

PARISH PIPELINE

JANUARY, 2020



VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1

“Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night”

By Maryann Haskell; Photos by Julie Ashcroft

There are so many different ways to connect with us at the Church of the Immaculate Conception and to get involved! As Christians we are called to serve God in some way according to our gifts and abilities but to absolutely be available to be used to serve others. We are the church! Not our building but our beings! Becoming involved in one or more of our ministries is an excellent way to grow closer to Christ as you become His hands and feet as you embrace being part of the body of Christ. Not sure which one is right for you? Just start. Don't wait until conditions are perfect - they likely never will be! As you become involved by making yourself available, God will be faithful to reveal to you what His plans are for your life. Whether it's finding a small group or joining one of our active ministries, we want to share life with you!

Perhaps you're still finding your way and where you feel called to serve, and that's fine. But don't let it take years of your life to figure out. Attending church is a blessing, and serving in any ministry is vital, no matter what you're doing. And it's not about feeling good or better about yourself. Getting involved with church is just about desiring to serve God and His people. So, wherever you feel called (or gently nudged) to join, just do it, even if it's just one evening once a month. Become a liturgical minister. Join the Rosary Altar Society. Get on the prayer team. Participate in the church choir. Join the women's ministry. Volunteer at a food pantry servicing the community. Attend a few different church group meetings to find one that feels like a good fit. Once you take the leap and join a ministry or a committee, God will restore measures of confidence in your faith, your strength and your abilities to serve His people.



Rite of Welcoming ceremony for Kelly Benkoski



The Carter family at Benjamin's installation as an altar server

See page 8 for additional photographs.

Ministry Updates

Friends-In-Deed-ICC's Social and Service Ministry by Cindy Peterson and Jeanne Behr

Over the summer, the social component of Friends-In-Deed teamed up with the Youth Ministry Office, which was sponsoring a series of *Summer Nights* every Tuesday in July. Each night began with a free BBQ, with additions of various edibles brought by parishioners. With each passing week, the fun and the crowd seemed to increase. Casual conversations over dinner plates were followed by all sorts of games, for all sorts of ages. Some folks were content to just sit and take it all in, while others (such as Fr. Jerry), went all-out competitive on the playing field! We were blessed with good weather each week. Next summer, there is talk of continuing Summer Nights into the month of August.

Another fun night was an Outdoor Movie Night, with the real-deal big screen and all. Again, the night started out with “fun food” for dinner, courtesy of the Youth who were fundraising for their trip to NCYC. And for pre-movie entertainment, two hours of open fields and lounging around were enjoyed before the sun set low enough for the movie to begin. There was a very wide range of ages who came out to watch “*Mary Poppins Returns*,” and the feedback we heard was very positive. Folks expressed the desire to have more movie nights, and we will certainly be doing that going forward, both indoors and out. I thought it was very heart-warming to see Fr. Jerry and Fr. Tom Connery accompany one another and stay for the whole movie.

Next up was a Potluck and Campfire, with sing-alongs and a guitar. Generosity and diversity was the name of the game for the Potluck, and goofiness and silliness was the name of the campfire sing-a-long. Name a song and it was played. The kids had a blast running around, and toasting marshmallows too! (I think the adults ate more s'mores than the kids).

The most recent event featured the showing of a special DVD entitled “*My Way*”, which was a professionally-produced documentary of the life of Immaculate Conception parishioners +Hank and Joyce Maddalone, and how they raised their very large family. It was a warm and receptive audience that attended, as evidenced by the way they stayed afterwards for a Q & A with Joyce, mingled and enjoyed some coffee and treats.

Coming up on Saturday, January 25th, there will be another Potluck, along with a Game Night, starting at 6 PM in the Flicker Room. Bring your favorite board games or card games, and we'll play it up! If you'd like to attend the Potluck, kindly RSVP to Cindy with what you'll be bringing.

In 2019, the Service component of Friends-In-Deed provided community service activities to a variety of areas in need. To name a few: fourteen children's blankets were made and donated to a charity organization, service was provided to City Mission,

Jack's Place, the Empty Stocking program and Animal Shelters. Also provided were care kits to the homeless and clothing to families and children who were in need.

All of the Friends-In-Deed social gatherings as well as community outreach events had this one thing in common: they made for a feeling of togetherness; a feeling of a church family. That is what we are and hope to continue to build. Remember, this is a ministry for *all* ages, and *anyone* can propose an idea that they'd like to do at any time.

We hope to see or hear from you sometime soon!



Social Coordinator: Cindy Peterson, 518-630-9323;
ICCFriendsSocial@gmail.com
 Service Coordinator: Jeanne Behr, 518-495-5644;
ICCFriendsService@gmail.com

Ministry Updates

Respect for Life Ministry —The Parish Expresses Its Pro-Life Opposition to the Proposed NYS Medical Aid in Dying Act by Larry Smith

During our recent petition-signing drive, we found that parishioners overwhelmingly opposed physician assisted suicide, although some questioned whether it is merciful to prohibit suicide as an option for the terminally ill. It is easy to become confused by the different terms (euthanasia, mercy killing, physician assisted suicide, death with dignity, medical aid in dying), especially if they sound compassionate. The following definitions and information from the NYS Catholic Conference and American Medical Association are provided for your consideration.

What is **euthanasia**?

Oxford definition: The painless **killing** of a patient suffering from an incurable and painful disease or in an irreversible coma. The practice is illegal in most countries. www.oxfordreference.com

Or in the secular culture: The **termination** of a **very sick person's** life in order to relieve them of their suffering. A person who undergoes *euthanasia* **usually** has an incurable condition. **But there are other instances where some people want their life to be ended.** www.bbc.com

What is **palliative care**?

If you have an illness that can't be cured, **palliative care** makes you as comfortable as possible, by managing your pain and other distressing symptoms. It also involves psychological, social and spiritual support for you and your family or caregivers.

What is the difference between **palliative care** and **hospice**?

Both **palliative care** and **hospice care** provide comfort. But **palliative care** can begin at diagnosis, and at the same time as **treatment**. **Hospice care** begins after **treatment** of the disease is stopped and when it is clear that the person is not going to survive the illness.

What is the American Medical Association's position on euthanasia? Opposed:

The *physician* who performs euthanasia assumes unique responsibility for the act of ending the patient's life. Instead of engaging in euthanasia, physicians must aggressively respond to the needs of patients at the end of life. Physicians:

- (a) Should not abandon a patient once it is determined that a cure is impossible.
- (b) Must respect patient autonomy.
- (c) Must provide good communication and emotional support.
- (d) Must provide appropriate comfort care and adequate pain control.

<https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/ethics/euthanasia>

What is the Church's position on assisted suicide (one form of euthanasia)? Opposed:

"There are alternatives to assisted suicide. We must do all we can to reduce suffering and promote the loving option of palliative medicine and hospice care."

"Because human life is precious, we are required to accept ordinary medical treatments, those that offer a reasonable hope of benefit without excessive burden. It does not require that we suffer an agonizingly long and painful death. On the contrary: overly burdensome treatments that provide little or no benefit to patients are not morally required."

"Palliative care is an expression of the truly human attitude of taking care of one another, especially those who suffer. It is a testimony that the human person is always precious, even if marked by illness or old age. — Pope Francis, March 2015"

www.nyscatholic.org

RCIA—Immaculate Conception Welcomes Three Seekers

by Kim Klementowski, Photographs by Julie Ashcroft

RCIA helps guide seekers along their faith journey, teaches them about our Catholic faith and assists them in receiving the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, First Eucharist and Confirmation) enabling them to be full members of our Catholic faith and our wonderful parish.

In September, our process formally began for welcoming any and all seekers wishing to come into full communion with the Catholic Church by receiving the sacraments of initiation. This year, we are pleased to welcome and assist 3 amazing people coming through the RCIA process. Kelly Benkoski will receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil, while Bill Hielman will receive the sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist and Pattie Steeves will receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Each candidate will introduce themselves below. Please keep them in your prayers as we draw closer to the Easter Vigil.



Bill Hielman –My name is Bill Hielman and I grew up in East Greenbush, NY. I was baptized in the East Greenbush Reformed Church. I married Cathy Gabriele of Schenectady in August of 1977 in St Luke’s Church in Schenectady. We currently reside in Charlton. We have three children, William Jr., David and Gabrielle. We also have five grandchildren. I worked for Verizon for 30 years. I transferred to Westchester County and returned to the Capital District in 1984. I retired in 2007 as a Construction/CE Manager for Verizon in Albany. I am currently working at GE in machine repair as an industrial electrician in the power systems plant, building 273 in Schenectady. I am a member of the Charlton Fire Department and have served as Commissioner, Chairman of the Board for the Commissioners and held all line officer positions, including serving as Fire Chief and Assistant Chief. I play basketball, hockey and golf.



Kelly Benkoski – Hello! My name is Kelly Benkoski. My husband Ben and I have two children, Riley (age 7) and Sean (age 4). I am a first grade teacher. Currently, I am enjoying my 15th year of teaching. I made the decision to go through the RCIA program and to receive the sacraments in order to strengthen my faith and to form a deeper relationship with God. I appreciate the welcoming community here at the Church of the Immaculate Conception and look forward to being a contributing member of the parish.

I have attended Catholic Church with my wife and children since we were married. When my children were younger they would periodically ask why I wasn’t baptized as a Catholic. I explained that I was baptized as a Protestant and explained some of the differences between the Protestant and Catholic Church. My wife and children have never pushed me to become a Catholic. I have questioned myself for many years why I didn’t make the commitment. It seems that I was just making excuses. I finally made the decision to become a member of the Catholic Church and am currently in the RCIA program.

RCIA, continued from page 4



Pattie Steeves (as submitted by her son David) – Prior to moving to Saratoga Springs, Pattie spent much of her life in New England-something everyone usually guesses after hearing her say a sentence or two in the famous Boston accent. She grew up in Lowell, Massachusetts, and also spent many years in New Hampshire. She's blessed with three adult children – David, Tiffany and Sara. Pattie is widowed, having shared more than 19 years of marriage to her husband Joe. Together, they made the arduous journey to recovery from addiction, and she has persevered for the last 17 years and counting, one day at a time. A lifelong Catholic, Pattie is excited to be able to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation here with her Immaculate Conception family. When she's not in her usual spot in the pews on Sunday, she can be found honing her crocheting skills, riding a quad through the fields and woods, welcoming friends to her home for dinner and caring for her dog, Charleston, and her bird, Fenway. She will be accompanied through the Sacrament of Confirmation by her beloved friend Addolorata Pauze, whose husband Doug, daughter Edda and entire family have welcomed her since the first time they met.

We sincerely hope you will join us at the Easter Vigil to witness these amazing candidates come into full communion with our beautiful Catholic Faith. On behalf of our candidates and our entire RCIA team, thank-you for your loving and caring support.

St. Vincent de Paul

by Joe Aglio, President



Frederick Ozanam was asked "Let us be frank, Mr. Ozanam -What do you do besides talk to prove the faith you claim is in you?" He was stung by the question and realized his words needed to become actions. He and a friend began visiting the poor of Paris and soon a group dedicated to help others formed the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Sister Rosalie Rendu told Frederick Ozanam and the founding members of the Society, "Because you see Christ in his poor, I know you will approach each one you visit with humility as His servant."

We, the members of the Immaculate Conception St. Vincent de Paul Society strive daily to treat our clients with this same humility and without judgment, knowing "but for the grace of God, go I." We tell each person that the donations of money and food from our parishioners are the funds that help with their rent, utilities, food and transportation. We are very grateful for your donations. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Fr. Jerry and the parish staff for their support throughout the year.

We had a very successful Thanksgiving and Christmas season helping our poor and less fortunate with food and gifts. In conjunction with Our Lady of Grace Parish, we were able to provide food baskets for 80 families at Thanksgiving. At Christmas, in conjunction with the Bethlehem Tree ministry, and thanks to Joan Bunn and her volunteers and your support, we were able to provide 3 gifts for each child and one gift for each adult in each needy family.

Thanks again for your food and financial support throughout the year.

Rosary Altar Society TAG SALE

Even though we still have snow on the ground and the temps are cold, we are thinking about our annual May tag sale. When it warms up and you are doing spring cleanout of all the nice things you want to purge, do not forget to donate them to the sale. Monies earned help to support many charities in our area.

We will be collecting items the beginning of April. We are not accepting used shoes, mattresses, Holiday items, TV's, electronics, home made videos/CD's. We would prefer in-season clothing.

Watch bulletin in the early spring for more information.

Spotlight on Dr. Bill Gray by Annette Botsford

In this *Pipeline* series, we hope to familiarize parishioners with those among us whom we see often but know little about. Readers are invited to contact Annette Botsford at abotsfor@nycap.rr.com with suggestions of future subjects for this feature.



Dr. William Jon Gray is the Director of Music Ministries at the Church of the Immaculate Conception. His path here has been varied and filled with music in all forms.

Bill was born in Delmar, where his dad worked for Rensselaer's Huyck Felt Mill, once one of the principal employers in that area. Bill was named after his Uncle Bill who was Rector at St Andrews Church in Scotia and also loved music. When the Huyck Mill opened a new plant in Alabama, Bill's dad and his family moved there for several years. Eventually his family returned to the Delmar area and he graduated from Bethlehem Central in 1973.

During his high school years, Bill sang in the choir at the Cathedral of All Saints and for the Capital Hill Choral Society. He took organ lessons and worked summers for the NYS Children's Theatre Group. It was a great teacher at his high school who helped to form his love for music. "All of the sixties' performers were formative for me", he said. "Along with the Beatles, the Stones and Presley, I also listened to a lot of rhythm and blues." But he was also exposed to classical music because of the wonderful teachers and

all that the Albany area offered musically.

Bill did his undergraduate study in Vocal Performance at The Juilliard School and his Graduate study in Conducting and Vocal Accompaniment at the Boston University College of Fine Arts. He obtained his Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from the New England Conservatory of Music. After completing his undergraduate work, he moved to Boston where his musical career started gaining momentum. He eventually moved to Washington, D.C. where he served as Artistic Director of the Masterworks Chorus and the Orchestra of Washington, D. C., now known as the National Philharmonic. He was the Artistic Director of the Bach Chorale Singers conducting more than 100 performances of major choral works.

From September 2000 to July 2014, Bill held the Chair of the Choral Department at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. He conducted the university's internationally recognized chamber music choir and taught graduate level courses in conducting, choral literature and score reading. While he was at the university, he conducted several choral groups and orchestras. He ended up staying at Indiana University for 20 years.

About five years ago, Bill moved back to this area to help take care of his elderly mother and stepfather. They have since passed away. Bill's extended family is in the area. He has two older sisters and an older brother, along with four stepbrothers and stepsisters. He enjoys spending time with them.

Bill enjoys the lively music scene in the area. He attends performances at Schenectady Light Opera, Capital Rep, Schenectady Symphony, SPAC, Glimmerglass, Saratoga Opera Company and also events in NYC and Boston.

See Dr. Bill Gray, page 7

Dr. Bill Gray

Continued from page 6

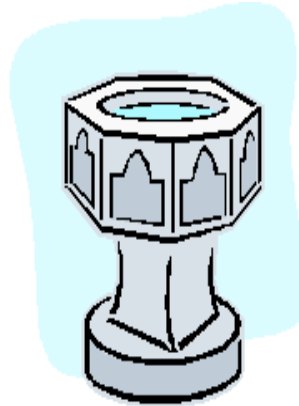
Bill has been involved in church music his whole life. He knew Derek Stannard, from Albany Pro Musica. When Derek wanted to take a vacation, he asked Bill to substitute here at Immaculate Conception. Derek decided to pursue a business opportunity and it was shortly after that when Bill became Director of Music Ministries at ICC.

In his position here, he chooses all of the music for the masses, in consultation with Fr. Jerry. Occasionally Fr. Jerry will request something specific, or Bill will bring a new piece for his comments. He creates and generates all of the worship aids for masses, funerals, and weddings. He is also responsible for music at the weekly masses at Glendale Nursing Home on Thursday afternoons. Also in the community, Bill serves as Conductor and Artistic Director of the Burnt Hills Oratorio Society.

When asked if he needed help with any of the groups, he responded, "We need more people for all Masses. Sunday at 8 am is difficult. Most people don't want to get up that early on Sunday and try to sing. Sunday at 11:00 am is the traditional Mass for the full choir."

"Of his performances of Monteverdi's Vespers in San Francisco Heuwel Tircuit of the San Francisco Classical Voice said, "William Jon Gray conducted the combined [Carmel Bach] Festival Chorale and members of the Festival Orchestra in a religious masterpiece, not one of Bach's but the massive Claudio Monteverdi Vespers della Beata Vergine 1610 to the largest packed house I've seen at Old First in over 35 years of on-and-off reviewing there. It created a sensation, as indeed it deserves when so ably presented. Fine playing and excellent vocal work littered the evening with one peak experience after another. . . the applause hit like a prolonged tsunami."

Times of Joy— Sacramental Milestones



Congratulations and welcome to these children who received the Sacrament of Baptism from September 30 2019, to January 6, 2020. We pray for the grace these families need to grow in their faith.

John Francis, child of Matthew & Karen McDermott

Carter Cesare, child of Anthony & Jessica Kirtley

McKenna Marie, child of John & Abby Homich

Azure Jamie, child of +Nicholas Harper & Hannah McLaughlin

Khody Daniel, child of Patrick & Sara Cunningham

Riley Margaret, child of Benjamin & Kelly Benkoski

Sean John Robert, child of Benjamin & Kelly Benkoski

Ava Rose, child of Anthony & Amy Cremona

Anthony Robert, child of Robert & Lindsay Casino

Mia Bella, child of Anthony & Meagan Maddalone

MacKenzie Marie, child of Thomas & Erin Lavertu

Michael Joseph, child of Phillip & Linda Theriault

Rayna Mae Teresa, child of Joshua & Danielle Barndt

This couple was married between September 30, 2019, and January 6, 2020. We wish God's blessing upon them.

Michaela Piel to Nicholas Piazza

“Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night”



The baptism of Baby Maggie with Mom Kara Egan



The Coats for Kids Collection. Drive: Over 100 coats were donated - 90% were new with tags! The Knights of Columbus donated 48 coats. The rest came from the generosity of our parish.



Thanksgiving Food Drive



Bethlehem Tree gifts

In this twenty-fifth issue of the *Parish Pipeline*, some of our ministries have updated their activities. Immaculate Conception is fortunate to have many more ministries which will be highlighted in coming issues. For a complete list of ministries,

- see the church website: <http://www.icglenville.com>
- contact Maryann Haskell, 399-6706, e-mail maryann.haskell@gmail.com
- fill in the information below and drop it in the collection basket. You will be contacted.

Name _____ Phone # _____

I am interested in the following ministry/ministries:

April 18 and 19:
Distribution of the next issue of the Pipeline

April 7: Submissions due