

May / June 2017



*the*

connecting the community of st. francis xavier parish

# Navigator



Easter Vigil



Easter Sunday

***Thank you for joining us at  
St. Francis Xavier for a beautiful  
celebration of Easter!***



Good Friday



Seder Meal



Tenebrae



Good Friday



**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

# Operation HOMES serves the poor in our midst

By Jennifer Webb

## What do you think of when you hear the word “homeless”?

Do you picture a scruffy-looking man holding a sign on the street corner? Or men sleeping under the bridges or atop sewer grates in big cities?

Would it surprise you to know that we have homeless people in Medina?

You might not see them because they're not who you think.

They might be the woman who left her abusive boyfriend or husband. Or the 26-year-old man who never quite got his life together and has been couch surfing until he ran out of friends who will help. Or the mom and her children whose father doesn't pay child support and she can no longer make ends meet.

**While our picture of homelessness may be different in Medina, insufficient affordable housing and myriad societal issues still put some individuals and families at risk.**

Thankfully, a consortium of Medina County churches exists to offer a safe place for these individuals and families to land while they discern their next steps.

**Operation HOMES is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the homeless of Medina County.** By rotational partnering with local churches for shelter, food and the administration of life skill programs, Operation

HOMES provides the opportunity for individuals to be independent, both personally and financially. In 2016, Operation HOMES served 60 adults and 10 children.

**St. Francis Xavier Parish is one of the 13 churches that work together so homeless individuals and families can sleep safely and get warm meals while they meet with a social worker.** Each church provides what it can -- in our case, six times a year the Randel House is opened for guests to stay overnight, take showers, do their laundry and get a warm meal.

**The program screens each potential guest to ensure the safety of all guests and volunteers.** Guests are required to leave each day to work, look for a job or meet with social service agencies. They return for dinner, which is provided by volunteers at each church. Other volunteers take shifts to function as hosts and interact with guests to make sure they're comfortable.

**Donna Bica**, the parishioner who has coordinated our program for about seven years, says plenty of generous parishioners contribute food each time we host. But she particularly needs adults willing to spend the night on a couch as an overnight host.

**Chris McGowan** has been an overnight host on Thursdays for about three years. He calls it the easiest volunteer job around. And, since he doesn't have cable TV at home, he was able to watch the Cavs playoff games or Thursday night football with the guests.

“Where else can you volunteer to go somewhere, watch TV, talk to nice people and then sleep for eight hours?

That's literally all I do,” he says.

“Then I get up in the morning and they feed me.”

In the morning, guests leave and he goes on to work. If he has a meeting or early obligation, he works it out with the other host to make sure at least one of them can stay.

**Chris, who learned about the program at a parish ministry fair, says he has learned that the guests are “just like anybody else.”**

“Maybe they've had a divorce, an accident or some reason that they find themselves homeless,” he says. “Foster kids who have aged out



of the foster kid program. Former alcoholics on their way back. It can happen to anybody. It's surprising."

Because the guests these days are often women and children, Donna says, she is hoping to find a couple of women or a married couple to help as overnight hosts.

But not all hosts are adults -- 11-year-old Anthony Hamilton comes with his mom, Tuesday, to help in the 5 to 7 p.m. shift on Sundays. The children and adults in the program enjoy seeing Anthony, she says. They play and can forget their troubles for a time.

**The key, she adds, is that the program treats guests with dignity.**

"It's just a couple of hours, but I help out, talk to someone, make them feel important," says Tuesday, who started volunteering about four years ago -- also after a ministry fair. "I let them know that this is a happy place here. That you can talk and enjoy your time."

The program earned recognition April 1 by the Catholic Commission of Wayne, Ashland and Medina Counties, the organization that coordinates social justice activities for this part of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. The Faithful Servant award recognizes work being done to live out the Gospel call to care for others, the lost and forgotten, taking care to recognize their unique dignity and self-worth, gifts and talents. It also celebrates creative efforts being done collaboratively within the wider community to address poverty.

**"It makes me feel good that we're part of a bigger something that I don't know much about," Tuesday says. "I know I'm doing more than serving a plate of hot food to people."**



## CAN YOU HELP?

Contact Donna Bica 330-723-3226  
or acting417@aol.com.

For more information about the program,  
visit [www.operationhomes.org](http://www.operationhomes.org)

## Ministry Minute

### ART & ENVIRONMENT

**Leader:** Pat Neuendorff

**What does Art & Environment do?** We decorate the sanctuary and the church with colors, sights and scents to promote a richer experience for parishioners and to draw the congregation more deeply into the service. And we give members of our ministry an opportunity to praise God with their talents.

**What should new members expect?** New members can expect to give anywhere from 1 to 5 hours of their time per month, with more time needed during the Christmas and Easter seasons. Members also can sew or make bows, wreaths and flower arrangements at home on their own time.

**From Pat:** "What is a ballgame without the smell of popcorn or the sight of brightly colored uniforms? How much do flowers, plants and seasonal colors enhance your worship in church? Please join the Art & Environment Committee to use your eye for detail and gifted hands to decorate our church as we give praise to God."

**From Alicia Madrilejos:** "We are created by God for a purpose and each one of us is given a talent. To use that talent to serve God is a blessing. One day I had a dream I was in the church, decorating, when huge hands got hold of the flowers I was going to use and said, 'These are beautiful. Keep doing the work.' I love doing the flowers for the tabernacle where God dwells. It's an honor and a gift from God."

**Interested? Contact Pat at 330-461-0385 / [butterflyqi1@yahoo.com](mailto:butterflyqi1@yahoo.com) or Alicia at 330-461-3220**



# 'Change is good'

When Paul Koopman came to St. Francis Xavier Parish in August 2012, he forged a new path here as a full-time youth minister.

Before that, then-Director of Religious Education Sue Rohe-Brooks had to juggle a Parish School of Religion program with 500-600 students, second-grade sacramental preparation for more than 100 students, middle-school Edge program with 200-300 students, Vacation Bible School with 120+ students AND try to engage some 500 to 600 teens in the Life Teen program.

As youth minister, Paul was able to focus his energies squarely on the teens, whose number could dwarf entire parishes in our diocese. He led teens on retreats and accompanied them to Steubenville Youth Conferences, the Washington D.C. March for Life, and Catholic Heart Work Camp. He worked with adult volunteer ministers to plan Sunday Life Nights and weekly Scripture studies. He taught middle-schoolers in our day school and the Edge program.

But now the 34-year-old married father of five is taking his talents to St. John Neumann Parish in Strongsville, where he started May 1 as youth minister. His family lives in that city, making it easier for him to become integrated with the parish community. "Fresh legs," Paul says, will benefit both parishes and hopefully draw more teens.

"Change is good," he says. "I think Chris (Gillis) and Dawn (Cavanaugh) are really going to help stimulate that growth."

For Paul, highlights include the semester kickoffs, Eucharistic processions to the Medina square, Catholic Heart Work Camp, and any opportunity to just be together and serve side by side.

"Life Teen gives community, it gives support and encouragement, motivation, and it helps the parents in their job of raising these kids in the faith," Paul says. "We are a tool they can use, a ministry that helps parents and families develop their kids in the faith. It's inspiring to see young people answering the call to holiness."

The Life Teen program holds much potential for teens, who often teeter between embracing their faith and immersing themselves in secularism. "We know we're being successful when they're taking their lives seriously," Paul says. Life Teen has the power to "push them deeper into the life and mission of the Church, and to teach them to be active and engaged members," he says.

"I'm going to miss them," he concludes. "I love St. Francis Xavier, I love the people, I love my teens."



## Youth ministers partner for teens' faith formation

By Jennifer Webb

**One has youthful energy and enthusiasm, fresh from leading his college youth ministry program.**

The other has the wisdom of years of experience, a knack for organization and a mother's tender heart.

Together **Chris Gillis**, 23, and **Dawn Cavanaugh**, 46, will team up to lead St. Francis Xavier teens to Christ.

Father Tony Sejba announced in mid-April that Chris and Dawn will join our pastoral staff to succeed Paul Koopman, who left April 30 to become the youth minister at St. John Neumann Parish in Strongsville. Paul joined our parish staff nearly five years ago from St. Albert the Great Parish in North Olmsted.

Both Chris and Dawn have been active volunteers in our Life Teen program and have worked well together. Now they look forward to helping teens develop their relationship with Jesus, make friends and grow in faith.

Chris joined our parish last summer after he graduated from Clarion University in Pennsylvania and started his job as an application developer at JM Smucker Co. He said he greatly enjoyed the Life Teen program in his parish when he was a teenager. He played the drums in the Life Teen

*Continued on next page.*





band and “did anything else the youth minister asked me.” A highlight was going to Spain with a group of teens and adults for World Youth Day.

That involvement continued at Clarion, where Chris served as president of the Newman Association and led college-level faith programs. He says he is excited to start this part-time role at the parish so he can continue his passion for leading others to Christ. “I loved it when I was in high school,” Chris says. “I wanted to keep giving back to something that made me who I am.”

Youth ministry at St. Francis Xavier is nothing new for Dawn. She grew up in the program before it was “Life Teen,” and, as an adult, helped to lead youth ministry at Holy Martyrs Parish. When she and her family rejoined St. Francis Xavier seven years ago, she got involved with our Life Teen program.

She and her husband, Bob, are the parents of Andrew, 25; Jonathan, 24, and Jordan, who is deceased.

Dawn, who works full time for the Medina County Health Department, is passionate about youth ministry and is excited for an opportunity to influence the teens’ participation in the Church and their faith.

**“I feel that this age group needs youth ministry,” she says. “They need another group of adults who can enhance their faith. They need safe friends in safe places.”**

The best part, she says, is when she knows teens finally let down their barriers -- sometimes after three or



four years -- and have their “God moment,” when they connect with God and experience His love.

**Teens need to be armed with knowledge and experience of their faith so that when questions or challenges arise, they are comfortable responding, Chris adds.**

**A few changes are in store.** Although the Sunday evening Life Nights will continue in the fall, the Wednesday evening gatherings, which have been drawing 15 to 20 teens, will shift to Tuesdays. On Thursdays, teens can come for a discipleship group or apologetics discussion, or Bible study: “something deeper than we can do on a Life Night,” Chris explains.

This summer, Dawn and Chris will accompany the teens to the Steubenville Youth Conference in June, the Servants for Christ trip in July and the Fest in August.



**With 500 to 600 teens in our parish, Father Tony says, it is important that we have a vibrant ministry that can help them feel loved and that they belong, and where they can meet God.** “Every kid needs to know they are loved and cherished,” he told parents. He urged them to become involved in the program. “We need core people who can sit at a table and relate to kids.” Other adults can help chaperone special projects or trips, arrange for speakers or provide hospitality. He added: “I’m very confident that Chris and Dawn will be able to lead our teens and continue to build a dynamic and effective youth ministry.”

**To contact our Life Teen youth ministry, visit [sfxlifeteen.com](http://sfxlifeteen.com)**



## Life Teen Band ready for a new gig

For more than 20 years, John Husbands has kept the beat for our Life Teen program, playing his blend of contemporary Christian music for nearly every Mass and retreat.

But now that his four children are grown and his wife, Mary, is alone in the church pew, John says, he'd like to sit next to her and enjoy Mass from the other side of the communion rail. Although, he adds, that vantage point will be strange after all these years.

"I have had the best seat in the house," he says.

The Brook Park native has played his guitar at Mass since he was 16, including Masses at the Newman Center at Bowling Green State University when he was a student. After college, he started playing guitar for Mass at St. Joseph Parish in Strongsville, where he was introduced to Mary. After they were married, they lived briefly in Lakewood before moving to Medina in 1990.

Right away, John says, he contacted the parish to see if he could help with the youth ministry program, which he did as a Core Team member for almost two years before he mentioned that he could play the guitar. Before long, he started playing the guitar at every Life Teen Mass.



He's watched many of the kids in the program grow up, and has played for their weddings, even some funerals. While you can often catch John playing and singing secular music at events on the Medina Square or other venues, he admits there's something special about leading the music at Mass. "You get to lead worship, and it's way more than singing a song and everyone feeling good about themselves," he says. "It was changing people; they

were feeling things more. That's going to be hard to give up. It's very spiritual and very uplifting to do that kind of stuff. I got to do it every Sunday."

**Still, he says he's ready for a change.** Most of the other band members -- including daughters Sarah, 24, and Gabriella, 18, -- are too. Father Tony says he's working to hire a suitable successor.

John says he'll continue to assist with music for the Edge on Wednesday nights, among other things. But he'll have to start learning the hymns sung for the other Masses.

"I'm still going to be around. I'm not going anywhere," John says. "It's been a great ride."



# ST. FRANCIS XAVIER 3RD ANNUAL Parish Day of Service

Saturday, May 27  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Get involved in our community by helping our neighbors in need for a few hours! We have projects lined up with opportunities for hundreds of parishioners of all ages. Most projects can be done together by families. It's a great way to spend time together, meet fellow parishioners and others in our community, while living our faith and showing that we care.

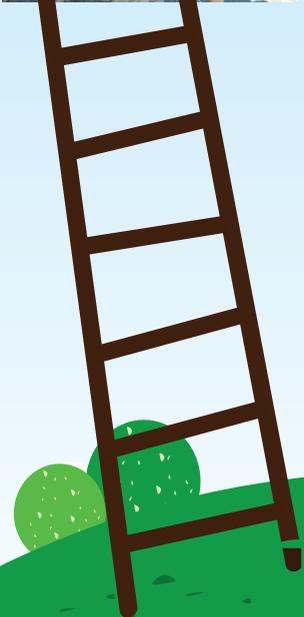
## Join us!

- ✓ Help spruce up the yards, clean gutters and wash windows for disabled and elderly residents.
- ✓ Make hand-tied fleece blankets for toddlers.
- ✓ Participate in a sing-along and rootbeer floats with nursing home residents, or play the piano or flute pieces you've been practicing!
- ✓ Spring-clean the cafeteria of a low-income community center.
- ✓ Enjoy a summer picnic with low-income or disabled residents.
- ✓ Wipe fingerprints from books in our school library.
- ✓ Plant a community garden with Feeding Medina County.
- ✓ Assist at a water stop or Stand Up for Downs after-party during the Medina Half Marathon.
- ✓ And much more!

Sign up at [sfxmedina.com/parish](http://sfxmedina.com/parish) for the activity and time slot you and your family would like. All projects will conclude by 4 p.m. so participants can return for 5 p.m. Mass and pizza party. All first-time participants get a Day of Service T-shirt.

## Questions?

Contact Jennifer Webb at 330-764-8946 or [jwebb@sfxmedina.org](mailto:jwebb@sfxmedina.org).



## St. Francis Xavier

606 E. Washington St.  
Medina, Ohio 44256  
330-725-4968  
www.sfxmedina.com

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Medina, OH 44256  
Permit No. 00124

### Change Service Requested



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**MAY 4**

**National Day of Prayer**

12 noon prayer service on Medina Square

**MAY 5-7**

**Boy Scouts clothing drive for Easter Seals**

**MAY 7**

**Hospitality Sunday**

After 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and 12 noon Masses, Church Basement

**LifeShare Bloodmobile**

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

**Last Life Night**

All teens and 8th graders invited  
6:30 p.m., Randel House deck

**MAY 6, 7, 13**

**First Eucharist**

**MAY 14**

**Mother's Day  
Respect Life Flower Sale**

**MAY 15**

**Patriotic Rosary**

1 p.m., Church

**MAY 15-22**

**Operation HOMES**

Randel House

**MAY 18**

**Day School Field Day**

**MAY 20**

**Adoration for Life**

8-8:30 a.m., Church

**MAY 22**

**LEAF Ministry**

7-8:30 p.m., Loyola Room

**MAY 24**

**8th Grade Graduation**

7 p.m., Church

**MAY 25**

**Last day of school!**

**MAY 27**

**Parish Day of Service**

Sign up at [sfxmedina.com/parish](http://sfxmedina.com/parish) to work a few hours for your neighbors in need!

**MAY 29**

**Memorial Day**

9 a.m. Mass

**JUNE 5-9**

**Vacation Bible School**

**JUNE 16-18**

**Steubenville Youth Conference**

**JUNE 18**

**Father's Day**

**JUNE 22**

**Marriage Mass & Reception**

7 p.m., Church & Xavier Room

**JUNE 26-JUNE 30**

**Camp 412 Middle School Camp**

Register by May 15 at [sfxmedina.com/parish](http://sfxmedina.com/parish)