

May/June 2014



the

connecting the community of st. francis xavier catholic church

Navigator

Eggstravaganza

Addison Slaw stood in wonder as she surveyed the activity around her.

On one side of the room, the 6-year-old could color dozens of Easter pictures, play pin-the-tail-on-the-bunny, or toss felt, carrot-shaped bean bags into a pail for a prize.



On another side, she and her brother, Brennan, could make cute little yarn-covered sheep and colorful coffee-filter-and-clothes-pin butterflies or tissue-paper flowers. Additional crafts and games were available at each end of the room, most led by enthusiastic Life Teen volunteers.

"They definitely had a good time," her mother Lauri says. "My kids love any crafts, so they loved that first room."

Addison and Brennan, 4, were among nearly 100 youngsters who excitedly doodled, crafted and played their way through the Xavier Room, school halls and gym April 12. The 4th annual SFX Easter Eggstravaganza was organized by the parish Moms & Tots ministry, led by Natalie Boothe and Sara Mion. Members of Life Teen, the Seniors Club and Girl Scouts helped run activities.

Children followed paw prints down the hall, where they could sit for pictures with the Easter Bunny. Nancy Slisko painted whiskers and little pink noses on youngsters.

"Addison loved the Easter Bunny, and the Easter Bunny was so great with the kids, but Brennan does not like anything dressed up so he hid behind me," Lauri says with a laugh.

Children found the gym floor covered in colorful plastic eggs. Instead of a traditional hunt for goodies, teens directed toddlers to find certain colors. Each child received a bag of small treats when they completed the activities.

The event is a highlight for the Moms & Tots ministry, which invites mothers and their young children to come together weekly to socialize and learn at St. Francis Xavier. The group gathers in the church basement from 9:15 to 10:45 a.m. on the first and third Fridays each month. On the second and fourth Thursday mornings at the same time, the group offers a faith-based activity day for preschoolers.

Natalie and Sara say the group is a great way for new parents – who might also be new parishioners – to meet other people and learn more about our parish.

Sara, whose mother, Lisa Pettry, was our parish secretary for many years, says the group was a great addition to the parish when it started in 2010.

"I've grown up at St. Francis Xavier, but it definitely was something I felt the need for," she says, especially for children not quite old enough for school.

The group also goes on a hayride each fall and visits with Santa. Evening events are planned for adults.

"We're always looking to grow and include as many people as we can," Sara adds. "We have a wide range of people who drop in, but we're always looking for more people."

Natalie, whose children are 5 and 2, says she is glad to share her time and talents to engage people. "It's my contribution to the church, something that I can help with even after my kids are older," she says.

"It's a nice way to connect with moms of young children and introduce them to other activities as their kids get older," adds Sara, whose children are ages 6, 5, 3 and 1.

The group hopes to expand into some areas of service, perhaps by visiting a nursing home.

"It was an important part of my life to be involved with service," Sara says, "so I want to be sure I get my kids involved."

Photo by Jennifer Webb



Saturday Vigil – 5 p.m., Sunday – 8 & 10 a.m., noon & 5:30 p.m.

Weekdays – 7:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday; 7 p.m. Monday, Thursday & First Friday of the month



Confirmation: Empowering us to save the world

‘Confirmation confers upon us the grace, the gifts of the Spirit to be more fully equipped and empowered to participate in the salvific life of the Trinity.’

By Paul Koopman, Director of Youth Ministry

Confirmation is a powerful sacrament that unleashes the power of Holy Spirit into our hearts, enabling us to become stronger in our resolve to continually build God’s Kingdom.

In confirmation we become more invested through the Spirit to participate more fully in the economy of the saving works of the Trinity. Remember, through baptism grace enters into our souls and we enter into the imminent Trinity – i.e. God’s community. In and through baptism we are sealed in God’s life as God’s own and, because of that seal, we are bestowed baptismal duties. This bestowal is a natural inheritance of being woven into the inherent nature of God Himself.

As St. Paul writes to the Romans (6:3-4): *“We were taken up into Christ by baptism...in our baptism we have been buried with Him, died like Him, so that, just as Christ was raised up by his Father’s power from the dead, we too might live and move in a new kind of existence.”* Again, it is through baptism that we become a new creation in Christ Jesus – we become partakers of the inheritance of salvific power of the cross – in which we gain access (sacramentally) to the Kingdom and all its fruits.

In baptism we partake and enter into the community of God, or the Trinity – we become a new creation sealed in creed and mission. To fully understand confirmation as a sacrament we must realize that the Trinity manifests itself in two ways: in a heavenly communal way (the Trinity), and through mission, and that mission is the work of saving the world.

This “saving the world” mission we will call the economy of the Trinity. It is through this economy (distribution of wealth) that God’s saving work is performed throughout the world, and this is where the theology of confirmation comes in a BIG way! Confirmation confers upon us the grace, the



Sponsor Liz Barr introduces Liz Krause to Bishop Richard Lennon just before he confirms her, as Deacon Paul Kipfstuhl looks on.

gifts of the Spirit to be more fully equipped and empowered to participate in the salvific life of the Trinity.

Let’s think of it this way: All the Apostles were in the inner room 40 days after Jesus died. They were all in community with the Trinity – but they were still afraid, they were still lacking something...

Then POW! The Spirit gives them life and makes them partakers in the salvific works of the Trinity, and from what we know they kicked those doors open and they went forth to save souls!

Let’s take a quick look at the Catechism:

Confirmation is the sacrament that completes Baptism; in it the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon us. Anyone who freely decides to live a life as God’s child and asks for God’s Spirit under the signs of the imposition of hands and anointing with chrism receives the strength to witness to God’s love and might in word and deed. He is now a full-fledged, responsible member of the Catholic Church. [1285-1314]

Any great leader empowers and equips his team for success. That’s a no-brainer. Through confirmation God is helping us not only to become better individually but also better as team members for the sake of His mission, for the sake of living out our baptismal calling. Again, God is no



Members of Life Teen presented the Living Stations of the Cross on April 11. Here, Jesus (portrayed by Paul Merimee) begins to carry his cross, Veronica (Jackie Kamis) wipes the face of Jesus, and Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.



dummy. He knows we need the help – it is up to us to open our hearts to the Spirit and be partakers in God's saving works.

And so, we stand firmly behind our confirmation students who will be preparing from April 13 to Oct. 8, and we are excited for their journey. Our confirmation team will be meeting with our Confirmandi for eight sessions. We will help our youth see the brilliance of God's plan and how they fit into God's economy.

Our young people need to know that they are the Church of today – not the "future" Church. Mary was a teenager when she said "Yes"! And her "Yes" changed the world.

So, how can you help? Our young people need us to not only model sainthood, but they want us to empower them in the faith and they want us to believe and have confidence in them as sons and daughters of the Father. So, when you get a chance, ENCOURAGE THEM, tell them you are proud of them! A few small words or deeds can go a long way in a young person's life.

Know this: Our youth need us to see the way, go the way and show the way – they are counting on us to articulate and live out the Gospel message! If not us, who?

So, again, be with us in rallying behind this ministry of confirmation in prayer, in action and in deed so as to make this confirmation preparation process as life-giving and dynamic as it can be for our young people.

Go and be the person God created you to be!



Parking lot reconstruction continues

Remember last summer's work on the parking lot by the gym? This spring, work begins again on the other half of the lot nearest the church. We sincerely apologize for the disruption, but we hope that this long overdue work will stabilize the lot and help us avoid having to rip it up again for quite some time.

In the meantime, parking will be at a premium, especially during Mass. The Knights of Columbus will again be on hand to park cars bumper to bumper. If you need access to your car or prefer to park in a "regular" space, we suggest parking in the new

lot at the east end of the property or along Washington Street.

You also might consider parking in the 620 Corporation lot opposite our Smith Road entrance. Owner Jim Gowe kindly has agreed to let use his space during our project.

These next few months are bound to be dusty and uncomfortable for everyone. Please be patient with each other, be kind, and seek to help those who might need assistance, especially our visitors and the elderly. Always try to be the face of Christ to each other – especially as we navigate these tricky days of reconstruction.



Father Lee says farewell

If you've ever stopped by the parish grounds during recess, you might have noticed a throng of children in red and blue pinnies playing a fast-paced game of basketball.

If you paused long enough, you might have noticed that one of the players was a bit *taller* than the rest.

"Father! Father!" the boys call out, hands raised to catch the ball from him.

That "big kid" under the hoop is Father John Lee, "child of God from Korea," dressed in shorts, T-shirt and a blue pinnie, with a sweatband just below his black hair. Even though he's more than a foot taller than the others on the "court," he good-naturedly passes the ball around, making sure everyone gets a turn.

Father Lee enjoys basketball and all sports – but more than that, he loves spending time with the youth.

"I just enjoy being with the kids," he says. "I love being with people."

That's what he says he will miss the most when he moves this June to his new parish assignment – the people. Father Lee has been at St. Francis Xavier for two and a half years, and now Bishop Richard Lennon is relocating him to Communion of Saints Parish in Cleveland Heights so he may continue his education toward a doctorate in preaching and homiletics. The Wickliffe seminary is about 50 miles northeast of Medina, but just 9.6 miles northeast of Cleveland Heights.

Sent by his bishop in South Korea to continue his formation in Cleveland as part of an ongoing arrangement between the dioceses, Father Lee was ordained here in May 2011. He then flew to South Korea to visit his family, and delays with his visa postponed his start at SFX until that November.

He quickly immersed himself in our parish culture, joining the seniors group on trips and outings, accompanying parishioners on the March for Life bus



trip to Washington D.C., praying and working alongside the teens on their summer Catholic Heart Work Camp trip, and eagerly drag-racing eighth-graders on the go-cart track. "I prayed three Hail Marys and one Our Father before I went on the [Top Thrill] Dragster [roller coaster at Cedar Point]," Father Lee says with a smile.

He invited parishioners to learn more about his culture as well, planning excursions with large groups to a Korean restaurant in Parma. Once, 65





parishioners accompanied him to the restaurant.

Although he learned English in South Korea, he wasn't especially adept at speaking it before coming to the United States. He's gotten much better – and wants to learn more. He often sat among the day-school students during middle-school Spanish classes with Senora Diane Bugner. "I like languages," he says simply.

Born Sungwoong Lee and baptized "John," he is the younger of two sons of musician parents. His mother was Catholic, and his father converted to Catholicism in 2005. Both sons are ordained priests.

After his junior year at the South Korean seminary, he began a mandatory two-year term in the country's army, where he trained as a sniper.

Coming to study here was an adjustment, but, he says, "the Holy Spirit helped me."

"The key is the heart. You have to open your heart. Three hundred sixty-five times the Scriptures tell us to

not be afraid. That means every day we do not need to worry. We worry about so many things.

"I don't worry. I do my best. When we try to control everything, we get frustrated. Do your best and leave the rest to the Lord."

Father Lee says he has enjoyed everything about his time here and has many fond memories, including praying over the eighth-grade CYO girls' basketball team before it played a critical tournament game, performing magic tricks for children and teaching them to sing "Beautiful" – complete with hand motions, and celebrating Christmas Mass at the county jail.

"It is the most welcoming place I have been," he says of our parish. "The people are tremendously kind, and very faithful. The people are just wonderful."

He is sad to leave, but he says he is willing to go wherever God leads.

"I'm very happy to be an instrument of his love and peace," he says. "Sometimes, if I made a mistake, forgive me with love."

Father Chris coming to SFX

Just before press time, Father Tony learned that Christopher Cox would be joining our parish staff in June following his May 17 ordination. The soon-to-be Father Chris entered Borromeo and St. Mary seminaries from St. Justin Martyr Parish in Eastlake. We will look forward to telling you more about him in our next issue. May God richly bless him as he prepares to begin his ministry!





Parish softball enters 7th year

Ah, summer... the crack of the bat, the roar of the crowd... No, not the Cleveland Indians, but the St. Francis Xavier Co-Ed Softball League, which begins play June 1.

The league welcomes all men and women age 18 and older in the St. Francis Xavier Parish community to join a team for friendly – yet competitive – games.

Founded in 2008 by baseball fan Father Bob Lorkowski when he was assigned here as a parochial vicar, the league brings together some 80 parishioners for Sunday afternoon games.

Today, the slow-pitch league continues under the leadership of Mark Bugner and Summer Kish. Last year, there were four teams of 13 to 15 people, but the league has had as many as eight teams.

“We try to keep a competitive spirit to it or it’s not fun to play,” says Summer. “But I love the fact that we will say a prayer before games and we’re all in it to help each other. That’s the part that I love. We have that common bond of St. Francis Xavier that holds the teams together.”

The league encourages players with every level of experience – including rookies. The games are played at Blakslee Park off Weymouth Road in Medina Township.

Summer, who entered the church several years ago through RCIA, says families of the players come to watch and play with soccer balls and scooters off the field, making the games fun for everyone. She and her husband, Dave, have taken turns playing various seasons so one of them is available to watch their three children, ages 8, 5 and 4.

“I’ve met so many people; that’s probably the biggest single way that I’ve met people in the church,” says Summer, who played softball as a youth. “It was a way to get involved and do something fun that I’ve wanted to do.”

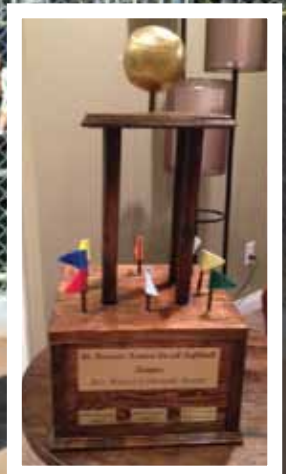
Under league rules, at least four women must be on the field every inning, and women and men alternate batting. Games are played every Sunday through August, when they conclude with a tournament and picnic. Last year, a St. Francis Xavier team comprised of members of all four parish teams placed second in a diocesan Co-Ed Young Adult Softball Tournament organized by the Cleveland Catholic Charities Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

Friendships built on the softball field have deepened with gatherings off the field as well. Mark says he has made friends who have become “those familiar faces you must talk to after Mass. We want to be there. We enjoy each other’s company, and it’s a time to hang out with some of your best friends and their kids.”

The games are meant to be inclusive, and players are not expected to be skilled. “I’m not good, I just like to play,” Mark admits.

“It’s been a lot of fun,” Summer adds. “For anyone who feels they aren’t connected to the church, it’s a great way to become involved. If you have any experience, even a small amount, you should not feel intimidated.”

It’s not too late to join! Contact Mark at mebugner@gmail.com, 330-764-1953, or Summer at summertime14@zoominternet.net, 330-241-5414.





New faces on parish staff

By Jennifer Webb

Parishioners will notice a few new faces around the rectory and church grounds. Please allow me to introduce you to a few of them.

Rhonda McKinnon



Rhonda and her husband, Jim, have been active in our parish since they joined in 2008, particularly with the Boy Scouts. Their only child, James, an SFX eighth-grader, is part of Troop 506. Rhonda also helps with our Parish School of Religion.

Now you also can see Rhonda behind the front desk at the rectory, where she greets visitors. She succeeds longtime parish secretary Lisa Pettry.

A native of Leavenworth, Kan., Rhonda attended public schools and religious education classes. She studied finance at Pittsburg State in southeast Kansas and earned her MBA. The family moved to Ohio in 2001.

Rhonda has worked in a variety of organizational roles, serving as executive director and chief administrative officer of a nonprofit organization, vice president of a testing company and district director in student financial aid at Cuyahoga Community College.

"I like being involved in my parish," Rhonda says. With James attending Hoban High School next year, she felt the time was right to return to work while continuing to contribute at St. Francis Xavier.

Karen Kase, the Medina High School girls' basketball coach, and parishioner Donna Toth also were hired this spring as part-time secretaries, joining longtime support staffer Joyce Dolinar. Together, they will ensure the parish office remains open and ready to greet visitors in the evenings and on weekends.

Rick Monroe

Rick Monroe, the brother of parishioners Ron (and Sue) Monroe and Loretta (and Dennis) Mailie, joins the parish staff after a career in the maintenance departments of Clorox Co. and FedEx Ground.

The lifelong Medina County resident was born in Brunswick and attended St. Ambrose Parish and school. After he graduated from Brunswick High School, Rick completed training in electronics and electrical work.



For more than 20 years, he has served as a firefighter and EMT for the Erhart/York Township Fire Department. In 2005, after attending numerous township meetings, Rick ran for township trustee. He now is serving in his third, four-year term.

"It's the grassroots of America," Rick says. "The residents will call you directly. There's no city head or service manager to go between. I enjoy that, helping them solve some of their problems."

Rick and his wife, Susan, have been married 30 years and have five children:

Rachel, 29; Jennifer, 28; Faith, 21; Rick Jr., 19; and Megan, 14. They raise chickens, goats and pigs on their farm.

At St. Martin of Tours Parish in Valley City, Rick serves as head usher.

Parishioners here, he says, "seem so friendly," he says. "They are very nice people."

And, well, me.

I'm not exactly new to readers, but as of March, I am new to the parish staff.

Since 2006, I have edited the Navigator newsletter, which is mailed every other month to all



registered parishioners. I have been a member of the parish stewardship committee since then, serving as its chairperson the last two years. Father Tony asked me to join the staff part time this spring to further develop our parish stewardship efforts.

As director of ministry and communications, my job is to promote engagement within the parish and community, encourage involvement in spiritual and community-building activities, and support the work of our priests, deacons and ministry leaders.

My mission – as is the mission of all Catholics, but particularly since it also is my job – is to seek the lost and build disciples. That is my passion, and I feel blessed with this opportunity to pursue this vocation.

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Calendar of Events

May 1 & 3

PSR closing liturgies

May 7

Parish May Crowning

7 p.m., Church

Fine Arts Fest

7:30 p.m., School

May 10

First Eucharist

10 a.m. & 1 p.m.

Pray for our second-graders!

May 17

Adoration for Life

8 a.m., Church

May 21

SFX Preschool Graduation

7 p.m., Xavier Room

May 22

School Field Day

9 a.m., School

Medina High School

Baccalaureate

No 7 p.m. Mass

May 26

Memorial Day

9 a.m. Mass, Church

May 27

SFX School Graduation

7 p.m., Church

May 28

SFX School closing Mass

9:15 a.m., Church

June 4

SFX last day of school!

June 7-8

Hospitality Sunday and Father Lee

farewell after weekend Masses,

Church Basement

June 12

Marriage Mass celebration &

reception,

7 p.m., Church & Xavier Room

June 16-20

Edge Camp I

July 3

Enjoy popsicles after Mass

and watch Independence Day

fireworks from our front lawn

The Navigator newsletter is brought to you by the Stewardship Committee of St. Francis Xavier Parish.

Want to help? Have feedback? Contact Jennifer Webb at jwebb@stfrancisxavier.info.