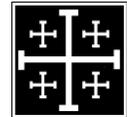




# ST. LEO'S JOYFUL NOISE



FALL 2021 EDITION

## PASTOR'S CORNER

A lot of things have taken place in our community since the publication of the last edition of our Newsletter. The surge of Covid-19 has gone up so high in our state, especially Berkeley and Jefferson counties, that though not a state mandate, our Bishop has reinstated the wearing of mask at all liturgical celebrations. I understand the apprehensions of some of our people about having to wear masks again when we thought it was a thing of the past. I thank all parishioners for cooperating with this uncomfortable directive. I apologize to anyone in our parish who feels estranged or alienated from our parish family, especially when they sincerely want to join us in-person for liturgical celebrations but could not because they are uncomfortable wearing a mask and so, have to resorted to staying away from worshipping with us altogether or to joining us via our livestream media platform pending the removal mask mandate. I pray that the recent surge of COVID will get under control soon so that we can get back to our regular lives before the outbreak of the pandemic.

One of the ways we can curb the spread of this deadly virus is by getting vaccinated, especially those of us who are within the vaccination age at this time. Understandably, there are so many arguments in favor and against the vaccine. My comments in this column are not to stir up controversies for or against getting vaccinated, rather a personal reflection on why I got vaccinated. As a type II diabetic who is prone to compromised immune system, though I do not fit into the typical profile of a diabetic, I have been fully vaccinated since this past April and am thinking about getting the booster shot soon. I chose to get fully vaccinated not only as a precautionary measure but also, out of love for others. . As your Priest who is always in close contact with people, I would be mortified if I, not only were to contract the deadly virus but also, transmit it unconsciously to those around me. Hence, out of personal safety and care for the safety of others, I chose to get vaccinated. I have had minimal side effects since receiving two doses of the vaccine.

I am aware different people have different stories of side effects they received from the vaccine. In all the stories I heard and studies I have done, I have not heard of many people dying solely on account of receiving the vaccine without a concurring and underlying disease they were battling before the pandemic. For me, this is a testament that the vaccines are safe and they save lives! If you are still leery about getting vaccinated, all I can tell you is that they have worked for me and they may work for you if you avail yourself the opportunity to get vaccinated!

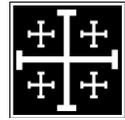
On a happier note, our *Welcome Back Weekend*, wherein we celebrated the things we have missed all through this pandemic, began on Saturday, September 18, 2021 through Tuesday, September 21, 2021. The highlights of the celebration included The Car Show and Adult Dance on Saturday, Mass of Thanksgiving at noon on Sunday, Feeding the Shut-in on Monday and the reopening of Bingo on Tuesday. The celebration was not only successful, it was also epic especially the Car Show, which brought over 100 participants with their cars to our campus. The participants felt so welcome to our parish that they inquired if we would be willing to host the Car Show again in our parish next year. We thank John & JoAnne Muia and their dedicated team of volunteers who worked tirelessly to make the event successful. We also thank the Chairperson of our Welcome Back Celebration, Karen Bageant, our Kitchen Manager, Carla Hopkins, our Boy Scouts, and myriads of dedicated volunteers whose hard work and dedication made all those who walked through our doors feel at home here at St. Leo! Given the exigencies of the surging pandemic some parishioners and families who wished to join us for the celebration could not do so. I hope and pray that such parishioners and families might join us for other parish events in the future when we get the surging pandemic under control.

Without a doubt, this pandemic has tested, tossed and tried to pit us against each other. The Holy Father advises us as a People of Faith not to allow the Evil One pervading during this



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time to pit us against each other, rather to be hopeful because even though we are living in a pandemic era, it will end someday. All we have to do is to do the requisite things to curb the spread of this deadly virus. As your Priest, I know the journey through this pandemic has not been easy because a lot has been asked of you and your family and you have continued to be cooperative and supportive of our parish family. I am eternally grateful to you and your family for your love, prayers and thoughtfulness and assure you of my thoughts and prayers.

Remain blessed. - Fr. Alfred Obiudu

## NEW PARISHIONERS

St. Leo's is delighted to have the following families join OUR parish family: Michael and Frances Smith and the Thielen family (Adam, Marissa, Christian, Emily and Justin).

## NEWLY BAPTIZED

Welcome to our newest member, Margaret Leigh Burford, baptized on September 18<sup>th</sup>.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The AmazonSmile program donated \$127.78 for activity from April thru June 2021 and to date has received \$1,752. While doing your Christmas shopping consider using AmazonSmile. You can help out twice by also purchasing an Amazon gift card!

## B-I-N-G-O!!!

Consider trying your luck out at St Leo's weekly bingo each Tuesday night. Doors open at 5pm, \$28 provides cards for all of the games, and the kitchen serves up a meal for \$8. You can't beat it! This is a great way to support the church while having a little fun. Who knows...Lady Luck may shine upon you.

## FEATURED MINISTRY

### *Food Distribution*

The Homeless Ministry and the Knights of Columbus Auxiliary came together last year to reopen the Food Pantry at St. Leo's. At that time we began by distributing bags of food to anyone in our community in need of support by a drive up plan that saw our first effort in January total 83 adults, 23 children and 41 households being served. We began the program on the third Saturday of each month. In July, we held our first Wednesday distribution, which netted only 4 adults and 4 bags and 2 households being served. The next few months saw a drop in distributions due to the number of other agencies offering food from government sources and a similar distribution being held on the same day as St. Leo. We adjusted our date to the second Saturday of the month and in September, we moved our Wednesday location to the Inwood Assembly of God parking lot which has proven to be more convenient and coupled with the fact that many of the government programs had ended; we began to see our numbers rise.

Date	#Adults	# Children	Bags	# Households
8/14/21	31	14	29	13
8/18/21	3		3	1
9/12/21	71	28	85	31
9/15/21	46	19	79	27
10/9/21	55	34	62	28

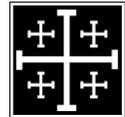
We were also able to distribute fresh produce donated by Tyson Farm Markets of Inwood at our September and October events. They have offered to continue to contribute to our distributions and we are so grateful.

Our Food Pantry also participates in the Faith Feeding Freedom program run by Toni Wiesberg. Each month, we prepare "snack packs" which are donated tote bags filled with portable food items and snacks which are then distributed to the homeless at the Martinsburg Library during one of their weekly lunch event.



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In August, we came together on a Backpack program to aid students returning to school. Once again, our parish came through with wonderful donations and we were able to complete 54 backpacks and 4 binders for Elementary, Middle and High School which were distributed to a representative of Berkeley County Schools and also to community members attending our food distributions.

As part of the Welcome Back celebration at St. Leo, our team prepared and distributed to-go dinners to our own parish shut-ins who were not able to join us at the church for the celebration. The meals were prepared in our kitchen and delivered by our awesome team members.

The Homeless Committee community meals have also continued during this time. Once a month, our volunteers prepare and deliver a hearty meal to, alternately, Immanuel House in Martinsburg and Bunker Hill United Methodist Church in Bunker Hill. Due to COVID restrictions, we were no longer able to serve these meals, but we have been able to provide them to ensure that those in need are still able to get a decent meal thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our St. Leo Parish Family.

Donations of food, cash and food cards have made it possible for us to keep our pantry well stocked and enable us to share and provide for an ever growing need for our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are so very grateful for the opportunity to be able to provide through this ministry and we could not do it without the help of our amazing parish family!

## HELP WANTED: VOLUNTEERS

The Boy Scouts are always in need of adult volunteers to help provide these youth with a positive example. We are in need of a female adult to work with youth female Scouts at the Pack/Den level. A husband-and-wife team would also be welcome for this role.

The goal of Scouting is to help youth make ethical decisions and grow in a structured and outdoor setting. Focus includes youth leadership development, citizenship, and skill building. Scouting is outing!

BSA Troop 23 conducted several events in recent months, including a three-day, two-night camping trip, service project at St Leos, Court of Honor, and are currently planning on two more outings this month. The Scouts continue to work on advancement and skills.

Cub Scout Pack 23 recently completed a Bobcat Boot Camp and game night. Regular meetings are being held weekly in the education wing for the Troop (ages 11-18) and the Pack (K-5<sup>th</sup> grade) on Wednesday evenings, starting at 6:30pm.

Contact John Phillips @ [jpsps@yahoo.com](mailto:jpsps@yahoo.com) if you can help with this organization.

## BAKERS – STAND BY

We were not able to get enough bakers to have a monthly bake sale at this time. We'll take another look at this in 2022. As we get closer to the Christmas holiday we will consider a Christmas Cookie Exchange as we've had in the past, so stay tuned.

## NEWSLETTER TEAM

Got some scoop? The editors of **Joyful Noise** are Sheri Lincecum and Karen Bageant. Email us at [joyfulnoise@stleo.com](mailto:joyfulnoise@stleo.com).