

THE OUTREACH

St. Basil Catholic Church

South Haven, Michigan

Serving Comfort — and Food

When Loved Ones Pass on, Funeral-Lunch Ministry Steps In



“*The human being is an animal who has received the vocation to become God.*

— St. Basil

Quoted by Gregory Nazianzen, 'Eulogy of Basil the Great, Oratation'

By Sylvia Verdonk

After decades of organizing cooks, bakers, set-up, and clean-up crews for funeral luncheons through the Women’s Service Guild, Dottie Brzezinski passed the torch on to the next generation.

About three years ago, Arlene Campbell accepted the leadership role from Dottie. Under Arlene, meat and cheese sandwiches gave way to hot penne pasta, breadsticks and salad provided by Maria’s Restaurant. Arlene’s work schedule unfortunately prevented her from continuing to lead the ministry, so the job was passed about a year ago to a relatively new parishioner, Cindy Krupp.

Families request funeral luncheons at St. Basil, generally for 35 to 50 people at a time, Cindy says. Smaller groups dine in the Upper Level room, while larger ones do so in the church basement. There is a small per-person fee to cover the cost of catered food. Cindy refers to the pasta and salads

from Maria’s Restaurant as “comfort food.” Women’s Service Guild members provide fruit, beverages, and desserts, as they did in the past.

As coordinator of the luncheon teams, Cindy says, “Many of my volunteers are willing to help on multiple days, but I am always looking for more people.”

Cindy has known service and volunteerism for all of her adult life. She and her husband, Rich, met while they were in the Air Force. Cindy was a nurse and chose to leave the service when she learned of her possible deployment to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, following the birth of their first child, Margaret. Rich continued serving as a pilot in the Air Force, but his months-long deployments became more difficult when sons Alex and Brian were born.

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Cindy, on duty



Rich and Cindy Krupp

Photo by Rosalie Plechaty

Opening Doors on Christmas Eve

By Jean Conlisk

Growing up we had a Christmas Eve tradition. As dusk fell, we would gather in front to the large window in the living room. A big church candle was secured in the tall cut-glass urn with white sand. Grandmother would lead the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary," as we prayed for anyone searching for a place to stay that night.

I have carried this into my own home through the years. One Christmas Eve almost as soon as I turned on the light at the front door, the doorbell

rang. Through the falling snow, I recognized our neighbor's friend. They were not at home.

I invited him to join us at the dinner table. He told about growing up in Arkansas in the Depression. He and his Dad went door-to-door, offering to fix anything and everything. His Dad impressed on him never to ask for salt or pepper; they might think he didn't like the food.

One recent Christmas Eve, I brought in the mail as dusk began to fall. There was a Christmas Letter from people we had known through the



years. I remember donating my golf clubs to their children's college-tuition garage sale. They had not sent a Christmas letter for fifteen years. This was an update of their lives. They had been doing church work elsewhere for several years and renting their home for vacation weeks during the summer. Their project was ending and they were in need of a place to stay for the summer. I reached for the phone and called them: They could stay in my walk-out level. No one need feel homeless on Christmas Eve.

After the Funeral, the Lunch Ministry Steps In

(Continued from previous page)

Rich transitioned from active duty to the Air Force reserves, and the Krupps moved, to be closer to family. The Krupp family attended St. Anthony de Padua Catholic Church in South Bend, Indiana, where Cindy's mother organized funeral luncheons of fried chicken, homemade salads, sides and desserts. Cindy helped with that and ran the Scrip gift-card program for the church and St. Anthony Catholic School for eight years. She was also the school nurse for three years.

Beginning in 2001, Cindy volunteered with her mother at the Christ Child Society of St. Joseph County in South Bend, purchasing and distributing new coats, clothes, and shoes to needy children there. The program even expanded to provide a new book to each child who passed through the doors.

"I enjoy service and volunteering," Cindy says. "I've always been involved, but I have to enjoy it."



Dottie Brzezinski ran the lunch ministry for decades.

The Krupps moved to South Haven from Mishawaka in February of 2017. Once at St. Basil, Cindy wasted no time in offering her spirit of service. Aside from funeral luncheons, Cindy helps with the Hospitality Committee and the Mom's Group, as well as the Open Door ministry at the Methodist Church. Cindy also just completed training for the

Befriender Program, a pastoral-care outreach effort.

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Thank you, Cindy, for your dedicated service comforting those in mourning.

A Fall Tradition

At the Annual Parish Picnic, Pumpkins and Paint Produce Little Picassos



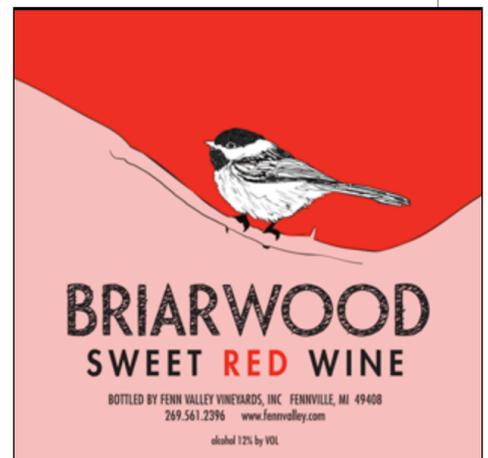
Where's Our Altar Wine From? The Soils Along Lake Michigan

Before Father Jim consecrates it into the Blood of Christ, our sacramental wine comes from fields 18 miles to the north of us, in Fennville, Michigan.

Fenn Valley Vineyards Inc. produces wine used by several local churches, says Jim Sanders, winery manager.

St. Basil uses the vineyard's Briarwood Sweet Red Wine, described as a fruity blend with 50 percent concord grapes.

The family-owned vineyard, a bit south of Saugatuck, says "Lake Effect" moderation of temperatures in a narrow band along the shore of Lake Michigan



allows for cold tender grape varieties to be grown.



Dear Fellow Parishioners:

We welcome story ideas and new writers for *The Outreach*, published every two months.



Merry Christmas,

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A statue of the Blessed Mother stands watch over vineyards in a farm region far from ours, Napa, California. Ever wonder where our altar wine comes from? See story inside.

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