

September/October 2015

the Navigator

connecting the community of st. francis xavier parish

Stewardship: Let's dive in

By Jennifer Webb, director of ministry and communication

This summer my kids were hooked, for a few days, on old episodes of "Shark Tank." If you aren't familiar with the show, let me explain: Entrepreneurs present their big ideas to a panel of wealthy investors who listen carefully, then decide whether to support these hopeful individuals. If they choose to risk their investment, they want something in return – a percentage of the company's profits. Sometimes, their demand is pretty steep, and the entrepreneur has to decide if it's worth it.

The show is entertaining, and yet I was struck by the subtle mean streak that I suppose is inevitable in savvy business dealings. These eager, often young, individuals are seeking approval of their big dream, which could so easily be quashed. And the businessmen and women seemingly take advantage of that optimism by demanding a high return on their investment.

It occurred to me that, in some ways, that's the way it is with God. We stand before him, and he wants to invest in us. If we're on the right path, he gives us everything we need to pursue our dreams.

The difference is that he requires nothing in return! There's no dotted line, nothing that legally binds us to our benefactor.

That's not to say that he wants nothing. In fact, nothing would please him more than if, in gratitude, we return and choose to share ourselves with him. That would be the gracious thing to do in thanksgiving for our many blessings. The *grace-ious* thing to do.

Let's we look at the three ways in which we can do that.

Pray. We develop an ever deeper, personal connection

DIVE IN continued on page 11



Our Life Teens had fun playing miniature golf this summer.



Patty Kane, Billie Duta and Yolanda Halstead visit after an August morning Mass.



PRAY: Spirituality program deepens prayer life

Most of us probably learned to pray as children, reciting a bedtime “Angel of God” or perhaps a “Hail Mary.” And, of course, there’s another favorite: “Bless us, oh Lord, and these thy gifts...” before we eat.

But how many of us are stuck, perhaps many years later, still praying these simple, rote lines? There’s certainly nothing wrong with them, and it’s great to have one of those in your “pocket” when you’re in a crisis and can’t put words together. They are a great source of comfort.

However, prayer can – and should be – so much more! It’s an opportunity to dialogue with our Creator, our Father, Brother and Spirit in Heaven, to grow in our faith.

Here at St. Francis Xavier Parish, we invite you to discover new ways to deepen your prayer life this year.

One good way is by participating in the Spirituality Program for Adults (SPA), which will be offered this fall for the fifth time at our parish.

Led by parishioners Mike Sweet and Brian Lombardi, the program begins Sept. 10 and meets for the next eight weeks on Thursdays. Participants begin with 7 p.m. Mass, then regroup to share their faith in small groups of about four or five people. Deacon Paul Kipfstuhl presents a short homily.

During the week, participants are directed to spend about 30 to 60 minutes a day reading, praying and journaling about specific Scripture passages. These reflections are shared in the small groups, which are led by experienced facilitators from our parish.

About 120 parishioners have completed the program. Some have been so moved that they return to experience it a second time, Mike says.

“We have some people who have some eye-opening experiences where maybe they had a particular issue in their life, but, since they finally decided to put themselves in a place

of prayer every day, the Lord was able to speak to them, and they have a revelation,” he says.

The program is based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, who was a friend of St. Francis Xavier and founded the Jesuit order.

“It’s not a Bible study, just an opportunity to develop a relationship with God so they become closer to God,” Mike says.

Mike is completing a two-year, master’s level program at the Ignatian Spirituality Institute at John Carroll University to be certified as a spiritual director. He hopes to be able to offer spiritual direction to those who seek it, as well as additional retreat opportunities at our parish.

He says SPA might be a good option for those who have completed a Christ Renews His Parish retreat, gotten involved in ministry and now are looking for something more.

“That service part is great, but while they still have those embers burning in their hearts for God coming out of that weekend after teaming, this is a great way to continue that,” Mike says. “This is a little more of a deeper way to interact with the Lord, and it takes a little more commitment, a little more time, but, gosh, the fruits of it are so much more bountiful.”

TWO MORE WAYS TO PRAY:

Come to 7:30 a.m. Mass during the week and stay for the rosary (below).

Women are invited to a Christ Renews His Parish retreat (right) at our parish Oct. 17-18. Visit sfxmedina.com or see the bulletin for more details.





SERVE: Diaper drive benefits Medina families in need

Natalie Boothe was relaxing by the pool this summer with her children when she stumbled on a magazine article that troubled her.

The article described how some low-income women save money and resources by stretching the time between diaper changes for their babies and toddlers. Sometimes, she read, they will even rinse and try to reuse them, or try to make one diaper last the entire day.

That's when Natalie decided to start a donation drive to collect diapers to help Medina people in need.

"It just broke my heart that moms had to choose food over diapers," says Natalie, who helps lead our parish Moms and Tots group.

"There are so many families that can't afford diapers," she says. "They are costly, and they need so many each day."

Enlisting the help of 170 friends on Facebook and many others in the parish and community, Natalie urged them to bring diapers to the St. Francis Xavier Parish rectory.

The response was gratifying, surpassing her original goal of 1,000 diapers by nearly double. Over the month of July, she collected 1,817 diapers for Birthcare, a volunteer-staffed agency that provides emergency assistance and support to families with infants and young children in Medina County. The agency, founded in 1976 by SFX parishioners, provides advice, clothing, diapers, formula, baby food, car seats, cribs, baby equipment and more.

Barb McCoy, who directs the agency, says she was touched by Natalie's desire to start the drive, and by the generosity of the donors. "We have many, many clients, and we try to serve as many as possible," she says. "This donation enables us to give more, if even for a short period. We are set up to be more of a bridge for people to get by until the next payday."

A woman who said she will benefit from the fundraiser detailed for her the struggle she faces to provide for her 11-year-old and 13-month-old daughters. "When I read yesterday what you are doing..., I started crying," she wrote to Natalie. "To admit my struggle to afford diapers, wipes, milk, clothes that fit (both of them), well, it is any and all words, ranging from difficult to impossible sometimes. I try to ration out every single month my diaper sources. ... I wanted you to know a firsthand account of a family you just brought an

immense amount of joy and gratitude to knowing this month we will definitely get diapers – a weight just lifted from my shoulders!"

Barb says this woman's story is "very common" here in Medina.

A number of families who donated to the drive expressed their joy at being able to help others in need.

Kathy Flemming, a parishioner and mother of four who belongs to Moms and Tots, says she appreciated the gift of diapers and wipes when her children were born. "I thought it was a great idea," says Kathy. "I am fortunate enough to be a stay-at-home mom. Diapers and wipes are very expensive. I wanted to help other moms who needed help."

Rachelle Helton saw Natalie's page on Facebook and decided to get involved. "My heart aches for those who struggle with the cost of diapers," she says. "I knew I wouldn't get through all the level 1 diapers I had, so when I saw Natalie's post I knew where my extra diapers would be going. I had also asked my stepson and his girlfriend to drop off a box of diapers. It made me feel good to be able to show them the importance of donating."



Natalie's daughter and son helped fill the car with diaper donations.

Natalie says she plans to make the drive an annual event. But you don't have to wait until then to give: Birthcare gladly accepts your donations any time at 620 E. Smith Road, E-5A, Medina, 44256. Visit the agency's website at www.birthcaremedina.org for more information.



BELONG: Rebuilding, replacing, restoring



A letter from our pastor

It has been another year of fixing, replacing, upgrading and, I hope, improving the property for our 3,100 registered families – that's some 10,000 people – including our guests who visit us throughout the year.

Thanks to the Rooted in Faith, Forward in Hope diocesan campaign, we've been able to complete a hefty list of improvements. We replaced the gym roof (shingles started blowing off in November), repaired a portion of flat roof over the school that began to leak last year, replaced the last 11 original school windows, repaired 22 windows, installed wireless Internet throughout the school and painted the church basement, tunnel and school. Hopefully this fall, we will complete the church's new West Vestibule.

The new entry replaces the crumbling ramp and stairs on that side of the church, offering a wide, welcoming sidewalk and canopy, with outdoor seating. Inside, the entry provides access to the church and basement with another elevator-lift for special needs access (it is a federal requirement that we have two handicap-accessible entrances).

Above the vestibule's roof is a 15-ton, energy-efficient A/C unit that will distribute cool air more evenly with a new soffit concealing the duct work. Additional A/C units were installed in the choir loft and sacristy. The units are quiet and won't interfere with our ability to hear the prayers at Mass.

While all of this was torn up, I decided to replace the original red tile in the sacristy with something a little less dated. I know it has been a mess since Easter, but I think it was worth the wait.

Another major improvement that occurred is the removal of the two very old mobile units alongside the gym that were replaced by a new, larger unit and covered walkway to the school. This work on our Learning Center was paid for by the State of Ohio and managed by our city's school system.

Why now?

Why so many projects? In the coming weeks we'll publish the financial report in the bulletin and website, sfxmedina.com. But, let me summarize. The list of capital repairs, replacements and improvements over the last six years was largely ordered by four things. 1, the agenda set by the priorities of our town hall meetings; 2, the energy study; 3, the estimated lifetime before even more costly structures fail; and 4 (last, but certainly not least), safety concerns. The money we

have saved on utilities has been significant. Once that was reinvested in the plant, we were able to save and do even more.

So yes, thanks be to God, we've done a lot. But, in a complex of buildings this age (and probably not unlike your own homes), there is more to do. The remaining capital repairs include a long list of replacements: the worn-out floor tile in the church basement, the rectory windows and boiler, the broken windows in the breezeway (music room) and the middle school roof. We also must update the school restrooms and address the church's East Entrance – the one most heavily used.

Offer input

The scope of the East Entrance could be rather simple or could include an expansion of that side of the building – both on the basement level (near the kitchen) and the church's main level. That is where I would like you to weigh in. We will be having a number of opportunities by which you can offer input going forward. Pastoral Council is developing a survey to help us to start thinking about the future. You will find it in the bulletin, our website and our Facebook page. Town hall meetings are scheduled for:

- Sept. 13, 1:30 p.m., Church
- Sept. 28, 4:30 and 7:30 p.m., Xavier Room
- Oct. 7, 1 p.m., Xavier Room
- Oct. 11, 1:30 p.m., Xavier Room

It is my hope that the ideas, suggestions and dreams be not limited to the buildings (New kitchen? Larger gathering space? Picnic pavilion? Technology upgrades in the church?), but include ministries and the mission of the Church.

Where do you want to see the parish in the next five or 10 years? Please spend some time thinking and praying about it, and talk with your neighbors and friends so we can plot a course together. Our parish is blessed to have many gifted and generous people who put their resources to good use.

God has placed you here for a purpose. You belong here, and God has given you something to contribute. Together, living as intentional disciples, we can discover that purpose and grow in untold ways when you share your unique gifts.

F. Tony



ADULT CARD

**ADULT
CARD**

YOUTH CARD

YOUTH CARD



Sing a new song unto the Lord

On behalf of the Music Ministry, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have stopped by to offer your kind words of welcome to Andrew Sabol and me as we begin our new positions here at St. Francis Xavier. We are excited to get started as soon as possible. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Marian Fletcher as our new director of the Youth Choir. Marian's vast experience with vocal performance and education will be a great fit for this growing program. You may contact Marian at mfletcher@sfxmedina.org and Andrew at asabol@sfxmedina.org.

Below you will find a description of the various musical programs offered at St. Francis Xavier. If you are involved in one of the programs, I look forward to working with you soon. Please contact me at 330-764-8959 or rneal@sfxmedina.org.

In Christ,
Ryan C. Neal



Andrew Sabol



Marian Fletcher

Traditional Adult Choir

The Traditional Adult Choir is open to any parishioner of St. Francis Xavier, high-school-aged or older, who has a desire to promote a full, active and conscious participation in the liturgy through music. This group primarily sings at the 10 a.m. liturgy each Sunday as well as major feasts and holidays from September through May. While reading music and/or professional training is not required, a pleasant voice, eagerness to work together, willingness to learn new music and the desire to sing well are strongly encouraged. This group practices on Thursday evenings from 7:45 to 9:15 p.m. in the choir loft. This group is directed by Ryan Neal.

Cantor

The primary role of a cantor is to serve as psalmist – leading and proclaiming the verses of the Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation. In addition, the cantor is a leader of congregational singing. A cantor must possess confident and rehearsed singing as well as having a pleasing singing voice. Monthly training workshops are provided

within the parish to prepare our cantors for this important ministry. An audition with Ryan Neal is required to serve in this role at St. Francis Xavier.

Youth Choir

The Youth Choir is open to any student, grades three through eight, who enjoys singing. Our focus will be on learning sound musical techniques and basic musicianship while having fun and making music for the glory of God. The Youth Choir sings twice a month at the 12 p.m. liturgy as well as special feasts and holidays. Rehearsals are held 5:15 to 6:15 p.m. Thursdays in the choir loft. This group is directed by Marian Fletcher.

Saturday Evening Small Group

This year, we would like to develop a new, regular group of singers open to high-school-aged individuals and older with an emphasis toward our younger parishioners. While a regular rehearsal schedule has yet to be determined, we will meet at 4:15 p.m. for the 5 p.m. weekly liturgy. Please contact Ryan Neal.

Resurrection Funeral Choir

The Resurrection Choir is an

important element of each funeral liturgy celebrated at St. Francis Xavier. Open to any individual who is available to sing on weekday and Saturday mornings, this group practices 30 minutes prior to each funeral liturgy. There are no auditions for this choir; however, a pleasant voice and the ability to attend rehearsals are important. Membership in the Traditional Adult Choir is encouraged and helpful in learning music in harmony. Please contact Ryan Neal.

Instrumentalists

Any parishioner high-school aged or older who is proficient on a string, wind or brass instrument is encouraged to share his or her musical talent at St. Francis Xavier. Extra instrumentation is welcome at all liturgies, but most noticeably during the Advent, Lent, Christmas and Easter seasons. Please contact Ryan Neal.

Youth Choir Aide

Parents and guardians of Youth Choir members are always needed to assist. Volunteers are needed on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings to assist in distributing music, etc. Please contact Marian Fletcher.



SFX School expands use of technology in the classroom

For the last several years, St. Francis Xavier School has been on a path toward steadily increasing its use of technology in order to introduce students to the latest concepts in education.

Under the leadership of principal Bibiana Seislove, the school has embraced a teaching focus that emphasizes science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) that earned national recognition last spring by Today's Catholic Teacher magazine.

This year, the 470-student school will have one STEM day each quarter, and teachers have been researching new lesson plans and activities to encourage students to consider innovative approaches to problem-solving. The STEM days are financed, in part, through the generosity of a parent and his employer's matching grant program.

"We're already working on ideas," Mrs. Seislove explains. "The teachers have jumped on board wholeheartedly and they're thinking of things."

What's even more exciting is that 175 students in grades five through eight have been assigned a Dell Chromebook to use at school and home. The Chromebooks were purchased with state funding, and the additional wiring and access points needed to allow so many people online at once were paid with Rooted in Faith, Forward in Hope diocesan campaign grants.

Students are learning Google and Microsoft programs to complete assignments, collaborate with fellow students and communicate with their teachers. For example, students may turn in language arts papers using Google Docs. Some of their textbooks will be loaded on the computers as well.

"Our kids are going to leave St. Francis Xavier being able to use either platform," she says. "It's a whole new world of resources that will be opened up for them."

In addition, the school is launching a new student management tool, called Ascend, which will allow teachers to create their own web pages, post homework details and generate daily emails to parents on their child's progress.

The classroom environment is changing, too, with a new Juno amplification system in every classroom that makes it easier for teachers to ensure all students can hear their lessons. Studies show that when teachers use microphones, students' attentiveness and achievement increase. The system also empowers teachers to very simply record an entire lesson – audio as well as anything the teacher writes or displays on an interactive whiteboard – for students who are absent.

Meanwhile, the acquisition of broadcasting equipment will enable students to record Masses and other events for the school website, and create video announcements to be shown in each classroom.

The technology will enhance an already vibrant Catholic faith-based curriculum that encourages each student to ask questions, seek answers, strive for excellence and be well-positioned for success in high school.

Mrs. Seislove hopes to expand on this excellence by adding more classes in the arts, including a deeper music and arts curriculum, to work toward becoming what education circles call a STREAM school – one that offers rich participation in science, technology, religion, engineering, arts and math. She welcomes and encourages parent and community involvement in this initiative.

"It's going to open up a whole new realm here," Mrs. Seislove says.





Dive in

continued from page 1

with our God and great Benefactor through prayer.

Serve. We serve him by serving his people and furthering his mission on Earth.

Belong. We can think of this in a couple of different ways. In one sense, it's the natural result of the first two steps: When we pray and serve, we find where we belong.

But it's also an invitation, maybe even a challenge, to actively participate in the life of the parish and Church. Care enough to grasp hold of the faith and claim it as your own. Your parish family wants you to feel welcome here. You belong! And those who belong – to a family, to a community – give and take, as they are able, to grow and help

others do the same. They lend their talents and skills to make it something even better than it was before. They don't merely consume but they look for ways to contribute. And you know what? Doing so reinforces those connections and feelings of belonging.

Take a few minutes to review the commitment cards inside this newsletter. They are to be used by one adult or one child – this year, sixth grade or older – so if you need extras, pick them up inside the church or parish office, or print them from our website, sfxmedina.com. Bring them back to

church the weekend of Sept. 19-20.

Pray. Discern where you can serve and what talents you can share. Contribute financially to the parish. And really belong. You have something unique to give, and we need you!

Invest a little more of yourself, and watch that return on investment grow.



Parishioners finished the paint job at Cups Café in a mini Day of Service in August.

School staff changes

St. Francis Xavier School began last month welcoming some new faces, including a new assistant principal and four new teachers.

Diane Salamon joins the staff of St. Francis Xavier School from St. Francis de Sales School in Akron, where she was a teacher, curriculum coordinator and assistant principal. She worked to design and implement a number of science programs for kindergartners through eighth-graders, including a family math night, technology night and polymer night. She also serves on the Science Range Finding Committee of the Ohio Department of Education and as a teacher leader for the Akron Global Polymer Academy.

She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Akron and a master's from Kent State.

Mrs. Salamon, who lives in the Portage Lakes area and is married with three sons (ages 22, 20 and 17), says she enjoys interacting with children and teaching science and religion. "I would love to make a difference here in students' lives," she says. "I want to help them develop in their Catholic beliefs and see how they fit into society with their faith."

In addition, Kelly Benson joins the staff to teach third grade with Gail Reynolds and Karen Carabin. Ms. Benson graduated from KSU in May 2014 and has been a long-term substitute teacher.

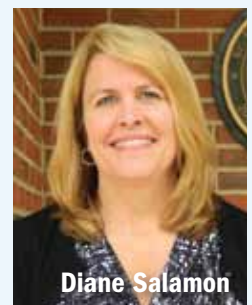
Jill Hudak is the third fourth-grade teacher, joining Kathy Jo Fronk and Stephanie Baker on the second floor. She has eight years of experience as a teacher, and joins SFX from her most recent position as an admissions event coordinator

at St. Joseph Academy in Cleveland.

The middle school welcomes two men as full-time teachers. Gideon Nocero, who taught in a Toledo charter school, is a sixth-grade homeroom teacher with Megan Gonzales and will teach middle-school math.

Michael Podrasky, who taught computers last year, became an eighth-grade homeroom teacher and teaches middle-school social studies. He also continues as technology coordinator for the school.

Meanwhile, Christa Ludwig is teaching computer classes to all grades. She most recently taught eight years at St. Leo the Great School in Cleveland.



Diane Salamon

St. Francis Xavier

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sept. 6

LifeShare bloodmobile

9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Priests' Driveway

Receive a \$20 Giant Eagle gift card!



Ministry Fair & Hospitality Sunday

After 8 a.m., 10 a.m.

and 12 p.m. Masses

Church Basement

Sept. 10

Youth Choir practices begin

5:15-6:15 p.m., Choir Loft

Spirituality Program for Adults

begins after 7 p.m. Mass

Church Basement

Sept. 19-20

Stewardship Commitment Weekend

Please bring your completed

Commitment Cards to Mass.

Sept. 21 & 24

PSR elementary classes begin

Sept. 24

Theology on Tap

(21 and older)

Social begins at 6 p.m.,

speaker at 7 p.m.

at Buffalo Wild Wings in Medina

See bulletin and parish website

for more details

Oct. 4

Parish "Monster Mash"

Halloween Party

2-3 p.m., School



Oct. 17-18

Christ Renews His Parish Women's

Renewal Weekend

Call Val at 330-723-1609 or visit

sfxmedina.com for details.

TOWN HALL meeting

Attend a Town Hall Meeting
to discuss goals for the parish:

Sept. 13

1:30 p.m.

Church

Sept. 28

4:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Xavier Room

Oct. 7

1 p.m.

Xavier Room

Oct. 11

1:30 p.m.

Xavier Room