

July / August 2017



the

connecting the community of st. francis xavier parish

# Navigator

## Hear ye, hear ye! VBS was fun!

St. Francis Xavier Parish had a mighty big adventure for the 122 children who attended Vacation Bible School the week of June 5! At the Mighty Fortress, the children encountered an elaborate castle, complete with knights in shining armor, an energetic court jester and the town crier who called the citizens to prayer.

**“Hear ye, hear ye! In Jesus, the Victory is Won!”**

Each day the students learned new songs and Bible verses that reinforced their faith. Nancee Houseman taught songs and hand motions while wearing a colorful court jester's hat and tooting a red plastic “ram's horn.”

**Wearing a black tunic and a big floppy hat with a long white feather, storyteller Fr. Thom presented tales from the Bible.** The children learned how God's power caused the walls of Jericho to tumble, how God delivered the kingdom to King Hezekiah and how King Jesus overcame sin and death by resurrecting from the dead. Many older students helped as aides in the classrooms or led playground games, and adults oversaw classrooms for crafts and coloring. The Randel House deck was snack central, under the supervision of PSR secretary Donna McEwen and her helpers.

**“I chose to continue this ministry to teach music because, to me, music is praying twice.** And helping children to do that in the easiest way possible is why I continue to do it,” says Nancee, who's in her second year with VBS. She led the students in a week-ending concert for parents, who got to hear the songs and verses that they had been learning. At the end, each student received a CD and DVD of the music to continue the lessons at home.

St. Francis Xavier sixth-graders Marie O'Keefe and her friend Grace Skupski served as aides in two classrooms. **“I wanted to help out with it because I want to be a kindergarten teacher when I grow up, and I thought this would be a nice experience,”** says Marie.

Beth Schaffeld has been volunteering as a teacher at VBS for about 12 years. As a full-time teacher during the school year, she says she's happy to use her talents to help in the summer when she's off. **“I like to help out. I get to spend time with my son, and help out the parish,”** Beth says. **“I've got a great group of kids and had a lot of fun this year.”**



MASS  
TIMES

SATURDAY VIGIL: 5 p.m. SUNDAY: 8 p.m., 10 a.m., 12 noon, 5:30 p.m.

WEEKDAYS: 7:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday

7 p.m. Monday, Thursday & First Friday of the month



# Hark how the bells

Fr. Tony has always loved the sound of bells as part of church music. To him, they lend a certain ambiance that enhances the liturgy in a way that's unlike other instruments.

This fall, thanks to generous gifts made to the parish in the memory of living or deceased parishioners, St. Francis Xavier will get to hear those tones more regularly through the addition of a bell choir.

Four octaves of handcrafted bells made by Malmark Handbell Co. – along with special tables, pads, gloves and more – arrived in late May. The bells range in size from 8 or 10 ounces each to as much as 6 pounds.

**“It’s a beautiful sound,” says parish music director Ryan Neal. “It’s something new that adds to our liturgies in ways that we’ve not had available to us in the past.”**

The custom-made bells are cast of pure bronze in the approximate proportions of 80 percent copper and 20 percent tin, according to the Plumsteadville, Pennsylvania-based manufacturer. The metal is heated in crucibles to 2,150-degrees Fahrenheit and poured into sand molds. When the bronze has hardened, the sand is broken away. A precise process of sanding and polishing each bell follows, with each bell examined and assembled carefully for the best tonal response.

**In addition to being beautiful instruments, a bell choir provides an additional way for parishioners to participate in the liturgy.** Ringers do not need experience in music, although of course that is helpful.

“We wanted to have an opportunity for people to get involved in the music ministry who are not singers or don’t care to sing,” Ryan explains.

While not every parish has a bell choir, many in our diocese do, including St. Joseph in Strongsville, St. Ambrose in Brunswick, St. Hilary in Fairlawn and SS. Robert and William in Euclid. In March, the bell choir



Members of the St. Noel Handbell Choir visited St. Francis Xavier Parish in March to demonstrate how the bells sound.

# Memorial gifts

The addition of bells to our liturgies is made possible through the contributions of undesignated memorial gifts offered by the families and friends of living and deceased parishioners. They can be given as part of an estate-planning procedure or through individual donations. These funds are reserved for special items used during liturgy or furnishings for the church. These funds also may lend support to a special program of the church, for special projects or for unforeseen non-budgeted items.

Memorial gifts also may be designated for a specific use, such as the church endowment fund, school endowment fund or for a special project. All contributions of this nature should be discussed with Fr. Tony, who can work with the giver to understand his or her wishes and help discern the type of gift that best meets those desires.

**To reach Fr. Tony, call the parish office at 330-725-4968.**

from St. Noel Parish in Willoughby Hills came to our church to accompany the music at Mass and give parishioners a chance to try them.

**“You can ring by hand or by mallet, you can pluck them, and they all have different articulations,” Ryan explains. “There are many different techniques to bell ringing besides just ringing a bell.”**

He is encouraging anyone in middle school through adults who have an interest to participate. He’s hoping for a multigenerational group, as in all our choirs. A full choir requires 12 regular ringers and three to five substitutes. If more are interested, a second bell choir could be added.

“The ability to read music is highly preferred but is not absolutely necessary, however a good sense of rhythm is,” Ryan says. “We can teach you when to ring your bell, but you have to be able to follow the music.”

**To inaugurate the ministry, Elke White, a nationally recognized bell choir director from St. Noel Parish, will lead a two-evening workshop on bell choir performance on Aug. 29 and 30, from 6 to 9 p.m., in the choir loft.**

**Rehearsals will be held Tuesdays, beginning Sept. 5, from 7 to 9 p.m. in the choir loft.**

**Interested? Call Ryan Neal at 330-725-4968 or email him at rneal@sfxmedina.org.**

# Life Teen musician excited to share his faith

By Jennifer Webb

**Sometimes it takes a personal faith crisis to confirm what you know is true.**

**For John Hall, the 29-year-old leader of our Life Teen music ministry, a strong Catholic foundation and positive experiences in youth ministry drew him deeply into his quest for God.** Although his path strayed from Catholicism for a time, he never stopped searching for Truth. And along his journey, he heard God calling him home to the Catholic Church.

“It was kind of a crazy time of my life,” John says. “It ended up being really good for me.”

John grew up in Florida, where as a senior in high school he became involved in a Life Teen program. It was during that time that he had two life-changing experiences: He had an intense encounter with God during adoration, and he met Danielle, who would become his wife.

He attended college, finishing 75 percent of an associate degree. As a guitarist, he started helping out with music at a Presbyterian church, where a minister saw his deep spirituality and encouraged him to expand his role as a worship leader. He became a leader in what was called Recovery Church, where 300 addicts would come out every Wednesday night to worship and reflect. “I was preaching there some nights, teaching groups; it was a pretty intense time,” John says. “It seemed obvious that I would become a pastor and get ordained, but there was always a calling that I had to come back to the Catholic Church.”

Eventually, John was encouraged to begin the process of ordination as a Presbyterian minister.

**Still, something was holding him back. He started meeting with a priest to discuss some questions he had about the Catholic Church, and that process of studying his faith reignited his love for the Church.**

“I had believed a lot of things about the Catholic Church that weren’t necessarily true,” he says. “I just didn’t understand all of it. The more research I did, the more I wanted to be back in the Church. I was getting called back to the Catholic Church.”

John and Danielle, who have been married eight years, moved to Ohio with their three children: Kaylie, 5; Elijah, 3; and Layla, 1. He was helping out with the music at St. John Neumann Parish when he learned that St. Francis Xavier Parish was looking for someone to succeed longtime Life Teen band leader John Husbands, who retired in April from the ministry. After meeting with Fr. Tony, John joined the ministry in May.

John says he is excited to be part of the Life Teen ministry here, and looks forward to helping teens on their journey, not only in music but, along with Danielle, as a core leader with involvement on Life Nights, retreats, XLT nights and more. “It’s really deepened my faith a lot, which is huge for me. I’m really psyched about the Life Teen program. It affected me so much in my walk, in my journey. My first real experience with Jesus was at adoration at a Life Teen retreat. It changed and shaped my whole life. So it had a really big impact on me.”

**He’s asking teens to get involved with the music ministry as singers, instrumentalists, or work behind the scenes planning liturgies and running the sound board or slides.** Music has always tethered him to God, he says, and he wants to help others develop a close relationship with God. “I see the effect,” he says. “If I make the effort, the fruits are going to happen. We’re going to see awesome stuff happen at the church.”



## MUSICIANS NEEDED!

John Hall is hoping to involve more teens in the Life Teen band as singers and instrumentalists, such as those who can play guitar, bass, drums or keyboard, “but if there’s violin or string instrument, that’s cool too.” He also needs people who can run the sound and slides for the lyrics. Email him at johnhallworship@gmail.com.



# ST. FRANCIS XAVIER 3RD ANNUAL *Parish Day of Service* was 'great family experience'

Our third-annual Parish Day of Service found St. Francis Xavier parishioners doing good works all over Medina County! Blessed once again with a bright, sunny day after several days of rain, more than 250 people were hard at work fulfilling 266 "jobs" at many locations around the county.

Hosting the Day of Service the same day as the Medina Half Marathon meant lots of opportunities for service that revolved around the race, which is led by parishioner Beth Bugner, involves many other parishioners, and raised thousands of dollars for two charities founded by parishioners – Stand Up for Downs and the Mary Grace Foundation.

Many of our parishioners visited some of the nine area nursing homes that we serve here in Medina County, playing bingo with residents at Life Care and the piano or clarinet at the Avenue of Medina, Medina Meadows, Brookdale North and South, and others. Children and adults sang patriotic songs with residents at Elmcroft and enjoyed ice cream treats with them.

The Forgan family visited JAF's Therapy in Motion, which provides horseback riding therapy for disabled children, and helped move hay and clean the tack room. After planting flags at the national cemetery in the morning, the Tomeckos did yardwork for four disabled individuals living semi-independently. Six people originally planning to plant the Feeding Medina County garden (it was too wet) instead helped at the Lodi Family Center, where director Rebecca Rak was extremely grateful. "Thank you so much to your team," Rebecca says. "They were amazing troopers! They have got to be exhausted because they got so much done!"



A number of others twirled a jump rope, blew bubbles and cheered on an exuberant dance-off during a block party sponsored by Let's Make a Difference at the low-income Union Square apartments.

About 20 children and adults stayed on campus and made 33 fleece blankets that will be distributed to toddlers served by Birthcare.

After the work was done, everyone came back together for Mass, dinner and a chance to see a video showing some of the many places we made a difference that day.



"This was my first service day, but I truly enjoyed it," says Marcy Dionisio, a retiree and new parishioner who opted to stay beyond her morning shift to make additional blankets.

"I signed up to pick up litter because it is something my whole family (very young children) could do," says Carol Walling. "It was a great family experience."





# Girl Scouts lead blanket activity for bronze award

By Rachelle Skupski, leader, Girl Scouts of Northeast Ohio Troop 90457

**The Girl Scout Bronze Award is the highest honor a Girl Scout Junior can earn.** Working as a team, the fifth-grade St. Francis Xavier Girl Scout Juniors in Troop 90457 planned and executed an intensive service project benefiting the patients at St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital. They wanted to bring joy into the lives of children who were going through a difficult time.

**The troop decided to make blankets, hats, bracelets and cards for the patients.** Over five months, they learned how to make bracelets from yarn, cut and tied fleece blankets and used their imaginations to create colorful, joyful cards. The girls also were inspired to learn to knit so they could make hats. Mrs. Patty Cathcart joined us for several meetings and introduced the girls to knitting. The girls were excited to learn a new skill and grateful to Mrs. Cathcart for her time and contribution of several hats.

**On May 19, the girls invited the other St. Francis Xavier Girl Scout troops to make blankets, bracelets and cards.** The fifth-grade girls made all the plans and preparations for the party, decorated the Xavier Room, hosted the party and cleaned up. They taught the younger troops how to cut and tie the blankets and how to make bracelets. Six blankets were completed, along with several bracelets and many cards.

**While working on the Bronze Award, the girls learned that it is fun to help people.** They also learned to work as a team by talking about what was important and what needed to be done. One of the girls’ favorite things was teaching others to do something they had never done and inspiring them to try new things and help others.



BACK ROW: Troop leader Rachelle Skupski, Avery Rogus, Rebecca Zwick, Gracelyn Skupski, Kaitlyn Junn, Troop co-leader Laura Paliga

FRONT ROW: Claire Kollin, Alexcia Nguyen, Annalise Paliga, Anna Stankard

# Eagle Scout project honors wounded military

**Gus Wilson wants to make sure that Purple Heart recipients get the recognition and appreciation they deserve.** He’s working with the Wounded Warrior Family Support program to install eight signs giving reserving parking spaces at six locations in the Medina area for veterans who were wounded during combat.



**The sign project honors the estimated 1.8 million Purple Heart recipients who have transitioned back into civilian life.** It also is helping 17-year-old Gus earn his Eagle Scout rank. He spent a warm Saturday morning in June leading a group of younger Scouts as they drilled into the parking lot at Home Depot in Medina to install a pole that will hold two purple signs, fastened back to back. A similar pole was installed at the Home Depot in Montrose.

The boys installed two signs each at the Medina County Veterans Memorial Hall, and VFW Post 5137. Schoolhouse Scoops also accepted a sign.

**“I wanted to do a project that had to do with (veterans),” says Gus, the son of Germaine and Jim Wilson. “It sounded really helpful to me, and it was really nice. It’s a courtesy to more veterans than maybe just doing a small project that would help out a few of them.”**

Gus is just one example of a handful of boys in the troop who are nearing completion of their Eagle Scout projects. Jim McKinnon, advancement coordinator for Troop 506, chartered by St. Francis Xavier Parish, says four or five boys should receive their Eagle rank this year. **Nationally, it remains an elite designation.** In 2016, 55,186 young men became Eagle Scouts, but only about 6 percent of boys who begin Scouts will finish as Eagles.



# Are you being Formed?

St. Francis Xavier has received a Rooted in Faith – Forward in Hope grant to provide educational material about our faith to our parishioners through an online source at Formed.org. And the 185 parishioners who have logged in are telling us what a great tool it is.

**“The programs are FANTASTIC. They are informative and well-produced.”**

**“It’s an easy way to learn a lot more about the faith.”**

From May 13 to June 13, for example, our parish recorded 147 visits to the site, ranking us in the 68th percentile compared with all parishes using Formed worldwide. The data has been normalized before ranking to eliminate parish size bias.

**We ranked in the 59th percentile for the number of minutes spent using the site (2,578 minutes!), and in the 70th percentile for the number of “events” associated with Formed.** (An “event” is any user interaction with a video, audio, e-book, study guide or share button.)

“I have listened to multiple videos of “The Wild Goose” by myself, while cleaning out the front closet. I have sat and watched “Who Am I to Judge” as a date night with my husband, and on days that correspond with specific Church feasts like Fatima, or the canonization of Mother Teresa, I have watched movies of similar titles.” – Donna

**“There is so much content to teach us more about our Catholic faith. There are various formats to suit anyone’s preference.”**

## With Formed, you can:

- Prepare for Sunday Mass by watching an insightful, five-minute video by renowned Catholic teachers
- Enjoy a high-quality movie with your family
- Enrich your marriage with the award-winning video series “Beloved: Finding Happiness in Marriage”
- Download a Bible study and study guide for yourself or your faith-sharing group
- Grow in faith through the deep and smartly produced “The Wild Goose” series (this is the No. 1 video watched by our parishioners in the last month)

**“Long have I lamented that Catholics do not have the quality of our brother Christians where audio productions are involved.** We grew up listening every day to ‘Adventures in Odyssey’ and ‘Focus on the Family Radio Theatre.’ Here, at last, (in ‘Brother Francis’) is something that stands in the same class as the Narnia Chronicles and Oliver Twist. This is a remarkable series even if you know the story of St. Francis’ life.” – Julie Kiesel

**“I cannot at this time get out to attend parish programs. This is a good replacement. I just miss the human group interaction.”**

“Formed is a real blessing to me and such a great gift from our parish. **Formed offers so many different opportunities to look deeper into our faith and find ways to not only learn about it but more importantly to develop it in our daily lives.** When I was on retreat at a monastery in Kentucky during Lent, Formed was an important spiritual piece in my daily prayer and meditation during that very personal time with God.” – Mike Sweet

**It’s EASY and FREE to register!**

- Visit [formed.org](https://formed.org)
- Click on REGISTER (lower right of page)
- Enter our Parish Access Code: **FRGCCT**
- Enter your email and create a password (you’ll need this to login later)
- Enjoy and share with others!





## St. Francis Xavier

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**JULY 4**

### **Independence Day**

Mass, 9 a.m.

**JULY 9**

### **LifeShare Blood Drive**

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

**JULY 17-19**

### **CYO Volleyball Camp**

9 to 11 a.m., gym

**JULY 24-31**

### **Operation HOMES**

Randel House

**JULY 29-30**

### **Life Teen Cardboard City Overnight**

**JULY 30**

### **School Uniform Sale**

8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Xavier Room

**AUGUST 6**

### **The FEST**

Family-friendly Catholic festival at Center for Pastoral Leadership, Wickliffe

Begins at 12 noon. Ends with 8 p.m. outdoor Mass and fireworks!

**AUGUST 16**

### **Curriculum Night**

7 & 7:25 p.m., grades 1-5  
7:50 p.m., grade 6 & new middle school students

**AUGUST 18**

### **Open House**

6 to 7 p.m.  
**Tailgate Party**  
6 to 9 p.m.

**AUGUST 21**

### **First day of school!**

### **Confirmation Meeting**

7 p.m., Xavier Room

**AUGUST 28**

### **LEAF Ministry**

7 p.m., Loyola Room

**AUGUST 29-30**

### **Bell Choir Workshop**

6 to 9 p.m., Choir Loft

**SEPT. 16-17**

### **Stewardship Commitment Weekend**

## SAVE THESE DATES!

**SEPT. 29-OCT. 1**

### **Life Teen Fall Retreat**

St. Leonard Youth Retreat Center, Avon

**OCT. 11**

### **Rob Snow "Minimize the Mountain" presentation, sponsored by Respect Life ministry**

7 p.m., Church

**OCT. 14-15**

### **Women's Christ Renews His Parish Renewal**

**OCT. 27**

### **Confirmation**

7 p.m., Church