



THE CARPENTER

ST JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL

VANDERBURGH COUNTY EVANSVILLE, INDIANA ESTABLISHED IN 1841

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FEBRUARY 2026



MINDING THE GAP

Fr. Gene Schroeder
PASTOR

Viktor Frankl was an Austrian psychiatrist who is best known for his famous book, *Man's Search for Meaning*. This book was his attempt to try to make sense of his experience, and that of so many other Jewish people who were rounded up and forced into concentration camps by the German government during World War II. As he came to understand human behavior, he coined the term "minding the gap" which refers to that crucial space between an event or something that triggers us and our response to this stimulus. It is there that we find the power to choose our attitude and actions. His experiences being in a concentration camp helped him to realize that even when we are suffering, we retain the ability to choose how we are going to be in life.

What do we mean by "minding the gap" and what does this have to do with being Catholic? Let's look at the first question. Let me give you an example that might help you understand the concept of minding the gap. Picture this scene. It is after Mass and as I am greeting people, someone comes forwards and says, "Father, the kneeler on pew 19 is broken." An innocent enough statement probably given with no other thought than to share some information. But that is not how it is received. I am tired and worn out from celebrating Mass, and what I hear is "there is a

pew that is broken and you are supposed to go fix it." Now, if I am in my kind space, I can say "well thanks for letting us know, we sure will want to get someone to fix that." But because I am tired, I don't do that. Instead of

feeling kind and grateful that someone is concerned enough about our church

that they would let me know when something needs to be fixed, I find myself feeling put upon and resentful. How is it that I have come to believe it is my responsibility to "fix" things?

Now, if I don't "mind the gap", I could easily say something cynical like "well, I'll get my tools and get right on that!", which won't do anyone any good. But "minding the gap" is not just about learning how to respond in a healthy way toward situations, it is also about asking another question—What is being triggered in me that I would feel resentful or put upon? Where does this energy come from? In my case, it goes back to the belief systems that have been part of my upbringing. One is a belief system that

tells me that I am responsible for fixing things. And I am supposed to know how to "fix" things, even if I have never had any experience in doing it.

Now you may say that this is blowing this whole incident way out of proportion. And you would be right, on one level. But the belief systems that determine my behaviors, or for that matter, your behav-

iors, do not necessarily operate in a logical manner. We all have belief systems and we are all influenced by them. In the life of our parish, how often we have gotten sideways with one another over simple things like, how we make the food at the social, or what does or does not happen at an athletic game? These stories are abundant and often leading to people getting upset and leaving the parish.

So learning how to "mind the gap" is pretty important. We want to be people who are intentional about what we say and do. But this takes a lot of effort. We live in a world that is so easily distracted by social media, which means we don't take a lot of time to ask questions like "why does this particular situation bother me," or "why does this person seem to upset me." These questions have to do with us. Although most people wouldn't necessarily see this, when we find ourselves triggered by some event or person, they are really gifts to us because they are "windows to our souls", giving us the chance to learn something about ourselves.

(Continued on page 7)

NEW FIRE ENGINE DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF BRUCE WOODWARD

The Evansville Fire department introduced its newest frontline fire engine, Engine 2(E2), a 2025 E-One Cyclone which will be assigned to Station 1. This past December 18, this engine was formally dedicated in honor of retired District Chief Bruce Woodward, who served the Evansville community for 33 years, from 1983 until his retirement in 2016.

Engine 2 is equipped with a high-powered water pump capable of moving up to 1500 gallons of water per minute, a 780-gallon water tank that gives firefighters an immediate supply when they arrive on scene and a strong 500-horsepower engine with a heavy-duty transmission that helps the truck accelerate and respond faster.



Altogether, these features allow firefighters to get water on the fire more quickly, operate more safely, and respond more reliably during emergencies throughout the community.

Terry Woodward was on hand with members of her family, Mayor Stephanie Terry and members of the Fire Department for the formal dedication ceremony. Her husband Bruce, who was the son of Bob and Imelda Woodward, died in 2023. What a beautiful tribute to the years of service Bruce gave to the Evansville community.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Jubilee of Prisoners.. p. 4
- Introducing our High School Seniors.....p. 4
- Mid Year Report to the Parish..... p. 7
- Women's Retreat....p. 12

Jubilee Celebration of Mercy for Prisoners

This past December 14, Pope Leo celebrated mass for the Jubilee of Prisoners, the last major event of the Jubilee Year. Prisoners from over 90 countries were able to join in this celebration. The communion hosts used at the mass were donated by the *Casa dello Spirito e delle Arti* Foundation through its "Il senso del Pane" project, which, since 2016, has involved more than 300 inmates each year in producing communion wafers for over 15,000 Italian and foreign dioceses, religious congregations, parishes, monasteries, and Christian organizations. The following is the text of the homily Pope Leo delivered at the Jubilee Mass



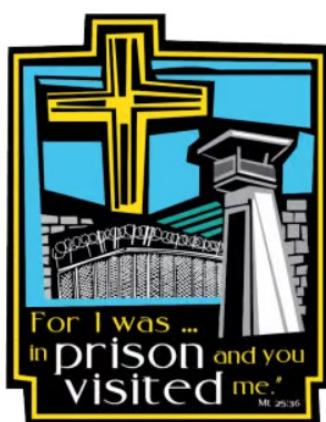
Today we celebrate the Jubilee of Hope for correctional institutions, prisoners and all those who oversee or work in the penitentiary system. The choice of this day, the third Sunday of Advent, for this particular jubilee is rich in meaning, as it is the day that the church calls Gaudete Sunday, whose

name comes from the first words of the entrance antiphon for the Mass (cf. Phil 4:4). In the liturgical year, it is the Sunday "of joy," which reminds us of the bright aspect of waiting: the confidence that something beautiful, something joyful will happen.

In this regard, on December 26 last year, Pope Francis, when opening the Holy Door in the Church of Our Father in the prison in Rebibbia, addressed this invitation to everyone: "I say two things to you: First, the rope in hand, with the anchor of hope. Second, open wide the doors of your heart." Referring to an image already directed toward eternity, beyond the barrier of space and time (cf. Heb 6:17-20), he was inviting us to keep alive our faith in the life to come and always to believe in the possibility of a better future. At the same time, however, he was exhorting us to be people who practice, with generous hearts, justice and charity in the places where we live.

While the close of the Jubilee Year draws near, we must recognize that, despite the efforts of many, even in the penitentiary system there is much that still needs to be done in this regard. The words of the prophet Isaiah that we have just heard, "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing" (35:10), remind us that it is God who ransoms, who redeems and liberates. Furthermore, they convey the sense of an important and demanding mission for all of us.

Certainly, prison is a difficult place and even the best proposals can encounter many obstacles. For this reason, however, we must never tire, be discouraged or give up. We must keep moving forward with tenacity, courage and a spirit of collaboration. Indeed, there are many who do not yet understand that for every fall one must be able to get back up, that no human being is defined only by his or her actions and that justice is always a process of reparation and



reconciliation.

Yet, when even in difficult situations we are able to maintain and preserve the beauty of feelings, sensitivity, attention to the needs of others, respect, the capacity for mercy and forgiveness, beautiful flowers spring forth from the "hard ground" of sin and suffering. Moreover, gestures, projects and encounters, unique in their humanity, mature even within prison walls. This involves working on one's own feelings and thoughts, which is necessary for those deprived of their freedom, but even more so for those who have the obligation of representing them and making sure that they are treated justly. The Jubilee is a call to conversion and, as such, it is a source of hope and joy.

For this reason, it is important to look first of all to Jesus, to his humanity and to his Kingdom in which "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk...and the poor have good news preached to them" (Mt 11:5). We must remember that, even if at times these miracles come through the extraordinary interventions of God, more often they are entrusted to us, to our compassion, attention and wisdom and to the responsibility of our community and institutions.

This brings us to another dimension of the prophecy that we heard: the obligation to promote in every place—and I wish to emphasize particularly in prisons—a society established on new criteria, and ultimately on charity, as Saint Paul VI said at the conclusion of the 1975 Jubilee Year: "This—charity—should be, especially on the plane of public life,...the beginning of the new hour of grace and goodwill, which the calendar of history opens before us: the civilization of love!" (General Audience, 31 December 1975).

To this end, Pope Francis also hoped that during this Jubilee year forms of amnesty or pardon meant to help individuals regain confidence in themselves and in society could be granted and real opportunities of reintegration could be offered to all. I hope that many countries are following his desire. The Jubilee, as we know, with its biblical origin, was a year of grace in which everyone was offered the possibility of restarting in many different ways (cf. Lev 25:8-10).



The Gospel that we heard also speaks to us of this reality. John the Baptist, while he was preaching and baptizing, invited the people to repentance and to cross the river once again, symbolically, as in the time of Joshua (cf. Josh 3:17) in order to enter into and take possession of the new "Promised Land," that is a heart reconciled with God and with our brothers and sisters. In this sense, John's profile as a prophet is eloquent: He was upright, austere and frank, even to the point of being imprisoned for his courageous words. He was not "A reed shaken by the wind" (Mt 11:7). Yet at the same time, he was rich in mercy and understanding towards all who sincerely repented and were struggling to change (cf. Lk 3:10-14).

In this regard, Saint Augustine concludes one of his famous commentaries on the episode in the Gospel of the adulterous woman (cf. Jn 8:1-11) saying: "When the accusers left, only the

Justice is always
a process of
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reconciliation

poor woman and mercy remained. And to her the Lord said: Go and sin no more (Jn 8:10-11)"

Dear friends, the task that the Lord entrusts to you—to all of you, prisoners and those who work in the penitentiary system—is not easy. There are many problems to be addressed. Here, we can mention overcrowding, insufficient commitment to guarantee stable educational programs for rehabilitation and job opportunities. On a more personal level, let us not forget the weight of the past, the wounds to be healed in body and heart, the disappointments, the infinite patience that is needed with oneself and with others when embarking on paths of conversion, and the temptation to give up or to no longer forgive. The Lord, however, beyond all this, continues to repeat to us that only one thing is important: that no one be lost (cf. Jn 6:39) and that all “be saved” (1 Tim 2:4).

Let no one be lost! Let all be saved! This is what our God wants, this is his Kingdom, and this is the goal of his actions in the world. As Christmas approaches, we too want to embrace more strongly his dream, while being steadfast and faithful in our commitment (cf. James 5:8). We know that even in the face of the greatest challenges, we are not alone: the Lord is near (cf. Phil 4:5), he walks with us, and with him at our side, something beautiful and joyful will always happen.



INTERESTED IN CURSILLO? COMPLETED YOUR CURSILLO? WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Cursillo is a Catholic movement that aims to help people discover their personal relationship with Christ and live out their faith joyfully and authentically.

The method of the movement is to form small groups of Christians who meet in a friendship group to share their lives as Christians. A four-day encounter is a part of the movement that prepares the Christian to live out his or her faith. They are held in the spring and fall each year and last from Thursday evening through Sunday evening.

If you are interested in making a Cursillo, have questions, or are looking for a sponsor, please contact Cale Schnaus at 812-774-0732 or Rachael Schnaus at 812-499-8248.

If you have completed your Cursillo, we would love to know if you are grouping. If so, where and when are you grouping and if you are willing to accept any new Cursillistas? If you are not grouping, but would like to find a group to join, we will help get you into a group. Thank you for your help in keeping the Cursillo movement alive!



LOTTERY THANKS Thanks to all who bought tickets and thanks especially to all our great ticket sellers! Not only will we be able to give away \$16,200 to 48 lucky winners, we have also made \$21,300.00 for our parish.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS February 21, 2026--March 15, 2026

DATE	EUCARISTIC MINISTERS	READERS
Saturday February 21, 2026 5 PM	Diane Woods Eric Reffett Mary Loehrlein Carolyn Hutchinson	Sis Jarboe
Sunday February 22, 2026 8 AM	Brian and Ann Craney Marcia Frey Terry Drone	Chick Duncan
Sunday February 22, 2026 10:30 AM	Sally Kempf Cecelia Koch Kitty Deig Paul Hillenbrand	Jane Scheller
Saturday February 28, 2026 5 PM	Mary Kay Fehrenbacher Donna Niemeier Eric and Karen McDonald	Jim Hermann
Sunday March 1, 2026 8 AM	Chick Duncan Lisa Cook Rodney and Paula Baehl	Tom Folz
Sunday March 1, 2026 10:30 AM	Jena Wessel Rachael Schnaus Becky Dosher Steve Jung	Shane Wessel
Saturday March 7, 2026 5 PM	Butch and Linda Feulner Sis & Katie Jarboe	Susie Schapker
Sunday March 8, 2026 8 AM	Darlene Appler Kylie Frey Stephanie Frey Jalane Weber	Marcia Frey
Sunday March 8, 2026 10:30 AM	Shane & Jena Wessel Debra Baumgart Al Debes	Steve Jung
Saturday March 14, 2026 5:00 PM	Peter and Jodi Fehrenbacher Donald Werner Brandon Werner	Sis Jarboe
Sunday March 15, 2026 8:00 AM	Tom & Delores Folz Imogene Baehl Michael Elpers	Josh Baehl
Sunday March 15, 2026 10:30 AM	Diane Bassemier Danielle Weledge Doris Taylor Debra Baumgart	Chad Martin

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR OUR PARISH FISH FRYS



**FEBRUARY 27
MARCH 13**

It's time to make plans for "the best fish fry in the Evansville area,"—Friday February 27 and Friday, March 13. We will be serving our fish dinners **DRIVE THRU ONLY** from 5-7 PM. We'll be scheduling some work days to help prepare all the food for the fish fry on the Wednesday and Thursday before each fish fry. Check the bulletin and future newsletters for details.

Up Close and Personal



Katherine Roemke

Full of energy and joy about life. That would be a good way to describe Katherine Roemke. She is the daughter of Bryan and Christine (Lipper) Roemke, the older sister to Emma (a freshman at Signature school) and the granddaughter of Daryl and Carolyn Lipper.

Katherine is a senior at North High School. She's been busy with academic classes, taking a number of AP (Advanced Placement) classes

in biology, statistics, and English/literature. Among the many different books she has read are the classic Ray Bradbury novel *Fahrenheit 451* and Tara Westover's memoir *Educated*.

In addition to her academic work, Katherine's energy has been devoted to musicals, dancing, orchestra and 4-H. "I've been in pretty much every musical I could be in at North and the summer musicals put on by the EVSC." Among them have been *The Adams Family*, *The Sound of Music* (she played the young daughter Brigitta), *Momma Mia* (she played the daughter), *Into the Woods*, *Cinderella*, and *The Wizard of Oz* where she played the lead role of Dorothy. She had her only special "red shoes") and worked with her special dog "Togo." Being involved in all these musicals has not only helped her tap into her musical skills, but has also been an opportunity to develop lots of self confidence.

Katherine has also been a member of the EVSC Youth Orchestra where she has played the cello. Perhaps inspired by the famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma! Being involved in the orchestra this year has a special twist since her mom is the teacher for the Youth Orchestra.

Katherine has also been a member of the Scott Township 4-H Club for many years. Being part of 4-H is a family tradition. Katherine is the fourth generation of her family to be a member of 4-H. This year she is serving as President of Scott Achievers. With 86 members, they are the largest 4-H Club in Vanderburgh County. "Most people think of 4-H as people who show animals at the 4-H Fair, but it is a lot more than that. Being part of 4-H has given me the chance to get to know a lot of different people and seeing the different things they do. 4-H has also been a great way to develop your self confidence."

Over the years, Katherine estimates that through her years in 4-H she has brought over 150 different projects to the fair—sewing projects, food projects, and child development projects. She's gotten a lot of help and inspiration for her sewing and food projects from her Grandmother Carolyn.

Being involved in 4-H has also given Katherine the chance to participate in the 4-H queen contest. Last year she was first runner-up. She also participated in the Indiana State Festival Association Queen context where she was also runner-up. While she didn't win, her participation earned her some scholarship money for college.

Next year, Katherine would like to pursue a degree in speech leading to a career as a Speech Language Therapist. She has applied to Northwestern University in Chicago and St. Mary's University at Notre Dame. Of the two, she's leaning toward St. Mary's. "I went for a visit there and fell in love with the college. Since it sits right next to Notre Dame Univer-

INTRODUCING OUR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

sity, going there would mean she would take some of her classes at Notre Dame. Of course, college costs a great deal of money. Katherine was named as second alternate for the Lilly Scholarship. This means that if the two people ahead of her decide to go to school outside of Indiana, she would then become eligible for a Lilly Scholarship. As of this writing, she is now the first alternate. So here's hoping for some good news!

When Katherine talks about people who have influenced her, a lot of teachers and music directors came to mind. "I've been blessed to have some very passionate teachers, especially in high school. But the people that have the biggest influence on her have been her family, especially her mom and dad. "My mom has a great passion about music, so that is something we share in common. What I appreciate most about my mother is that she has a very kind heart, and she gives us the chance to pursue the interests that we have. I think she is a great role model also because she gives 110% to the things she does. She has a lot of passion and determination in the things she does, as well.

One of the things I share in common with my dad is that he has a great curiosity about things in life. My mom says that he and I are 'big idea people with a big imagination.' I always get the sense that he really cares for us. I'm told that when I was a little baby, I would not go to sleep unless my dad held me in his arms and rocked me to sleep, and he did that pretty much every night."

WORDS OF WISDOM: "I've been blessed to have lived a life that has been really good without a whole lot of difficulties. But I have had my challenges as well. One of them is learning how to live with ADHD which makes it difficult to focus your energy and concentrate on things. Lots of people deal with this. I've been blessed with a very sensitive nature as well which can also be a great blessing and a difficulty at the same time. I remember having to deal with people who never quite got why I always seemed so happy. That led to name calling from others which made it difficult to fit in, which is what every kid wants. Over the years I have to understand that you can feel sadness about things and yet feel joy at the same time. I think one of the most important pieces of wisdom I can offer is to be on the lookout for the person who looks like they are all alone. Take the time to reach out to them. You never know the things they might be dealing with in their life. Remember, too, that everyone deserves a place at the table. When you can develop this kind of attitude, then you realize that there is never a reason to hate others.

Owen Traylor

Owen is the youngest son of Brad and Susie (Hoffman) Traylor and the younger brother to Jackson, Eva, and Lillian Traylor. He is a senior at Mater Dei. When we sat down to talk, Owen was in the middle of wrestling season. He's been wrestling since the seventh grade. Owen wrestles in the 190lb division and was getting ready for the Mater Dei Wrestling Holiday Turney. "We have a lot of good wrestlers on the team this year so I think we will do pretty good."

Wrestling has been a good fit for Owen. "Wrestling can teach you about accountability. If you



(Continued on page 5)

RUMMAGE SALE

It's time to start planning for our rummage sale. The dates for the rummage sale are June 12 and 13. Right now we are inviting you to save your gently used items for the rummage sale.

Rule of thumb—if you wouldn't buy it at a rummage sale, then don't bring it. We regret that we cannot accept electronic items, old computers, TV's and the like. More information to be coming in the weeks ahead. Got any suggestions or questions? Contact Imogene (812) 963-5221.

win or lose, it's up to the effort you are willing to put into it. I like the fact that wrestling can give you the opportunity to challenge yourself. When you succeed at something that is really difficult, it is really an amazing thing. You spend a lot of time with teammates at practices, weightlifting sessions, and wrestling matches so you can develop some good friendships with them.

Owen has worked hard with his academic studies as well during his four years of high school as evidenced by the fact that he has been a member of the National Honor Society. Through this, he has also done volunteer work at grade school wrestling and track meets. He also did volunteer work with the Salvation Army. Throughout his four years of high school, Owen has been blessed with some good teachers. "I've taken some courses on biology and human anatomy with Mrs. Wanne-muehler. I've also taken some classes with Mr. Austin, especially an advance placement class on macroeconomics. The teachers that I have had from my theology classes have also been really good. I especially have enjoyed learning about church history with Mr. Wathen and my senior year theology class with Mr. Schaefer. We're spending a lot of time talking about vocations."

Owen graduated from St. Joe Grade school. "I was there from pre-school through 8th grade. It's small enough so you get to know everyone. I loved our PE classes and going to the library for reading. Recess time also had a lot of great memories. I remember all my teachers, especially Mrs. Will and Mrs. Daugherty."

Next year, Owen is thinking about going to school in Florida. He has some relatives living in the Tampa Bay area, so going to there has some appeal for him. "It would be the chance to get out of Evansville and get another perspective on life. I'm not sure what I will major in. Perhaps something to do with business or perhaps a degree in biology." Of course, going to school in Florida will depend upon the amount of scholarship money he can get. The back up plan is to go to IU where all of his siblings have gone. Going to IU has the added benefit of joining his sister Lillian who is already at IU.

When asked about people who have been influential in his life, Owen is quick to point to his family. "I've been blessed with great parents. My mom is great. I don't think I really give her enough thanks for all the things she has done for me over the years. What I have especially appreciated about her is how she helps me keep my focus in life and stay on target on the things that I do. I appreciate her patience and the guidance she gives me in making good decisions in life."

"I think my dad and I have a great relationship. He likes wrestling, so that is one thing we bond over. He's been a

great model in terms of having a good work ethic. We both enjoy working on cars as well."

The influence of his family extends to his brother Jackson and sisters, Eva and Lillian. "Jackson has been a brother that I can look up to. He's married and the father of two kids so I get the chance to play the "uncle" role." Jackson and my sister Eva are both a few years older. Eva is now finishing graduate school and is planning on getting married later this year. My sister Lillian is a lot closer to my age so we've always had a special relationship. She's now attending the Kelly School of Business at IU."

Owen has a lot of extended family members here in Evansville and in Jasper, where his dad grew up. Lately, he has had the opportunity to work with his cousin Sam Fehrenbacher on a house remodeling project. "We're putting in a new floor, and Sam is teaching me some of the ins and outs of this work, especially the proper use of power equipment. "If you're not careful about what you are doing you can get hurt pretty quickly."

WORDS OF WISDOM "I think learning to appreciate what you have is pretty important. Sometimes you have good things, like family, and it can be pretty easy to take them for granted. I think it is important to get involved in as many things as you can. Sometimes you need to push yourself to do things you may not have thought you could do. All this can teach you accountability. Do what you say you are going to do. Being involved in wrestling has really helped me to do this. I think it is also important to surround yourself with good friends. Everyone needs people that they can talk to and know that they will support you. High school goes by quickly, so learn to appreciate all the things that happen from classes to going to athletic events. It's all an opportunity to enjoy life."

Addy Wilkinson

It's been a busy four years for Addy Wilkinson, a senior at Mater Dei. She is the daughter of Jordan and Kelly Wilkinson and the older sister to Alice, a sophomore at Mater Dei, Georgianne, a fourth grader at St. Joe, and younger brother Leo who just turned 3. She was selected to represent Mater Dei at the Tomorrow's Workforce Luncheon sponsored by our Catholic high schools. This event honors seniors for their leadership qualities. At this event, Addy was chosen as the Mater Dei recipient of an academic scholarship.



Addy has been active in student government and currently serves as student chaplain. She was honored for her academic work by being selected for the National Honor Society for the past two years. This year she is serving as President of the National Honor Society. Students in the National Honor Society are called to set a good example through academics as well as living a spiritual and moral life. One way she has done this is by doing service hours in the community. Addy has spent a lot of time volunteering at cross country and track meets for the Mater Dei feeder schools. You've probably also seen her working at parish fish fries and the chicken dinner in July.

(Continued on page 6)



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Drop it in the collection or send it to parish office.

CREMATION NICHES NOW AVAILABLE FOR SALE IN OUR CEMETERY COLUMBIARIUM



We are now ready to sell spaces for people to be buried in our new cemetery columbarium. There will be a total of 80 niches in five concentric circles. Each of these spaces will accommodate two urns 5 1/2" X 5 1/2" X 7" urns. The front of each niche space will be approximate 12" x 12" which will allow people to engrave the names of the people buried in this space along with the year of the birth and the year of their death.

The cost for each individual niche space will be \$1,500. If you would like to purchase a space in our columbarium, please stop by the parish office and we will help you select your niche space.

(Continued from page 5) **INTRODUCING OUR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS (cont.)**

Addy has also been involved in the Mater Dei Spring Musical Productions. Over the years, she has been part of the cast for Peter and the Star Catcher, SpongeBob, and this year she will be part of the cast for Tuck Everlasting. Watch for it this coming April!

Throughout her years at Mater Dei, Addy has also been a member of the cross country and track teams. "I started running when I was in 5th grade. I went out for soccer and cross country then and found out I was better at cross country, so I've stuck with that. This past year, the Girl's Cross Country team at Mater Dei won both the city championship as well as the sectional championship—a first for Mater Dei. "I really like being on the cross country team. You spend a lot of time with your teammates at practice and at meets, so it's pretty natural that you become good friends with one another. Running takes a lot of physical preparation. You have to be willing to put in the time getting in shape and staying in shape. Running cross country requires a lot of mental effort as well. They say running is 50% mental. Most people can do more than they think, and a lot of running is pushing yourself beyond what you think you can do."

In addition to all these extracurricular activities, Addy has spent a great deal of time on her academic work, taking a number of AP (advanced placement) classes in chemistry, biology, physics, anatomy, and calculus. "I found out early that I was good at science and math and grew to love it." This spring, Addy will have a chance to put her academic knowledge to work as a member of the Mater Dei Academic Bowl Team.

Next year she plans on attending IU to pursue a degree in science. Her long term goal is to become an orthodontist, which means that after completing college, she will be going to dental school and then specializing as an orthodontist.

Addy graduated from St. Joe Grade School. "Lots of good memories, especially the lunch times. The lunch ladies were great, especially Mrs. King. She's like a grandmother to every-

JOIN US AT THE ALTAR SOCIETY MEETING



The St. Anne Altar Society meets on the second Thursday of each month. Next meeting is February 8 at 6:30 pm in the meeting room. New members are always welcomed. Yearly dues of \$5 can be paid at the meeting or can be put in the weekly collection. Join us for food and fellowships and join in our efforts to provide money for the things we use at mass—candles, altar bread and wine, missalettes

SIGN UP NOW FOR ST. JOE COMMUNITY BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

Sign Up now, for the 2026 St Joe Community Baseball & Softball teams. Boys and girls age 3-12. <http://www.leaguelineup.com/stjbaseball>. Questions? Call Jon Eickhoff at 812-455-3361.



one. We had a lot of good teachers as well. I think Mrs. Daugherty was really good. Most of the people in my calculus class are from St. Joe. She really prepared us well for this."

When asked about the people who have had a big influence on her, Addy is quick to point to her parents. "I've been blessed with great parents. My mom is a great person to talk to. I feel comfortable talking with her about anything. She's a good listener and has taught me how important it is to try to understand another person's point of view. My dad and I are more alike. We like things in order. He's able to be fun loving and yet knows when to be serious as well. Another person that has had a big influence on me is Ms. Gilles. She started teaching us piano, but over time she has become just a really good friend and someone I can go to for advice. She's become part of our family, a little like having another wise grandparent.

WORDS OF WISDOM: I think it is so important to believe in yourself and trust your own wisdom. When I was younger, I was pretty shy. As I started doing different things like cross country and track, and then getting involved in school musicals and student government, I developed a lot more self confidence. One of the things that has really helped is surrounding myself with good friends. These are the people who support you and are willing to be good role models for you. You can tell something about a person's authenticity by their ability to truly listen to you. In a good relationship you are able to have fun and yet be serious as well. When you do that, you can gain something from every relationship. Going to Mater Dei has been a good experience for me. There is a great sense of family here. I've experienced that from the teachers, to the coaches, to the friends I have made. It has really helped me to become a more confident person.



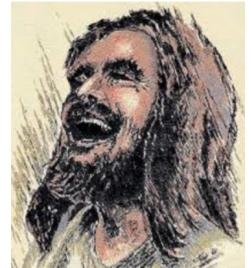
The Best Poem in the World

I was shocked, confused, bewildered
as I entered heaven's door
not by the beauty of it all,
nor by its decor.
It was the folks in heaven
who made me stutter and gasp, the
thieves, the liars, the sinners, the alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade
who swiped my lunch money twice,
and next to him was my old neighbor
who never said anything nice.

And Herb, who I always thought
was rotting away in hell,
was sitting on cloud nine
and looking pretty well.

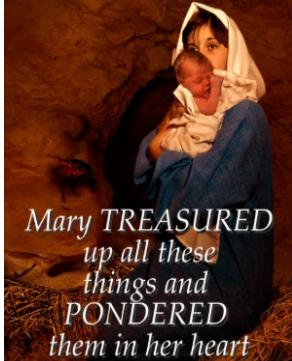
I nudged Jesus. What's the deal?
I would love to hear your take.
How did all these sinners get here?
God you must have made a mistake.
And why is everyone so quiet, so somber. Give me a clue?
Hush, my child, said Jesus. They're all in shock.
No one thought they'd be seeing you!



(Continued from page 1)

Because we live in such a superficial world, we don't take the time to entertain such questions. The end result is that there is no "minding the gap" and people simply go from being triggered by a person or event to responding to it in an attacking and blaming way.

Learning how to "mind the gap" would help us immensely in creating a world where there is much less division and a whole lot more tolerance of others. But for us who claim to be Catholic, there is much more to this. "Minding the gap" is a central part of embracing the Gospel. Jesus tells the Peter and disciples "cast your nets into the deep." (Luke 5:4). He's not giving "fishing" advice, but telling us that that being a disciple requires a lot of inner work, looking deep into our souls. Another time he tells the disciples "try to enter through the narrow gate. (Matthew 7:13-14). He's telling us that being Catholic is about inner transformation and not simply about outward actions. Again and again, he invites the disciples to "come away for awhile and pray." (Mark 6:31). A one point Jesus laments the superficiality of people's lives when "he saw the crowds and was moved to pity because they were like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36) Another time he grieves for the people because of the hardness of their hearts. (Mark 10:5).



these things in her heart" The psalmist tells us "Let the one who is wise heed these things and ponder the loving deeds of the Lord" (Psalm 104:43)

Reflecting on all these scripture passages can help us learn how to "mind the gap." Many of the practices of our faith tradition are really tools to help us "mind the gap." Something as simple as praying the morning offering, recalling the words of St. Paul to be so intentional in our lives that everything we do, in speech or in action, is done in the name of the Lord. Evening prayer, with its daily examination of conscience, is an invitation to see just how well we have done. Praying the rosary, with the repetition of prayers, is an effort to quiet our mind from all the distractions around us. Eucharistic Adoration, in its best sense, is a chance for us to be quiet and reflect upon what is happening in our lives.

So "minding the gap" is really at the heart of helping us grow up to be followers of the Gospel Jesus teaches us. But it is not easy. In a world full of noise and distractions it is easier to ignore the invitations that comes to us each day to seek a deeper inner transformation. Some people say that the vast majority of people, (more than 90%) do not really want to do the work of inner transformation. And, frankly, we haven't had many people in our church who teach us how to do this.

For so many people, being Catholic is simply a matter of doing holy things. Because we live such superficial lives, we often are unaware of the people and events that trigger us. And even if we are aware of some of these events,

MINDING THE GAP (cont.)

quite often they are a source of embarrassment for us and something to just shove aside. We rarely think of these as gifts, or an opportunity to learn something about ourselves. It is just so much easier to go on to the next distraction in our life. And when someone asks us "what is happening in our lives" we have little to say.

One of the big hurdles we have to overcome is not just learning how to pay attention to the things that happen to us, but to see the times that we get upset or react to others when we are not at our best, as a very important part of our spiritual life. They are holy moments for us. When we ask questions like "why does this situation upset me." or "why do I get so offended by this person," we are, to use the words of Jesus, "casting our nets into the deep" and "trying to enter through the narrow gate."

While it does take courage to do this inner work, it is not impossible. In fact, it is where Jesus wants to take us. Learning to live our lives with intentionality will not only make us freer and less likely to be controlled by unhealthy belief systems, it will also open us to a world of joy and peace that we can scarcely imagine now. If the thought of taking the risk to "mind the gap" is frightening, we need only listen to the words St. Paul spoke to the people of Ephesus: "I give thanks to God whose power now at work in your lives can do far more than you can ask or even imagine." (Ephesians 3:20)

**HAPPINESS is when
what we THINK,
what we SAY, and
what we DO,
are in HARMONY!**

MID YEAR PARISH REPORT

July 1, 2025--December 31, 2025

With the end of December, it is a good time to give a mid-year about what has been happening in our parish these past six months. Our present year began last July with our annual Summer Social Chicken Dinner and Grand Raffle. Over 2600 chicken dinners were sold. Their sales and the proceeds from our grand raffle resulted in a combined income of \$115,012.48. After paying expenses of \$31,106.81, we were left with a profit of \$83,905.67.

In August the new school year began and we welcomed four new members of our school staff, Caroline Voges, Jennifer Fuchs, Adrienne Kerney and Hadley Kendel. We also welcomed some new members to our maintenance staff: Yensia Araujo, Bill Vogt & Bill Layman. Kelsy Meier, our school Principal, has led our school staff as they welcomed students to the 185th year of teaching children the ways of faith in our parish. The new school year has been filled not only with the usual academic pursuits but a whole list of extra curricular activities as well—speech team, musical programs, art exhibits, and sporting events. The work of the school could not happen without the support of our school PTO and Athletic Committee activities. They provide not only financial support but also a countless supply of volunteers who perform an endless list of tasks.

August and September also brought a new year of Religious Education Opportunities. Jessica Recekloff, our DRE coordinated a whole host of faith development opportunities. Bible Study Groups, , That Man Is You Reflection Group, Women's Study Group, Children's Liturgy of the Word, Men's and Women's Cursillo, opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration were among these opportunities. Sacramental preparation for Confirmation and Reconciliation were also conducted.

Throughout these months we have continued to gather in prayer at Mass, celebrate the gift of people at funerals and wel-

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7) **MID YEAR REPORT TO THE PARISH (cont.)**
 comded new members through the sacrament of Baptism. We are blessed to have the services of Kristan Gilles, our Director of Liturgy who enhanced all these liturgical events. Finding a Director of Worship who also has keyboard skills as a pianist and organist is becoming more and more difficult. Our choir and liturgical ensemble blessed us as well with gifts.

Taking care of our parish buildings and keeping our parish campus in good shape has always been a priority in our parish. Each year brings its share of plumbing, heating/air conditioning and electrical things that need to be fixed. We continue to be blessed with so many members of the parish who are quick to offer their particular expertise with maintenance issues. Last summer, the school classrooms and floors were given a special cleaning. We completed the project of removing the old heat-

CATHOLIC MINISTRY APPEAL

PARISH GOAL \$131,040.00
 PLEDGED TO DATE \$140,326.00 107%
 NUMBER OF PLEDGES 326 68%
 AVERAGE PLEDGE \$430.45



ing units in each classroom and replacing them with new cabinets. The landscaping around our new cremation columbarium was also completed. We continued to monitor the moisture issue in our church. We repaired and painted a section of the church where the moisture problems had caused the paint to peel. Our plan is to check this area after several top see if the moisture problem has been resolved. If the results are good, we will proceed with painting and repairing the entire area effected. We are also proceeding with plans for a new presby septic system.

The work of our Altar Society, Knights of St. John and Men's Club continues. Through their kuchen sales, the Altar Society continues to provide money to pay for many of the things we use at Mass. The Men's Club conducted their usual fall burgoo and sausage sales. This year, the took over the Knights of St. John Fall Festival Booth. Both the Men's Club and the PTO operated their booths at the Fall Festival and had very successful year's.

In our effort to help us own the financial responsibility for providing the money needed to do the various ministries in our parish, we are providing you with a condensed financial report.

The majority of the money we receive comes from our Sunday collections and grade school tuition. At of the end of December we are running behind our budgeted needs for this period. Overall, our year to date total parish income is slightly less than our budgeted projections.

With regard to our expenses, we have been able to keep our actual expenses pretty much in line with our budgeted figures for this period. When we plan our budget, we tend to budget our expenses on the high side in the hopes that expenses will be less than that. That way, if expenses are less than we anticipated, and our income is less than we anticipated, we hope things will even out.

We have had a tremendous response to our annual Catholic Ministries Appeal (CMA), what we used to call our Catholic Parishes Campaign. We have received pledges in the amount of \$140,326.00 toward our goal of \$131,040.00.

Our three year “Rebuilding the Church” campaign came to a close this past December 31. We had total pledges of \$805, 572 for this campaign and we received pledges of \$815,910.23. We will have some costs connected with repainting

2025 FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

By this time you should have received your contribution statements for 2025. It should reflect the contributions you have to the parish as well as your contributions to our work in Haiti. Please take the time to review your statement. We make every effort to be accurate in the records we keep, but there is always the chance that we have made a mistake. So if you find some inconsistencies in your report, please let us know so that we can make the necessary corrections.



You should be receiving a separate statement from our diocesan office which will give you a record of your contributions to the Catholic Ministries Appeal.

the affected areas in the church, but outside of that, all the bills connected with rebuilding the church have been paid. The other items we undertook through this campaign, with the exception of the new presby septic system, have also been paid.

INCOME	Current YTD	YTD Budget	Total Budget
Sunday Collections	\$347,728.29	\$399,000.00	\$798,000.00
Other Ordinary Income	\$42,575.44	\$17,000.00	\$76,300.00
Summer Social Income	\$115,012.08	\$55,000.00	\$55,000.00
Religious Education Income	\$2,019.42	\$600.00	\$1,600.00
School Income (Pre-School, Supplies, Tuition, Grants, Tuition Vouchers, Fees, etc.)	\$596,935.06	\$618,444.00	\$1,189,574.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,060,678.09	1,090,044.00	\$2,120,074.00
EXPENSES	Current YTD	YTD Budget	Total Budget
Parish Staff Salaries and Benefits	\$115,286.46	\$146,450.00	\$292,900.00
Parish Office & Related Expenses	\$9,518.97	\$12,400.00	\$34,200.00
Church and Worship	\$3,355.11	\$7,000.00	\$14,000.00
Parish Buildings/Ground Maintenance	\$20,200.14	\$19,700.00	\$46,200.00
Summer Social Expenses	\$31,106.81	\$35,700.00	\$35,700.00
Parish Assessment For Mater Dei High School	\$49,770.60	\$50,751.50	\$101,503.00
School Expenses	\$682,183.92	\$758,210.50	\$1,503,271.00
Religious Education Expenses	\$31,068.63	\$34,950.00	\$69,700.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$956,733.89	1,081,112.00	\$2,120,074.00
If you would like to see a more detailed report, stop by the Parish Office and we will make a copy for you.			

MISSION OUTREACH



Be an island of mercy in a sea of indifference.

Pope Leo

Not all of us can do great things, but all of us can do small things with great love. Mother Teresa of Calcutta



THANKS....to the members of the St. Anne Altar Society and the parishioners of St. Joseph for the Christmas gifts you provided for the patients at the Evansville State Hospital. In such a simple way you helped to remember people who are so often forgotten. Thanks for all you did this holiday season to bring some comfort and joy to people.

Theresa Arvin Community Service Director

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS THIS MONTH AID FOR THE CHURCH IN EASTERN EUROPE



ASH WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 18
Since 1991, the collection has provided more than \$75 million to Catholics in post-communist Russia and Central and Eastern Europe, including communities in Ukraine. These funds have supported more than 3,500 church projects in many Eastern Europe Countries. Visit their website: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/church-central-eastern-europe>

SUPPORTING BLACK AND NATIVE AMERICAN PARISHES IN NEED

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT FEBRUARY 22

The Black and Indian Mission Collection exists to help local African American and Native American Diocesan Communities throughout the United States spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and respond to real and pressing needs on the ground. This collection is held annual on the First Sunday of Lent. For more information visit their website: www.blackandindianmission.org



We continue to accept donations for the St. Vincent dePaul Food Pantry. Simple things like a jar of peanut butter, a bag of beans, a can of tuna, a can of soup, a box of oatmeal or cereal.

CREATING AN AWARENESS FOR RECYCLING MEANS
LOOKING AT THE THINGS WE THROW AWAY
AND ASKING "CAN THIS BE RECYCLED?"
JUST ONE MORE WAY WE CAN LEARN
TO CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME



BLOOD DRIVE
SUNDAY FEB. 1
8 -- NOON
IN THE GYM

HAITI MINISTRY REPORT

STUDENT SPONSORSHIPS

Grade school and High School have completed the 1st Trimester. Thank you to all sponsors who have paid for your sponsored student. We are always looking to add more sponsors to the program. If you know anyone wanting to sponsor a student, please have them reach out to Amy Streete or Chad Martin.

GIFTS OF COMPASSION FUNDRAISER

Thanks to the generosity of so many people, we have raised over \$25,000 to buy food for our children in school. That's enough to provide over 50,000 meals. It is an amazing start. Our goal is to provide meals for the 900 students and staff at the school during the whole school year. To do that we would have to have enough money to provide over 135,000 meals. We will continue to accept money for this project. Checks can be mailed to St. Joseph Parish 6202 W. St. Joseph Rd. Evansville, IN 47720. Please put Gifts of Compassion in the memo. If you don't have checks and want to make a donation you can Venmo @AlisonM1980, and I will see that the funds get to St. Joseph Haiti Outreach.



SEWING HOPE

Sewing Hope continues to give hope to many young adults by helping them learn the trade of sewing. It is up to many families to make their own clothes or rely on a neighbor or friend to do this. Classes started October 6. Please contact Monie Siscel if you would like to get involved. She is still looking for a few more sponsors. \$300/year (82 cents/day)

CHURCH ROOF

Last November, the metal for the roof and lumber to repair roof trusses arrived at the parish from the Dominican Republic. Stay tuned for photos of the new roof. The current roof has several holes and leaks terribly when it is raining.



MISSION TRIP

We have so many folks interested in making a Mission Trip to St. Jacques and the surrounding area. Right now we are looking at May. This is subject to change based on the interest.

If you want to get more involved in this ministry, please come to a meeting or reach out to me. We are really looking for some young energetic people who can take this ministry to the next level and make sure it continues for another 40 years. With that said, we still want our older mature supporters to stay involved! For more information contact Chad Martin at seabeesgreat58@gmail.com. (812-454-2785).

HAITI CELEBRATION

We're hoping to have a Haiti Celebration this spring—a chance to give thanks for all that we have been able to accomplish. Look for details in the next couple of months.

FEBRUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 8 & 10:30 Mass Coffee & Donuts 9:00 am Family Class & RCIA Conf. Retreat 12-4 Children's Liturgy @ 10:30 Food Pantry and Haiti Collection BLOOD DRIVE 8 AM – NOON	2 Boot Camp 5 am 7 am-7pm Eucharistic Adoration 6:30 pm Mass	3 7:30 am Mass Choir Practice 6 pm Nut Club Dinner	4 Boot Camp 5 am 7:30 am Mass Parish Staff Meeting 12 Noon That Man Is You 5:30 pm Bible Study 6:45 pm	5 NO MASS	6 Boot Camp 5 am 7:30 am Mass Communion to the Homebound 8:30 am Bible Study	7 Confessions 4-4:40 pm 5 pm Mass Food Pantry Collection RCIA Retreat at the Catholic Center
8 8 & 10:30 Mass Children's Liturgy of the Word @ 10:30 RCIA at 9 Food Pantry Collection  <i>World Marriage Day</i>	9 Boot Camp 5 am 7 am-7 pm Eucharistic Adoration 6:30 pm Mass Knights of St. John Mtg 7 pm	10 7:30 am Mass Choir Practice 6 pm	11 Boot Camp 5 am 7:30 am Mass Parish Staff Meeting 12 Noon That Man Is You 5:30 pm Bible Study 6:45 pm	12 NO MASS Altar Society Meeting 6:30 pm	13 Boot Camp 5 am 7:30 AM MASS Senior Citizen Gathering 1 pm Communion to the Homebound	14 Altar Society Making Kuchens 7 am Confessions 4-4:40 pm 5 pm Mass Food Pantry Collection
15 8 & 10:30 Mass Family Class and RCIA at 9 am Children's Liturgy of the Word 10:30 Food Pantry Collection	16 Boot Camp 5 am 7am-7 pm Eucharistic Adoration 6:30 PM Mass Men's Club Meeting 7 pm	17 7:30 am Mass	18 ASH WEDNESDAY Boot Camp 5 am 7:30 am Mass That Man Is You 5:30 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm Penance Services with distribution of ashes 11 am & 7 pm	19 NO MASS 6 pm Haiti Ministry Meeting 	20 Boot Camp 5 am 7:30 AM MASS Communion to the Homebound Bible Study @ 8:30	21 Confessions 4-4:30 pm 5 pm Mass Food Pantry Collection
22 8 & 10:30 Masses Food Pantry Collection RCIA Rite of Sending at 8 am Rite of Election at St. Bens at 2:00	23 Boot Camp 5 am 7 am-7 pm Eucharistic Adoration 6:30 PM Mass	24 7:30 am Mass Family Stations of the Cross 5:30 pm	25 Boot Camp 5 am 7:30 am Mass Parish Staff Meeting 12 Noon 1 pm Fish Fry Preparations That Man Is You 5:30 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm	26 NO MASS 6 pm Haiti Ministry Meeting	27 Boot Camp 5 am 7:30 AM MASS Communion to the Homebound Bible Study @8:30 PARISH FISH FRY SERVING 5-7 CARRYOUT ONLY 	28 Confessions 4-4:30 pm 5 pm Mass Haiti & Food Pantry Collection Youth Holy Fire Retreat in Indy



MASS 7:30 AM
PENANCE SERVICES
11 AM & 7 PM
DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES
AT ALL THESE SERVICES



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Mrs. Jessica Reckelhoff
E-mail jreckelhoff@evdio.org
Coordinator of Religious Education

**WEEKEND MASSES: Saturday 5pm
Sunday 8 and 10:30 am**



Lord, help us to remember when we first met and
the strong love that grew between us.
Help us love in *practical ways* so that nothing
can divide us. May our *words be kind* and
our thoughts be *gracious*. May we remain
humble enough to ask for *forgiveness*
and wise enough to *freely give it*.

Coming....March 7 & 8, 2026



HOPE
Womens Retreat

Join us for this exciting 2 day retreat. We will host
motivational talks, brunch, dinner, snacks, drinks, crafts,
Music, and a spa hour. This retreat is a time to get away
from all the daily distractions, deepen your faith, all the
while sharing in love for the Lord.

We can't wait for you to join us!

Register on line at St. Joe Facebook. \$50/person Or
contact Jessica Reckelhoff (jreckelhoff@evdio.org) or Rachael
Schnaus (rschnaus@yahoo) to register or for questions.



LENT BEGINS ON February 18
Ash Wednesday
February 18
Mass at 7:30 am
with distribution of Ashes
Penance Service
with distribution of Ashes **11:00 am and 7:00 pm**
This year, we will be following a much older Catholic
tradition of having ashes sprinkled on our heads.