



The AGATHAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF SAINT AGATHA PARISH

January 2019

Saint Agatha preschool to open this fall



St. Agatha will open its preschool in the fall, using the fun and expansive childcare room.

Dear Parishioners,

For several years, people have asked me about the possibility of something here at St. Agatha. I'm happy to announce to you that "the something" is scheduled to start in the fall. We are planning to open a preschool for the coming school year.

Here's where we are right now: Several meetings have been held with the Diocesan School Office to learn the requirements of running a preschool, including what is needed for the physical space. We are now proceeding with our plans.

Classes for 3-year-olds will be Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00-11:15. **Classes for 4-year-olds** will be Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 9:00-11:15. **Pre-Kindergarten classes** for 4/5 year-olds will be Monday – Friday afternoons from 12:15-2:30.

We will begin the process of hiring a director and a teacher for the preschool early in the new year.

We will be using the present Child Care room for the preschool. This will not affect the current morning and afternoon child care programs.

I am expecting a high interest in the preschool programs. At this point I can't tell you when the registration will begin. So please stay in touch with our principal, Mrs. Alsharaiha, or put your name on a waiting list in the school office for the opportunity to register your child.

Of course we hope that the preschool programs will be the incentive for you to continue your child's education at St. Agatha.

I wish you many blessings in 2019.

Father Dan Ochs
Pastor

SAVE THE DATE

Parish Appreciation Party

February 23 / 6:00-8:30 p.m. / Parish Hall

Adult Ed Series

Sundays in February / 9:30 a.m. / Parish Hall

Lenten Mission

March 18-20 / 7:00 p.m. / Church

Full calendar for parish council

One word sums up Kurt Niermeyer's approach to the parish council he now leads as its president: unity.

"The way the world is now, unity is a good thing, and anything we can do to promote that is a good thing," Niermeyer said. He views the council's role as building community among St. Agatha members and supporting the church. Toward those goals, he said council is "trying to improve unity and participation of parishioners. I'd like to see an increase of the number of parishioners attending weekly mass."

The Parish Council is planning a Lenten Mission for March 18-20 to be led by Fr. Daniel Swartz. "I think (a mission) focuses the parish on Lent and ultimately on Easter," Niermeyer said. Echoing his theme for the year, he added that he hopes the topic "will also be something that unites parishioners."

Of course, the parish can continue to look to its council for those monthly donut Sundays (first Sunday of every month), quarterly Taste & See wine and cheese mixers, and semiannual grounds clean-ups. As well, parish council supports the parish appreciation party, parish picnic, newcomer welcome activities, and any Hands Together projects. Niermeyer sees all of these activities as "important functions to keep the church and the faith moving forward."

In addition to Niermeyer, this year's parish council includes Eric Dyarmet, president-elect; Juli Kanoski, secretary; Greg Cunningham; Tom Enesey; Megan McCurdy; Bill Roberts; Betsey Stevens; and Barbara Wookey.

Niermeyer has enjoyed his time on council because it "gives you a little bit of insight into the workings of the church." He encouraged people who want to learn more about St. Agatha and serve it to express interest in serving on Parish Council, adding that he'd love to see more younger members on the council.



Parish Council: This year's Parish Council includes (seated left to right) Betsey Stevens, Barbara Wookey, Tom Enesey (standing left to right) Greg Cunningham, Kurt Niermeyer, Meaghan McCurdy, Father Dan Ochs, and Eric Dyarmet. Not pictured are Juli Kanoski and Bill Roberts.

Resolving to grow our faith, community

The dead of winter might seem an unlikely time to grow things; nonetheless, January is a traditional time for planting seeds for self-improvement. And there's no better garden than our own parish community.

For anyone searching for New Year's resolution ideas, there are plenty of ideas in and around St. Agatha:

- ⊕ Participate in Father Hussey's Adult Education series on the Future of the Church. Father Hussey will lead discussions at 9:30 a.m. on the four Sundays of February in the parish hall. No registration is required.
- ⊕ Attend St. Agatha's upcoming Lenten Mission to be led by Father Dan Swartz, at 7 p.m., March 18-20 in the church. Our parish council is coordinating this event.
- ⊕ Volunteer to cantor at Masses. Cantors "are the inspiration that bring the congregation closer to God," says Music Director Michael Vicario. Not ready to go solo? The choir and bell choir are always looking for new voices and ringers.



Fr. Dan Swartz will present St. Agatha's Lenten Mission.

- ⊕ Join a new ministry, such as collection counter or church cleaner. An entire list of our parish ministries and their contacts can be found at the front of the parish directory, or simply call the parish office at 614-488-6149.



Joining the bell choir is just one way to ring in the New Year with St. Agatha community spirit.

- ⊕ Become a member of the Prayer Line. "All you have to do is pray," says Pastoral Minister Mary Ann Schirtzinger. "There's nothing more profound than prayer. You can do it on your own time." Anyone interested in joining, or in need of prayers, should contact Schirtzinger by calling 614-488-6149. Prayer requests are emailed to members.

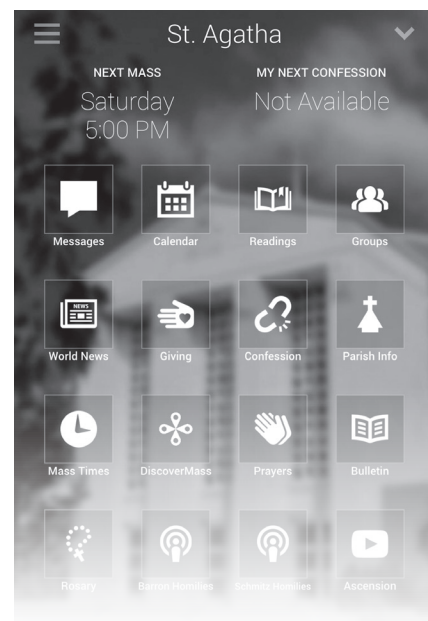


What's app, St. Agatha?

If you're looking for a handy way to keep up with all things St. Agatha, it's in, well, your hand.

Last fall St. Agatha partnered with the My Parish app to provide all the information on our parish anyone could want in a tap or a swipe. From Mass times and sacrament availabilities to bulletins and the day's readings, from a calendar of parish events to a clearinghouse of news regarding the Catholic Church, from reminders of upcoming events to message boards for various parish ministries, it's all here, and more.

The new St. Agatha app is now available to download for iPhone and Android smart phones. To download the app text App to phone number 88202 or search your phone's app store for myParish. It's free and easy to set up an account.



EIGHTH GRADERS TOUR NATION'S CAPITAL

Sometimes the classroom doesn't cut it

By Erin Karas

On September 25, 2018, at 6:15 a.m., the eighth graders left for our monumental trip to Washington D.C. Because we've known each other for so long, it was a special opportunity to go with the class and bond outside of school. The bus ride from St. Agatha lasted eight hours, but seemed much shorter due to our anticipation of seeing D.C.



The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception was just one of the many stops on the St. Agatha eighth graders' tour of Washington, D.C. last fall.

As we first arrived, our fantastic tour guide, Paul, pointed out some of the many monuments we would be seeing. Our first stop was the United States Holocaust Museum. In a heart-wrenching display, this museum captures the Nazi-induced suffering of the Jews in a horrible spectacle. This tour was an example of why sometimes just being in a classroom doesn't cut it. Words describing the Holocaust museum could never be enough.

After the Holocaust Museum, we walked across the street to the WWII Memorial. This memorial, with its pillars representing every state, and reflecting water, honors all the Americans killed in the war. After the WWII Memorial, we walked around the reflecting pool

to the Lincoln Memorial, and the Korean and Vietnam War Memorials. From these inspiring memorials we took the bus to the Pentagon to view the 9/11 Memorial. This was a very somber experience at a place that illustrates the pain of 9/11.

On the second day, the momentum of excitement about being in D.C. grew. Everyone was excited to see the White House. After waiting in a long line and passing through security, we all stared at the elegant furnishings of the White House public rooms. After the White House, everyone was ready and prepared for the rest of the day. We rode in the bus to Ford's Theatre. After walking through a small museum, we were able to see the actual theatre and from our seats we could see the box where Lincoln was shot. Across the street, we saw Peterson House, the house and bed where Lincoln died. Then we rode to the sparkling new African American Museum. This was fascinating and informative. I learned about the long and tragic history of African Americans before they could fully participate in the freedoms of America.

See "DC" on next page.



The Newseum was a big hit with touring St. Agatha eighth graders last fall.

MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT: *Bereavement Committee*

Offering solace one mouthful at a time

Since the mid 1990s Mary K. Ferris has been coordinating meals for gatherings sometimes as large as 150, sometimes with only a few days' notice. As head of St. Agatha's bereavement committee, Ferris leads an army of cooks, all for the purpose of making a difficult day a little easier.

Since around the time the parish hall was built in 1994, the bereavement committee has provided meals to families following funeral Masses. "It's very simple," says Ferris. "We are here to provide a brunch or lunch, whatever the family would like."



Mary K. Ferris strives to make a difficult day a little easier through her work with the bereavement committee.

Pastoral Minister Mary Ann Schirtzinger can speak about the workings of the committee both as a beneficiary of its generosity and as the parish's point person at the luncheons. "Having buried parents, it's nice to know, especially with a large family, with kids, you don't have to find a home to gather in... or a

restaurant to accommodate you," says Schirtzinger. "I think it's the best thing we do. When calling hours are lessening more and more, this is a good time to visit with the family."

Ferris has six captains she turns to when the call comes. Each of them has a list of about a dozen volunteers who prepare casseroles, vegetables, salads, and desserts. While most of the committee members are women, there has been the occasional husband who prepared a dish.

"Our food is wonderful. We have wonderful cooks and generous donors," says Ferris. Only twice in all her years have they ever run out of food.

With the parish hall as popular as it is, Ferris says, confirming its availability is key. With Schirtzinger's help, Ferris then estimates how many people to expect for lunch, taking into consideration whether the deceased was from the area, whether their children are parishioners, even the weather. Next, the captains are alerted, and the calls go out to the cooks. The day of the funeral, the first crew gets to the parish hall about 8 a.m. to begin setting up. A second shift is enlisted for clean-up. "We try not to call the same people every time," Ferris says. "I do like the ministry. People are so grateful."

DC (continued from previous page)

Next was Arlington National Cemetery where we saw the rows upon rows of graves, set up like the uniformed marching of soldiers. We even witnessed the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, where three classmates helped to lay a wreath in front of the tomb. After this, we made two quick stops at the Iwo Jima and Air Force Memorials. Then we topped off the night with an enjoyable cruise along the Potomac River.

The very next morning, we were up bright and early to visit the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. This was absolutely breathtaking with its stunning architecture. Then it was straight to the Newseum, where we saw all the Pulitzer Prize winning photos, the daily front page of newspapers from cities in every state, and from many newsworthy past events. The Air and Space and Natural History

museums were educational and had amazing spaceships and beautiful gems. The National Archives were awesome in the sense that we were actually seeing the original Constitution and Declaration of Independence.

On the final day, we visited the Longworth building. This building holds the offices of Congressmen and women, including Ohio Representative Troy Balderson, whom we met. We walked to the Capitol building and gazed at the stunning rotunda and paintings and visited Statuary Hall. As we walked to the bus, we saw a group of protesters whose catchy shouts became stuck in our

heads for the day. Then we boarded the bus and drove home. Never will I forget my 8th grade trip to D.C.



Erin Karas
8th Grade, Saint Agatha School

SAINT DAY

Little saints dress the part

By Carol Rowland

We study the saints because they show us the possibility of getting to heaven, Father Dan Ochs told the congregation at a children's Mass in November, including Tracy Rowland's second grade class, dressed as a gathering of saints.

To open the Mass, the children had processed down the aisle flanked by a myriad of parents, grandparents, teachers, and siblings. Among those represented were St. Francis of Assisi (Jack Dury), patron saint of animals; St. Maria Goretti (Maria Galvan), benefactress of young teenage girls; St. John the Baptist (Max Humphrey), who prepared the way for Jesus; and St. Agatha (Lily Smith), a martyr who stands for courage in suffering.

During Mass the children introduced themselves as their saints and added for whom or for what each saint advocated as a patron saint. St. Rose of Lima (Juliana Faehnle) helps poor children and the sick elderly; St. Dominic (Dominic

D'Addario) is the patron saint of astronomers; St. Elizabeth of Hungary (Trinity Nsiah) is the patron saint of bakers; St. Clare (Charlie Rogers) is the patron saint of television. Rogers explained that when Clare was too ill to attend Mass, Mass miraculously appeared on her bedroom wall. St. George (George Zeffirides), the patron saint of Boy Scouts, led English troops to victory.

After Mass, the students moved to the parish hall, demonstrated their well researched Saints reports, and shared donuts and juice with their visitors in celebration of jobs well done.

Parents commented on how much their children learned through researching, composing on the computer, and demonstrating their knowledge in front of a large audience of parents, teachers, and first graders.

"Studying the lives of the saints, who lived very holy courageous lives, emphasizes the students' moral formation," said Rowland. "At school everything supports parents' efforts to instill virtues shown in the saints lives. What the children researched about the saints' behaviors will be woven throughout the year," she added.

Carey Fox as Mary, the Mother of Jesus, said, "One of my aunts is very special to me and her name is Mary.

I also wanted to honor my Grandma(Mary). In discussing facts she found during her study, Carey replied, "I was surprised that when Gabriel asked Mary to be Jesus' Mother, she was only fourteen years old." Carey will continue to ask the Blessed Mother to pray for her and others.

Ethan Mentel, who chose St. Charles Borromeo, has his Grandpa's middle name, Charles. "I had no idea before that there was even a St. Charles. I learned a lot about him," Ethan said. He found it amazing that St. Charles, the patron saint of seminarians, had a doctorate at the age of twenty-one and became an archbishop at twenty-two. Ethan said he would definitely continue to pray to his saint.

"Project objectives included, not only developing the

assignment, but more importantly, choosing a role model that will assist the children to become good, kind people when they grow up," Rowland said.



ADULT EDUCATION SERIES

Talks focus on church future

On the four Sundays of February Father Edmund Hussey will lead discussions of some topics of interest for the future of the Church. Rather than providing detailed predictions of the future, these discussions will offer some background and, as Father says, “educated guesses.” All programs will be in the parish hall and begin at 9:30 a.m.

On February 3 Father Hussey will lead a discussion about the leadership role of bishops in the future Church. In the Tridentine era of the Church the bishops were more the administrators of large dioceses than a pastoral presence for their people, he explains. They usually appeared only on special occasions garbed in the impressive regalia and symbols of their office. Then the Second Vatican Council issued a decree about bishops that emphasized their pastoral ministry in the Church. Since the Council, the bishops’ failure to deal effectively with the sex abuse scandals has weakened their prestige and their leadership role in the Church.

On February 10, Father’s program will focus on women in the future Church. The day of women’s silent partnership in the Church is over; a new day has dawned for them and, therefore, for the entire Church, Father says. Nevertheless, the issue is not an easy one. The place of women in the Church today has been a matter of intense discussion and often of heated dispute.

Father’s program on February 17 will address immigrants and strangers in the future Church. Father refers to Moses’ comments to the people of Israel: “You shall

therefore love the stranger for you were once strangers in the land of Egypt.” This line reminds us that we are all immigrants, Father Hussey says, and that we should love the immigrants in our midst. In the Last Judgment scene in the Gospel of Matthew Jesus will say to the Just at the end of time: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” It is, therefore, somewhat ironic, he says, that our immigrant nation has become so conflicted about immigration today.

On the fourth and final Sunday of our February Adult Education Program, February 24, Father Hussey will discuss the transition from the Tridentine image of the Church as a Perfect Society to the Post-Vatican II image of the Church as a Pilgrim People, which supports Pope Francis’ hope that we will always be a welcoming Church, not a judgmental Church.

SAVE THE DATES

The leadership role of bishops in the future Church

February 3 / 9:30 a.m. / Parish Hall

Women in the future Church

February 10 / 9:30 a.m. / Parish Hall

Immigrants and strangers in the future Church

February 17 / 9:30 a.m. / Parish Hall

The transition from Tridentine to Vatican II

February 24 / 9:30 a.m. / Parish Hall

Faith Sharing

This Lenten season our parish will have the opportunity to join together for faith sharing, focusing on the Mass. Discussion groups will meet in the Parish Hall on Wednesdays during Lent, from March 6 to April 10. Both morning and evening sessions will be available.

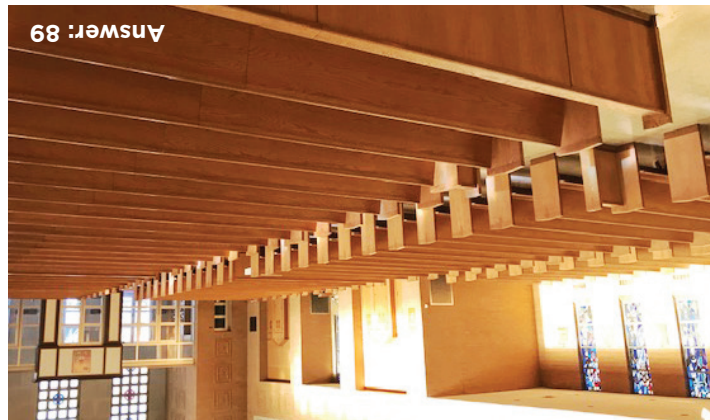
The groups will explore Bishop Robert Barron’s study, titled “The Mass.” Bishop Barron leads participants on a walk through the Liturgy, offering insights on this most privileged and intimate encounter with our Lord Jesus Christ. See how the Mass brings us out of the fallen world and into the heavenly realm, says Jeanne Altiero,

director of religious education. Further, Altiero says, the discussions will show how the Mass resonates with a call from God and a response from his people, the Church, and, most importantly, how we are intimately joined with the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus through the Holy Eucharist. Altiero believes “The Mass” will help faith sharing participants understand how to fully, consciously, and actively participate in the source and summit of the Christian life. Contact Altiero at 614-488-4975 with any questions. Bishop Barron’s homilies are available on the St. Agatha (my Parish) app.

ST. AGATHA TRIVIA

How well do you know our parish?

Thanks to a generous donation, Father Dan Ochs has contracted for the refinishing of all the pews in our 55-year-old church. Exactly how many pews does that include (not counting any on the altar)?



This beautiful and often overlooked depiction of the Holy Trinity is located on the tabernacle canopy

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