

Newsletter

Winter 2019

St. Sebastian Parish Celebrates 90 Years at Gala

St. Sebastian Parish hosted a celebration of the parish's 90th anniversary at a gala on Nov. 10. The gala, which drew a crowd of 180 people, took place at Zwisler Hall – the very site where the parish celebrated Mass in its early years until the current church was dedicated in 1960.

The highlights of the gala included the attendance of several priests who served at St. Sebastian over the years, pictured below, who enjoyed breaking bread together and sharing stories of their time at St. Sebastian. Other highlights included a proclamation presented by Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan, a St. Sebastian parishioner, in honor of the parish's anniversary as well as its role as a cornerstone of the

West Akron community. After enjoying dinner, guests were treated to a video featuring footage of the extensive Cornerstone of Our Faith church restoration project that was completed during this anniversary year. Much of the video was filmed using a drone to capture overhead images, from the soaring bell tower to the massive altar.

To view this video of our beautiful church, visit the parish website (www.stsebastian.org) and click on the "90th Anniversary" tab on the left. The 90th Anniversary web page also has links to:

- a list of donors to the Cornerstone of our Faith Campaign;
- the 90th Anniversary Gala program, which includes a parish history and historical photos;



- photos from the night of the gala;
- the Anniversary Mass program;
- an archival document listing the "Good Crusaders," otherwise known as many of the original members of the parish; and
- a link to a video recording of a song composed by alumnus John Kastelic '82 that was inspired by the church restoration work. More information on the song is listed in this newsletter under John's name in Alumni Updates.

The gala is part of the parish's many 90th anniversary celebrations, which began June, 2018, with a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Bishop Nelson Perez. Also in June the parish completed a \$1 million restoration of the church, a major project that involved repairing and restoring every aspect of the church, from the pews, kneelers and statues, to the floors, doors and front plaza. Other anniversary activities include a parish photo directory, the sale of commemorative items,

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Top (left to right): Fr. Robert Jackson (1999-2004), Fr. Anthony Simone (2017-present, parochial vicar), Fr. John Valencheck (2008-present, pastor), and Fr. Thomas McCann (1973-1980); Bottom (left to right): Fr. Clyde Foster (1989-1994), Fr. Thomas McGovern (1961-1963), Fr. James Semonin (1974-1980), and Fr. Edward Burba (1980-1985). Not pictured, but also in attendance at the gala, were Fr. Peter Kovacina (2014-2015) and Deacon Terry Peacock (1986-present).

We Will Remember

The Alumni Association extends our sincerest sympathy to the families and friends of our deceased alumni. If you learn of the passing of a St. Sebastian alumnus, please contact us by phone at 330.836.2233 x119 or by email at alumni@stsebastian.org.

(October, 2018 through January, 2019)

✠ Please keep these friends in your prayers ✠

Rose Marie Humphrey Sandrene '41, July 1, 2018
Marie Karg Graham '44, November 12, 2018
Joan Hummel Johnson '46, December 27, 2018
Marcheta Floyd Hagen '51 July 4, 2018
William J. Adante, Jr. '51, December 6, 2018
Michael J. Patnode '58, September 18, 2018

Eileen Reymann (Spoonster) Sherman '59,
January 27, 2019
Sandra Magyary Miller '61 August 29, 2018
Paul J. Sandrene '67, September 21, 2018
James R. Knapp '75, November 17, 2018
Nina L. Francesconi '89, November 24, 2018

90th Gala, continued from pg. 1

the publication of a book of the church's history (publication details to be announced) written by the current pastor, Fr. John Valencheck, and several festivals, concerts, recitals and parish gatherings. Special thanks to Michelle Huber '78 (parish director of marketing and PR) and Cathy Sivec (parish catechetical leader) for planning this outstanding gala celebration!



Joining in the celebration at the 90th Anniversary Gala were many alumni from St. Sebastian Parish School, including (Front) Sharon Fournier '74, Kathy McDonald Seikel '52, Karen Frey '58, Mickie McCool Trenta '56, Annette Karg Brady '46, Tom Karg '73, Nancy Karg Maloyan '46, Harry Schwab '41; (Middle) Mari O'Neill '04, Molly Karg '04, Lauren O'Neill '01, Becky Schmidt Davis '65, Marcy Smith '82, Anne Morgan Dennée '85, Kathy Beringer Reed '72, Ellen Henaughan Martucci '42; (Back) Tim DelMedico '70, Tom Van Auken '69, Peggy Baumgardner Contrera '72, Michelle Traverse Huber '78, Karen McCusker Spangler '78, Tom Welsh '65, Luke O'Neill '02, George Bachmann '63. Not pictured but in attendance: John Bader '67.

Celebrating 90 Years of Catholic Tradition

St. Sebastian Parish was founded on July 6, 1928, when the Rev. Hilary Zwisler was announced as pastor of a new parish. The first Mass was celebrated in rented space at the Rankin School gym on August 5, 1928. The new parish was established in response to a population boom in Akron, which from 1910-1920 experienced growth of more than two hundred percent. By 1928, Akron's St. Vincent Church had again

become too overcrowded, despite the establishment of the nearby parishes of St. Bernard, St. Mary, St. Paul and St. Martha.

In 1929, construction began on St. Sebastian parish's first building, a combined church and school. As it grew, the parish added a convent in 1950 for the Sisters of Humility who taught at the school, as well as a gymnasium in 1952, and the current church building, which was dedicated in 1960.

Since then, the parish school has added a junior high wing (1969), a science lab (2001), a technology/computer lab (2001), a school garden (2011), and an Innovation Lab (2017). In 2001, the convent was converted into classrooms for kindergarten and preschool students. St. Sebastian Parish School has educated over 5,500 students, and St. Sebastian Parish boasts a thriving membership of more than 1,750 parishioner families.

Alumni Updates

Class of 1948

Karl Gauthier emailed to say that he and classmate Jim Wendelken enjoy the *St. Sebastian Alumni Newsletter* with great nostalgia. Karl and Jim both live in Georgetown, Texas in Sun City, a community for retired people, which Karl calls “adult fun camp.”

Class of 1960

Joe Bachmann wrote to say he remembers that his class of 1960 was the first class to celebrate graduation in the new church. Joe was an altar boy at St. Sebastian. He went on to attend Archbishop Hoban High School and the University of Akron. Joe, pictured here with some of his student athletes, is entering his 45th year of coaching, and he says it all started in 1966 when Charlie Zeno asked him to coach a high school CYO basketball team for St. Sebastian. Joe says Charlie was his favorite coach, and he still remembers all the life lessons from playing and coaching. Joe recalls that in his first CYO season, his team notched the best record in history with 18 wins and 1 loss. The team earned a trip to the state tournament, where they finished 4th. He says he has had the pleasure of watching his three sons play college baseball and helping many other young people grow through sports. Joe says, “Thanks to Charlie and to St. Sebastian.”



Class of 1964

Peggy McMullen Cogar published a book entitled, “My Family, My Country: A Memoir of Patriotism and Faith.” The book, which is available on Amazon, is a collection of stories drawn from the love letters Peggy’s father wrote to her mother while he was serving in the military during World War II and letters that Peggy’s son and granddaughter wrote during their time in basic training in 1997-2015. Peggy, who lives in Florida, notes that a portion of the sales from the memoir are donated to two charities: Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) and Folds of Honor.

Class of 1964

Vinceena Pianalto Kelly ordered two of the hat clips that were removed from the church pews during the church’s recent restoration, one for her and one for her brother Vince (Class of 1960). Vinceena said she and Vince have fond memories of the “old” church as well as the “new” church. They both attended St. Sebastian from grades 1-8, and they both were married at St. Sebastian as well. Vince and his wife Carol Prease (also an alumnus, Class of 1961) will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary this year, and Vinceena and her husband David will celebrate their 47th anniversary this year.

SAVE THE DATE!
Nov. 29, 2019:
Come Home to
St. Sebastian

In honor of the upcoming 90th anniversary of St. Sebastian Parish School (the school was founded one year after the parish), the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation is planning a “Welcome Home” evening for former students, parents, teachers and friends of St. Sebastian Parish School. The event will be Nov. 29, 2019, the Friday after Thanksgiving. Details to come! If you are interested in helping with the planning, please contact Kathy Holaday at 330-836-2233 x113 or HoladayK@stsebastian.org

Class of 1965

55th Reunion: Anne Lynett Clark wrote to ask if any members of the Class of 1965 would be interested in holding a 55th reunion in 2020. Please email Anne (anneclark@neo.rr.com) and let her know if you would be interested in a reunion and/or if you would like to help with the planning.

Class of 1968

Frederick Costanzo retired in 2013 after serving 38 years as a research engineer for the Navy’s Underwater Explosions Research Division. He and his wife, Andrea, have lived in Hawaii for the last five years, where besides hiking and beach activities, he continues to work part-time, having established his own engineering consulting business. They have three grown children and four grandchildren, and they are very active in their local parish on the Big Island.

Alumni Updates (continued)

Class of 1969

Jim Luby returned to Akron after living in Oklahoma for several years. Jim purchased and renovated two office buildings in Fairlawn (2840 and 2850 W. Market Street), which now house Café Arnone, City Barbecue and CoreLife Eatery.

Class of 1975

Mimi Davis Moore organized a campus tour on Feb. 2 with her 1975 classmates, pictured here in the current kindergarten classroom (formerly the convent during their school days). Mimi said the group enjoyed their visit, sharing “great memories with great friends!” Front Row: Brian Davis, Pat Conley, Mimi Davis Moore, Teresa Kloss Thompson, Jackie DelMedico Paparella; Back Row: Greg Getzinger, Tom Wathen, Mary Kelley Lyons, Denise Labut, Tracy Pier Wathen.



Class of 1976

Thomas Brunenmeister dropped a line to the alumni email address (alumni@stsebastian.org) to say that he lives in Woodbury, Minnesota, where he has been working for his current company for over 25 years.



Class of 1978

The Class of 1978 had an informal reunion the Saturday after Thanksgiving at Ray’s Place in Fairlawn to celebrate 40 years since 8th grade. Nineteen members of the class shared stories, drinks and appetizers, along with some entertaining class photos from the past. Cecilia Mariani O’Donnell took on the role of lead organizer, using a class Facebook group to publicize the event, with Barbara Melody Blanco as chief instigator and cheerleader. Father Valencheck

stopped by to say “Hello” and to encourage classmates to stay in touch, and he welcomed them to come home and visit St. Sebastian any time. The group had a great time, and according to John Mascolo, they hope to get together every year now! Pictured here are (First Row): Mary Ellen Crowley Huesken, Tim Luby, Gary Mushock, Cecelia Mariani O’Donnell, Laura DeBarr Feltman, Denise Barnhardt Benson, Kelly VanAuker Shaw, Karen McCusker Spangler, Barbara Melody Blanco, Carolyn Marks Hawkins; (Second Row): John Mascolo, Kevin Metker, Michael Kazar, Bob Reeves, Paul Luby, Paul Graf, Jim Baker, Rocky Williams, and not pictured but in attendance, Tom Seikel.

Class of 1982

John Kastelic composed an original song, “Restoration,” commemorating the recent church restoration project at St. Sebastian. John was inspired to create the song by the unique and constantly shifting acoustics in the mostly-empty church during

the restoration work. When Fr. Valencheck heard about the song, he invited John to play it in the church. The video recording, which was filmed by Fr. Valencheck, was made spur-of-the-moment while the pews



Send Us Your Alumni Updates

We love to hear from our alumni! Please drop us a line and let us know what you are doing. Newly married? New baby? Get together with fellow alums? Email Anne Morgan Dennée '85 at alumni@stsebastian.org or fill out the online form at alumni.stsebastian.org/contact.html.

Alumni Updates (continued)

were still removed for refinishing. Restoration work in the church was in full swing, so at times workers can be heard in the background. A link to a video recording of this beautiful and moving song can be found on the parish website (www.stsebastian.org) under the 90th Anniversary tab. Thank you, John!

Class of 1989

Melissa Miller Kamanya moved from Akron to Arizona with her family when she was young. After graduating from college, she joined the Peace Corps, where she met her husband, Sinclair. They live in Bend, Oregon, have 5 children, and will celebrate 20 years of marriage this year. Melissa writes “after many lovely years of being a stay-at-home mama, most of my career has been serving Jesus. First, I worked at our local church in children’s ministry, and now I work in our local Habitat for Humanity affiliate. My mom recently died in August, 2018 (Sandra Magyary Miller), and I traveled to Akron for her burial. I was delighted to visit the school campus and was humbled that the church was even more beautiful and magnificent than I remembered it to be. Thank you, St. Sebastian School, for helping to build a foundation in my heart to love God and His people for all my days.”

Class of 2011

Joanna Cardarelli enlisted the help of her mother Kathy’s pre-K class at St. Sebastian to collect shoes for the children of Haiti. Joanna had recently traveled to Haiti and noticed that many young people did not have shoes. The pre-K students were very excited to help out, and when Joanna returns to Haiti, she will bring a load of shoes for the children.



Class of 2012

Jakob Krejsa, a junior at Xavier University, created a World War I history exhibit for display at the university’s Library Archives and Special Collections. Jakob did all the research and work for this exhibit, which was called “When Our Boys Go Over There: Xavier University and World War I.” A history major with a minor in political science, Jakob has also recently completed an internship with the office of U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio.



Class of 2015

This past fall, Ian Doucet chose St. Sebastian Parish as the site of his Eagle Scout project. He and his crew installed a new walkway between the church and the rectory to replace the old one, which was sinking into the mud. Thank you Ian (pictured here at right with his brother, Jack, Class of 2020) for your thoughtfulness and hard work!



Classes of 2015-2017

Congratulations to the following alumni who were members of the St. Vincent-St. Mary High School Cross



Country team that competed in the state meet this fall: Carmela Macreno '16, Jeannie Hunt '17, Theresa Hagey '17, Natalie Tobin '16, Kevin Rybka '16, Jake Pentasuglio '16, Matt Dennée '17, Alex Phillip '15, Nick Steel '16, and Andrew McSteen '17. Both the boys and the girls teams took second place in Division II. The boys were led by Alex Phillip’s 3rd place finish, and the girls were led by Theresa Hagey’s 8th place finish.

Alumni Scholarship Endowment

The Alumni Scholarship Endowment was established by the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation in 2013 to provide financial assistance to students attending St. Sebastian Parish School. Thanks to the wonderful generosity of the St. Sebastian community, in 2016 the fund received enough donations to become an endowment that provides tuition assistance on a yearly basis. What a wonderful way to make a lasting contribution for the benefit of St. Sebastian Parish School! Listed below are donors who gave to the Alumni Scholarship Endowment from February, 2018 to January, 2019. The St. Sebastian Foundation – and the parish school families who benefit from this fund – are deeply appreciative of their generosity!

Anonymous

1940 Jeanne Ott, in memory of Conrad C. Ott

1942 Ramona Botzum

1943 Charles Kincaid, in memory of Betty Ann Winter Kincaid

1943 Lawrence H. Halter, in memory of Sandra J. Halter

1944 Marie Karg Graham *

1946 Richard Keeney, in memory of Bridget Henaugan Keeney

1947 Roland and Sara Bertolini, in memory of Joseph, Louise and Raymond Bertolini

1947 Michael R. Stiller, in memory of Ruth A. Stiller

1948 Ralph* and Edna Del Greco

1948 Paul J. Slaven

1949 Edward Dannemiller

1949 Toni Schapansky, in memory of Stanley and Bertha Augustyn

1950 Anonymous

1951 Tim Scanlon

1955 Barbara Farr Brizes

1958 Dennis McAleese, in memory of deceased classmates of 1958

1960 Barbara Hilkert Andolsen, in honor of William and Mary Louise Hilkert

1960 Joseph Bachmann, in memory of Marjorie Bachmann

1961 Michael McGuckin

1964 Susan Korosa, in celebration of the Humility of Mary sisters who taught at St. Sebastian

1964 Peggy McMullen Cogar

1965 Anne Lynett Clark

1969 Anonymous

1969 Chuck Maroon

1969 Patty Zachardy Van Pelt, in memory of deceased members of the Zachardy family

1970 Thomas and Karin Bray

1971 Stanley C. Bernat, in memory of Stanley and Irene Bernat

1971 Michele Tomaski Pfrogner, in memory of George and Nellie Tomaski

1971 Robert Zwisler, III, in memory of Robert Zwisler, Jr. and Joyce Zwisler

1972 David and Sherry Marshall, in memory of Carole Marshall

1972 Jean Ochsenhirt, in memory of David and Tim Ochsenhirt

1972 Jeff Shaffer, in memory of Dorothy Shaffer

1973 Teresa Redle Brostowitz

1979 John F. Farmer

1982 Elizabeth Pinkerton

1984 Amy DiFilippo

1985 Anne Morgan Dennée

1986 Paul Hummel

2001 Max Bedell, in honor of Mike and Pat Bedell

2003 Carley Whitney

2008 Sholar Petit, **2009** Maddie Petit and **2013** Olivia Petit, in memory of Gerald "Papa" Petit

2015 Caroline Hummel

* Deceased

