

JUNE 2023

ST. MARY MESSENGER

A Letter From The Pastor

Dear Parish Family,

As we begin this Summer season, we are blessed to bring back the St. Mary Messenger. This quarterly publication enriches our parish life by zooming out to share the stories of our parish life that don't necessarily fit into a weekly bulletin format. I warmly welcome all of our new parish households into the fold, and hope that this publication and stories will strengthen your connection to Christ and His Church through our local parish community.

I am happy to say that our parish is in a very good place spiritually and temporally. We have witnessed our pews filling up again post-pandemic as people make their way back to the Church in recognition of that primary and irreplaceable relationship with Christ. We have brought on a number of new staff members this year, and warmly welcome our new parochial vicar later this month, Fr. Fabian Han. We have been blessed in abundance through contributions to the Angel Scholarship Fund where we are able to assist families with over \$137,000 in tuition scholarships for this upcoming school year. Our Faithfully United stewardship program helped stabilize and increase offertory commitments to strengthen our parish life and ministries. We have begun our replacement of the church roof, and plan to replace and repair the church HVAC units in the coming year. We also plan to upgrade our cameras, access, and security system for our school and parish this summer. Also, save the date for our 2nd annual Oktoberfest on Sunday, September 17 to celebrate our parish!

Please know of my heartfelt prayers for you each day. When we gather together for Mass and prayer, we welcome the Lord Jesus Christ into our lives, hearts and minds. I look forward to growing in holiness with you each and every day of our parish life. Please let me, our clergy and staff know how we can pray for you and assist you in your journey of faith.

I am yours in Christ,
Fr. Scott Goodfellow, Pastor



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Meet Our Newest Staff Members

*DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS (ST. MARY SCHOOL & PARISH),
MRS. KELLY MCCLOSKEY*

Hello! My name is Kelly McCloskey, and for the past 10 months, I've been working as the Director of Communications for St. Mary Parish and School. In this short time, I've met many wonderful parishioners and families and I know there are so many more I have yet to meet!

I have two children at St. Mary's School. My son, Camden, will be entering the 5th grade and my daughter, Quinn, will be entering 3rd grade. We are a busy, active family! Some of my favorite hobbies include reading, yoga, running and clicking the "add to cart" button on Amazon

I am blessed to have become a part of the St. Mary Parish & School staff. Some life and career changes brought me into this role and I could not be happier at how things have turned out. God had a plan for me all along, and I'm glad I listened. If you are ever in the school lobby, please stop by my office and introduce yourself! Or, if you have specific requests related to the communications of the parish and/or school, I'm happy to meet with you individually. I can be reached at kmccloskey@stmarychardon.org.

OFFICE MANAGER (ST. MARY PARISH), MRS. MICHELLE RIHTAR

What a blessing it has been to serve as the parish office manager for both St. Mary Chardon and St. Patrick in Thompson. These last three months have been so educational and inspirational for both myself and my family.

After taking a leap of faith, changing careers after nearly 20 years in the culinary world, I knew on day one what good hands God had placed me in. Everyone here has shown me such grace and patience as I have been learning and growing in my faith.

More than anything, I have enjoyed immersing myself more deeply in parish life, in addition to seeing our two children every day at school. Whether it be prepping in the kitchen before fish fries, helping the second graders make unleavened bread for their Jesus Day retreat, or assisting with PreCana, I feel blessed to have the opportunity to serve the community where I was raised and call home.

With the return of weekend parish office hours after masses, in addition to extended office hours on Wednesday evenings, there are several opportunities for parishioners to visit us. Please stop by and say "hello." I would love to meet you!



Kelly McCloskey



Michelle Rihtar

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FACILITIES MANAGER (ST. MARY SCHOOL & PARISH), MR. GREG CLACK

Hello! My name is Greg Clack and I am the Facilities Manager here at St. Mary School and Parish. I am going on almost one year of being here and I am so grateful for this opportunity. I have been doing commercial maintenance for the last 22 years, along with managing contractors of various trades. My wife, Cathy, and I moved to Leroy Township a couple of years ago from Euclid. We enjoy attending Mass at St. Patrick's and are also active members of St. Mary's in Cleveland. My wife and I have three children, Alex, Becca and Beth, and all graduated from All Saints School in Wickliffe.



ADVANCEMENT DIRECTOR (ST. MARY SCHOOL), MR. FRANK RIHTAR

These are exciting times for our St. Mary School community! We are truly blessed to have so many wonderful parents, teachers, and administrators, all sharing a dedication to learning centered on the Gospel and focused on the spiritual, academic and personal growth of each student.

As a St. Mary parishioner, a parent of two children at the school, and a life-long advocate for Catholic education, I was drawn to this opportunity to engage more deeply in my faith and share my experiences as a nonprofit director to help promote, strengthen, and grow our wonderful school community. Each day, as I witness firsthand the commitment to academic excellence rooted in faith formation, I appreciate more and more how blessed we are to have St. Mary School for our children.

I want to thank everyone who has supported the Angel Scholarship Fund (ASF) and the opportunities this wonderful program affords to so many families who need it most. In addition to expanding our ASF goal for 2023, we continue to explore new funding to support school safety and STEM initiatives while, most importantly, establishing an annual fund to support even more exciting times ahead.



ENROLLMENT ASSISTANT (ST. MARY SCHOOL), MRS. KIMBERLY O'KEEFFE

With a background in finance, parent advocacy, and early childhood academic tutoring, I continue to look forward and help advance St. Mary's School admissions and family outreach. I am dedicated to help accomplish the school's admissions goals: provide all children and families access to an excellent and affordable faith-based education. Helping guide families through the enrollment and scholarship process allows me to highlight our core values and benefits of St. Mary's School. With all three of our children either currently or previously attending, I have a unique perspective which helps me truly empathize with parents and families. My passion for catholic education has only grown since joining the administration, and I look forward to the bright future of this institution.



St. Mary's Welcomes Father Fabian Han

Hello, everyone! I'm Deacon Fabian Han. I'm very excited to start my priesthood at St. Mary's in Chardon and St. Patrick's in Thompson. I'm originally from the Archdiocese of Daegu, South Korea. (There is a partnership between my Archdiocese and the Diocese of Cleveland, I studied at St. Mary Seminary.) I love learning languages and music. I'm sure I will spend four blessed years with you all in Chardon. I'm new to everything as a priest, I need your help and prayers. I can't wait to see you in late June! Until then, take care and stay healthy!

In Christ, Father Fabian Han

Photos from Diocese of Cleveland



REMEMBERING COACH

By Sister Sandy Nativio

I first met Coach (Mare) in 1993 and hired her as the Physical Education teacher for St. Mary School. Immediately, she took on the task of providing the opportunity for her students to experience not only physical growth, but mental, emotional, and spiritual growth.

Mare consistently strived to help young people be more Christ-like in the way they lived because she was a constant example of how to do that herself. She loved her job at St. Mary because as she said, "We are able to have Jesus front and center here in our school every day." Mare frequently volunteered at the St. Mary Fish Fry, collected and delivered toys to Appalachia, volunteered at the St. Mary Painesville Soup Kitchen, organized CYO games, and was the Sorority Mom for students at Kent State. She did all this and much more as secretly as possible.

At the end of the school year in May, our Good God called Coach Mare Von Linden home and left all of us with heavy hearts but also with the memories of how she graced everyone she met. At the school prayer service for Coach, people of all ages came to pray for her: Pre-Schoolers through eighth graders, teenagers, college kids, CYO kids, Parents, Grandparents, and even Great Grand Parents!! Many spoke of her kindness, compassion, and her sense of humor- a true testament of how well she is remembered and loved.

Coach was a woman of great Faith. She followed Jesus who was her Way, her Truth and her Life. I am sure that when she met him so unexpectedly, he said "Well done, good and faithful servant!" So now, we pray as we prayed at your farewell liturgy:

"Go now in peace faithful friend of God, as you take our love into Paradise. God's holy angels will lead you home to the wide waiting arms of the Lord."



*Angel Scholarship Fund: Turn your Taxes
into Tuition and Bring Faith-Based Education within
Reach for Families who Need it Most*

Thanks to the overwhelming support and generosity of our Angel Scholarship Fund (ASF) donors in 2022, St. Mary School is blessed to offer more than \$137,000 in scholarship assistance this upcoming school year to our students, with highest priority given to those with the greatest financial need. We ask you to consider becoming an ASF donor in 2023, as we strive to raise \$300,000 to provide the precious gift of Catholic education to the families in our community who need it most, bringing the faith-based education they seek for their children within reach.

What is this new tax credit scholarship?

The Angel Scholarship Fund (ASF) was made possible in 2021, when Ohio became the 18th state to offer a tax credit for student scholarships to assist with tuition costs. This new tax credit allows donors to 'spend' their Ohio state income tax liability dollar-for-dollar towards a scholarship granting organization like St. Mary School. Because this tax credit is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in tax liability, there is no net cost to donors. We have to pay our state taxes anyway, and by donating to ASF, we allow our tax dollars to assist directly with tuition assistance at a school of the donor's choice.

How does the tax credit work?

Taxpayers receive a 100% tax credit, up to \$750 for individual filers, and up to \$1,500 for joint filers, to be taken off their Ohio state income tax liability when they file taxes. Let's say you owe \$2,000 in state income taxes as a married joint filer. You contribute \$1,500 to ASF, so you only owe \$500 in state taxes. Your \$1,500 contribution to ASF can be designated to a school of your choice in the Diocese of Cleveland, including St. Mary School, or you can make an undesignated contribution to assist in the area of greatest need.

Who does ASF help?

This is an easy way to turn taxes into tuition assistance to make Catholic education affordable for all. ASF prioritizes scholarships for lower-income families under 300% of the poverty threshold. After prioritized needs are met, the scholarship can help ease the tuition burdens for all students. All K-8 students can benefit from the scholarship, and receiving ASF scholarships do not affect students' ability to receive other scholarships.



*"St. Mary's
is blessed to
offer more
than
\$137,000 in
scholarship
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Angel Scholarship Fund Donor, Ms. Minello, provided yummy popcorn balls for all students at St. Mary's. She was touched by a handwritten thank you card from one of our students thanking her for her donation.

Ms. Minello's family has strong ties to St. Patrick Parish (Thompson) and made her donation in memory of the Tamburro / Pfouts families

All of our students at St. Mary's are so grateful for your donations!

How can I donate?

Visit <https://stmarychardon.org/asf> to learn more and donate online through the Catholic Community Foundation, or stop by the ASF kiosk in the gathering space to pick up a contribution form. To receive the tax credit for this tax year, your donation must be received before December 31, 2023. While there's still plenty of time this year to make a donation, now would be a good time to estimate how much you owe in state income taxes so you can be prepared to make your contribution.

What next?

Share this amazing opportunity with your family and friends! More contributions means more scholarship assistance for current and future St. Mary School students. This will help reduce parent out-of-pocket tuition costs, help with school enrollment by making Catholic education more affordable, enhance the visibility of our school within our community, increase teacher compensation to retain and recruit top talent, enhance the academic and faith formation opportunities for our students, and reduce the parish subsidy to free up offertory money for other parish ministries.

In short, this is a win-win opportunity for our students, families, taxpayers, and our parish and school. We hope you can get involved! Please contact us if you have any questions.

Father Scott Goodfellow
frscott@stmarychardon.org
440-285-7051

Mr. Frank Rihtar
frihtar@stmaryschoolchardon.org
440-286-3590



Legacy Giving: Estate Planning Resources

Each of us has been blessed by God, and He has entrusted us with many gifts. We are all called to receive His gifts gratefully, to cherish and to tend these gifts. We are called to share them in justice and love with others and ultimately to return them with increase to the Lord.

Part of our responsibility as stewards of God's gifts includes what is sometimes referred to as our "final act of stewardship" – the creation of our estate plan. Our estate plan is part of our legacy to use those gifts given to us to provide for our loved ones in the future. Providing for our loved ones in our estate plan is also an opportunity to give witness to the importance of our faith and express our gratitude to God by making a gift to the Church. Considering to include a gift to the Church in your estate plan is especially important today.

With many of our churches noticing the trend of declining (and aging) membership, estate gifts go a long way to sustain our parish and ministries for generations to come. As we support our loved ones and the Church in our life, we may continue that same support at the end of our earthly life by including the Church among our loved ones in our estate plans. Just as you may hope to provide for your children or grandchildren after you are gone, a gift to the Church in your estate plan strengthens our parish for future generations.

If you might be considering leaving a legacy gift to St. Mary, our parish is pleased to offer you resources to help you in the planning process. Whether you are just beginning to plan for your family or you are considering a future gift to our parish in your will or revocable living trust, or as a beneficiary of a retirement account or life insurance policy, we hope you will find these materials useful. These are available at our parish office or online at <https://stmarychardon.org/faithful-legacy>, where you can download brochures to assist you in your estate planning.

The Catholic Community Foundation of the Diocese of Cleveland is also a resource for you in the planning process. Please contact Jean Ann Montagna at 216-696-6525 x8070 or at jmontagna@catholiccommunity.org to request a free printed copy of the Catholic Estate Planning Record book or to request a confidential conversation about ways you can remember our parish in your estate plan, including gifts through your will, trust or by beneficiary designation of a retirement plan or life insurance policy. The foundation can also help our parishioners who want to establish Donor Advised Funds, Charitable Gift Annuities, Revocable Trusts, and Permanent Named Funds that benefit our parish or other ministries of the Diocese of Cleveland.

If you have made a decision to include our parish as part of our estate, thank you! We recommend that you work with your legal and/or financial advisor to accomplish this. You will need to provide your advisor with some specific information, including our parish tax ID, which our Catholic Community Foundation and your legal counsel can help you to craft.

Please consider letting the parish know of your plans. We would be grateful for the opportunity to thank you and assist you in any way we can. For more information, please contact Fr. Scott Goodfellow at 440-285-7051 x113 or Jean Ann Montagna of the Catholic Community Foundation at 216-696-6525 x1640.



Milan Jelenic (pictured left), who was a devoted and loyal parishioner to St. Mary's for many years, left his legacy gift to the church. Milan became a parishioner at St. Mary's in 1985, after moving to Hambden Township and served as an usher. Some of Milan's favorite things to do at St. Mary's were attending the parish picnic and enjoying the music sung by the beautiful choir. According to his niece, Cindy, he was always singing along with our choir! Thank you, Milan, for giving us your time and treasure. We are forever grateful!



Faithful Legacy
Ensuring the Future of Our Catholic Faith

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

As members of the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) team Deacon Larry and Mike Boehnlein, Connie Wills, and Vi Fierman and St. Mary Parish Community, we were excited to welcome 4 individuals into full initiation into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil. They have participated in the RCIA program this past year because of their desire to become members of the Catholic Community of faith. As catechists and team members we have journeyed along with them growing our own faith lives. They have each written the following about themselves and their personal faith journey to share with you.



My name is Bruce Baird. I'm a lifelong resident of Chardon, married to my wife Claire for 48 years. We have 4 children and 4 grandchildren, 3 of which attended St. Mary School. I'm retired from St. Gobain Xtals in 2009, drove school bus for Chardon for 10 1/2 years retiring in 2020. My hobbies include studying martial arts for 23 years, coaching grandson's Little League team, watching him play, and working around my home. I had promised my wife I would convert and the time was right. The RCIA program is an excellent source of information about the Catholic Faith. I very much enjoyed the program and all the people who are involved.



My name is Cyrus Palo. I grew up in Newton Falls and went to college then the military and afterwards got a job with the Painesville Police Department and recently took a job with the Lake County Sheriff Department. I currently live in Chardon. During college I became a Christian in a small protestant church. When I met my fiancé Alicia, I began to explore the Catholic faith and decided to join RCIA, where I found the teachings of the church to make sense. We plan to be married in the fall and have become involved in parish life.



"I began to explore the Catholic faith and decided to join RCIA, where I found the teachings of the church make sense."



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Chuck and Sharyl Verbsky, are the parents of Fr. David Verbsky from our Parish. After accompanying their son on his journey through Priestly formation, they were drawn to join and adopt the Catholic faith as their own. Chuck and Sharyl reside in Mentor and were junior and senior high school sweethearts. They have been married for 44 years and have 2 children. Chuck is retired from KeyCorp and Sharyl is retired from Orange schools where she taught elementary music. They both love spending time with family, traveling, walking, and listening to music. Their son, Fr. David was ordained to the priesthood in May 2022 and celebrated his first Mass at St. Mary's. Their daughter, Kathryn is a nurse and has two beautiful teenage children. They both were thrilled to be in RCIA and now have immersed themselves in Parish life working the fish fry and community supper.

The summer months are a time for all of us by virtue of our Baptismal call as missionaries to extend an invitation to friends and family who have not begun or completed their sacraments of initiation to consider becoming Catholic. You could invite them to come to Mass and breakfast or share some resources to explore the faith. A good choice might be *This is Our Faith* by Michael Pennock or *Catholicism* by Robert Baron. Basically begin the inquiry process by offering the invitation to explore the faith and praying for them.

In September we will resume our RCIA journey of faith; meeting every Sunday after the 8:00 am Mass for a few minutes to break open the word and on Monday evening from 6:30 – 8:00pm to learn more in depth about the faith. The program begins in September and continues to the Easter vigil or when candidates are ready to complete the journey. If you or someone you know has an interest in learning more about the Catholic faith encourage them to attend the RCIA program. If you have a desire to join the class, join the team or to sponsor a candidate please call Deacon Larry Boehnlein at 440-285-7051 ext. 21.



RCIA Team with Candidates & Sponsors at Easter Vigil Mass



Chuck & Sharyl Verbsky with their son, Fr. David after Easter Vigil Mass



Time, Talent & Treasure

Stewardship is a way of life that aims to bring us closer to God. Within a parish, stewardship can look many different ways. Most commonly, we use the words time, talent and treasure when looking for ways to fulfill our stewardship spirituality. "Time represents hours spent devoted to prayer and reflection - time that enhances our relationship with God through our conversation, praise and contemplation with and of the Lord. Talent refers to the use of our skills, abilities and actions - whether it be at home, parish, work, or within the community. And treasure refers to all of our financial resources" (catholicdioceseofcleveland.org).

At St. Mary's there are many opportunities for parishioners to use their time, talent and treasure. While there are too many to list here, please take some time and visit www.stmarychardon.org and click on the Ministries tab to view the variety of ministers we offer, along with a description of each. If you are feeling a calling towards a specific group, please reach out to our Parish Office at 440-285-7051 or email office@stmarychardon.org. Anyone in our office will be happy to help guide you!

A few of our ministries that can always use extra hands are Collection Counters, Funeral Coordinators and Bereavement Ministry. Not sure what each of these ministries do? See below for a short description and contact information.

Collection Counters: Volunteer teams rotate counting the Sunday collection every 4-6 weeks and make the bank deposit. For more information on this ministry, please contact the St. Mary's Business Office at 440-285-7051.

Funeral Coordinators: Specially trained parishioners meet with the family of a deceased loved one to plan the Funeral Mass and are also present at the Mass to assist family members and friends as needed. This time of planning and accompaniment with the family is a great blessing for the family, and it offers great assistance to our clergy. For more information, please contact the Parish Office at 440-285-7051.

Bereavement Ministry: Volunteers support families who grieve the death of a loved one by providing and/or serving a luncheon on the day of the funeral, and giving prayerful support throughout the year. Every year for All Souls Day, volunteers assist with an evening Mass of Remembrance and small social following the Mass. For more information, contact Judy Kordos at 440-286-3848 / jkordos@windstream.net or Marge Goss at 440-285-8813 / jrgjan42@roadrunner.com.



Hello from Mrs. Fedak - Principal at St. Mary School

First Year as Principal

It is hard to believe that I have been the principal for a full year. I cannot be called a new face at St. Mary since I have spent the last fifteen years teaching math to the junior high students and encouraging everyone to embrace STEM education. This year my role changed as I started as the Interim Principal.

The year began with a dedication of the new playground that PTU and the Playground Committee worked so hard to execute. By incorporating the students in the planning, demo, and building phases the playground was an excellent STEM project. Not to mention how much the students love the time they spend out there!

In the Fall, I had a team work on a Safety Grant application to update some of the systems we have in place to keep our students safe. The grant process included an assessment of school for safety and vulnerability. In the spring, St. Mary was awarded \$98,000 to make the updates proposed by the team.

During Catholic Schools' Week the first State of the School night was held. Father Scott announced that I would no longer be the Interim Principal, but the Principal for this and next school year. Also, that evening a shift in the tuition model was explained along with the new projects for next school year. St. Mary will go through the re-designation process for STEM and shift to a Standards Based Grading for students in Kindergarten through 2nd grade. Theology of the Body will also be integrated into the Religion Curriculum for all grades.

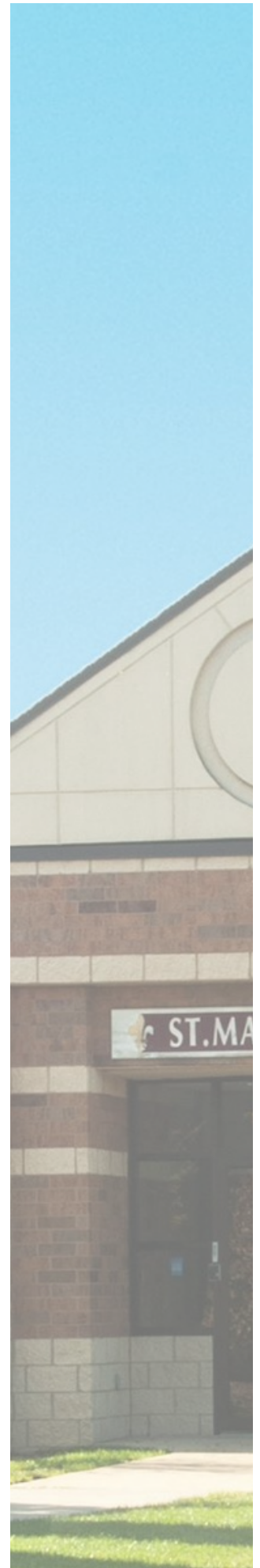
This winter Jessie Weinberger, also known as Big Mama, came to visit the students in grades 3 through 8. Jessie is a nationally known expert in internet safety who made a big impact on our students. Jessie presented to the adults a few weeks later. In addition to sharing the dangers with parents and students, she gave them action steps to make sure our students are safe. Making sure devices are out of the bedroom at night is a big step. Constant communications about expectations for online use is important as well.

SAFE Buddies and SAFESkills came for students in grades Kindergarten through 8 this spring. This program consisted of 6 sessions on social emotional learning. Students were taught how to calm themselves down with breathing techniques and how to identify safe adults. Many of these techniques were introduced into the classrooms.

In May, we said goodbye to Coach Mare Von Lindern, may she rest in peace. The entire St. Mary community grieved the loss with a Prayer Service and sharing stories. Helping others by using our talents is one of the many lessons Coach taught to anyone who met her. Coach's impact on St. Mary will be felt for years to come.

The end of the school year celebrated our 8th grade students at Graduation and the Baccalaureate Mass. Next year, these students will call Chardon High School, Notre Dame Cathedral Latin, & Lake Catholic their school. The time the students spent at St. Mary will be full of fond memories and we look forward to see what the future holds. See you in the 2023-2024 school year!

Blessings,
Mrs. Julie Fedak



Interested in Knowing More?

Visit <https://stmarychardon.org/resources> or scan the QR code for a list of helpful spiritual, counseling, and pro-life resources.

