

Who Was St. Elizabeth Seton?

Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton was raised Episcopalian, married and had five children. At the age of 30, she was widowed and converted to Catholicism. In 1812, she founded Sisters of Charity, the first congregation for religious women in the United States, whose devotion was education of the poor and teaching in parochial schools. She was credited with opening the first American parish school and the first American Catholic orphanage. She was the first native-born citizen of the United States to be honored with canonization. In the homily at the canonization of Elizabeth Ann Seton, Pope Paul VI said "The Church renders the greatest honor possible to Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton and extols her personal and extraordinary contribution as a woman — a wife, a mother, a widow, and a religious."

Born: August 28, 1774 in New York City

Died: January 4, 1821 in Emmitsburg, Maryland

Canonized: September 14, 1975

Feast Day: January 4

History

Since the creation of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana by Pope Pius XII in 1944, Catholics in Hamilton County were served by parishes in Cicero, Lebanon and Noblesville. In 1955, Bishop Bennett foresaw the potential for growth in the Carmel area and established Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish to serve Washington and Clay Townships in Hamilton County.

Further growth in the community of Carmel led Bishop Raymond Gallagher to issue a decree on July 1, 1981 establishing the parish of St. Elizabeth Seton.

Father Leo Piguet was named the first pastor and served the parish for seventeen years. Upon his retirement in 1998, Father Ted Rothrock was named pastor and served the spiritual needs of the parish until the summer of 2020. Under the *Uniting in Heart* diocesan initiative, Fr. Brian Doerr was named pastor and began his pastorate in August of 2020. Fr. Doerr currently serves the needs of the parish with Father Dave Newton, Senior Associate Vicar; Father John Johnson, Senior Associate Vicar; and Deacon Bill Reid.

Beginning with only 254 households in July of 1981, we now have over 2,400 households. Growth is expected to continue.

Located on the corner of Haverstick Road and 106th Street in southeastern Carmel, the church building was dedicated on October 20, 1985, by Bishop William Higi. Upon Bishop Higi's retirement, Monsignor Timothy L. Doherty from the Diocese of Rockford, Illinois was installed on July 15, 2010 as our new bishop. Bishop Doherty will shepherd our diocese into the future.

The Parish Facility

The parish facility is set on 33 acres surrounded by trees and Blue Woods Creek. The layout of the parish facility is a cluster similar to many farm buildings in Indiana. The simplicity of the design blends with the setting of an agricultural community. The driveway opens with a boulevard from Haverstick Road and gently guides you into the campus and to the church. Looking across the pond, a lighted grotto with a statue of Our Lady and a waterfall adds to the beauty of the campus. The waterfall was donated by the Women's Club in 1999 and constructed by Lynn's Ponds, Pets and Water Gardens. The beautiful statue of Our Lady was donated by a parish family in honor of their parents, Mr. & Mrs. Larry Ricci and Mr. & Mrs. Donald Burkhart. Low walls extend from the front of the church to form friendly arms of welcome to all people. The brick used throughout the building both inside and out is Alwine White brick from Pennsylvania, a handmade brick of red clay hand rolled in white lime. The altar, ambo, baptismal font and pillars for the tabernacle are constructed of Carnelian Granite from Milbank, South Dakota. The presider's chair is constructed from the two major materials in the worship space, Carnelian Granite and the white oak of the benches.

In the summer of 1999, a sign proudly pronouncing "St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church" was erected at the corner of 106th Street and Haverstick Road. The next summer, a yellow pine cross was built and installed on the front lawn of the church. Standing thirty feet tall with a spread of twenty feet, it is buried in concrete at ground level to the depth of seven feet by eighteen inches. Meeting all codes, it stands tall today.

To complete an Eagle Scout project in 2003, Ben Blotsky took on the building of the grotto around the statue, which is set off beautifully by lighting at night. Another Eagle Scout project completed in 2006 by Jim Merchun was a Rosary Walk along the west parking lot ending at the grotto. It depicts the twenty mysteries of the Rosary. Thanks to many donors, this makes a wonderful area for a quiet spiritual walkway on our grounds. The addition of new benches at the grotto and a walkway from the front parking lot was an Eagle Scout project spearheaded by Tim Miller in 2010. Gary Considine designed and oversaw the building of a fire pit and walkway at the foot of our outdoor cross. It is used for the Easter Vigil fire.

For people with disabilities, there is a ramp and automatic door opener at the front entrance of the church and north entrance to the Nave, and a specially designed covered entrance at the rear of the church. Reserved parking spaces are available at both entrances.

In 2002, the new parking lot on the grounds behind the church was completed providing an additional 440 spaces to our existing lot, as well as a lighted drive through the parish campus exiting onto 106th Street. Along the drive is a labyrinth, a meditative walkway meant to help with concentration and peace in prayer, made of stone with a dirt path completed as an Eagle Scout project in 2006 by Christopher Hill.

Construction of the Parish Rectory, positioned in the wooded northeast corner of the campus, was completed in 2003, giving the priests a much-needed on-site home.

The Parish Life Center was completed in 2005 on the east side of the church. This building houses a full-size gymnasium with a stage, and classrooms around the perimeter. The building provides space for our parish pre-school, kindergarten and youth religious education classes, for meetings and liturgies, and for an activity center. Opportunities for basketball and volleyball make this space a hub for our athletic and social activities.

In 2005, Philip Morton completed his Eagle Scout project by installing a much-needed playground for our school children. In 2007, Matt Oliver designed a pergola for the PLC patio providing an outdoor shaded area for small group meetings. In 2009, Sam Morris completed a fire pit and benches along the east drive.

Our outdoor ball fields have been upgraded and provide space for scheduling many different sports activities including softball, football, and soccer. Thanks to the generosity of Compression Etc. and Seton parishioners, renovations to the football field began in 2010 with the installation of a new scoreboard, sod and fence. In 2011, with the designing and building of our 3K Cross Country Course, Ben Swift completed his Eagle Scout Project.

The course is clearly marked with a Start/Finish Post near the left field of the softball diamond. The course is available for both recreational runs and CYO Cross Country meets. Once again, our Eagle Scouts went to work enhancing our facilities.

The Family Room project was completed and opened in September of 2016. The new space provided a new and larger Social Hall, additional office and meeting spaces. This additional 22,000 square feet also served to connect the Parish Life Center to the main building.

The church building itself is divided into several areas: the Commons, the Nave, the Mary Chapel, the Blessed Sacrament Chapel with Confessionals, the Day Chapel, the West Wing, the Administrative Wing, the Family Room and the Wake Chapel.

The Commons

The Commons is a gathering space that encourages friendly interaction of the parish community before and after liturgy. This area allows access to all other areas of the building without having to go outside. The Commons is large enough to hold 850 people standing; room enough for gatherings for weddings, funerals, baptisms and special liturgies such as the Easter Vigil.

The many varied ministries of the parish community publicize their activities in the Commons before and after weekend Masses, making this area the “information center” of the building.

The Baptismal Font

Water is a major Christian symbol, and the continually flowing water of this font reminds us of life and of our Baptism. The central location in the Commons is both symbolic and practical. It is the central axis of the facility and relates to all we do in the parish.

The Nave

The design of the main worship space was purposely kept simple so that it needs people to complete it. The seating arrangement for 850 people allows the assembly to participate more fully in the liturgy. In 2007, after a long period of design research, kneelers were installed with the help of many parish volunteers. Four new pews were added in 2012 to accommodate 50 more seats.

The wood on the ceilings of the Nave and chapels is fir. The doors of the three prayer spaces are white oak, which identifies these as special places for worship.

Our crucifix is a unique design of artist/sculptor Wiktor Szostalo. Made possible by the gift of a single donor family, this piece of sacred art was installed and dedicated on November 23, 2003, the Feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross. Both crucified and resurrected, both ancient and modern, the Christ figure in this piece of sacred art is both evocative and compelling in its form and design. It is centered in the sanctuary between the ambo, altar, and presider's chair. Made chiefly of stainless steel and colored glass, this corpus stands over ten feet high and weighs over 800 pounds. The completion of this piece was the result of almost five years of research, design and production. We are grateful to the donor family for making this sacred art possible.

The lighting features for the corpus were made possible through the generosity of the Thomas Linnen family as a memorial to Mary J. Linnen.

Kiln-cast crystal glass in a postmodern depiction of the Way of the Cross, along the north wall of the Nave, was also designed by Wiktor Szostalo. Many donors made it possible to install these beautiful bas-relief sculptures in time for Holy Week in 2007.

The Mary Chapel

This small chapel is located at the northeast corner of the Nave. It provides an intimate prayer space with vigil candles available. A new sculpture depicting the Blessed Mother as a seated "Our Lady of Perpetual Help" was commissioned through the generosity of a family in the parish. This addition to the religious art in the church was fashioned by Wiktor Szostalo and dedicated on September 24, 2005.

The Blessed Sacrament Chapel

The Church participates in the tradition of reserving the Blessed Sacrament. The purpose of this reservation is to provide communion to the sick and for the devotion of the faithful.

This chapel has a seating capacity for approximately twelve people and is open to meet the spiritual needs of the faithful 24 hours a day. Located in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel is the tabernacle. It is also made of white oak and the interior is lined with teak. Our tabernacle is surrounded by pillars of granite like that of the altar, ambo and chair of the major worship space, and the Baptismal Font in the Commons. The sanctuary light was donated by a parish family.

The Confessionals

Two individual reconciliation chapels (rooms) are located on the right side of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. These two confessionals provide the opportunity for the traditional celebration of the sacrament or the more familiar "face-to-face" confession.

The St. Joseph Chapel

Daily Mass is celebrated in this chapel, as well as small weddings and funerals, Communion Services, music rehearsals, Children's Liturgy of the Word, Morning and Evening Prayer and related gatherings. Kneelers were installed on the chairs in 2004.

150-year-old Stations of the Cross, obtained from a monastery in France, were donated by a parishioner in 2007 to grace the walls of our St. Joseph Chapel.

The Wake Chapel

Originally designed as an area to accommodate the casket for wakes prior to funerals, this area has become multi-functional and is used for wedding preparation and much-needed additional meeting space. New glass and wood doors were installed in 2013 providing additional privacy.

The West Wing

The lower level of the West Wing houses the Working Sacristy, the Vesting Sacristy, the Parlor, the West Conference Room, office space and the Wake Chapel. The upper level currently houses additional offices for parish staff and Parish Archives.

Administration Wing

The Administration Wing houses the offices of the pastoral and office staff, a reception area and the office workroom. The second floor, called The Upper Room was designed as a multi-purpose room for meetings and educational activities. An elevator makes the space accessible to all.

The Social Hall

The Social Hall completed in June 2016 and dedicated on September 18, 2016, seats 200-300 and will serve as a dynamic gathering space for events such as The Knights of Columbus Family Breakfast, Fish Frys, Welcoming Brunch, as well as sacramental receptions. This 25,000 square-foot space was made possible by the generous donations of parishioners.

The Parlor

The Parlor is a small room in which grieving families may relax, brides may prepare for weddings, or small meetings can take place.

The Family Room Expansion

The 25,000 square-foot Family Room expansion, made possible through generous donations of parishioners, was completed in June 2016. The space allows our family of faith to continue to grow and to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This expansion includes a new Social Hall, ministry rooms, nursery space, and new work area and offices for Religious Education, Sports and Youth Ministry. With this expansion, the Parish Life Center and all spaces are now connected.

The Family Room

This project included renovation of the original Social Hall to the current Family Room. The Family Room is now available as an unscheduled, relaxed, and welcoming gathering space for parishioners, families and friends to meet for coffee, conversation, and fellowship.

Saint Francis Garden

In response to Pope Francis's Laudato Si, Seton's Creation Care Ministry created the Saint Francis Garden in 2017. This 3000+ sq. foot garden encourages parishioners to get hands-on experience in growing native plants, shrubs and trees. The growth of native flora is critical to supporting local pollinators; Bees, birds and butterflies are responsible for the pollination of 1/3 of all fruit and vegetables. In 2018, the garden was expanded to include a Bee Box behind the parish rectory and blessed with the arrival of a Saint Francis Statue from Poland. Troop 202 Eagle Scout projects include Jacob Olekszyk's Pebble Saint Francis Path and Nathan Sproull's Prayer Benches.

Parish Timeline

- 1981 - Bishop Raymond Gallagher issued decree establishing St. Elizabeth Seton Parish on July 1.
- 1981 - First Parish Picnic held on July 26, now known as Seton Fest.
- 1981 - Land at the corner of 106th Street and Haverstick is purchased for parish.
- 1983 - Ground Breaking Ceremony held on October 9.
- 1984 - Church building construction began in April.
- 1985 - Church building construction is completed.
- 1985 - Fr. Leo Piquet celebrates first Mass in the Nave on August 24.
- 1985 - Bishop William Higi dedicates the building on October 20.
- 1997 - Sunburst stained glass window in Nave donated by Mary King in memory of David King.
- 1998 - Administration Wing completed.
- 1999 - St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church sign installed at corner of 106th Street and Haverstick Road.
- 1999 - Waterfall and statue of Our Lady installed.
- 2000 - Wooden Cross installed outside the front of the church.
- 2001 - Allen organ installed in Nave.
- 2002 - Completion of new parking lot.
- 2003 - Grotto and surrounding lighting at waterfall completed.
- 2003 - Parish Rectory construction completed.
- 2003 - Installation and dedication of crucifix in the Nave.
- 2004 - Kneelers installed in the Day Chapel.
- 2005 - Parish Life Center construction completed.
- 2005 - "Our Lady of Perpetual Help" statue dedicated September 24.
- 2006 - Rosary Walk completed.

- 2006 - Labyrinth completed.
- 2007 - Kneelers installed in the Nave.
- 2007 - Glass Stations of the Cross installed in the Nave.
- 2007 - Stations of the Cross installed in the Day Chapel.
- 2007 - Arbor at the Parish Life Center built.
- 2007 - Stained glass window installed in the Day Chapel.
- 2007 - Ball Fields upgraded.
- 2008 - Wood deck completed off Social Hall.
- 2009 - Fire pit and benches constructed along the east drive by the Parish Life Center.
- 2010 - Fire pit with walk by the cross in front of church built.
- 2010 - New benches at the grotto and walkway from parking lot constructed.
- 2013 - The Nursery is converted into the West Conference Room and relocated in the PLC.
- 2013 - Wake Chapel remodeled to increase use as a meeting space.
- 2015 - Groundbreaking for the Family Room expansion.
- 2015 - Dedication of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Statue May 16.
- 2016 - Family Room expansion completed.
- 2018 - Dedication of St. Francis Garden and Statue