minutes of your time, and will provide Fr. Tim and ministries with invaluable information as we plan for the future.

The surveys are available online **through March 20** at:

St. Joseph

<https://portal.catholicleaders.org/dmi/survey/d956pd95xp>

Nativity of the BVM

<https://portal.catholicleaders.org/dmi/survey/dpgdx18416>

or a paper copy is available in the St. Joseph Parish office.

- The 2021 Mass Intention book is open. Please mail the request with your contact info so that we can confirm your request.
- If you have not already done so, please prayerfully consider helping Catholic Charities with a donation to this year's "Love Your Neighbor" annual appeal. You can donate online at CatholicCommunity.org/Match.

- New opportunities to grow in faith await you through Flocknote. We now have access through Flocknote to Bishop Robert Barron's Word on Fire program. Just text SJPA to 84576 to be added to receive this, as well as other messages and updates regarding what's happening at our parishes.

- Registration is now open for St. Joseph 2021-22 School year. Please check out our website at www.sjsamherst.org to learn more about us and to register for preschool - Grade 8.

LENTEN/EASTER SCHEDULE

- **Stations Of The Cross — Fridays In Lent**
(7 p.m. — St. Joseph Church)

Refer to the parish website for information on this year's Immersion rendition of the Stations of the Cross available on DVD. Proceeds to support Missionaries of the poor in Haiti.

- **Reconciliation (Confession) At St. Joseph Parish**

Saturdays from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Thursdays following the 7 p.m. Mass until 8:30 p.m.

Good Friday Confessions follow the Noon Liturgy until 3 p.m.

HOLY WEEK

- **Sunday, March 28 — Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion**

4 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass — at St. Joseph

5:30 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass — at Nativity B.V.M.

8:30 a.m., 11 a.m., and 5 p.m. — Sunday Masses at St. Joseph

- **Monday, March 29**

9 a.m. Mass of Holy Week — at St. Joseph

11:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. — Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Nativity B.V.M.

- **Tuesday, March 30**

8 a.m. — Mass of Holy Week at Nativity B.V.M.

11 a.m. – 10 p.m. — Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Nativity B.V.M.

7 p.m. — Chrism Mass at St. John Cathedral, or it can be viewed at home on the diocesan website.

To better accommodate the social distancing protocol, the Easter Schedule will be as follows:

EASTER TRIDUUM

- **Thursday, April 1 — Holy Thursday at St. Joseph Parish**

7 p.m. — Mass of the Lord's Supper (*Adoration and Confessions to follow Mass*)

9 p.m. — Simple Closing of Adoration

- **Friday, April 2 — Good Friday at St. Joseph Parish**

12:00 Noon — Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion, with Confessions afterwards until 3 p.m.

7 p.m. — Stations of the Cross

- **Saturday, April 3 — Holy Saturday at St. Joseph Parish**

(*There will be no Blessing of Easter Food this year*)

11 a.m. - 12 Noon — Confessions

8:30 p.m. — Easter Vigil of the Lord's Resurrection

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An Excerpt from MY ADDRESS TO THE COMMUNITY

BY NATHAN FRANKART

Pease of Christ to you! I have a special treat this month! Recently I gave a talk to the Borromeo Community regarding living our prayer lives intimately with Jesus, and I would like to share part of it with you. Here is the excerpt from the last page, as it applies to all of us as members of God's family:

We see before us the image of an act perfectly made out of passion and desire, love and affection, for us. Christ on the cross reveals how passionate the Sacred Heart truly is at Calvary, a true physical manifestation of His burning, aching desire for souls. Your souls, my soul. We have been given a great opportunity, to strive to love God and love another emulating this same intense passion. We even have the grace to aid our journey in truly embracing Our Lord every moment in prayer, every time we call on His name, every time we mark ourselves with the symbol of the Trinity. Our lives of living in darkness are truly over. The decision has already been made, you have al-



ready said "yes" to loving God. There is no turning back. You have been baptized as beloved sons of the Father, confirmed through the Holy Spirit, and called out to discern God's will for you. There will never be a time for us to shy away from Our Lord of Love. And as we journey deeper into that mystery of love, we will be living witnesses to what an intimate relationship with Jesus does to the soul.

It's so apparent how this transforms souls — those who chose to love Christ in such devoted and intimate ways become the saints. Brothers, I desire to see

each and every one of you. Your lives of holiness aren't starting after ordination or at the beginning of another vocation. Your lives of intimately loving Christ must be carried every single day. I've read once in a book regarding Carmelite spirituality this beautiful truth, how much more the Father in heaven rejoices when one prays the Our Father with true love and devotion than for hundreds said in repetition. Take advantage of every hour, and with every word. Let them be said with as great of love and devotion as when you first realized that you loved Jesus.

Parish Happenings *continued from page 6*

■ Sunday, April 4 — Easter Sunday

8 a.m. — Tentative Mass of Easter Sunday at Nativity B.V.M. Parish

9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. — Tentative Masses of Easter Sunday at St. Joseph Parish

No Mass on Easter Monday, April 5

FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics, but are not Holy Days

of Obligation. Additionally, Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence. The norms on fasting are obligatory from age 18 until 59. When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. Likewise, the norms for abstaining from meat are binding from age 14 onwards. If possible, the fast on Good Friday is continued until the Easter Vigil — on Holy Saturday night — as the "paschal fast" to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus and to prepare ourselves to share more fully and to celebrate more readily His Resurrection.

This newsletter brought to you by the Catholic Communities of:

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200 Saint Joseph Drive, Amherst, OH 44001

Address Service Requested

Fr. Tim O'Connor Serving Both Parishes

Mass:

Monday, 9:00 a.m. - *St. Joseph*

Tuesday, 8:00 a.m. - *Nativity of the BVM*

Thursday, 7:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*

Friday, 9:00 a.m. - *St. Joseph*

Saturday, 4:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*

5:30 p.m. - *Nativity of the BVM*

Sunday, 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*

Confession at St. Joseph:

Thursday - Individual Reconciliation 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Saturday - Individual Reconciliation 11:00 a.m. - noon

Eucharistic Adoration (Chapel) at Nativity of the BVM:

Monday-Friday 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Megan Campbell *continued from front cover*

learn that I actually came back for another year. I enjoyed the content of our RCIA sessions, and how it was broken down and explained to us. I also enjoyed the laughs we shared.”

While Megan points that she is still learning about the saints, she particularly appreciates the example of the saint she chose for her Confirmation — St. Brigid.

“She is the saint of infants and children with abusive fathers,” Megan says. “She is also known for helping those who are less fortunate or poor.”

Now that she is a fully initiated Catholic, Megan savors her newfound faith and appreciates how it is positively transforming her.

“One of the aspects of the Catholic faith that appeals to me is the sense of community that it gives to you, the feeling

of family,” she says. “It is great to know that we are all at church for different reasons, but yet for the same reasons. Now as a Catholic, I hope to become a better person and to share this goodness with others.”

Looking forward, Megan hopes to embrace stewardship in a new way.

“When things calm down with COVID, I would like to help out our community by giving more than just monetarily — for example, maybe with the school as they help with the Blessing House throughout the year,” she says.

Currently, Megan works with the Amherst School System as the Color Guard Instructor for the Marching Band. She also works in administration for a long-term care facility, and as a state-tested nursing assistant.

“One of the aspects of the Catholic faith that appeals to me is the sense of community that it gives to you, the feeling of family. It is great to know that we are all at church for different reasons, but yet for the same reasons. Now as a Catholic, I hope to become a better person and to share this goodness with others.”

MEGAN CAMPBELL