

# The Spirit

Tidings for the parish community of Saint Elizabeth

## 7,000 Hours, Hundreds of Volunteers, and 1 Very Special Day

*A look back at the impact of the Saint Elizabeth Parish  
Stewardship Day of Service as we enter its 10<sup>th</sup> year*

Some organizations are all talk. Saint Elizabeth parish, in contrast, is all action and no activity is a better example of faith in action than the Stewardship Day of Service (SDOS). As SDOS prepares for its 10th year, let's pause to reflect on the tremendous impact hundreds of volunteers have made on 41 beneficiaries - not to mention, the impact they've made upon one another.

SDOS began in the spring of 2011 with more than 300 parishioner volunteers. Couples, families and single people of all ages gathered together early one Saturday morning for Mass and then set off in groups to help 22 different non-profit agencies in the community. Volunteers committed to three hours of work (there is now an "extended day" option). The program was initiated by the Parish Stewardship Council as a visible way to carry out Saint Elizabeth's mission. SDOS provides an opportunity for everyone to come together and volunteer their time and talents to others outside the parish community.



In nine years, hundreds of Saint Elizabeth parishioners have volunteered upwards of 7,000 hours!

According to SDOS planning team chairperson, Anne Tymon, SDOS has achieved its goal of providing outreach to the community in a way that allows parishioners to get to know one another. "Our tag line, We are God's Hands, reminds the volunteers of the Lord's desire for us to do His work and care for our neighbors," said Anne. "Between SDOS and several other outreach ministries, such as Good Works, food collection drives and the Burkina Faso food packaging project, many parishioners have demonstrated their willingness to practice stewardship and fulfill our parish vision and mission."

*(continues on page 4)*

### Dates of Interest

#### *Stations of the Cross & Benediction*

Fridays at 7:00 PM  
February 28, March 6, 20 & 27  
*Youth Ministry Stations of the Cross*  
Friday, March 13 at 7:00 PM  
*Living Stations of the Cross*  
Friday, April 3 at 1:30 PM & 7:00 PM

#### *Sacrament of Penance/ Reconciliation*

Saturdays, 9:00-10:00 AM, chapel  
Wednesdays at 7:00 PM, chapel  
March 4, 11, 18, 25 and  
April 1, 6:30-7:00 PM, chapel  
[No confessions on  
Holy Saturday, April 11]

#### *Communal Reconciliation Service with Individual Confessions*

Tuesday, March 31 at 7:00 PM  
Extended Confessions:  
Saturday, April 4, 9:00-11:00 AM

#### *Sacrament of Confirmation*

Saturday, March 28  
Mass at 11:00 AM

#### *Holy Week Services*

*Palm Sunday, April 4-5*  
Mass at 5:30 PM, 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM,  
11:30 AM

#### *Holy Thursday, April 9*

Mass of the Lord's Supper  
at 7:30 PM

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## Finding Your Vocation!

**H**ave you ever considered that you have been called to a specific vocation? The *Catholic Dictionary* defines a vocation as “a call from God to a distinctive state of life, in which the person can reach holiness.” As Catholics, we experience married life, religious life, ordained life, and the single life as four unique ways to live out our individual vocations.

Father Andrew Labatorio and Deacon Alec Sasse offered additional insight on vocations.

Father Andrew works with the Saint Elizabeth Vocations Committee. The group’s purpose is to provide opportunities for parishioners to discern their individual vocations through prayer and fellowship, with a major focus on assisting young men who are considering a possible vocation to the priesthood.

“Each vocation is a response to God’s desire for us to love both Him and our neighbor,” said Father Andrew. “Through a vocation, individuals pledge a specific way of loving as commanded by God. The life and future of the Church depend on how we respond to our individual calling, and all vocations are needed and important.”

In February, the committee hosted a Vocation Awareness Night. Panelists with vocations to the priesthood, permanent diaconate, religious life, missionary life, and married life shared personal stories about their journey and how they responded to God’s call to their particular vocation. Participants left the evening with a new

understanding of vocation as an active response to the call to love within the Church.

“When people hear the word ‘vocation,’ often the first thing that comes into their minds is the priesthood or the religious life,” added Father Andrew. “We are teaming up with the Parish Youth Ministry Team to explore ways to reach out to younger members of the parish during the time of their discernment. We hope our young people will consider seriously and respond generously to a call to these vocations.”

Deacon Alec, who will be ordained as a priest in Lincoln, Nebraska this May, found his vocation in Catholic high school. “I started to take my faith more seriously: going to daily Mass, frequent confessions, spending time with friends who were good influences, and learning to pray more deeply under the guidance of my pastor,” he explained. “As I spent more time speaking with God, I began to feel a yearning, and decided to enter the seminary. Honestly, I thought I would just go for a year and then move on with my life. Luckily, I was wrong and God has continued to reveal His love to me through this vocation.”

“Parishioners can help to promote vocations through prayer and fasting,” added Deacon Alec.



*Deacon Alec and Father Andrew talk about how they respond to God’s call to their particular vocation.*

“Just ‘ask the Lord to send workers into His harvest.’ If you think a man could have a vocation to the priesthood, then be bold and tell him. It really makes a difference!”

“My advice for someone considering the priesthood is go to confession each week and start to spend at least 30 minutes in front of the Blessed Sacrament each day. The Lord will speak to you from there,” said the deacon. “Most men in the seminary are looking for a faith that is serious, sacrificial and a total commitment. The seminarians are drawn to the priesthood as a challenge and a complete gift of self. We want to be spiritual fathers who lead people down the often difficult path of Christian living.”

Whether we are called to married life, the single life, religious life or ordained life, may we all respond generously to God’s call and continue to pray for each other.

*~ David Guthrie*

## School Spirits: *Enjoying Adventures Outside of the Classroom*

Saint Elizabeth Parish School students have been stepping out of the classroom to enjoy several fun, community-building activities this school year. With multiple social events woven into the school calendar, students and families have opportunities to participate in some entertainment outside of the academic domain.

The school year kicked off with a picnic at Hickory Park in August, where new students were able to make new friends and existing students could reconnect after summer break. Fall led to the school's first FUN-raiser, the *Fall Festival*, which took place at the parish school. Despite a rainy day, many parishioners and school families showed up to enjoy food, entertainment and participate in a car raffle. The event raised close to \$41,000 for the school!

"The August picnic was such a success and a great way to kick off the school year," said Dr. Greco,



*Adventure Club members posed at the "LOVE" statue during their December field trip to Philadelphia.*

Parish School Principal. "Many school families participated and had a great time just being together. It made us realize that we need some more social events during the year. We did some things in the past, but they were very informal. Now we are planning events each month."

In November, everyone enjoyed a Sunday get-together at Liberty Union Bar and Grill, as the restaurant donated a percentage of their sales back to Saint Elizabeth Parish School. An ice-skating event was held in December. Students enjoyed a white-out basketball game in January as part of Catholic Schools Week, along with the much-anticipated Variety Show with the theme *All Creatures Great and Small*. Pizza Bingo and a sell-out mother/son bowling event took place in February.

A new Social Committee, led by parent Cristin McMichael, has planned several additional outings throughout the school year, such as a father/daughter dance and a Chick-Fil-A get-together.

Another new addition this year is Adventure Club for fifth- and sixth-grade students. Led by teacher Beth Hogarth, students meet for outdoor adventures and day trips on weekends throughout the school year. "We felt that kids in this age group needed a bit more freedom to explore new experiences, so this is a nice way to take them out of their comfort zones and try new things in the company of their classmates," noted Dr. Greco. "The objective is to have fun outside of the classroom while experiencing some-

thing different. And in some cases, there's a service component. These trips are not fund-raising activities, but simply fun ways for students to broaden their perspectives."

The Adventure Club took a trip to Refreshing Mountain Retreat and Adventure Center for a day of zip-lining, as well as a rock-climbing outing last fall. As a way of practicing stewardship during the holidays, students collected food and toiletry items from each classroom and made blessing bags, which they personally delivered to Mercy Hospice, a women's homeless shelter in Philadelphia. The day in the city was also spent visiting Macy's Dickens' Village and enjoying the holiday light show.

~ Julia Krumenacker

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## SDOS 10th Anniversary *(cont'd from cover)*

In any given year, SDOS provides unskilled labor to 14-27 different agencies. Common services include organizing and restocking supplies, painting and cleaning, outdoor cleanup, planting, and mulching. The agencies represent a wide range of non-profit organizations in Chester County, including:

- Food Banks – i.e., Chester County Food Bank, The Lord's Pantry
- Therapy Organizations – i.e., Hope Springs Equestrian, Thorncroft Equestrian
- Children's Services – i.e., L'ARC of Chester County, Paradise Farms Camp, Camp at Old Mill, Chester County Family Academy
- Homeless Shelters – i.e., Friends Association, Home of the Sparrow, Safe Harbor of Chester County, Saint Mary's Franciscan Shelter
- Religious Retreats and Mission Relief Services – i.e., Malvern Retreat House, Camp Innabah, Saint Mary of Providence Center
- Seniors Centers – i.e., West Chester Area Senior Center, Downingtown Senior Center, Saint Martha's Manor

Feedback from the agencies has been extremely positive over the years. Here are a few comments:

### Hope Springs Equestrian Therapy:

**"A wonderful group of people of all ages came and helped us from Saint Elizabeth! Thank you so much!"**

### West Chester Area

#### Senior Center:

**"We're grateful to your parish for doing this special day each year, and we hope that you know what great help it is and what a huge impact it makes, especially for a very small nonprofit who has such a small staff."**

#### Paradise Farm Camps:

**"We really enjoyed having teenagers in the Saint Elizabeth group of volunteers. They are such a good - work force!"**

SDOS is beneficial to both agencies and volunteers, even beyond the hours of work. The agencies benefit from parishioners' richer understanding and compassion in what the agency offers the community and they learn of other opportunities to help the agency throughout the year on their own schedules. SDOS support allows these non-profits to dedicate more of their funds to their main mission.

Participants agree that they get more from the experience than they give. "Volunteers come away feeling fulfilled and needed, and they often come together closer as families and friends. Most participants meet new friends in the parish and our youth get the special opportunity

**SDOS is April 18, 2020  
Registration closes April 5**

to see all the good they can bring to the world beyond their front doors," explained Anne.

Of course, there is a lot of work that goes in to making this one day each year a success. The SDOS planning team began its work for 2020 in October 2019, and meets monthly. Over the years, the team has grown and the process has evolved – for instance, they upgraded from a print registration process to electronic. And each year, the team conducts a "lessons learned" evaluation program to identify ways to continue to improve the service day.

"Our biggest challenge each year is knowing whether we will have enough volunteers for the sites we commit to serving because most registrations don't come in until the last two weeks," said Anne.

Embarking on our 10th SDOS, Saint Elizabeth parish hopes to continue this wonderful tradition as long as there is participation. Anne concluded, "SDOS is a beautiful and visible way to carry out our mission: As a stewardship parish, in grateful acknowledgement of God's abundant gifts, we generously share our time, talent and treasure in service to the needs of others."

Contact the parish office at 610-321-1200 or visit the parish website ([stelizabethparish.org](http://stelizabethparish.org)) to learn more about how to put your faith in action... because Saint Elizabeth is more than just talk!

~ Lisa Barbadora

## Family Spirits: Tradition of Service Defines the Ciarlone/Till Family

Jackie Till graduated from Syracuse University and moved to Pennsylvania from Lake Panamoka, Long Island, NY, where she grew up in a family of five daughters. Tom Ciarlone, a Villanova graduate, grew up in Downingtown and attended Saint Joseph Church. The two were introduced by mutual friends, married in 1994, moved to Chester Springs and have been Saint Elizabeth parishioners since its founding in July 2000.

Tom and Jackie have raised four children: Lucy, Caroline, Randolph, and their youngest, Will, who was baptized at Lionville Middle School during our first year as a parish community. Three of the Ciarlone children have been altar servers. Randolph and Will attended Saint Elizabeth Parish School and played SEAM/CYO basketball and baseball. Tom served on the Parish Stewardship Council and the whole family has participated in the Stewardship Day of Service; their favorite activities have been cleanup work at Camilla Hall on the Immaculata University campus and packing food for Burkina Faso. Lucy, also a Villanova graduate, is an emergency room nurse in Manhattan. Caroline, a Saint Joseph University graduate, works in Philadelphia. Randolph is a junior at Immaculata University, and Will is a Saint Joseph University freshman.

“We love the priests, parishioners and all the opportunities to give back to the community that our parish provides,” said Jackie.

Jackie’s parents, Grace and Randy Till, came to live with the Ciar-

lone’s four years ago, after living in Long Island all their married life. They met in 1954, were married at Saint Catherine Church in Franklin Square, NY, and will



*The Ciarlone/Till family serves Saint Elizabeth parish with a tradition of stewardship and active church participation.*

celebrate their 63<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary this June! Their five married daughters have given them 19 grandchildren, and they are now awaiting their 8<sup>th</sup> great-grandchild. Being retired and loving life at Saint Elizabeth parish, they find the community to be warm and welcoming. They are active here, as they were in their former parish. For example, Randy continues his 50-year membership in the Knights of Columbus, and Grace participates in several parish ministries, including Women at the Well, making casseroles for the Saint John Hospice collections and cleaning altar server robes. Both are part of the Senior Adult Ministry (SAM) and enjoy socializing with other seniors (see article about SAM on page 6).

The Tills are grateful to Jackie and Tom for welcoming them into their home and introducing them to the parish. Grace and Randy encourage other families to join a parish ministry, believing it to be rewarding for any Catholic. Grace summed up her feelings saying, “To be able to help out at Mass and join groups makes us feel needed and appreciated.”

As the Ciarlone/Till family continues to serve Saint Elizabeth parish, their family tradition of stewardship and active church participation sustains the entire community.

~ Lisa Sheronas

### Dates of Interest, *continued*

*Good Friday, April 10*  
Solemn Passion Service at 3:00 PM  
Veneration of the Cross Prayer Service at 7:00 PM

*Holy Saturday, April 11*  
Blessing of Easter Foods at 11:00 AM  
Easter Vigil Liturgy at 8:00 PM

*Easter Sunday, April 12*  
Mass at 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM

**Stewardship Day of Service**  
Saturday, April 18 at 8:30 AM

**Holy Day of the Ascension of the Lord**  
Thursday, May 21  
Mass at 7:30 AM, 12:00 PM, 7:00 PM

**Memorial Day**  
Monday, May 25, Mass at 9:00 AM

## 10 Years Strong – Senior Adult Ministry is Better than Ever!

**S**aint Elizabeth Parish Senior Adult Ministry (SAM) started in 2010 with just a few inaugural members. Now a decade later, SAM is thriving with more than 50 regular members. The goals of the organization include faith formation, responding to human needs, and providing social opportunities for our senior parishioners (60+ years of age).

“I joined SAM a number of years ago and have enjoyed helping the group expand both in the number of attendees and the diversity of programs,” said Fidel Verdugo, one of SAM’s early members. “My wife Mary and I have made some wonderful friends who are all at a similar stage of life. We always look forward to our SAM gatherings – especially the end-of-year field trip.”

SAM offers a range of free activities, starting each September and concluding with an annual field trip in June. Members are welcome to attend all activities or just a few. One of SAM’s regular programs is the monthly “Lunch and Learn,” which consists of a short presentation by a volunteer speaker and/or a video on a given topic, followed by a luncheon. The Lunch and Learn programs begin at 10:30 AM in the parish ministry center.

Here is what’s in store this spring:

### **March 12**

Speaker: Tom Beccone; Music

### **April 2 or 16**

Speaker: Lindsey & Eric Ranstrom;  
God’s Call to Seniors

### **May 14**

Speaker: Jim Murray or Action  
News Speaker; TBD



*Through the Senior Adult Ministry, senior parishioners come together for social opportunities, faith formation and service.*

In addition to Lunch and Learn programs, SAM offers a number of fun activities.

- **Game Days** – On the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month, join new and old friends to play board games. Go back to a time when this was how we passed a rainy or snowy day. Play or learn new card games, Scrabble, Monopoly, and Trivial Pursuit (we skip Operation!) while enjoying treats and laughs. Mark your calendars: March 26, April 23, May 28, and June 25.
- **Field Trips** – Our last event of the year is always a blast. Last year, SAM visited a Chester County treasure – the Antique Ice Tool Museum in West Chester, which was founded by the Stack Family who had been involved in the ice business for over three generations.

This year, SAM is considering several possibilities including Springton Manor Farm in Glenmoore, historic churches such as the original chapel at Saints Philip and James in Exton and St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church at Ludwigs Corner, or the Saint Padre Pio Shrine.

Most importantly, SAM is a wonderful way to spend time with old friends and meet new friends while getting out of the house for an enjoyable morning or afternoon. In fact, the writers of this article re-connected after many years through SAM and have been rekindling a beautiful friendship ever since! You could be next.

For more information on SAM, please contact the parish office, visit the website, or simply drop by our next gathering. We hope to see you soon!

~ Isabel Day Jones  
Suzanne Wickersham

## Living Beyond Sunday: How to Enjoy a Prayerful Lent

One year ago, the Parish Stewardship Council introduced a new concept in our stewardship journey here at Saint Elizabeth Parish called *LIVING BEYOND SUNDAY*. It is a program designed to help parishioners recognize that we are glad stewards for the Lord every day and not just while attending Mass on Sunday. We are called to consistently share our time, talent and treasure each and every day in our homes, schools, offices, and in the community at large. Jesus provides the direction we need for living our faith daily. The Lord is our GPS (Growing, Praying and Serving).

In 2019, the Pastoral Stewardship Council introduced the “G” in GPS: *Growing* – both in our faith and in our actions as Catholic stewards. Beginning in Lent this year, *LIVING BEYOND SUNDAY* is focused on the “P” in GPS: *Praying*. Lent allows time to focus on spiritual and prayerful renewal. It is a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Parishioners can be active participants in *LIVING BEYOND SUNDAY* by dedicating themselves and encouraging loved ones to engage in thoughtful daily prayer. For example, reading Holy Scripture can transform people in a personal and powerful way. When examining the Word of God, we encounter Jesus as we prayerfully consider the readings.

A few years ago, FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) developed a “top ten” list to help Catholics of all ages answer the timeless question, “What should I do for Lent?” The list was designed with guidance by Pope

Francis and contains great tips. Four tips deal with prayer. In his 2015 annual Lenten message, Pope Francis said, “During this Lent, then, brothers and sisters, let us all ask the Lord to *make our hearts like yours* (Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus). In this way we will receive a heart which is firm and merciful, attentive and generous, a heart which is not closed, indifferent or prey to the globalization of indifference.”



Praying does not have to take a lot of time, we simply need to make time to take time to pray. Jesus himself went away to pray on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:43-44). Consider contemplating a short Scripture verse each day this Lent. This could be habit-forming and qualifies as *LIVING BEYOND SUNDAY*.

Be sure to check out the *LIVING BEYOND SUNDAY* banner outside the sacristy in the church narthex (opposite the rest rooms and kitchenette) throughout the Lenten season for new prayers, tips and resources on how to expand your prayer life.

Saint Elizabeth Parish offers many opportunities for prayer. In addition to weekly Mass, Catholic believers are called to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly, especially in anticipation of Easter. Other examples allow prayerful involvement both on a personal level and as a community, including Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Mondays and praying the Stations of the Cross on Fridays during Lent.

Did you know that praying can be good for us physically, too? In 2018, two separate studies by Baylor University and Columbia University revealed some interesting information for a restless world. Baylor’s study focused on anxiety, obsession and compulsion. Their study found that God is a source of comfort and strength for many people. Plus, through prayer, people develop an intimate relationship with Him. When this is the case, prayer offers emotional comfort, resulting in fewer symptoms of anxiety disorders. Columbia University found that participating in regular prayer and meditation has an impact on the brain’s cortex and can reduce depression.

Let the “P” in GPS begin, and may we continue our stewardship journey *LIVING BEYOND SUNDAY* in prayer during this Lenten season.

~ Michael Maher

## Parish Census

Do you have five minutes (or less) to make a difference at Saint Elizabeth Parish?



That is all it takes to fill out the online Parish Census! Go to [stelizabethparish.org](http://stelizabethparish.org). Look for the *Census* logo on the front page and follow the steps to update your information!

If you have already filled out the paper copy of the Census, please do not fill out the online version. Thank you for your cooperation with this project, a key step in the ongoing implementation of the 2017-2021 *Parish Pastoral Plan*.

## Flocknote

Our parish is using the *Flocknote* messaging system to communicate with parishioners. It includes a *Weekly Digest* complete with announcements and links about upcoming events, weekly parish bulletin columns, a link to the Sunday scripture readings, and a prayer corner.

We are also using the *Flocknote* system for regular communications from the Parish School and from the Youth Ministry Program. Plans are underway to expand the use of *Flocknote* for other ministries in the coming months!

*Flocknote* is a free service! To sign up, go to the "Next Steps" section of our parish website. If you have any questions, contact Sara Richardson, Communications Coordinator, at [sricharson@stelizabethparish.org](mailto:sricharson@stelizabethparish.org).

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