



The Angelus

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM CATHOLIC CHURCH

CELEBRATING 70 YEARS

Fall 2022

Engaging the Views from the Pews

You miss seeing kids at Mass — but you don't want to bring your own.

You love the Eucharist and worshipping as a community — but you also like Mass on your own time, in your pajamas, with coffee. You find the Mass hymns just perfect. Or too dated. Or too modern. You want women elevated in the church — and possibly ordained. You want more laity and diversity in church leadership. You find St. John's to be a warm and welcoming exception to most parishes and the church at large. And you l-o-v-e the Pastor.

Such are the opinions that unite and sometimes divide the parishioners of St. John Chrysostom, drawn from two surveys (one by Parish Pastoral Council last winter and one by the Archdiocese in March) and three parish Listening Sessions in the spring.

The three tools drew more than 1,200 responses and attendees, giving the Pastor, Fr. Ed Hallinan, and Parish Pastoral Council much to consider. Some popular requests drew quick action:



St. John's marked its 70th birthday with a new video that tells our story of unconditional welcome and active faith. See <https://bit.ly/SJCWelcome>.

- Sunday's 10 am Mass returned to 9:30, ending a PREP conflict.
- Sunday's 8 am Mass reverted to a liturgy without music.
- The presiders' schedule was added to the bulletin.
- Livestream Masses, ended by many parishes, continued daily.
- New music was introduced at the Saturday Vigil Mass.

See **FROM THE PEWS**, page 2

A Parish Community Forged by Faith, Steeped in Service

It was freezing and still dark at 6:30 am Friday, Dec. 19, 1952, as Fr. Joseph Fitzpatrick and altar servers Joseph O'Brien and Gerald Sherwin prepared the first Mass at the new St. John Chrysostom Parish in the basement chapel of a home on South Providence Road.



Much has changed since Msgr. Stevenson blessed the ground for St. John's Church. But the parish's mission has not.

In the nearly 70 years since, tens of thousands of parishioners and six pastors have built much together, tied across time by one mission: love and service of God and neighbor. From its humble start, St. John's has bloomed into a vibrant faith community, 2,100 families strong, that lives an active faith of worship, generosity, service, and thousands of relationships kindled by dozens of ministries.

THE EARLY DAYS

Ironically, St. John's church building would not exist until a generation after the parish was founded. First came the school, then the convent

for the Sisters of St. Joseph, then the rectory (now Parish House) and finally, in October 1970, the church. Until then, Masses met in a nearby basement, in the Garden City Fire Hall, and in the school gym.

At the church's opening, the *Delaware County Daily Times* noted the rare, round, post-Vatican II style. The design was meant to "express one theme: service," the paper reported. "The words 'To Serve Him is to Reign,' inscribed on the marble wall behind the altar, reflect the theme of service that the parish of St. John Chrysostom epitomizes."

From the beginning, the parishioners and pastors built traditions of faith, generosity and service. They came together to worship; to dance, sing, cook and knit; to play sports; to celebrate life's joys and mourn its sorrows. Most of all, they came together to serve, within and beyond the parish "boundaries" — a concept that every SJC pastor has quietly ignored, so as to welcome all.

See **HISTORY**, page 3

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Other issues proved more complex. Following are some key findings, trends and comments drawn from the surveys and sessions. The Listening Session feedback was sent to the Archdiocese in May.

A CHURCH OF HOPE AND HELP

Despite the Universal Church’s challenges, parishioners still deeply love the institution for the hope and service it provides worldwide; for the Eucharist; for the community it creates (“like having a second family,” said one parishioner); for the sacraments; and for the prayer life it nourishes.

The negative side of the ledger remains heavy, however. Criticisms include the lack of women in the clergy and church leadership; clericalism; the persistence of white male images of God; pain and rage over recurring sex-abuse and financial scandals; and anguish over the anti-LGBTQ stance of many church leaders and priests.

Critics also find the church “still too judgmental and shaming of lay-people” over divorce, sexual identity and other issues; and “too corporate, hierarchical, focused on power” and inflexible.

‘ST. JOHN’S IS UNIQUE’

Happily, these criticisms tend not to apply to St. John’s, parishioners noted.



Parishioners filled the church for our 70th Anniversary Mass. But children and youth were scarce — a post-COVID trend.

Overwhelmingly, the respondents said they love their parish and their Pastor, with more than 90 percent saying they

would recommend both to a friend. Respondents say the parish cultivates a welcoming, open spirit that they do not experience elsewhere — and one not conveyed by the Church at large.

Parishioners also give high marks to the parish’s many opportunities to serve and engage, to its Religious Education Program, and to its messaging — ratings that exceed the Archdiocesan average. “Honestly to us, St. John’s is unique in many ways,” said one person. “Very approachable priests, most hospitable, and down to earth.”

BUT WHERE ARE THE KIDS?

Whether online or in person, parishioners are still attending Mass — 70 percent of them say daily or weekly; 11 percent say quarterly. A fraction say they never attend, and the rest come occasionally.

Gone, however, are the days when the church was filled with families and the chatter of children. Even the 9:30 Mass, which used to be full of PREP students, now has few faces under 30. Today, most in-person Mass-goers at St. John’s are Empty Nesters or people without children. They say that they are drawn by the Eucharist, by the community, and by a deeper experience than they find in online worship. “How could I not commit to an hour a week attending Mass to thank God for all He has done for me?” said one parishioner.

Parish families with school-age children report the lowest rate of weekly Mass attendance. And yet, a fair share of those parents also say it is important to model such faith practices for their children.



Parishioners praise St. John’s many opportunities for service, such as a shelter cleanup by the Youth Group.

Parishioners who attend Mass online enjoy the flexibility and informality of viewing Mass whenever they want, from home. (Most online Mass-goers view the recorded Mass, rather than the livestream.)

Some say it is just easier to gather their family at home than to get everyone to church. But others concede that they have “simply fallen out of the routine” or have become “lazy” about Mass. Nearly 30 percent claim schedules that are too busy for Mass, while some say it is “too much of a hassle get kids there and monitor their behavior.”

Whatever their attendance patterns, parishioners found this spring’s Listening Sessions a welcome first. “I never in a million years thought to speak up about anything,” said an elder participant. “The Church just values obedience. It wouldn’t even listen to victims of abuse.” Indeed, many wondered, as one said, “Are the folks who need to listen going to listen?”

HOMILIES: HOLINESS & HOT BUTTONS

Homilies are of critical importance to worshippers and drew many comments. While many praised St. John’s homilists as authentic and inspired, some criticized what they called “politics” in preaching. The term wasn’t defined, but some singled out homilies focused on racism,



Parishioners appreciate SJG’s welcome to all, including refugees and immigrants.

ism, which the Catholic Church has long denounced as a sin.

Some objected to a petition for the “eradication of the sin of racism.” This Intercession was written and provided by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, which requests that parishes use it regularly.

MUSIC & MORE

As with all music, liturgical music draws strong opinions.

Some want only traditional hymns, while others prefer a contemporary lineup. Each Mass offers different music; the 8 am Mass has none.

Respondents appreciate Fr. Ed’s regular welcome of children and families at Mass, and some requested more after-Mass hospitality. “Doughnut Sundays” returned to much smaller crowds after COVID,

HISTORY, from page 1

For generations, parishioners fed, sheltered and clothed those in need, close to home and far beyond. They assembled Thanksgiving meal baskets for the community; shipped care packages to soldiers overseas; fasted to raise funds for food pantries; prepared couples for marriage and parents for baptism; visited the sick and homebound; and opened their hearts and hands far and wide.

SIX VISIONS, SIX LEGACIES

The story of St. John's has unfolded under six pastors.

Fr. Joseph Fitzpatrick (1952-60) established it all, buying a house that became the rectory (now Parish House), finding places to celebrate Mass, and building a school and convent.

Fr. Patrick Dougherty (1960-66) introduced the liturgical changes called for by Vatican II: Mass in English. The altar facing the people. Laypeople proclaiming the Word. More congregational participation. More change, in fact, than had been seen in centuries.

Msrgr. Frederick Stevenson (1967-91) oversaw construction of the church and establishment of a religious education program (then CCD, now PREP). He co-founded a community interfaith council and established a variety of lay ministries that brought more people into the work of parish life.

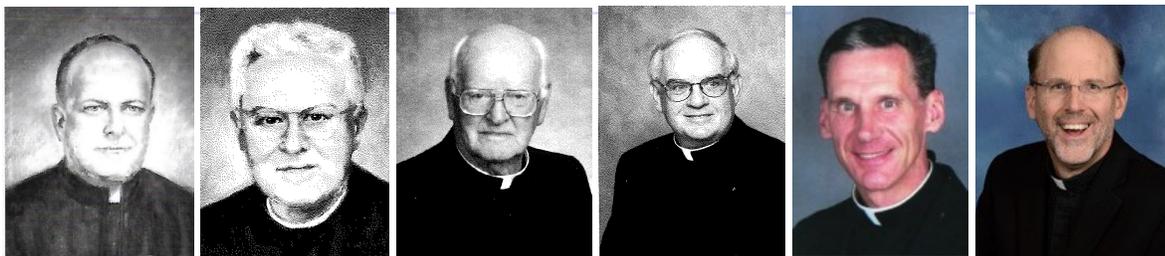
The Sisters of St. Joseph have served St. John Chrysostom Parish since its founding. The convent, built in the early 1950s, was razed in 2019.



Fr. (later Msrgr.) Joe McGeown led an expansion of the school; increased the laity's role in parish governance, including the formation of the first Parish Council; and established St. John's as a Stewardship Parish.

Fr. Jim Bajorek oversaw what he called "refreshing" of the church—a multimillion-dollar campus renovation that he hoped would also lead to refreshing of the parish's spiritual life. Tragically, Fr. Bajorek—an avid runner, world traveler and man of great holiness—collapsed from what proved to be brain tumors in July 2011 and died the following April.

Fr. Ed Hallinan, a long-time friend of Fr. Bajorek, arrived at St. John's in September 2011. He walked with



St. John's has been blessed with visionary pastors. From left: Fr. Joseph Fitzpatrick (1952-60); Fr. Patrick Dougherty (1960-66); Msrgr. Frederick Stevenson (1967-91); Fr. Joe McGeown (1991-2003); Fr. James Bajorek (2003-11); Fr. Ed Hallinan (2011-present).

the parish in its grief, then turned to its future.

Early on, Fr. Ed made clear that he wanted parishioners to share responsibility for parish leadership. He also sharpened our commitment to the City of Chester and to social justice, following his years of ser-



Our 70th Anniversary Mass honored parishioners of 50+ years. From left: Paul Fraatz ('66), Pat Simchock (original), Gloria & Jim Wood ('66), Maureen Rydel ('59), Bill & Mary Anne Boylan ('65), Patti Georges ('55), Rosemary Miller (original) and Jessica Clark, representing her mom, Joann Clark (original), who was also present. Not pictured: Judi Burns ('71), Jim & Charlene Sherry ('66).

vice in some of Philadelphia's poorest communities.

Working with the Parish Pastoral Council, Fr. Ed oversaw a series of listening sessions that drew hundreds of parishioners. From those meetings emerged 21 parish priorities, including reinvigorating ministry, improving and modernizing communications and technology, expanding outreach to Chester, and bolstering youth activities.

All of these goals advanced in short order. Fr. Ed also extended new outreach to persons with disabilities and LGBTQ persons and made anti-racism a parish cause—efforts that stirred some controversy but were overwhelmingly embraced by the parish and beyond. St. John's pastoral care of persons with disabilities won a national award in 2015 and significant coverage in a new book, *From Inclusion to Justice: Disability, Ministry, and Congregational Leadership*, by the Rev. Erin Raffety, PhD, of Princeton Theological Seminary.

Of course, the years have also brought challenges: the near-closure of our school; two wars; a major fire; Church scandals; a culture that increasingly rejects organized religion; and, most recently, COVID, which upended some ancient religious traditions overnight.

Yet, St. John's has emerged with more parishioners and greater life than ever. Today, more than 40 ministries enrich worship, build friendships and community, and deliver substantial support across our area. It is now our turn to steward the remarkable parish we have inherited, keeping it strong and serving for the next 70 years.

Annual Parish Financial Report

<u>PARISH GENERAL OPERATIONS</u>	FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30		ANNUAL BUDGET
	2021	2022	2022-23
RECEIPTS:			
Church Collections	\$ 1,326,385	\$ 1,381,427	\$ 1,325,971
Interest, Dividends & Other Income	7,204	1,048	1,350
Religious Education Tuition	60,615	76,775	65,035
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 1,394,204	\$ 1,459,250	\$ 1,392,356
EXPENSES:			
<u>Pastoral Care, Church & Rectory</u>			
Salaries, Health & Pension Benefits	\$ 456,779	\$ 449,988	\$ 461,730
Religious Educ./Youth Group	63,118	57,651	59,866
Pastoral Expenses	53,426	62,626	78,705
Parish Administration	47,881	78,118	72,950
Insurance & Real Estate Taxes	45,586	48,594	51,100
Subtotal	\$ 666,790	\$ 696,977	\$ 724,351
<u>School</u>			
Financial Commitment to Mother of Providence	\$ 229,500	\$ 238,500	\$ 228,500
<u>Buildings & Ground</u>			
Maintenance & Utilities	\$ 151,744	\$ 146,323	\$ 123,750
<u>Charitable Giving & Archdiocesan Assessment</u>			
Archdiocesan Assessment	\$ 154,300	\$ 166,800	\$ 162,500
Local Charities, net of contributions	15,456	18,915	18,000
Subtotal	\$ 169,756	\$ 185,715	\$ 180,500
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$ 1,217,790	\$ 1,267,515	\$ 1,257,101
OPERATING SURPLUS	\$ 176,414	\$ 191,735	\$ 135,255
Paycheck Protection Program Forgiveness	\$ 96,200	\$ -	
<u>Capital Contributions/(Expenditures)</u>			
Designated Contributions	\$ 17,625	\$ 15,000	
Capital Improvements Expenditures	(24,378)	(41,477)	
Net Capital Contributions/(Expenditures)	\$ (6,753)	\$ (26,477)	
Cash Balance as of June 30, 2021 and 2022	\$ 1,091,073	\$ 1,201,820	
Cash Reserve for Long Term Capital Expenditures		\$ (500,000)	
Cash for Current Operations		\$ 701,820	

Thank you for your continued support!



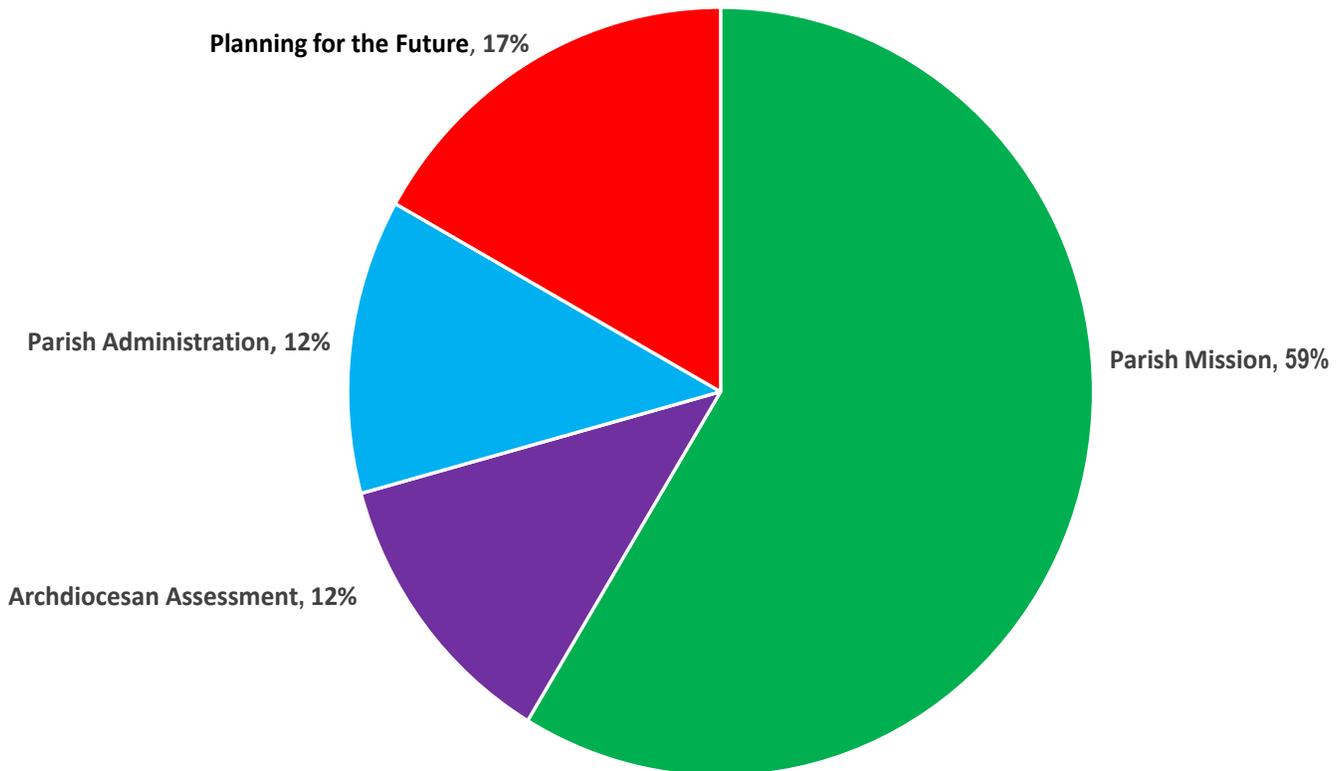
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Donate

Annual Parish Financial Report

Where Each Dollar Goes



Parish Mission. Most of your donation supports our Parish Mission, which includes...

Clergy: Salary, health insurance, pension contribution and residence expenses for our parish priests.

Community Outreach & Charities: Cash donations to local charities, Diocesan collections, the Chester Ministry Outreach, and payroll costs related to staff responsible for the parish outreach ministries. Not included are parish programs that provide food, clothing, toiletries and other items for Adopt-A-Family, the St. Nicholas Project, St. John's Hospice and Caring for Friends.

Facilities: All costs related to the Church and Parish House, including maintenance, utilities, property insurance and payroll costs associated with employees responsible for facility maintenance.

Faith Formation and Evangelization: Salary and costs associated with the RCIA program, adult education, Livestream Mass Ministry and seasonal devotional booklets for parishioners.

Liturgies: All expenses for our Masses and special liturgies, including stipends, music, missals, and church environment and altar supplies.

Parish Religious Education Program & Youth Group: Salaries, benefits, and program costs for ministries that serve our parish youth.

School : Parish financial support for Mother of Providence Regional Catholic School (MPRCS). The school also receives financial support from Nativity BVM in Media.

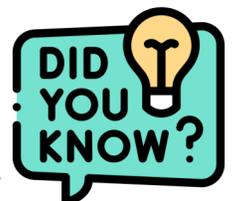
Planning for the Future. These donations support capital investments and savings for future facilities needs. In the last year, we installed a new fire alarm system in church (\$26,000) and a new, ADA-compliant entrance (\$11,600) in the Stevenson Center.

Parish Administration. These contributions support parish administration, including the office payroll, equipment and supplies, technology and other expenses for our ministries.

Archdiocesan Assessment. This assessment by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia supports Pastoral Administration and parishes in financial difficulty.

Just **53 percent** of active parish families contributed to St. John's in the last fiscal year.

The average annual contribution for those families was **\$1,336.77**.



Celebrating a Sacramental Season

After three years of COVID-constrained liturgies, we joyously celebrated the sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation unfettered this spring. Seventy parish second graders celebrated First Holy Communion in May; 71 received the sacrament of Confirmation in April. Our congratulations and prayers go out to all of our youth. We also extend our thanks to Patty Briganti, Coordinator of Religious Education; program assistant Janine Gregory; school principal Sara Dempsey; and all of our devoted catechists.



FROM THE PEWS, from page 2

but the gatherings are growing. The church and gym were both filled for the parish's 70th anniversary festivities. (See page 8.)

Some parishioners requested child care for the 9:30 Mass. Parishioners willing to support this effort are urged to contact the Parish House.

'JUST ONE MASS'

Despite the critiques and suggestions, St. John's is overwhelmingly beloved by its parishioners. They love its openness, its come-as-you-are atmosphere, its inclusion, and its warm welcome to all.

"We look forward to attending Mass every week," said one family. "Homilies are truly inspirational and connect to readings with an added personal touch. The music ministry is phenomenal.

"As far as we're concerned, if a parishioner would make the effort to attend just one Mass at St. John's, we believe they would want to return."

Mother of Providence Celebrates 10 Years



Mother of Providence Regional Catholic School is celebrating 10 years of academic excellence! Our enrollment continues to grow, with more than 270 students in grades PreK-3 through 8. Our nationally recognized school provides a safe and welcoming environment where students can reach their potential academically, spiritually and socially. MPRCS is grateful for the support of St. John Chrysostom Parish and Fr. Hallinan. Please visit us at mpregional.org.



Passages

Feb. 1 – Aug. 31, 2022

Baptisms

Brody Garrett Artingstall (Thomas & Kaitlin)
Fiona Rose Artingstall (Thomas & Kaitlin)
Skylar Jasmine Becker (Jason & Sharon)
Seamus Ries Blair (Patrick & Carolyn)
Matthew Francis Bobek (Michael & Kathryn)
Charlotte Bradshaw (Matthew & Sarah)
Colin Richard Brady (Lucas & Megan)
Samuel Jason Brown (Jason & Katherine)
Nora Jeanne Cadigan (Keith & Colleen)
Jane Marie Campanella (Kir & Annamarie)
Gavin Robert Cutting (Andrew & Erin)
Vincent John DeCarlo (John & Katsiaryna)
Logan Robert Fahey (Alek & Leah)
Zoe Amariah Gilbert (Immanuel & Jennelle)
Jack Michael Gillin (Edwin & Patricia)
Ella Marie Grajek (Andrew & Chelsea)
Nora Carol Higgins (Patrick & Jennifer)
Linnea Patricia Wixted Hirt (Karl & Mary Pat)
Adam Philip Johnson (Eric & Lauren)
Gianna Frances Konel (George & Danielle)



Adam Johnson joined the parish family in February.

Charlie Farrell Latch (Jason & Allison)
Imorou & Titilayo Linkpon (Chams & Fati)
Gabriel Thomas Lynch (Nicholas & Sabrina)
Miabella Rose Manley (Michael & Dana)
Miles James McLeod (Michael & Heather)
Kendall Rose Naulty (Kenneth & Caroline)
Colm Gerard O'Donnell (Aodh & Breanna)
Joshua James Pantesco (Joshua & Elizabeth)
Connor James Price (Daniel & Catherine)
John Matthew Sowa (Matthew & Melanie)
Ares June Washington (Jermain & Sarah)
Killian Joseph Williams (Bryan & Maria)
Hannah Joy Zelinski (David & Amalie)

Marriages

Finbar Byrne & Victoria Cocco (Aug. 20)

Kevin Eisenmann
& Allyson Blonski
(July 16)
John Mayers III
& Abby Marriott
(June 11)
Evan Reavey &
Shana Rush
(June 18)
Daniel Kelly &
Helen White
(June 25)



John Mayers and Abby Marriott wed in June.

In Memoriam

Jean C. Boyle (April 5)
L. Luke Cellini (Aug. 8)
Paul Johnson (March 19)
George V. Kweder (Feb. 12)
Deacon Walter Lance (Feb. 23)
Felicia Lindsley (April 26)
Lewis A. Maylath (July 18)
Charles D. McCall Jr.
(May 2)
Barbara Valent Miller
(Aug. 24)
Vincetta Mirasola
(April 14)
Ann Reitenbach Norris
(March 31)
Ronald E. O'Neal
(June 22)
Mary L. Petillo (April 1)
James John Scanlan
(March 21)
Kathryn Seaver (Aug. 13)
Palmina B. Smith (May 3)
David Traynor (Aug. 12)
Timothy James Tullio (Feb. 18)

New Parishioners

George & Shannon Ames (Geoffrey, Maggie)
Bill & Sue Barasha
Jillian & Don Barna
Kerri & John Bodnar (John, Brody, Trey)
Megan & Luke Brady
Katie & Jay Brown (Samuel)
Megan & Joe Camp
Patti Cassell

Lisa Cleek
Michael & Katie Conn (Emma, Tessa)
Tom & Monica Crowley
Erin & Andrew Cutting (Gavin)
Bonnie & Steve Devlin
Mary & Art DiCola
Colleen Dougherty
Katie & Josh Finley (Martin, Regan)
Greg & Sarah Fleming (Liam, Conor, Maggie)
Jim & Kristy Francis (James)
Judi & Dan Frattarola
Mary Fuchs (Kathryn, Larry)
Patricia & Ed Gillin (Jack)
Andrés González & Lisbeth Pérez
(Aranza, Camilo)
Pat & Dan Grady
Patrick & Jenna Higgins (Avery, Nora)
Sue Huegel
Kira Iatesta & Nick Drake
Kelly & Alex Jablovkov (Elena, George)
Ashley Johnson
Kelly and Russell Kaminski (Dylan, Declan)
Loretta Landis
Ronnie Malone
Paul & Rita Marano
Angelo & Trish Marchesani (Angelo, Nicholas)
Bill & Kathie McFadden
Mary McGarry & Paul Curry
(Skylar, Brielle, Maeve)
Annette Mollichella
George & Nikki Mollichella (Camillo)
Tori Montello (Paisley, Colson)
Sonya "Sonny" Mouzon
Bill & Nancy O'Connor
Lauren & Frankie Puzangara
(Luciano, Andrea)
Ed & Carrie Reilly
Ashley Russo (Finn, Noah)
Colleen Sachs
Steven & Trish Schloeder (Collin, Lewis)
Charles Sprecher
Regina Stone
Christina & Mark Williams (Lucas, Elle)
Susan Young
Lauren & Zachary Ziegler (Colin, Noah)
Libbera Zukowski



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CONNECT



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Celebrating 70 Years of Faith, Family, Friends and Service



ALL ARE



HERE.
(All means all.)

MASSES

Tue-Fri: 8 am
Sat: 4 pm
Sun: 8, 9:30,
11:30 am