



The Angelus

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM CATHOLIC CHURCH

February 2021

Parish Outreach Grows, Changes to Meet New Needs

Like the virus itself, the COVID pandemic afflicted communities with new problems and deepened old ones. Our community was no exception.

Sister Parish and St. Vincent de Paul have evolved into new ministries that offer new, greater and more flexible support.

Illness and job loss drove people who had never missed a paycheck into food lines and financial crisis. The newly impacted further strained community resources long taxed by the chronic need for food, clothing and other essentials. The growing, and widening, needs prompted mounting calls to St. John Chrysostom Parish for individual and institutional assistance.

The parish has responded with more support, new efforts, and restructuring of two significant outreach channels.

BUILDING UP BASICS

When COVID struck, the parish's longtime collection of food, diapers and toiletries literally moved front and center — from the rear church exits to the vestibule on Providence Road. The community responded with a sustained flow of donations by the tons. That outpouring has allowed SJC to expand its support from one Chester food pantry (The Bernardine Center) to four more: Anna's Place, Catholic Social Services, CityTeam and St. Katharine Drexel. Deliveries are now

made to these five partners in rotation, in accordance with their changing needs.

MEAL MATTERS

Our meal ministries, Caring for Friends and St. John's Hospice, have also grown dramatically, drawing more participants who are cooking more than ever. With grab-and-go supplies in church and drop-off simplified and safe, cooks turned out 5,000+ Caring for Friends meals and 650+ casseroles for St. John's Hospice in 2020 — a huge parish record. Meal delivery has expanded to three sites in Chester and serves our homebound upon request. Monthly casserole pickup by St. John's Hospice has nearly doubled.



Parishioner Gavin Feehery, 14, has become a faithful cook for our St. John's Hospice effort. Casseroles provide a hot lunch daily for men experiencing homelessness in Philadelphia.

See **OUTREACH**, page 4

COVID Can't Still Holiday Hearts & Hands

St. John's parishioners are extraordinarily generous all year long, but they really outdo themselves at Thanksgiving and Christmas. This past holiday season, despite COVID — or perhaps because of it — they did more than ever ... giving more, reaching farther, meeting new needs, and finding new ways to connect. And while we missed the hugs and smiles, we learned that some of the firsts invented for this strange season unexpectedly became blessings.

THANKSGIVING

COVID changed our Thanksgiving meal assistance from groceries to



Photo by Becca Ball

supermarket gift cards. The change both simplified the complex program and allowed guests to tailor their celebration

to their dietary and cultural needs. On the other hand, our Youth Group families answered a new call for turkey and trimmings from Dr. June Elcock-Messam for Every Child Counts (photo left). Working outdoors and distanced, the youths donated and assembled the fixings of feasts for two dozen families.

ADVENT

Our Adopt A Family ministry and St. Nicholas Project take center stage at Advent, capping months of unseen planning. This year, with a tremendous outpouring of volunteers and donations, Adopt a Family served a record 80 families, including more than 300 children.



Our new St. Nicholas Project partner was Divine Providence Village. Gifts, cards and flowers for 220 residents and staff were donated, sorted and delivered during Advent.

See **CHRISTMAS**, page 2

CHRISTMAS, from page 1

Gifts for every adopted family member were accompanied by gift cards, poinsettias, candy, and beautiful gift baskets. Extra donations were given to our new Good Samaritan Ministry (see story, page 7), to assist families in crisis throughout the year.



Another first: Our Prayer Shawl Ministry gifted Penn Presbyterian Medical Center with shawls, lap robes and baby items.

Our St. Nicholas Project, formerly limited to gift trees in church, for the first time also offered online signups and a “no tech, no touch” option for participants who were neither online nor in church. Again, the result set a parish record. Even non-parishioners participated as word spread through social media.

A similar hybrid approach enabled the parish to uphold its Christmas toy commitment to CityTeam Chester. The tweaked Tags 4 Toys campaign reaped enough Target gift cards for CityTeam parents to buy about 170 toys. Meanwhile, our Advent Angels drew more than enough volunteers and treats to deliver flowers and gifts to dozens of homebound and bereaved parishioners and neighbors.

The extras went with gifts from our Prayer Shawl Ministry to a local hospital.

CHRISTMAS

Christmas was undeniably quieter than normal. Masses were low key and lightly attended. A Christmas Eve storm even knocked out power to the church and community — a fitting final note to a dark year. Still, the Christ Child’s birth brought hope to a weary world, and a star appeared over Bethlehem, as the light of a thousand acts of generosity continued to burn brightly at St. John Chrysostom.



Photos courtesy of Linda Elser

Above: Adopt a Family leaders (L-R) Linda Elser, Kim Pizzirusso and Lynn Paolucci coordinated the efforts of scores of parishioners to serve 80 families, including 300 children.

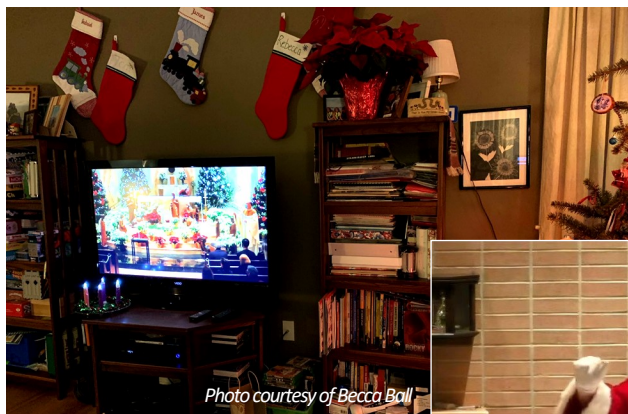


Photo courtesy of Becca Ball

Clockwise from above: More parishioners attended Christmas Mass online than in church in 2020, but Santa stopped by to say hello and bring a gift to the Baby Jesus. The Faithful Band sent a video Christmas card that fed souls starved for song.



Right (top and bottom): Despite a COVID lockdown, 220 residents and staff at Divine Providence Village awoke Christmas morning to gifts from St. John’s parishioners.



Photos courtesy of Divine Providence Village



Mother of Providence Marks a Blue-Ribbon Year

September was a tense time for schools everywhere as educators and families grappled with the likely reality of an entire school year in a pandemic. After months of intense preparation, Mother of Providence Regional Catholic School opened safely, in person and on time.



Everyone was excited to be back and adjusted quickly to the new normal of instruction with masks and distancing. More good news soon followed: In late September, the U.S. Department of Education named MPRCS a 2020 National Blue Ribbon School — just one of 50 private schools nationwide so honored.

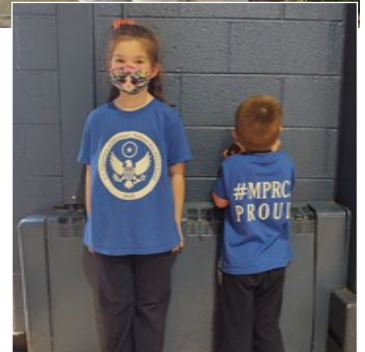
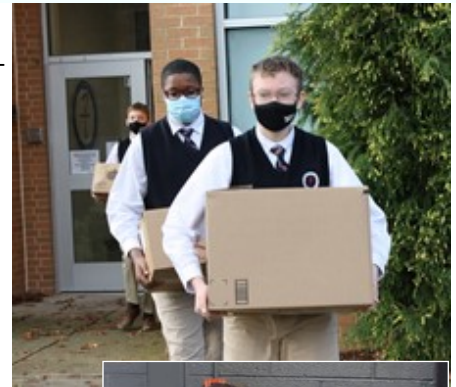
The months since have gone well and safely, with new and modified traditions.

One thing that didn't change is the school's commitment to service. In December, Student Council

sponsored a food drive for St. Gabriel's Food Cupboard (photo top right). In February, the school teed up a "Souper" Bowl collection for Anna's Place of Chester.

The school also boasted a new Neumann Scholar in eighth grader Shannon McGee. The Connelly Foundation offers the four-year high school scholarship to 35 talented eighth graders each year.

Mother of Providence is looking forward to a healthy spring term and to finishing this challenging year on a high note. Registration for next year is already underway at mpregional.org. We hope you'll join us!



Lights, Camera, Liturgy!

Last March, St. John's had a YouTube Channel with exactly zero subscribers and zero videos. Then came COVID, the shutdown of Masses, and a brand-new rush to online worship. At St. John's, recording and posting Masses began the first week of the March lockdown.

By year's end, SJC's YouTube Channel had more than 650 subscribers, nearly 73,000 views and more than 13,600 hours of watch time. The response was gratifying, but the changing and escalating technology demands were daunting.

The first Masses were recorded in the chapel on a handheld iPhone 7, then improved with a new camcorder and tripod. When Mass returned to church in June, however, the only available technology was a 20-year-old system (below left) that was once cutting edge, but now long obsolete. A summer of research and bid comparison culminated in the installation of all-new Newtek and Panasonic cameras and livestream technology (below right) in October. Internet upgrades followed, allowing us to add Facebook as a second streaming platform.

Today, SJC's online Mass is here to stay, streamed in HD on YouTube and Facebook five times a week and Holy Days. We are grateful for the parishioner support that has made these improvements possible.



NEW SUPPORT, NEW PARTNERS

In addition to increasing our traditional outreach, the parish has restructured two longtime outreach channels to meet today's changing and growing needs.

First, our St. Vincent de Paul Conference, supporting neighbors in crisis since 1994, voted last fall to disband and reconstitute Jan. 1 as the Good Samaritan Ministry, a parish entity that can respond to needs outside the rules set by St. Vincent de Paul (*see story, page 7*).

The new Chester Ministry Outreach will allow SJC to encounter and serve areas that we do not now reach, Fr. Ed said.

Meanwhile, at Fr. Ed Hallinan's direction, SJC's longtime Sister Parish entity will become the Chester Ministry Outreach, providing essential support to — and active relationships with — five faith-based social service providers across Chester.

While maintaining support to St. Katharine Drexel Parish, St. John's Chester Ministry Outreach will also provide regular, critically needed financial assistance to the other partners served by our food collection: Anna's Place, The Bernardine Center, Catholic Social Services, and CityTeam.

On March 1, a green Chester Ministry Outreach collection envelope will replace the monthly pink Sister Parish envelope, sealing this new commitment.

"We are called to encounter and serve our brothers and sisters wherever they are," said Fr. Ed. "Thanks to our parishioners' tremendous generosity, the Chester Ministry Outreach will allow us to assist neighbors in areas that we do not currently reach."

All donations to the Chester Ministry Outreach will be combined and sent to one partner each month in alphabetical rotation. All March donations, for example, will go to Anna's Place; April's, to the Bernardine Center; and so on.

As we pray for the success of these new efforts, we recognize that our encounter with these brothers and sisters must be not just financial, but also personal and spiritual. Thus, post-COVID planning is also underway to connect our parishioners with the volunteer needs of our partners, allowing us to bring our hearts and hands more fully to the service of our neighbors.



Parishioners are essential to our outreach. In January, our Youth Group sorted and bagged hundreds of items from our Winter Coat Drive for distribution across Chester. Parishioner Tom Strohmeier helped deliver the bounty.



Meet Our Chester Ministry Partners

Anna's Place. Founded 10 years ago as a hospitality center by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Anna's Place now primarily provides emergency food and meal assistance to more than 100 guests a week on Chester's West Side. More: annasplace.org.



New ponchos were a happy bonus on a recent weekly visit for food at Anna's Place.

The Bernardine Center. Founded in 1986 by the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, the center offers emergency assistance, educational programs, and a free hot brunch three times a week. More: bernardinecenter.org.

Catholic Social Services. Operated by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the CSS Family Service Center provides food, clothing, rent and utility assistance; showers and laundry for individuals experiencing homelessness; support for new immigrants; and more.

More: cssphiladelphia.org/familyservicecenters.

CityTeam Chester. Founded "to share Christ's unconditional and redemptive love by caring for immediate needs and enabling lasting solutions," CityTeam (formerly, CityTeam Ministries) provides food, clothing, shelter, spiritual support and residential recovery programs. More: cityteam.org/chester.

St. Katharine Drexel Parish. Established in 1993 by the merger of six Chester parishes, St. Katharine Drexel operates a Food and Clothing Cupboard that also offers toiletries, diapers and basic household items. More: stkatharinedrexelpantry.org.



Food insecurity is a constant in Chester. Above: Volunteers tend Catholic Social Services' food pantry. Below: CityTeam Chester preps meals to distribute on the street.



Midyear Parish Financial Report

<u>PARISH GENERAL OPERATIONS</u>	FOR THE SIX MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 31,		ANNUAL BUDGET
	2019	2020	2020-2021
RECEIPTS:			
Church Collections	\$ 718,096	\$ 690,447	\$ 1,172,600
Interest, Dividends & Other Income	1,406	532	7,800
Religious Education Tuition	36,212	32,970	62,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 755,714	\$ 723,949	\$ 1,242,400
EXPENSES:			
<u>Pastoral Care, Church & Rectory</u>			
Salaries, Health & Pension Benefits	\$ 249,058	\$ 238,848	\$ 478,410
Religious Educ./Youth Group	50,089	29,408	70,415
Pastoral Expenses	38,048	24,209	69,850
Office and Other Administrative Costs	18,794	23,694	45,200
Insurance & Real Estate Taxes	21,828	22,693	44,100
Subtotal	\$ 377,817	\$ 338,852	\$ 707,975
<u>School</u>			
Financial Commitment to Mother of Providence	\$ 87,600	\$ 91,800	\$ 210,000
<u>Buildings & Ground</u>			
Maintenance & Utilities	\$ 65,748	\$ 74,033	\$ 114,250
<u>Charitable Giving & Archdiocesan Assessment</u>			
Archdiocesan Assessment	\$ 78,600	\$ 77,150	\$ 158,000
Local Charities, net of contributions	11,530	8,081	23,500
Subtotal	\$ 90,130	\$ 85,231	\$ 181,500
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$ 621,295	\$ 589,916	\$ 1,213,725
OPERATING SURPLUS	\$ 134,419	\$ 134,033	\$ 28,675
<u>Capital Contributions/(Expenditures)</u>			
Designated Contributions	\$ 10,000		
Convent Abatement/Demolition	(120,850)		
Church Exterior Masonry Repair		(33,195)	
Net Capital Contributions/(Expenditures)	\$ (110,850)	\$ (33,195)	

Upcoming Parish Capital Expenditures during 2021

1. Sealing and restriping parking lot/access roads (preliminary estimate; postponed from 2020)	\$ 32,000
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Support SJC to keep us strong and serving.



www.bit.ly/givesjc

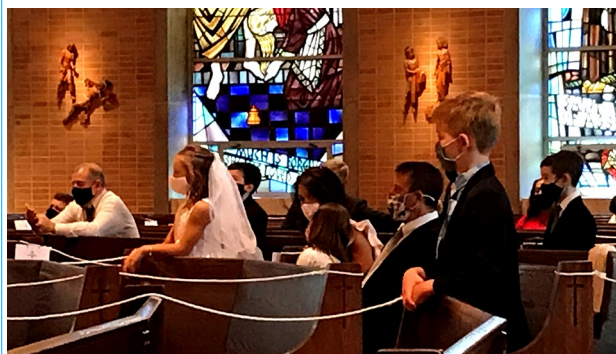


@SJC-Church

Deferred Sacraments Safely Celebrate their Day

September: First Holy Communion

As it did with everything else, COVID changed First Holy Communion, moving the



spring sacrament to mid-fall. Those white spring clothes were a little snug and the celebration distanced, but the joy brought us all together.

More than 60 children (last year's second graders) from Mother of Providence Regional Catholic School and the

Parish Religious Education Program received the sacrament at two Masses, on Sept. 26 and Oct. 3.



October: RCIA Rite of Acceptance & Welcoming

Participants in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) are either *catechumens* who are converting to Catholicism or baptized *candidates* preparing for First Holy Communion and/or Confirmation. The Rite of Acceptance & Welcoming, celebrated Oct. 25, is an early milestone on that eight-month journey. Guided by our RCIA team, this year's participants — Marabeth DiAntonio, Nicholas Falsone, Abby Lucking, Fati Lafia Soumaila and Jake Winkelvoss — will, COVID willing, be fully initiated into the church at the Easter Vigil Mass in April.



December: Confirmation

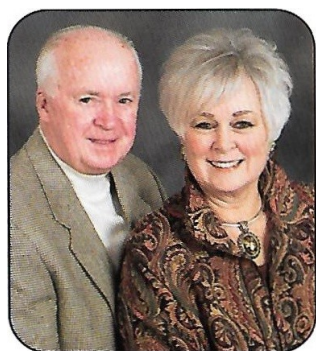
St. John's welcomed Archbishop Nelson Pérez as celebrant at Confirmation on Dec. 14. The sacramental Mass, the first one live streamed at St. John's, drew a distanced full house and more than 300 views online. More than 70 youths celebrated the sacrament, postponed nine months, in a joyful gathering.



Good Samaritans Ready to Serve All on the Road

In September 1994, Fr. Joe McGeown, then SJC's pastor, called a brainstorming session at the Parish House with nine parishioners. At issue: how to meet modest parishioner requests for assistance: a ride to church or the doctor, help with a prescription bill, a hand with grocery shopping. With \$1,000 in seed money from the parish, that meeting — which included current parishioners Marita Green and Joe Moody — launched SJC's St. Vincent de Paul Conference. In those early years, led by Joe Moody and Andy Kiszka, teams of members went into homes to confidentially address requests for help. Financial support came from church Poor Box donations and clothing drives with the St. Vincent de Paul donations truck.

Soon, however, the ministry's very success sparked greater demands for its help. When Deacon Walt Lance succeeded Kiszka, service expanded to a 10-mile radius, and members were suddenly juggling some 10 home visits a week. Teams were visiting up to 150 homes a year just in Chester — a practice that became so risky that the Chester Police asked the ministry to stop in 2003.



Parishioner Joe Moody helped found SJC's St. Vincent de Paul Conference in 1994. Mary Moody was the group's last president.

The ministry regretfully ended the home visits but developed an alternative program to support the Chester organizations that serve residents directly. That institutional support totaled \$9,000 to \$15,000 annually — a life line for the recipients, but a practice actually prohibited by the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which prescribes "person to person" assistance. It was a workaround that lasted years, but ultimately frustrated members.

"Having overlooked this for several years led us to rethink our association with St. Vincent de Paul and our concern for those ministries that are so close to us," said Mary Moody, wife of Joe and immediate past president of the conference.

Thus, after much prayer and deliberation, members voted last fall to dissolve their St. Vincent de Paul charter and reconstitute as a parish ministry that could respond as needed to the community. Like their Gospel namesake, our Good Samaritans aim to serve all neighbors as best they can. The new ministry maintains the same scrupulous financial stewardship as its predecessor, and will respond to both individual and institutional requests for assistance. Much of the institutional support will align with the parish's new Chester Ministry Outreach partners (see story on page 1).

The Good Samaritans "will continue to work for the needy without restraints or obstacles to answer the call 'To Serve Him is to Reign,'" said Mary Moody. "We look forward to working with our neighbors in need."

For more information or to request assistance, please call the Parish House at (610) 874-3418 or visit sjcparish.org/good-samaritan. Donations are appreciated through the Poor Boxes in church, through any online giving method (Parish Giving, Venmo or online banking), or by check to *St. John Chrysostom Parish*, noting *Good Samaritan Ministry*.



Photo courtesy of Bernardine Center

The Good Samaritan Ministry will continue to answer individual requests for assistance while supporting institutional providers like The Bernardine Center that serve Chester residents directly.



Deacon Walter Lance led SJC's St. Vincent de Paul Society for 18 years. When police ended the team's home visits in Chester, Deacon Lance and others figured out a new way to serve those residents.



Transitions

Aug. 1, 2020 – Jan. 31, 2021



In Memoriam

Marion S. Colameco (Aug. 4)
Patricia A. Dickey (Sept. 8)
Beverly A. Revenis (Sept. 25)
Michael G. Stambaugh (Oct. 9)
Joseph D. O'Shea (Oct. 13)
Maria Piccione (Oct. 19)

Catherine E. Cormican (Oct. 27)
William H. Barnes (Oct. 19)
Joseph A. McCadden (Nov. 21)
Juliette Randall (Nov. 24)
Angeline Evers (Dec. 1)
Joseph J. Redican Sr. (Dec. 2)

Walter L. Powell III (Dec. 3)
Thomas M. Dougherty (Dec. 15)
Thomas Zech (Jan. 11)
Rita Schiavo (Jan. 15)

Marriages

Paul M. O'Connell III & Nicole S. Catania



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Visit us at sjcparish.org



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our news & Masses!

Printed Feb. 4, 2021

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Baptisms

Emily Brooke Abramowitz (Eric & Dana)
Atlas Patrick Barbalace (David & Courtney)
Colin Xavier Bigelow (Benjamin & Kathryn)
William Frank Bradshaw (Matthew & Sarah)
Emma Quinn Bytheway (Thomas & Eileen)
Casey Cadigan (Keith & Colleen)
Emma Lucia Carroll (David & Joanelle)
Dylan Eric Diamond (Jason & Kimberly)
John Nikola DiAntonio (Bernard & Marabeth)
Boriana R. DiAntonio (Bernard & Marabeth)
Margaret DiAntonio (Bernard & Marabeth)
Michael DiAntonio (Bernard & Marabeth)
Landon James Egnaczyk (Ryan & Kerri)
Haley Michelle Egnaczyk (Ryan & Kerri)
Sofia Grace Fabiani (Michael & Brianna)
Jack T. Hallinan (Thomas & Tara)
Luca Vincent Hill (Robert & Jennifer)
Kamryn Alexandra Kadelski (Michael & Lisa)
Claire Margaret Kopay (Kevin & Stephanie)
Justin B. Mboowa (Fred & Deborah)
James Pepper (Brandon & Meghan)
Francesca M. Puzangara (Dante & Jennifer)
Andrew Joseph Pyers (Brandon & Margaret)
Timothée John Reil (Shane & Julie)
Reese Oliver Righter (Joseph & Caitlyn)

Our Parish Family Grows

Aug. 1 – Dec. 31, 2020



Franklin Roach (William & Stephanie)
Bernice Anne Sengendo (John & Hilda)
Brielle Pauline Sengendo (John & Hilda)
Eleanor Jo Shump (Paul & Caitlin)
Harper Sara Smith (Brian & Alicia)
Elijah Philip Sorrentino (Philip & Kara)
Lily Oak Vasko (Jack & Christine)
Aubrey Anita Washington (Jermaine & Sarah)
Olivia Paige Wise (Tyler & Ashley)
Graeme Robert Wise (Tyler & Ashley)
Alfred James Wise (Tyler & Ashley)

New Parishioners

Shannon & Scott Berkeimer
Lauren & Zachary Bradley (Mia & Ellie)
Lucy Carfagno & Thomas Koch (Thomas III)
Lauren Ciciretti (Mark & Eric)
Bernie & Marabeth DiAntonio
(John, Maggie, Bobbi, Michael)
Anthony & Megan Diorio (Anthony, Juliette)
Sabrina Garcia
Jen & Richard Joco & family
Danielle & Chris Kaprielyan (Alexis & Caleb)
Sharon & Tori Montello
(Makenzie, Paisley, Michael)
Theresa Richardson (Megan & Taylor)
Larry & Claudia Roberts

Maryclaire & Richard Roysdon
(Teddy)
Barbara Shellington
Willa Thompson
Angela Ugwuanyi (Nneoma, Ositadimma,
Chinemerem, Munachiso)
Alexandra Viscosi & Michael Bertsch
Tyler & Ashley Wise (Olivia, Graeme, Alfred)

**Join us for Mass
wherever you are!**

Mass Schedule

Tues-Friday: 8 am*

Saturday: 4 pm Vigil

Sunday: 8 am*, 10 am**, 11:30 am

* Live Stream

** American Sign Language

10 am 1st & 3rd Sundays



WORSHIP LIVE



8 AM TUE-FRI & SUNDAY