



## “AND STEPHEN WAS HEARD...”

A Quarterly Newsletter  
of Saint Stephen's Roman Catholic Church  
in Kearny, New Jersey

Fall, 2020  
Volume 1, Issue 1

### FROM OUR PASTOR...

My dear parishioners and friends of Saint Stephen's parish,

In the fall of 2013, our parish newsletter, “*And Stephen Was Heard*” was initiated as a part of Pope Benedict XVI's call for Catholics to enter into a “New Evangelization”. The Pope was calling on all baptized Catholics to commit themselves to a better and more disciplined approach to speaking about and teaching the Catholic Faith.

For different reasons, our newsletter lasted only a few issues. That doesn't mean it was a failure, however. Other resources and other concerns began to demand more of our staff's time and energy.

Now, we are pleased to bring back the parish newsletter with two goals in mind: firstly, to resume the call-to-arms of Pope Benedict of participating in the New Evangelization. Secondly, to explore other opportunities for enhanced communication with our parishioners, our friends and the larger community.

I hope that you will find something of interest in this issue and in those to come. Our number one priority must be to always keep Jesus Christ at the center of our lives. By what we do and what we say, we can accomplish this goal in various and beautiful ways.

Thanks, as always, for your continued support of our parish!

God bless you!

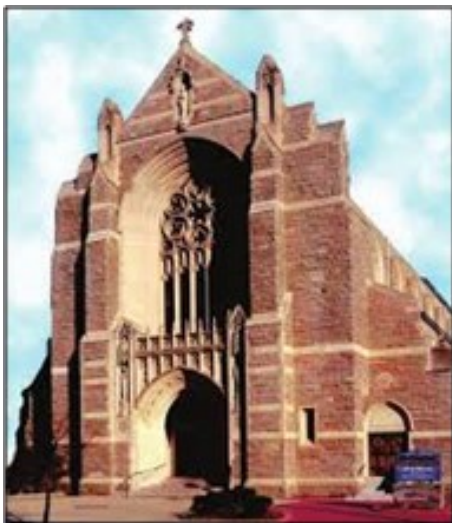
*Father Joe Mancini*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Church Re-Opens! .....	2
Parish Census Update.....	2
Confirmation.....	3
First Communions .....	4
All Souls Day .....	5
Thank you Fr Juan! .....	8

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Sacraments celebrated under different circumstances this year
- Saints for September, October and November
- Family Spotlight



## RE-OPENING OUR CHURCH

After several months of lockdown and quarantine, Churches were allowed to resume public Mass and other sacraments in June.

Over the summer, we have had steady attendance at all of our Masses.

Now, as the summer comes to an end, we are

seeing an increase in participants at Mass.

We are still limited to 100 people in the Church for each Mass and so we encourage you to make a plan for going to Mass. Our schedule is 5 pm on Saturdays, 8 am, 10 am and 12 noon on Sundays. The 7 pm Sunday night Mass will resume on October 4th.

“I asked the Lord to give you great courage and firm hope in God, so that strengthened by these virtues you might resist every discouragement...”

-- Venerable Bruno Lanteri

### OPERATING HOURS FOR THE PARISH OFFICE

The Parish Office observes the following schedule:

**Mondays - Fridays**  
9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

**Saturdays & Sundays**  
9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The Parish Office will be **CLOSED** on the following holidays in the Fall:

Labor Day - September 7  
Columbus Day - October 12  
Thanksgiving - November 26



## PARISH CENSUS UPDATE 2020

The US government is asking all citizens to participate in the 2020 Census to allow their voice to be counted and heard. With that in mind, it is also time to update our parish census.

The last time that we participated in a major update of the parish census was in 2011 - 2012. At that time, census forms were sent to parish households to update their information. Now, almost ten years later, it is time to update again!

We will be sending out new census forms to each family or individual for whom we have an address. We ask that, upon receiving the new parish census form, you take the time to fill it out by providing the requested information. On the other side of the form is a “Time and Talent” survey which invites each parishioner to consider how they might be able to participate more fully in parish life. This information is crucial to how we recruit volunteers for many of our projects.

The completed census form and stewardship survey can be mailed back to the office, dropped in the collection basket, faxed or scanned and emailed. You can also download the form on our parish website - [www.ststephenkearny.com](http://www.ststephenkearny.com).

Thank you for your cooperation!



*The newly confirmed gather for a group picture at the end of the Mass on June 25th.*

## CONFIRMATION, JUNE 25, 2020

So many aspects of the life of our parish were put on hold by the effects of COVID-19. Included among these were the celebrations of the Sacraments that usually take place in the Spring.

The adults who were preparing for Communion and Confirmation through the RCIA process had been scheduled to receive these sacraments on May 31st. The teenagers who were preparing for Confirmation were scheduled to receive the sacrament on June 7th.

Both liturgies had to be postponed since we were not allowed to resume public worship until late June. However, Cardinal Tobin, after receiving and hearing the requests of several pastors, decided to give each pastor delegation to confirm the candidates in his proper parish provided that the sacramental celebration was delayed by COVID-19.

Father Joe, having received this delegation, confirmed ten of the adults and young adults in Saint Stephen's on June 25, 2020. The remaining candidates will be confirmed sometime in the Fall.

Those who received Confirmation in June are: Rafael Bernardino, Jeanette Carvalho, Dante Correa, Julianna Englese, Michael Florczak, Cassandra Munafo, Manuel Naveiras, Jr., Angelina Salcedo, Zachary Wilkinson, and Colin Wiss

## SEPTEMBER SAINTS

- 3 Gregory the Great
- 5 Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa)
- 8 Birth of Mary
- 9 Peter Claver
- 12 Holy Name of Mary
- 13 John Chrysostom
- 14 Exaltation of the Cross
- 15 Our Lady of Sorrows
- 16 Cornelius & Cyprian
- 17 Robert Bellarmine
- 19 Januarius (San Gennaro)
- 20 Korean Martyrs
- 21 Matthew
- 23 Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)
- 26 Cosmas & Damian
- 27 Vincent DePaul
- 28 Wenceslaus; Lorenzo Ruiz
- 29 Archangels Michael, Gabriel & Raphael
- 30 Jerome



## OCTOBER SAINTS

- 1 Thérèse of Lisieux
- 2 Guardian Angels
- 4 Francis of Assisi
- 5 Francis Xavier Seelos
- 6 Bruno;  
Marie Rose Durocher
- 7 Our Lady of the Rosary
- 9 Denis;  
John Leonardi
- 11 John XXIII
- 14 Callistus
- 15 Teresa of Avila
- 16 Hedwig;  
Margaret M. Alacoque
- 17 Ignatius of Antioch
- 18 Luke
- 19 North American  
Martyrs
- 20 Paul of the Cross
- 22 John Paul II
- 23 John of Capistrano
- 24 Anthony Mary Claret
- 28 Simon and Jude



## FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS - JULY, 2020

Children in our CCD program who had been preparing to receive Jesus for the first time in Holy Communion were disappointed, along with their parents and family members, when the celebrations, originally scheduled for May 2 and 9, 2020 had to be postponed due to the effects of COVID-19.

However, when Churches were given the “go ahead” to resume public Masses, Saint Stephen’s offered parents a choice for the children to receive in the summer or in the fall.

We congratulate the children who received First Holy Communion in July: Addison Burke, Zevastian Cajucom, Luca Englese, Clara Fernandes, Josie Fernandez, Emma Gomes, Emily Gomez, Bianca Loria, Owen McCarthy, Lily McSweeney, Christopher Machado, Algeline Mendoza, Kole Pais-Sotelo, Nicholas Peldunas, Izabella Perez-Bombino, Emma Peso, Ian Riley, Mason Santos, Izabella Szymanski, Michael Szymanski, III, Liliana Ventoso. We also extend congratulations to Christopher Machado’s father, Cristiano, who also received Holy Communion for the first time with his son!



## FOCUS ON LITURGY - ALL SOULS DAY

While many people do not like to think about death, their own or anyone else's, we know that death is a part of life. The death of the body is an outcome of the effects of Original Sin.

Many people fear death but, in reality, if we live our faith and believe what the Church teaches, there is nothing to fear. Saint Paul writes that death does not have the final word! Secular society would say that it does but for people of faith, our story is life, death and resurrection and, for those who believe, something greater is yet to come.

The Church, each year, gives us the great commemoration of all the Faithful Departed, All Souls' Day, on November 2nd. This is a special day set aside to remember all of our loved ones who have died and commend them to God's mercy.

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“...Our story is life, death and resurrection and, for those who believe, something greater is yet to come.”

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At Saint Stephen's, we offer the annual “Mass of Remembrance” during which we remember, by name, those from our parish who died in the past year. It is always a special and moving liturgy and perhaps more so this year given that many who died during the pandemic could not have a funeral Mass.

The practice of offering Mass for the dead is a great virtue. Those who have died no longer have the ability to help themselves get to heaven and so they depend on us, our prayers and our Mass offerings to release their souls from Purgatory.

Let us always remember those who have died, who have gone before us in faith!

## NOVEMBER SAINTS

- 1 All Saints
- 2 All Souls
- 3 Martin de Porres
- 4 Charles Borromeo
- 9 Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome
- 10 Leo the Great
- 11 Martin of Tours
- 12 Josaphat
- 13 Frances Xavier Cabrini
- 15 Albert the Great
- 16 Margaret of Scotland; Gertrude
- 17 Elizabeth of Hungary
- 18 Dedication of the Basilica of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Rome; Rose Philippine Duchesne
- 21 Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 22 Cecilia
- 23 Clement; Columban; Miguel Agustín Pro
- 24 Vietnamese Martyrs
- 25 Catherine of Alexandria
- 30 Andrew



# FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

## THE DREFKO FAMILY

**T**he Drefko family- Cindy and Bill, Gregory (18) and Joseph (14) are familiar faces at St. Stephen's.

Cindy has been a lifelong parishioner. She received all of her sacraments in St. Stephen's and attended St. Stephen's CCD. Cindy and Bill were married at St. Stephen's and it became Bill's parish home as well. The boys were both baptized at St. Stephen's (Greg by Msgr. Desmond and Joe by Deacon Earl) and have received all of their sacraments here. The family is proud to be an active part of the St. Stephen's parish family.

Cindy and Bill have both served as members of the Parish Council. Cindy taught third grade and eighth grade CCD for a number of years and currently serves as a Eucharistic minister. Bill served as director of CYO sports and worked with the youth group. Together they are currently members of the Pre-Can team.

They also take pride in being active in our community. Bill is an adult leader of Boy Scout Troop 305, assistant coach for Kearny Little League and proud supporter of the KNAS varsity ice hockey team. Cindy is the president of the Kearny Baseball Booster Club, Kearny High School PTA member

and a member of Alpha Delta Kappa.

Gregory is an altar server and a member of the Parish Youth Council. He is looking forward to his freshman year at St. Thomas Aquinas College where he will study criminal justice. Greg is excited that he will continue to



*The Drefko Family (left to right)*

*Bill, Greg, Joe & Cindy*

play the sport he loves as a member of the STAC ice hockey team. He will also continue to work as a sacristan at St. Stephen's.

Joseph is also an altar server and a member of the Parish Youth Council. He is proud to be a life scout in Boy Scout Troop 305, chartered by St. Stephen's Church, and dedicated to the principles of the Four Chaplains.

Joe is looking forward to his sophomore year at Kearny High School. He is a member of the KNAS varsity ice hockey team and the KHS baseball team.

When asked “as a parish, what is St. Stephen’s doing well, for adult and young people alike”, the response was immediate. “Our whole family feels a connection to St. Stephen’s because of the many ways we can be involved in parish life. We have enjoyed opportunities we’ve had to serve others as a family, such as preparing for the church Thanksgiving Dinner for the needy and church decorating. We also enjoy the many opportunities we’ve had for fellowship with other families, such as Advent wreath making and summer movie nights. We feel blessed to have built relationships with other St. Stephen’s families that extend beyond the walls of the church. Our faith brought us together as friends”.

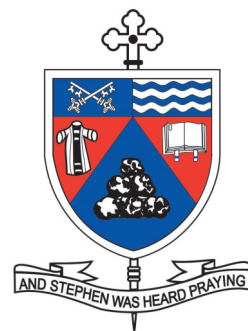
“Greg and Joe love being invited to help prepare for special liturgies. Our young people are always welcomed and encouraged by our priests to be involved and to learn about the celebrations by being a part of the entire process”.

“Greg shares that he has benefited from having so many service opportunities in our parish. Service has always been a part of who he is and his experiences have made his desire to help others even stronger”.

“The introduction of Flocknote for parish news and communication is one thing our parish should be proud of! St. Stephen’s has taken the opportunity to ‘meet people where they are’ by using technology to reach them. Important reminders about celebrations, CCD classes, youth group meetings and other exciting news is shared so easily. We especially love that our children are receiving the news too. They even remind us about upcoming events. It’s been a wonderful way to stay connected”.

In explaining how the family members live their faith, more than weekly attendance at Mass, they are in complete agreement. “Jesus is always present in our home. He is there in the message on our welcome mat that lets everyone who enters know that we are grateful. He is there on the crosses that adorn the walls and the statues in our kids’ rooms that remind them Jesus is with them. He is there to hear me thank Him out loud for the safety of my children on an ordinary day. Our faith is just a part of who we are and we hope it is evident in our actions and words each day. Bill and I strive to be good examples for our children, although we may not always be. Our family tries to be of service to others whenever we can. Sometimes it may just be a random act of kindness but we know it makes a difference”.

When asked what would the family like to pass to future generations concerning their hope for the Church going forward, Cindy and Bill summed it up. “Teaching our children to be proud of our faith is one of the best things we’ve done for them. We’ve supported them and helped them to truly be a part of the Church. We have encouraged them to build a relationship with Jesus. It isn’t always easy but we are hopeful that future generations will do the same. The Church today embraces young people in a way that is different from when we were growing up. It is a move in the right direction. Our hope going forward is that the Church continues to provide opportunities for young people to feel welcome and connected to God, and to feel empowered to make a difference by sharing their faith with others. After all, they are the future of the Church”.



## SAINT STEPHEN'S PARISH

Established in 1904 to meet the spiritual needs of Catholics in the Arlington section of Kearny, Saint Stephen's has been home to generations of the faithful.

Our beautiful church, dedicated in 1939, has served as a focal point in the Town of Kearny. Our worship of God each week is equal to none and the current parishioners strive to practice good Christian virtues in every aspect of daily life.

We have inherited a great treasure of faith from our ancestors. May we wisely use the gifts and talents that God has given us in order to build the Kingdom here on earth!

May our patron, Saint Stephen, guide and direct us on our journey with the Lord.

## Thank you Father Juan!



It was announced in August that Father Juan had been transferred to Saint Vincent DePaul parish in Bayonne, effective September 1st.

Though with us only for a year, Father Juan was an important part of our parish family and we wish him well.

If you wish to keep in touch with Father Juan, his new address is: *979 Avenue C, Bayonne, NJ 07002*

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This Newsletter is being emailed to our parishioners who have provided an email address through the parish census.

Copies of this Newsletter are also available for pick-up in the Church.