

SAINT BARBARA CHURCH

# CROSS TALK

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## It Takes a Parish to Grow a Giving Tree

by Elizabeth Penn

The St. Barbara Giving Tree has roots deep within our parish. The seeds were planted by Pat and Dennis Coyne who recognized a need in the community and collaborated with members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society to address it. Through the Giving Tree project, members of the parish were given the opportunity to provide personalized Christmas gifts for families who did not have the means to purchase them. As the number of families served increased, the Giving Tree project blossomed into its own ministry. This year, the generous people of St. Barbara sponsored over fifty families; one hundred and forty-nine children received gifts.

To nurture the Giving Tree, Jamie Smith and Amy Hahnel partnered with the directors of the Family Resource Centers at Summit View Academy, Caywood Elementary, Beechgrove Elementary and Turkeyfoot Middle Schools to identify families in need. Other agencies also support some families because the numbers are so large. The project begins in late September when the individual schools are contacted. Each child receives four gifts: three gifts chosen by their parents or guardians and new socks and underwear. The FRC directors identify the socks and underwear as necessities because many of the children have neither; parents may have to choose between paying an electric bill or buying socks. Tags are printed by another parishioner, Jeff Jehn, through Waltz Business Systems. Beginning in late November, two to four volunteers distribute the tags at every Mass.

As the gifts are returned to the parish, they are stored and sorted by an "army" of volunteers. This year the volunteers were led by Amy and Bill Hahnel who took on the Giving Tree as a family project. The project culminates on a Saturday morning in December when the families arrive to pick up their gifts. Members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society provide a box of food that includes all of the ingredients for Christmas dinner, including a ham for each family. The dinners are made possible by a donation from the SVdP Northern Kentucky District, in addition to the donations of St. Barbara parishioners. Dave Bazler, president of SVdP, describes ours as a very "Giving parish," in which a variety of ministries collaborate to serve the community and "provide the opportunity for spiritual development for all of us."

Thanks to the generosity of our Home School group and an anonymous parishioner, parents also receive gift wrapping supplies so they can wrap the gifts themselves. Each family also receives a twenty-five dollar Target gift card to purchase stocking stuffers.

Each year seems to bring a new "branch" to the Giving Tree. For the first time, the volunteers purchased sixty generic gifts for families who had hoped to shop on their own but discovered at the last minute, perhaps due to a medical emergency, that it was not possible. The FRC directors were thrilled to be able help them. Also, for the first time, two of the FRC directors participated in the distribution process. Over the years, Amy Hahnel has seen other changes as well. In addition to seeing parents at the distribution, she is now seeing grandparents, some of whom are raising their grandchildren because the parents have been lost to opioids.

Thank you letters from grateful families attest to the impact of the Giving Tree on those who receive our gifts. Perhaps the greatest impact is actually on those of us who experience the joy of giving. Thanks to all who make it possible!



# Thoughts from the Deacon

The New Year is upon us. It's time to put the old year behind us and to look forward to the challenges that we will face. Each new year we set out with good intentions, resolutions meant to change our lives for the better. It's also a time when we reflect on the past year. As I write down these thoughts I hear a country song on the radio. The song is *"Five Minutes More."* The singer is reflecting on his life, and times gone by. His song is about times during his life that he would like to have just five minutes more to change the outcomes, to play a little longer, to love a little better, to share just a little more time with a dying loved one, but life goes on. Many of us have lost a person we loved this year. We have experienced loss and regret that we didn't do, or say, all we wanted to say. Life doesn't have a pause button. We can't press replay or get a do over. We need to be ready for the obstacles and the opportunities that God gives us.

The song ends: *"Yeah, sometimes this old life will leave you wishing you had five minutes more."* When it comes to the really important things in life, our love for God, for family, and those we encounter, don't put off letting them know how you feel. You may not get those five minutes more...

**Happy New Year!**

Deacon Chuck

# To Be a Better Person

by Lynne Schrott

Happy New Year! Time to lose weight, eat healthier, and exercise more... at least for a few weeks. An article in Forbes stated that only about 8% of folks keep their new year's resolutions all year, but I guess any attempt to change a bad habit or develop a positive one is commendable.

This year, according to a Marist poll, the top resolution is to "become a better person." Thinning a waistline is admirable, but we might agree that becoming the best version of oneself is a superior goal.

If any of you have already reached perfection, you can stop reading. For the rest of you, here are some tips:

**Volunteer:** Make the world a better place by enriching your life and those you choose to serve.

**Express gratitude:** One of the easiest things to do to contribute to overall happiness and make others happy also.

**Limit negativity:** It's contagious, but so is positivity. Shift from gossip to congeniality.

**Pray daily:** Remember... "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Phillipians 4:13

**Exercise:** Go outside to spend time in nature to increase your energy, so that you can do what God needs you to do.

**Take a break from technology:** Put down your phones and be present in the moment, so that the person sitting across from you truly feels he/she matters more than Facebook.

The Crosstalk staff wants to wish all of you a new year filled with hope, and may your light shine for all to see! Just make sure that the light emanates from you, and not merely from your smartphone screen. Have a wonderful 2018!

# Lunch with Santa and Kid's Christmas Mass



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# Updated Directory Coming Soon What Are You Waiting For?

by Tina Bowen

In 2013 St. Barbara and group of volunteers achieved a monumental task of putting together an updated parish directory. Fast forward a few short years and our directory needs updating again St. Barbara has grown with well over 1100 new families since the last directory came out. That is growth to be proud of!

With that mind St. Barbara is embarking on a mission to publish a new directory. A small committee will be forming in January to work on it and organize all the duties that go into making a parish directory. Be on the look out for information on getting pictures made, submitting pictures and possible ministry photos. There is a lot of work and logistics involved in publishing a new directory. If you are interested in helping out please contact Barb Osborne our committee chair [boez1975@gmail.com](mailto:boez1975@gmail.com) or Tina Bowen [tinabowen1971@gmail.com](mailto:tinabowen1971@gmail.com). Our first committee meeting will be January 11th at 7pm at St. Barbara.

by Pauline Baumann

This is addressed to the women of St. Barbara Parish who have been sitting on the fence for the first four Christ Renews His Parish Weekends. I guess you have been thinking that you will attend "next time." Well, ladies, next time is now! CHRP #5 will be held on February 24 and 25, right here in the Sterling Event Center.

It can't be a matter of time... CHRP starts on Saturday morning and ends on Sunday afternoon, a mere 30 hours of your life! Perhaps you are new and feel you wouldn't know anyone. This is a great opportunity to get to know more women of our parish and on a much deeper level. You argue that you already attend Sunday Mass and feel you are doing your duty. Why not put God on a higher priority level and give Him your all for one weekend?

Amazing things can happen on this one weekend when you put aside your daily pressures and obligations. You will interact with other women of our parish who have faced difficulties and sorrows in their life. But with God's help they have emerged stronger in their faith and are able face life's problems with strength and courage. You will be able to laugh with them, share their struggles, and admire the faith they now live by. It is a time to see God's love shining through the lives of the women you sit next to every Sunday. You don't need to have a PhD in Theology to attend... just a desire for the peace that only comes with accepting God's love and mercy.

Applications for this cost-free CHRP weekend will be available from any team member and in the rear of church. For more information, feel free to contact Alicia Kemp (317-508-0406) or Pauline Baumann (859-341-8641).



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## Youth Group Report

by Britney Abbey

On December 10, 2017 the Youth Group helped to run LUNCH WITH SANTA. We were in charge and did as much as we could. There were many jobs that needed to be done such as: delivering pizza, filling up drinks, organizing the music, and much more. The children and their families enjoyed a nice lunch and pictures with Santa. The youth group is more than happy to do anything you ask them to do.

Also on December 21, 2017 the Youth Group went to Woodcrest Retirement home. We delivered Christmas presents to everyone in the home. We all met in the lobby. Santa would shout out the names and we would hand the presents out. If the residents couldn't make it to the lobby, we would deliver them to their rooms. This was a great experience for everyone in the youth group and even the families of the residents that had stayed.

The St. Barbara youth group helps not only at the church but around the community as well. We are happy to help anyone that needs it.

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## Happy Valentines Day



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## St. Henry Grade School News

by Julie Nelson

A huge "congratulations" to 6th grader Molly Krallman on placing second in Social Studies and third in Art & Humanities for written assessment at KAAC's prestigious Showcase Competition for 6th graders hosted by St. Henry. Congrats also to all the 6th grade participants for their hard work, time, and preparations in getting ready for the big day. The event involved eight total local schools including St. Henry, St. Cecilia, St. Pius, St. Agnes, Blessed Sacrament, Woodland, Turkeyfoot, and Beechwood. Also, a huge "thank you" to Melissa Schlake, the middle school academic team coordinator and varsity coach, for volunteering countless hours to the organization, set up, and planning of this major event. "Thank you" too to Julia Gowen for coaching the 6th grade academic team this year. "Thank you" to all the teachers and staff who came in early Saturday to help with the all day program. I heard we received a lot of compliments about how well the day flowed and how nice and helpful our faculty and staff were.

The future is looking *very* bright! Congratulations to our 5th grade Future Problem Solvers, Nathan, Avery, Lizzie, and Charlotte, and our 6th grade Future Problem Solvers, Gracie, Mary, Molly, and Carson. Both teams competed for two hours in KAAC's Junior Division Future Problem Solving statewide competition. These hardworkers have been preparing for months to take on the topic "The Spread of Disease." Results will be announced at the end of January.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Fri	Jan 19	Day of Prayer and Penance
Sat/Sun	Jan 20/21	Opportunities for Life collection, all Masses
Sun	Feb 4	Scout Sunday, 9:00 am Mass
Wed	Feb 14	Ash Wednesday, 7:00 pm Mass
Every Wed	Feb 21 - Mar 28	Lenten Masses, 7:00 pm
Sat	Feb 17	Valentine Dance, 7:00 pm
Thu-Sun	Mar 1 - 4	Men's Cursillo weekend
Sat	Mar 3	Confirmation commitment, 4:30 pm
Sat	Mar 10	Confirmation retreat, 8:00 am - 3:00
Sat/Sun	Mar 10/11	International Needs collection, all Masses

## St. Henry High School News

by Sarah Banks:

As we round out the end of 2017, St Henry continues to flourish athletically, socially, and in service. First off, our Volleyball and Boys Cross Country teams were the KHSAA 9th Region Champions. In addition, Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, and Volleyball all won the KHSAA 34th District Championships. Furthermore, the Volleyball team dominated the All "A" State Tournament; while the Boys Soccer qualified for the All "A" State Tournament Finalist match. Moreover, Boys and Girls Golf, Volleyball, Boys Soccer and Cross Country were all 2017 NKAC Conference Champions. Also, Mike Bowling (our Athletic Trainer) was inducted to the NKY Athletic Directors Association Hall of Fame. Winter sports have started strong with St Henry's Aqua Cru winning the Holy Cross Invitational and breaking four meet records. Lastly, the Archery team started by winning the first tournament of the season and placing 3rd out of 10 teams in the second.

We recently held the first ever Crusader Clash Dodgeball tournament. These tournament matches were between 2 sports teams and competed on a one and out bracket until it came down to Boy's baseball and Boy's and Girl's tennis. In the end, the Boy's baseball team won and faced off against the SHDHS staff at Crusader Crazy Day and the boys dominated against the teachers. Crusader Crazy Day is a day dedicated to the 8th graders of St Henry's feeder schools and gives them the opportunity to see the school and experience a day in the life of a St Henry student.

On the service side, we have completed our annual Elves on a Mission. This year we adopted 12 families with an average of 5-7 family members. The outpouring of help from our Crusader Family was overwhelming. We received over \$3,000.00 dollars in monetary donations at the Thanksgiving Grandparents mass. Several individuals donated gift cards while others adopted children, meeting not only their needs, but also their wants. In addition, clubs such as Spanish club and Spanish Honors Society also adopted a Hispanic family and have compiled a large number of gifts for each member of the family that covers everything from basic needs to gift cards for restaurants.