

**Saint Ann Catholic Church
75th Anniversary**

1947 — 2022

Celebrating the Faithful: Ministries & Stories



***Remembering. Celebrating. Renewing.
“I am with you always.” (Mt. 28:20)***

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Introduction

This collection was compiled from histories, recollections and stories written or told by present and past parishioners for the celebration of our parish’s 75th anniversary. It is not an exhaustive history of all our ministries but includes a wonderful sampling and is a celebration of how our church members live out their faith in service to our parish, our community, and beyond. Some personal stories and recollections are also included. As you read through these stories, may you be inspired to join one of these groups, start a new one, or continue your efforts in your current ministries! And may God continue to bless Saint Ann Church and its parishioners for many more decades to come.

PARISH MINISTRY STORIES

Adult Religious Enrichment Committee (AREC)

by Marie Powell

Although many Catholic Church documents since the Second Vatican Council have articulated the importance of religious education for adults, most Catholic parishes have continued to use their personnel and financial resources to educate youth. In the 1970s, an effort was made at Saint Ann to offer religious education programs for adults on Sunday mornings while many parish children were attending CCD classes. This initiative did not attract many persons and eventually ended.

In the 1990s, then-pastor Father William Schardt asked a group of parishioners to form a committee whose goal would be to organize programs especially focused on educating adults in the Catholic faith. Thus was born the Saint Ann Adult Religious Enrichment Committee (AREC). Original members of this committee included Dr. Othmar Winkler, Bob Strawn, Gene Mattingly, and Bill Broderick. Alice Eichers continued to act as secretary for many years.

Because Dr. Winkler was a professor at Georgetown University, he was able to encourage many of his colleagues to come to Saint Ann parish to speak to adults on various aspects of Catholic life.

Over the years, Saint Ann parish has also hosted speakers from many other local Catholic institutions including The Catholic University of America, Trinity University –Washington, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, religious communities of men and women, the Virginia Catholic Conference and various personnel from the Diocese of Arlington. Father David Collins, S.J., a graduate of Saint Ann School and recently appointed program director of the Catholic Studies Program at Georgetown University, has continued to be a most informative and engaging speaker.

Under the leadership of pastor Fr. Donald Greenhalgh, the AREC began to focus on the many video resources sponsored by Bishop Robert Barron. These included the ten-part series, *Catholicism, The Mass*, and several series of *Catholicism, the Pivotal Players*.

With the guidance of our pastor, Fr. Mel Portula, CICM and his Missionhurst colleagues, AREC has been able to organize many programs under the theme, *The Church in the Global Village*, greatly expanding parishioners' understanding of Church challenges and accomplishments in the wider world.

The AREC also coordinated both daytime and evening study groups on the landmark Pope Francis encyclical, *Laudato Si* (On Care for our Common Home).

Although the pandemic has made in-person offerings more difficult, other parish initiatives, such as Jim Schellman's virtual programs, have continued the effort to educate both parishioners and non-parishioners on topics of interest to Catholics. Saint Ann Catholic Church can be proud of its many efforts to engage adults as they grow in knowledge of issues relevant to their lives as Catholics. For more information, or to get involved, please contact Marie Powell at powellmarie@verizon.net.

Bridge Group

by Maureen Donnelly

About 10 or 11 years ago, when Marie Berger joined the parish from Reston, she related that her former parish had a nice senior's group that played bridge regularly. In 2012, Maureen Donnelly took this idea to then-pastor Fr. Greenhalgh to ask if they could start such a group at Saint Ann. With his approval, Maureen set up the Bridge Group and it took off.

The group meets weekly on Wednesdays @ 9:30 a.m. in Room 105 and plays until noon. Lois Crean and Maureen organize the sessions. Sixteen to twenty players regularly attend, including a few from outside the parish. Each player pays \$1.00 per week to play. Over the years, the group has donated over \$6000 to Saint Ann's Good Samaritan fund (players often donate more than \$1). It is a social but prayerful group, and anyone is welcome to join. Since resumption of meetings that had been interrupted by the pandemic, covid immunization is a requirement. For more information, call Maureen Donnelly at 703-534-2819 or Lois Crean at 703-522-4170.

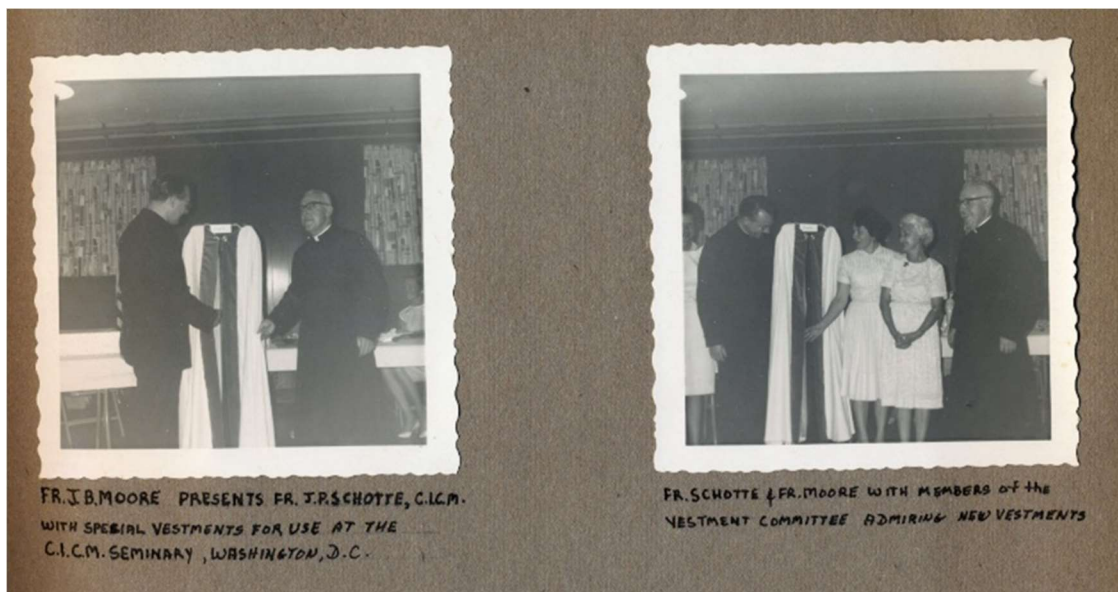
Court Queen of Peace #1872 Catholic Daughters of the Americas

by Alexia MacClain

Court Queen of Peace #1872 is part of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas. It is a group of Catholic women, ages 18 and over, who focus on spiritual enrichment, charitable projects, and

fellowship. The Court recently celebrated its 60th Anniversary. Chartered on December 2, 1961, it began with women from Saint Ann and St. Agnes Parishes and expanded to include neighboring parishes. Previously they met at the Knights of Columbus, but since 2013, meetings are held at Saint Ann Parish. Saint Ann Pastors Msgr. Frank Hendrick and Fr. William Schardt as well as Missionhurst priests Fr. John Morel, C.I.C.M. and Fr. Mike Hann, C.I.C.M. have served as Chaplains.

Some of the Court's activities throughout the years have included retreats, Days of Recollection, and an All-Night Vigil at Missionhurst. In the 1960s, they donated clothing, baseball equipment, and art supplies for a new day camp in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, and in the 1970s, they collected clothing and household items for those in need in the Shenandoah Valley. They also organized a Bookmobile at Arlington Hospital, made thousands of rosaries, knitted bandages for those with leprosy, made hospital gowns out of shirts, supported Pontifical North American College seminarians, and sponsored children in Jordan and India. In 1977, at the request of Bishop Welsh, they welcomed the Poor Clares to Northern Virginia by providing food for one week. They sewed clergy vestments for needy parishes, missions, the Dominican Retreat House, and the C.I.C.M. Seminary. In a 1964 letter thanking them for the vestments, Fr. John P. Schotte, C.I.C.M. wrote, "All the boys were delighted!"



Catholic Daughters Vestment Committee and Chaplain Fr. J. B. Moore presenting Fr. J. P. Schotte, C.I.C.M., with vestments for the C.I.C.M. Seminary (June 9, 1964).

In recent years, the Court has organized Lenten Reflections

and masses/prayer services for deceased members. It also shares a prayer partnership with Dominican Sisters in Linden, VA. During the Year of Mercy (2016), they organized a pilgrimage for the community to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, PA. Every Fall, they fill "Christmas at Sea" containers with toiletries and warm socks for the International Seafarers' Center in Baltimore, MD and pack boxes of greeting cards for assisted living centers. They made pro-life prayer cards and collected pocket change to assist a family with an ill child. They have sponsored an annual Education Contest, since at least the 1970s, for diocesan students in poetry, essay, and art. They held a Tea in 2017 to raise funds to make 222 colorful cloth diapers for babies in Haiti, and in 2019, they filled "Welcome Home" Baskets with household items for Arlington Street People's Assistance Network (A-SPAN) clients moving into housing.



Catholic Daughters with “Christmas at Sea” boxes for international seafarers (2019).

The Book Club is the Court’s evangelization effort. It began in 2013 and has blossomed into spiritual reflection, sharing, friendship, and Christian fellowship while learning about saints and our own faith journeys. Informal book discussions are held every other month on a Saturday morning at Saint Ann Parish. All in the community are welcome.

Another evangelization effort for the community has been showing feature films of a religious nature through “Ignatius Night at the Movies.” Over the years, donations have benefited Catholic Relief Services (to assist victims of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and the earthquake in Nepal), Labouré Society, Holy Cross Family Rosary, National Center on Sexual Exploitation, Dominican Sisters in Linden Virginia, A-SPAN, Covenant House, and Divine Mercy Care.

The Court also sponsors a Junior Court to promote faith formation, service, charity, community, and fellowship for girls. Junior and Juniorette Courts were active for many years beginning in May 1962. After a while without one, a Junior Court was instituted in November 2015 with Fr. Pascal Kumanda, C.I.C.M. and later Fr. Francis Mfesao Bakongo, C.I.C.M. as Chaplains.

The adult women of Court Queen of Peace #1872 meet on the First Saturday of the Month (September-June) at 10:00 am at Saint Ann Parish, Room 105. Book Club discussion dates vary and are announced in Saint Ann Parish’s bulletin, as are other activities. For more information, contact 703-573-1582.



Maria Deasy and Lynn Heaton in the Chapel talking about the Contemplative Prayer Group, December 2021

Contemplative Prayer Group

by Lynn Heaton

The Saint Ann Contemplative Prayer Group was formed at the initiative of Fr. Mel Portula shortly after his arrival as pastor in 2013. The Missionhurst priests have a tradition of revering the practice of contemplative prayer as a way of centering their minds and hearts on God. Fr. Mel wanted to share his love of this quiet experience of God's presence with our parish community.

Prior to the COVID pandemic, the group met for one hour on Wednesday afternoons in the Saint Ann Chapel for twenty minutes of meditation followed by reflection on readings from books on spirituality and contemplative prayer. When in person meetings became unsafe due to the pandemic, the group shifted onto the Zoom platform and has remained there through the present time. As group members have moved away or become less able to break away for the afternoon, the online meetings have been a way to stay together while maintaining the same general format.

It has been surprising to see that so many members of the group are lively, humorous, and very active in parish life. There is a sense of acceptance and camaraderie that allows a free exchange of ideas and personal experiences that is both healing and invigorating. Please contact Lynn Heaton if you think you might be interested in joining us. 571-217-0491 or lynnheaton617@gmail.com.

Saint Ann Arlington Federal Credit Union

by Eva Esber

The Saint Ann Arlington Federal Credit Union ("SAAFCU"/the "Credit Union") is almost as old as the parish itself. Established in 1949 as a federally chartered and insured credit union by members of the Saint Ann Parish, SAAFCU held its' 73rd Annual Meeting in February 2022. SAAFCU was part of a larger movement of community groups around the country to form credit unions, including many Catholic parishes. With childhood memories of the Great Depression, and even fresher memories of World War II, this generation of parishioners readily identified with the goals of the credit union movement to promote thrift and savings, and to provide affordable access to credit.

The mission of SAAFCU, and the means of accomplishing it, are essentially the same today as when it was founded. Membership is open to all parishioners of Saint Ann Parish and their immediate families, as well as parents, students, staff and teachers of Saint Ann School and their immediate families. Members hold shares based on their deposited funds. Loans are made to members at fair and competitive rates without the higher fees charged by commercial lenders. Interest earned on loans, in turn, contributes to dividends paid to all members.



Saint Ann Arlington Federal Credit Union, 1959. Standing on the right is Ed Kelly, SAAFCU's first President, who served with distinction for 24 years. Can you help identify others in the picture?

In its earliest years, SAAFCU operated from the basement of our original church, near the boiler room. Among other things, it helped a number of parishioners purchase their modest Arlington homes. In 1958, as the Credit Union approached its tenth anniversary, it reached \$51,000 in share deposits. SAAFCU later supported the construction of our beautiful new church, providing Rev. John T. Cilinski with a contribution of \$10,000 to the Building Fund

Campaign in December 1985. Coming a long way from its boiler room days, the Credit Union now operates from a real office on the lower level of the church, with the teller window open on Sundays. As of March 2022, the Credit Union has over 500 members with more than \$4 million in share accounts. Since just 2010, the Credit Union has returned more than a quarter of a million dollars to members of our community through share dividends.

A core philosophy of the credit union movement was "not for profit, not for charity, but for service." SAAFCU remains committed today, just as when it was founded, to providing all parishioners with a safe place to save and access to affordable credit. SAAFCU originates home equity, auto, share-secured, and personal (unsecured) loans. The greatest value of total loans outstanding at any time was \$1.9 million in 2018. Since just 2010 SAAFCU has originated more than 380 new loans, totaling more than \$6.4 Million. Of those, more than 190 loans were unsecured loans, totaling over \$775,000. SAAFCU provides more individualized attention than most for-profit banks and other commercial financial institutions can offer, with greater consideration of the specific needs and circumstances of members. The personal, unsecured loans often make the biggest difference in our members' lives. Particularly when made to members with credit challenges, they avoid the dangers of pay-day lenders or other predatory lending practices.

At one time, there were as many as 860 Catholic parish credit unions in the United States. Now, SAAFCU is the oldest Catholic credit union in Virginia, and among only about 30 Catholic credit unions in the United States. SAAFCU's survival is attributable to extraordinary volunteer effort, talented management dedicated to its mission, and the support of our Pastors and parish community. For more than its first fifty years, the Credit Union operated exclusively through volunteers, with many serving for decades. Founders of SAAFCU included Ed Kelly, a specialist in economic affairs at the State Department. Mr. Kelly served with extraordinary dedication for twenty-four years as the Credit Union's first President. As the Credit Union neared the start of its second decade, A. Francis ("Bud") Vitt joined the leadership as Treasurer of SAAFCU. Bud was shortly thereafter recognized as Treasurer of the Year by the Virginia Credit Union League for his outstanding contributions. Nick Babiak also served with distinction for many years as Chair of the Credit Committee, a role now filled with equal distinction by Chris Sullivan. Likewise, Van Caffo left big shoes to fill after he stepped down as Treasurer; Kenny Goss rose to the challenge of filling those shoes more than fifteen years ago and was a Board member long before that. Likewise, Donley Stocking and Alvina Pettit were integral members of the leadership for decades. Don Stocking's granddaughter Derin Honeywell, our current Assistant

Manager, along with Kenny Goss and volunteer teller, Pat Martin, are today the face of SAAFCU to our members on Sunday mornings.

After continued growth for fifty years, in the early 2000s the Credit Union leadership, including then-Board Chair Andy Brown and then-Supervisory Committee Chair Bob Ryan, led a significant strategic planning session. Knowing the credit union would still be largely fueled by volunteer hours, they also recognized that the time had come to hire a part-time Manager. Parishioners Alison Baity and Kim Doyle were among the earliest to serve. The position is currently open. Our Managers have always been generous beyond measure with their time and commitment to the Credit Union's mission.

For the decade from early 2012 to early 2021, SAAFCU was led by parishioners Pete McGuirk as Board Chair and Mary Green as Manager. Their tenure covered a time of turmoil in financial markets due to fallout from the Great Recession. Pete and Mary brought a strong combination of financial, administrative, and technical experience and were well-suited to the challenging times. Just as they started their decade of service at a time of turmoil, they ended it helping guide the Credit Union through operations during the worldwide quarantines and shutdowns in 2020 brought on by the Coronavirus pandemic. Our current Board Chair is Joe Shirron, and Mary Green has stepped back in to fill in for the manager vacancy.

For each of the Board Members, Managers, and other volunteers identified above, we know there are dozens more. In preparation for the Credit Union's own 75th Anniversary in 2024, SAAFCU would like to gather more memories and stories about those parishioners who contributed to its founding, growth, and continued vitality. Please email us at stannarlingtonfcu@hotmail.com and share with us your memories of those who have served our Credit Union.

Eucharistic Adoration

Recollection by Florence Starzynski

Eucharistic Adoration was started at our parish many years ago, possibly in the late 1980s, when a parishioner asked our then pastor about beginning a weekly 24-hour adoration from Friday morning to Saturday morning. The pastor agreed so long as she could guarantee two persons would be present for each hour. This was done and this beautiful prayerful practice was begun in the small chapel adjacent to the rectory. The folks assigned to a particular hour were so faithful to their commitment.

During the time when I was the keeper of the schedule, I also had to call everyone on the schedule if Adoration had to be cancelled for any reason. One winter day, when a storm was pending, Father wanted Adoration cancelled so I started making my calls. Most people were glad they didn't have to get up in the middle of the night or go out in bad weather. But one lady really surprised me. When I told her Adoration was being cancelled that day she said, "Oh no. But I have something very important I was hoping to talk over with the Lord."

During the day, lots of other unscheduled people stopped by to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. People wanted to take advantage of this beautiful opportunity. There was even a man who had to rush off to work early Saturday mornings, but he would park his truck facing the big back window of the chapel where he could see through to the monstrance and have his private time with the Lord before hurrying off to his job.

The daytime was busy, but the nighttime hours were so very quiet and peaceful. My prayer partner, Marge Tracey, and I had the 2:00-3:00 AM slot. In the total stillness of the night, we prayed the rosary together aloud, praying for each other's intentions. It formed a bond unlike any other.

One Friday night Adoration was special indeed. That was New Year's Eve, December 31, 1999, the day we moved into the new century. It was the day when folks were saying all kinds of crazy things were going to happen at the stroke of midnight. To help us all welcome the new millennium calmly and prayerfully, Father Barkett said Mass in the chapel that night. He finished his homily just at midnight. He wished us all a Happy New Year and we all smiled and sighed with relief. The catastrophes that had been predicted didn't happen and life would go on.

In late 2004 when the new church opened, Adoration moved to the chapel there. This setting was less secure than the old chapel and as a result, in 2007 the hours were cut back to 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM, and later to 9:00 AM to Noon Benediction.

Millie Kozar followed me as keeper of the schedule, and then Joanne Kormos took over when Millie moved away. When the Covid pandemic struck in March 2019, Adoration continued for a short time on reduced hours and then was discontinued as it was in other parishes. Saint James and Saint Agnes parishes restarted their Adoration so Saint Ann parishioners can visit those nearby churches to spend some time before the Eucharist.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion History

by Kathy Bates

The function of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs) is to help distribute Holy Communion either within Mass or by taking it to a homebound person. They assist ordained ministers (Bishop, Priest, or Deacon). In 1971, EMHCs were first permitted in the United States. At that time the Congregation of the Sacraments responded to a request of the American Bishops to allow laypersons to assist Priests in giving Holy Communion.

The first group of EMHCs at Saint Ann were all men. Fran Vitt was among the very earliest to serve. Once women were allowed to serve, Christine Strasser was one of the very first to serve. Fran and Christine both remember being required to wear white robes (cassock and surplice) and be up on the altar sitting next to the Priest for the Mass.

In the Diocese of Arlington, pastors send the Bishop the names of parishioners for whom the Pastor seeks appointments as EMHCs. The Bishop makes the appointments for a period of five years. EMHCs must attend a Diocesan training workshop and local training at Saint Ann.

At present there are about 80 EMHCs who serve at all the Sunday Masses, both English and Spanish. There are also EMHCs who serve patients at Virginia Hospital Center, help with the liturgies at Sunrise Assisted Living facility and take Communion to the homebound. For more information, or to get involved, please contact Kathy Bates at kwbates2@gmail.com.

Saint Ann Hospice Ministry

by Michael Landrigan

As an important aspect of our faith outreach through works of mercy, Saint Ann ministers to the needs of the sick being treated within the parish boundaries which includes patients at Virginia Hospital Center as well as individuals in "life-limiting" circumstances at Capital Caring Health's Halquist Memorial Inpatient Center at 4715 15th St, N, in Arlington. The latter is a 15-bed facility for terminally ill patients in the later stages of disease. While technically related and treated as a single "Hospital and Hospice Ministry," the two aspects of the ministry are administered separately.

The Hospice aspect of the ministry began in the 1970s when the facility, which is now Halquist, first opened. Hospital Ministers would visit Catholic patients at the facility who expressed a desire to receive Holy Communion on an “as needed” basis. Eventually, by 2007, the need at the facility had grown and the then-current pastor of Saint Ann asked the Hospital Ministry Coordinator, Mary Green, to organize a regular ministry to visit the Catholic patients at Halquist. Mary became the coordinator of the new Hospice Ministry while also remaining coordinator of the Hospital Ministry; - dual positions that she held for almost a decade.



By 2016, with health care security rules becoming more stringent, it was decided by Capital Caring that these visiting ministers should undergo security and medical checks and be vetted as official Spiritual Support Volunteers. All ministers went through this process and officially became a part of Capital Caring Health’s volunteer program. By 2018, there was a Capital Caring staff chaplain available to patients only two days a week and the staff asked, if when present on other days, the Saint Ann

ministers would be willing to make visits to non-Catholic patients who wanted spiritual support. Our pastor, Fr. Mel, approved of this expansion of the role and the ministers moved into a more ecumenical approach to the ministry. Ministers continued to be “Eucharistic Ministers” to Catholic patients but also prayed or made supportive visits to other Christians, non-Christians and even those of no denomination who were in need of spiritual support or a caring supportive visit.

In the case of Catholic patients, the lay minister/spiritual support volunteer’s function is to be the presence of Christ and of the Church to the patients and his/her family and friends who may be visiting. The minister carries the Eucharist, prays the Church’s “Communion of the Sick” liturgy, and administers Holy Communion to those patients and visitors present who are able to receive. For those patients unable to receive, the minister prays WITH the patient. For those asleep or not conscious, the minister prays FOR the patient.



Winter garden at the Halquist Memorial Inpatient Center (formerly Arlington Hospice.)

With non-Catholic patients identified by the staff as being appropriate for visits, the visit included whatever is deemed appropriate - prayer, encouragement, a chat, and always a caring “presence.” The visit to all patients requires a great deal of love, sensitivity and gentleness. It is always “patient-centered” in that the minister follows the patient’s lead as to the level and type of spiritual support, or general support, the patient desires. A short, friendly and supportive visit can be a form of ministry. By 2020, the ministry had 14 lay ministers and one

Sister of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Many ministering. The ministry covered 5 days a week. Unfortunately, on March 11, 2020, due to the pandemic, all volunteer programs having direct contact with patients were suspended by Capital Caring Health, including the Saint Ann Hospice Ministry. Subsequently, on June 8, 2021, Halquist Memorial Inpatient Center was closed. At this time, we have no information on its future. Our Saint Ann Hospice Ministry is therefore currently inactive. For more information, please contact Michael Landrigan at mikeL545@verizon.net.

Hospital Ministry

by Joan Cox and Billie Shoemaker

As part of Saint Ann's outreach to the community, Hospital Ministers visit Catholic patients at Virginia Hospital Center (VHC) and offer them Holy Communion, prayer, and comfort. Saint Ann has always responded to the spiritual needs of the sick at VHC and before that Arlington Hospital. Since the early days of the parish, and, over time, what is now the Hospital Ministry began to develop.

By the 1990s, under the caring leadership of Catherine Foote, two volunteers a day visited the hospital. In 2006, then-Pastor Father Greenhalgh, seeking a more structured ministry to cover the growing needs and size of VHC, asked Mary Green to coordinate the Hospital Ministry. Mary, who at that time had been a volunteer since 2002, agreed, and under her steadfast leadership, the Hospital Ministry grew and flourished. By 2017, the ministry had more than 35 volunteers, with Hospital Ministers covering every day of the week. With the growth of the ministry, Peggy Burke, a faithful Hospital Minister, joined Mary as co-coordinator and the ministry continued to thrive and to serve additional Catholic patients. After years of excellent leadership and service, Mary and Peggy retired from their roles as co-coordinators as life demands pulled them in other directions. They have continued to serve as mentors.

In the summer of 2019, our Pastor, Father Mel, asked Joan Cox and Billie Shoemaker to fill Mary and Peggy's formidable shoes. The Hospital Ministers continued on joyfully in their service until March of 2020 when, due to Covid-19, volunteers were no longer permitted in the hospital. In the summer of 2021, the Hospital Ministry was allowed to return to VHC. At present, the ministry has

fewer active members than pre-pandemic. Through July 2022 at least, it has been able to have a presence at the hospital most weekdays, especially with the assistance of then-Deacon Remy.

At times of illness or injury, the Eucharist can be of great importance and comfort. The expressions of gratitude from patients are often quite moving and encouraging. It is our goal to assure that there are volunteers in the hospital each day to visit all patients expressing a desire for such a visit. It is our hope that the ministry will soon be able to once again provide the full weekly presence at the hospital. New volunteers are always welcome. If you would like to be a part of this ministry or more information, please contact Joan Cox at joanswim53@gmail.com or Billie Shoemaker at billieshoemaker@aol.com.

Lectors Ministry

Compiled from past histories and recollections of Maureen Donnelly

This ministry is one in which lay parishioners do the first and second readings of scripture at all Masses. The lectors also incidentally welcome the congregation before the Mass begins and offer the Prayers of the Faithful.



Lector Chris Carney reads at Sunday Mass in January 2022

The Lectors Ministry began at Saint Ann and other Catholic churches after Pope Paul VI issued his *Ministeria Quaedam* in August 1972, consistent with the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II). Pope Paul established the new ministry Lector, which gave lay people a role in the Mass that had formerly been reserved for priests or those who were candidates for Holy

Orders. Our third pastor, Father Frank Hendrick, implemented this new ministry at Saint Ann, along with other Vatican II reforms (such as Mass in English, turning the altar to face the congregation, and receiving our first permanent deacon).

For the first years of this ministry, lectors were invited to participate by the pastor. Initially, four were appointed and were all men. The lector wore a black robe and processed to the altar with the priest and altar servers at the start of Mass. There was only one lector at each Mass who did both the first and second scriptural readings. When not reading, the lector sat by the altar along with the celebrant.

After some years, women were also invited to be lectors. Maureen Donnelly and Cathy Hayes were among the first women lectors at Saint Ann. Like the men, they also donned black robes in the working sacristy before Mass and took their seats by the altar.

By the beginning of the 1990s, our then-pastor Father William Schardt expanded and updated this ministry further. Now all parishioners were welcome to volunteer for this ministry (rather than be appointed) and two lectors (one for each reading) were assigned to each Mass. The black robes were eliminated, and the lectors now took their seats in the congregation.

For years, Steve Stephenson acted as scheduler of the lectors (as well as being a lector himself). That role now has been held by Maureen Donnelly for many years.

For those interested in becoming a lector, Saint Ann welcomes volunteers, including teens (grades 12 and up), young adults, adults, and seniors. The time commitment involves being available on

a rotating basis for weekend Masses. For more information or to volunteer, contact Maureen Donnelly, 703-534-2819, or itsmsd@verizon.net.

Legion of Mary

Our Lady of the Presentation Praesidium

The Legion of Mary (LOM) is the largest lay apostolate in the Catholic Church. It was founded by Frank Duff on September 7, 1921 in Dublin, Ireland and has since spread throughout the world. Our Lady of the Presentation Praesidium, the Saint Ann branch of the Legion of Mary, was established in November 1955. The Legion of Mary is a ministry sanctioned by the Church to assist the Pastor in his evangelization efforts. The Legion of Mary is at the disposal of the Bishop, the Pastor and its Spiritual Director for any form of social service. Auxiliary Members are spiritually joined to the Active Members through daily prayer.

Besides weekly meetings, Active Members perform substantial active work such as regular visits to senior living facilities and nursing homes. They coordinate the Pilgrim Virgin Program and conduct Home Enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the parish. Active Members also conduct door-to-door visitations within the Parish boundaries. Visits to incarcerated individuals began in 2017. Through door-to-door visits, Legionaries welcome families to the area on behalf of the Pastor and encourage fallen-away-Catholics to attend church regularly. They also encourage non-Catholics who may be seeking a spiritual home to consider Saint Ann's and/or the RCIA program.



Legion of Mary volunteers at Arlington County Detention Center for Mass with the incarcerated, shown with concelebrants Bishop Michael Burbidge and Fr. Donald J. Planty.

The main purpose of the Legion of Mary is to give glory to God through the sanctification of its members through prayer, the sacraments and devotion to Mary. Over the years, Active Members of Our Lady of the Presentation Praesidium have touched the lives of hundreds of individuals through active work. Active work was halted during 2020 and 2021 due to the Pandemic. In 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were seven Active Members and 79 Auxiliary Members of Our Lady

of the Presentation Praesidium. Active Members attempted 729 door-to-door visits, had 301 contacts and found 49 active Catholics and 30 inactive Catholics. During the same year there were 33 visits to the Arlington Jail with 61 contacts. The Pilgrim Virgin Statue was welcomed into 70 homes with 266 contacts. During the same period, Home Enthronement was conducted at the homes of two families with four contacts.

Mary is the Mother of God. For that reason, we know that Mary has a high place in salvific history. Today, in various sectors of secularized society, we note a widespread crisis of faith in God, accompanied by a drop in devotion to the Virgin Mother. Our Lady of the Presentation Praesidium members attempt to counter this secular trend by leading the Daily Rosary, First Saturday Devotion and other devotions to the Virgin Mary. We go to Jesus through Mary because He always listens to His Mom!

The Legion of Mary has been recognized by numerous Popes. “The



Visit of the Pilgrim Virgin Statue to the home of friends of parishioners Jerome and Helen Jayasinghe



Legion of Mary Presents the true face of the Catholic Church.” (Pope St. John XXIII, July 13, 1960). Legionaries are called to be “Christian inspiration in the modern world and bring the priest to the people.” (Pope St. John Paul II, October 30, 1982). For more information, or to get involved, please contact Rosita Quijote at 703-344-3603.

Legion of Mary members Betsy McGuirk, Elly Escobal, Joanne Kormos, Maria D’Aiello, Rosita Quijote, and Berenta Juma with Our Lady of Grace statue in Room 108.

Music Ministries

Compiled from recollections of Karen Schroeder, Scott Brown, John Lane, and Michael Garcia

In the early years of the parish, Saint Ann had a traditional choir as well as children’s choirs that sang at various Masses and celebrations. After Vatican II changed the landscape of music in the church, teachers from Saint Ann School formed the first contemporary choir, using guitars and other instruments. Dick Thomas was hired as Music Director in the early 1970s and led contemporary and traditional choirs. He recruited parishioner Valerie Garcia as his successor, and she served as Director from 1988 until 1999. Valerie led a vibrant contemporary choir which performed at the White House Christmas Pageant of Peace in 1997 (and again in 2009 led by Scott Brown).



Saint Ann Contemporary Choir performing at an ecumenical concert for the 50th Anniversary of the Parish, in 1997. Choirs from several protestant parishes in the area celebrated with us.

Contemporary choir performing at the White House Pageant of Peace, Christmas 1997 (below).

Margie Fransen led a children's choir in the '90s. Saint Ann School graduate Nick Horner served as our Music Director in the 2000s. Jamie Semple held that position for the past nine years and developed a thriving youth choir and a children's choir who, up until the Covid pandemic, sang at Sunday Masses about once a month. Our Spanish Language choir was led by Sra. Morena Penozo in the '90s, later by Marcelo Bocaflor, and now by Miguel Ayala. It sings and plays at the Spanish Mass and at many parish events.



Spanish Language Choir accompanying children, Las Posadas 2006 (left)..

All choir practices and performances at Mass were suspended by Covid from March 2020 until July 2021, and our ensembles have been rebuilding since then. Jamie stepped down in July 2022, and we have recently welcomed our new Director of Music, Patrick Botti, and new Contemporary Choir director Ellyn Schuette.

For many decades, parishioner Ellen Winkler was an important part of our music ministry as an accompanist, piano teacher, and recruiter of cantors. Other memorable contributors to our music ministries include Michael Garcia who lent his voice to the contemporary choir in the '80s and '90s, and to Christmas Eve Masses well into the 2000s; and Martin Fetherston, Scott Brown, and Karen Schroeder who served as successive Contemporary Choir directors from the late 1990s through August 2022.

Saint Ann currently has a wide range of music offerings, including cantors, a contemporary ensemble at the 5:30pm Saturday Mass, and on Sundays, a traditional choir at 9am, a contemporary choir at 11am, and a Spanish language choir at 1:30pm Mass. For special liturgies such as the Feast of Saints Ann and Joachim and the recent ordination of Fr. Remy Kankolongo, CICM, members of all adult choirs sing together at bilingual Masses.



Saint Ann also has a chorale group that relocated here in March 2000. While not a formal part of our Music Ministry, 21 of its 35 members are Saint Ann parishioners, and it has performed popular music at nursing and retirement homes in Arlington. It is led by Jack Wells and produced by John Lane.

Over the years, our music ministry has accompanied the parish through many Masses, celebrations, joys and sorrows. New members are always welcome. For information, see the Saint Ann website.

Contemporary Ensemble leading procession into Mass, Palm Sunday 2022.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

from recollections by Mar_T Ahrens

In the early 2000s, parishioner Mar_T Ahrens organized this ministry to bring comfort to those who were seriously ill or homebound. The ministry members were both new and experienced knitters, crocheters and quilters. They made lap robes and shawls with a prayer “woven” into each one by the crafters as they worked. They worked from home with occasional group get-togethers to meet, share patterns and tips on their crafts, and enjoy some fellowship.

The finished creations were delivered to the parish office, then brought to the sick or homebound by our Eucharistic Ministers when they visited homes, the hospital, or assisted living residences to bring communion.

Ultimately, the supply of blankets surpassed demand and the project was discontinued around 2015.

This ministry could be revived as a “Mittens Ministry” or “Hats for the Unhoused” kind of project if any crafty parishioners are interested. Contact the office to let the pastor know if you would like to pursue this idea.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

by Amy Strickland



Easter Vigil Baptism of Nikki Gregory, April 16, 2022

While many Saint Ann parishioners are “cradle Catholics,” some entered the Church later in life. For nearly fifty years, Saint Ann has offered the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Starting each autumn, our RCIA team meets regularly for formation with adults who have expressed interest in entering the Catholic Church or completing their sacramental initiation in the Church; there is also adapted instruction available for children who are age seven and older. After a series of rites during Lent, at the Easter Vigil, these people receive their sacraments of initiation. RCIA is really a ministry of the entire

parish, as parishioners get to know the catechumens and candidates, pray for them, and welcome them into the community. Any questions about RCIA should be directed to the Director of Faith Formation at stannreled@gmail.com.

St. Joseph’s Work

by Warren Kaufman

The mission of St. Joseph’s Work is to provide minor repair and maintenance of Saint Ann parish church, school, rectory and grounds. The ministry has existed since the parish was first established. Members accomplish tasks as they become identified.

A couple of examples may suffice to illustrate the role of St. Joseph’s Work in the parish. Several years ago, the Work painted three classrooms and one of the porches in the school. Another example was the extensive renovation on the grounds around the rectory shortly after the completion of the new church. That effort required the removal of a previous pastor’s vegetable and flower garden on the south side of the building and installing a concrete path to the courtyard, a brick wall to provide privacy for the courtyard, and extensive landscaping to include removal of a hedgerow of large bushes and the addition of soil to level the existing grounds in preparation for the laying of sod and the planting of new trees, bushes and perennial flowers.

Routinely, most of the work has to do with ground maintenance, *i.e.*, trimming trees and shrubbery, weeding, installing new plants, and general ground maintenance.

If you are interested in volunteering for this ministry, contact the office at 703-528-6276 and leave a message for Fr. Mel Portula letting him know.

Walking With Purpose

By Karen Sheehan, Kathy Bates, and Heather LoPresti

Walking with Purpose is a Catholic Bible study for women that aims to bring women to a deeper personal relationship with Christ. Through personal study and small group discussions, the group helps to link our everyday challenges with solutions given to us through the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church.

The ministry has been at Saint Ann Parish since 2017 when it was started by Paula Dierkes and Karen Sheehan. We are blessed to have many women serve in various roles from coordinating to leading small groups. Karen Sheehan is the Pastoral coordinator. Kathy Bates and Heather LoPresti are the Operations Co-coordinators. Charlene Harkin and Cherie Kasch assist with hospitality. This year we were able to offer child-minding for young mothers during this study time. Whitney Distaso and Kathy Bates have made that possible on Wednesday mornings.

The ministry has doubled in size and we continue to welcome new women into the ministry. We meet for 1.5 hours once a week between September and May, with breaks for holidays and for a short summer study.

The Walking with Purpose ministry is more than just a study of scripture. It is a faith community that supports, encourages, and challenges one another. It is a safe place where we develop authentic friendships and engage each other in meaningful discussions. The Saint Ann's Walking with Purpose ministry is one of the more than 460 parishes throughout the United States, Europe, and Canada.

During the height of the pandemic, Saint Ann's Walking with Purpose ministry continued to meet. We held both virtual meetings and in-person meetings. For many of us, our weekly meeting was a grace from God. We prayed for each other, relationships grew stronger, we recognized blessings, and remained hopeful as the Holy Spirit fortified our spirits and love for God. We always welcome new women to join. For more information, please contact Karen Sheehan, Kathy Bates, and Heather LoPresti at stannwvp@gmail.com.

OUTREACH MINISTRY STORIES

Advent Giving Tree

by Erin Smythers

The Saint Ann Advent Giving Tree Program dates back to at least the late 1980s when the Saint Ann high school youth group was asked to run the ministry by Sister Theresa. Parishioner Debbie Howe worked with the teens to discuss the organizations that the tree would benefit, contacted those groups to determine each organization's needs and then got to work setting up the tree, and printing and cutting out the decorative tags/ornaments that adorned the tree. The tree remained in the Narthex for the Advent season, was monitored each week gifts were collected, and additional tags were added as needed.



In the early days of the program, Arlington County asked our Saint Ann community to sponsor specific families in need for the holidays. The Saint Ann Advent Giving Tree Program agreed to “adopt” 5-8 large families and was supplied with names, ages and requests for each member of each family. These requests were listed on the tags hanging on the tree. Each child received at least one new outfit, a new pair of shoes, a winter coat, a book and one to two toys. For the adults, clothing and personal items were requested. For the family as a whole, food items and supermarket gift cards were collected in addition to needed household items. It was important that each child in the family received approximately the same number of gifts as their siblings.

Throughout the 1990s, the program continued in this fashion with additional support being given to other local charities such as a senior center, HOPE in Northern Virginia, The

Arlington Community Temporary Shelter (TACTS, now Doorways), OAR, a non-profit that worked with prisoners, and even a single mother who had fallen on hard times that a Saint Ann parishioner asked the church to adopt. The tags on the tree continued to ask for the specific needs of our adopted families and also the needs of these additional charities requesting things like slippers, robes, toiletries, diapers, baby clothes and supplies, and toys.

Sorting the items and delivering them to the families was labor intensive. For several hours, 5-10 teens and 3-4 adults sorted, wrapped, tagged, and bagged all of the generous donations. The Saint Ann volunteers usually did not meet the recipients themselves but dropped off the gifts to the sponsoring organization or at one of the Arlington County community centers. However, Debbie Howe remembers when she and a few teens went to a community center connected to an apartment complex in south Arlington, “Some teens and I were dropping off gifts there. A little boy about nine years old was helping people carry in the gifts. When we arrived, he looked at the name on the bags and realized it was his. He got very excited and shouted, ‘That’s my name!’ He then looked at the number of gifts we had and said, ‘I need help to carry all these.’ He then happily ran off to get his family. That made all of our day. We did not usually get to see the people we helped.”

After 2003, Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services was also included in the charities that were supported by the Advent Giving Tree Program. And in the current model, many other wonderful charities have benefitted from the Saint Ann community’s generosity.

At some point in the last decade or so, the next transformation of the Saint Ann Advent Giving Tree Program took place, and it became what it looks like today. The Saint Ann Outreach Committee identifies the beneficiaries, with Catholic Charities always represented. The Advent Giving Tree coordinators reach out to the organizations to inquire about their needs. These days, gift cards are preferred for their versatility and ease of use. Organizations usually prefer gift cards from Target, Walmart, gas stations and grocery stores. On the first Sunday of Advent, the Giving Tree goes up in the

Narthex with colorful ornaments suggesting specific gift card donations for each charitable organization. Parishioners are encouraged to take an ornament and return it along with the gift card donation to the baskets by the tree. For security purposes, gift cards are collected daily. At the end of the drive, just before Christmas, the cards are counted, bundled and put in festive gift bags to be delivered to the chosen organizations. Even though we don't see the actual individuals that we are helping, it is apparent through the eyes of the directors and employees of the charities that Saint Ann's donations are very much appreciated.

The Saint Ann Advent Giving Tree Program is currently lead by Laura Fisher (lauraleonardfisher@yahoo.com) and Erin Smythers (erinsmythers@gmail.com). This past year's gift card donations totaled \$18,620.00 distributed between five charities: Doorways, Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic, Migration & Refugee Services, New Eve Maternity Home, and Offender Aid Restoration. Once again, help went to those who truly needed it thanks to the generosity of the Saint Ann community.

No matter the form of donations, the specific items requested, or the beneficiaries, for more than thirty years, the tree and its ornaments appear in the Narthex each Advent and the Saint Ann Catholic Church community has always been extremely generous to this ministry over its history.

Support of Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC)

Complied by Laura Ermovick

For over 25 years, the generous parishioners of Saint Ann Church have been donating non-perishable food to support the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC). Initially, the donations were collected and transported to AFAC on one Sunday a month. In 2006, Harris Teeter donated a shopping cart to hold collected food so that donations could be brought to the church at any time. The cart is parked in the Parish Hall lobby for all food drop-offs.

As the need for food in Arlington grew, notably in the economic downturn of 2008, donations also increased substantially. Volunteers started to deliver food to AFAC on a weekly basis. Parishioner Bill Shumann, who was the founding coordinator of this ministry, was a stalwart on this delivery duty for many years.

Currently, Laura Ermovick is our coordinator, and we have a group of four volunteers who rotate weeks to transport the food donations from Saint Ann to AFAC. On average, about 150 pounds of food is donated and transported each week. Our Plot Against Hunger community garden also raises produce for AFAC, and those volunteers deliver it directly during the growing season. There is always a big jump in donations during the week of Thanksgiving when hundreds of pounds of food are brought to the church. These donations are gathered at the Thanksgiving Day Mass and typically delivered to AFAC by a caravan of volunteers that day. The Thanksgiving Drive was managed for many years by long-time parishioners Paul and Peggy Burke.

The COVID pandemic shut-downs resulted in a temporary reduction in the weekly donations, but as the need for food assistance was great, parishioners soon resumed their generous donations. There is a framed certificate of appreciation from AFAC thanking Saint Ann for its years of support on the wall by the donation cart. For more information about this ministry, please contact Laura Ermovick (ermo_laura@hotmail.com).

Bagged Meal Program

Compiled by Peter Fox

In 1998, the newly formed Saint Ann Social Outreach Committee invited parishioners to help with providing bagged meals on a monthly basis to the homeless served by the Arlington Street People's Network (A-SPAN), now called PathForward. Led by Monica Shumann, a group of volunteers shopped for and assembled 120 bagged meals, each containing two sandwiches, snacks, a drink and fruit. The meals were then distributed to the "street people" (as they were called at the time) at two locations – near Central Library and in Rosslyn – together with soup provided by A-SPAN, which was picked up at the shelter.



Volunteers Eileen and Henry (rear), Kate and Cecelia, and Thomas, in the Parish Hall preparing to pack up bagged meals for delivery to Arlington's hungry.

Patty Hughes took over the leadership of the bagged meal volunteers, and the first time the group made sandwiches was in her kitchen! This was because the Parish Hall was being set up for a Confirmation that evening. Mary Cochran kept the volunteers organized, counted sandwiches and ensured the meals were assembled in a systematic fashion. (Mary is still involved and still keeping us organized!) During the early days, we bought the meat and sliced it in the kitchen, where Noreen Mattingly and Kathee Swennes were mistresses of the meat slicing. Other volunteers baked cookies, and sometimes we added cards or notes. Young children often participated. Two volunteers, often Jeff Momoi and Gene Mattingly, delivered and served the meals and found

this very rewarding. The homeless were always polite and friendly, waiting calmly in line to receive their meal, and expressing their appreciation.

Gay Friedmann joined the group and eventually became the coordinator around 2007. Cathy Morper volunteered to purchase the food each month at Costco and deliver it to the Parish Hall where the volunteers assembled 60 bags. On one occasion, we were surprised to find there was no food . . . Cathy had delivered it, but it was nowhere to be found. Two volunteers hurried to Safeway and purchased what was needed and we were able to assemble and deliver the bags, albeit a bit late. Later, a homeless man was found to be living in a closet off the Parish Hall, where remnants of the food were found hidden!

In 2015, Peter Fox took over from Gay as the coordinator, and the group continued to assemble and serve the meals with volunteers of all ages, but still with the support of long-time regular members including Monica Shumann, Mary Cochran, Noreen Mattingly, Kathee Swennes, and Florence and Paul Starzynski. Since 2020 and the pandemic, the program has been unable to use the Parish Hall, but we started a modified effort where volunteers assemble bags at home and bring them to the Saint Ann parking lot. Other volunteers then deliver them to the shelter. Over all these years, members of this program have always felt a strong sense of the Saint Ann community and the reward of helping those

less fortunate in our midst. For more information, or to get involved, please contact Peter Fox at petmon@verizon.net.

Box of Joy Ministry

By Heather Bryant

In 2017, I started this ministry at Saint Ann. Having 2 little girls, I grew tired and sad of finding new or “like new” small toys laying around their rooms untouched as Christmas approached. I thought to myself, where can I help children and donate these precious toys? After doing a web search, I found Cross Catholic Outreach’s project called Box of Joy. At first, in 2016, I drove to Middletown, MD which is over an hour away, to deliver several boxes that my little daughters and I packed together. After that, I read more in depth about the project online and decided I could do this myself at Saint Ann! So, with Fr. Mel’s approval, we started the ministry here at Saint Ann’s in the Fall of 2017 where we as a parish also served as a Drop Off Center for the entire Diocese! The first year, our goal was 500 boxes, and we did it! Oddly enough, we packed exactly 500 that first year. I am proud of the fact that this parish is so giving and that we raised the number of boxes donated slowly every year. 600+ in 2018, 700+ in 2019 and then...COVID-19 struck. However, even in the middle of a pandemic, this parish “showed up” and we still packed 500+ boxes...during a PANDEMIC! I have full confidence that our parish will continue to rise to the occasion, and we will pack around 800 boxes this year in 2022. That’s my personal goal anyway! In 2020, we successfully got Saint Ann School involved, as well, which has been wonderful addition to this ministry.



The Bryant family with 2017 Box of Joy donations.

This is a project that has brought me so much joy to my life. Of course, blessing thousands of the poorest of the poor children in this hemisphere every year is at the top of the list, but having my young daughters, year after year, save toys and specifically SHOP for toys for these completely impoverished children brings me the most happiness. This is truly a “giving back” project and it brings me JOY! Saint Ann’s support of Box of Joy brings hope to children in developing countries, providing them memorable Christmas gifts and a much-needed reminder of God’s love. Last year in 2021, 106,276 TOTAL boxes were packed and delivered to seven countries which included Guatemala, Nicaragua, Haiti, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, and Grenada.

Coat Collection

by Deanne Sobczak

In the fall of 2013, Alex and Eric Saenz had the idea to collect coats to donate to the homeless. Considering the cold weather, they thought this was a worthwhile cause and that it could help many people. They met with Father Mel to discuss this idea and he agreed it was a worthy cause. Beginning

that year, and in the nine years since, Alex, Eric and their family have organized the coat drive at Saint Ann. Over the years, they have collected and delivered approximately 600 coats to the Arlington Street People's Assistance Network (now called PathForward). A few years ago, with the coordination of Michele Mrozek, Alex and Eric also began collecting coats, sweatpants and other items for the students at Carlin Springs Elementary School. The staff at Carlin Springs is always greatly appreciative of the much-needed items donated by Saint Ann. For more information, please contact Deanne Sobczak through the parish office.

Hospitality Committee

by Kate Perryman

The Hospitality Committee long existed informally in the Saint Ann community. It began under the umbrella of the Bereavement committee. The long-standing Bereavement Committee provided refreshments after funerals. The Church even provided volunteers with a packet of recipes to use to make meals. Volunteers were sometimes asked to assist with other functions as they occurred. In the early 1990s, Father Schardt split the events into two distinct ministries creating the official Bereavement and Hospitality Committees. Because of COVID-19, the Hospitality Committee has been on hiatus. When in use, the committee hosts receptions for a variety of Church celebrations and observances as requested by our pastor.



Former Hospitality Chair Paula Dierkes prepares reception for RCIA participants 1997 in the Parish Hall

If you want to serve our parish, but don't have a lot of time, the Hospitality Committee is the ideal micro-volunteering opportunity. Most requests don't exceed 2 hours. You can volunteer whenever is convenient for you. For further information,

please contact committee chair, Kate Perryman at perrymankate@gmail.com

Lenten Soup Supper

by Kelly King, including recollections from Christine Strasser, Chris Chelak, and Peter Fox, and information from news articles

Each Lenten season at Saint Ann you will find the parish hall busy on Wednesday nights. The community is invited to come enjoy Lenten Soup Suppers - a simple meal of soup with neighbors and

friends. Donations are accepted, and the soup coordinators and pastor designate what local charities will receive the funds.

This Lenten tradition started in 1974, when parishioner Judy Davis proposed it to the parish board. As reported in the Washington Post in 1976, she saw it as means to help her children understand



the meaning of penance – the soup supper was a way for them to give up something so others may have more as a form of “positive penance.” In the early years, 35 parishioners regularly donated a gallon of homemade “soup of the week” and up to 300 people were served. The soup was very plain with unbuttered white bread and crackers as the only accompaniments.

Joanne and Andrew Stump deliver a pot of homemade soup to Monica Shumann at Soup Supper in Lent 1999

There was a gap for a year or two in the later ‘70s, but in 1979, then-pastor Msgr. O’Connell mentioned at the end of one Sunday Mass that he hoped to get the soup supper going again. Christine Strasser stepped up to restart the event with the help of Cathy Hayes and other parish women. The suppers were advertised in the Arlington Catholic Herald. So many showed up to the first supper that year that Christine had to run out to Safeway for cases of soup to supplement the homemade version being offered!

Later leaders included Alvina Pettit, Monica Shumann, Chris Chelak, Michele Mrozek, Heather Obora, and Kelly King. Regular soup-makers have faithfully contributed for many years – Eleanor Deely, Kathee Swennes, Florence Starzynski, and Joanne Stump are some whose pots are quite familiar to kitchen volunteers. The soup itself has evolved, from simple basic recipes, with one kind of soup offered on a given night (clam chowder and Hamburger ABC were always popular evenings), to more hearty recipes with frequent offerings of various “chef’s choice” selections. Vegetarian options are offered as well, along with more hearty bread and butter.

Many volunteers, not just soup-makers, contribute to these suppers. The kitchen is often filled with parish youth helping to set up, serve, replenish drinks, bread and crackers, and clean-up for the night. Scouts, SAS students, or Invictus groups volunteer to cook and staff designated dates. For many years, SAS eighth graders came after school to set the tables with placemats, a Lenten Grace prayer card, and information about the organization designated to receive that week’s proceeds. In early years, the supper supported So Others Might Eat (SOME) and Martha’s Table in DC. More recently, the proceeds have gone to local organizations like HOPE, Doorways, the Paul Stefan Foundation, Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC), and ASPAN (now PathForward). The suggested donation is the amount of a meal at a fast-food restaurant, but any amount is always welcome (and none is required).

For several years, SOME participated directly by hosting its Empty Bowls evening at Saint Ann on a Lenten Wednesday. SOME volunteers took over our kitchen, hall, and Narthex to put on its major annual fundraiser. Handcrafted bowls donated by local artists and students were put on display in the Narthex. For a donation to SOME, patrons chose a bowl and had their bowl washed and filled with



delicious soup made by several area restaurants or SOME's own chefs-in-training. Often the best soup was from SOME! Those evenings brought many folks from beyond our parish to support SOME and were a great success for the organization. SOME shifted to an on-line fundraiser with the Covid pandemic.

Soup suppers went on hiatus during the construction of the new church in 2003 and 2004. And, although we had to suspend the suppers for 2021 and 2022 due to the Covid pandemic, we pray that we will be able to resume this beautiful tradition in Lent 2023.

For questions or to volunteer, contact Kelly King via the parish office at 703-528-6276. For soup recipes, see Saint Ann's website under the Ministries tab.

Soup Supper friends in 2003: Bea Mancini, Connie Morper, Doris Vitt, Virginia Moran (all early members of Saint Ann Parish).

Saint Ann Migration and Refugee Ministry compiled by Monica Shumann and Peter Fox

Saint Ann Parish's efforts to support refugees began in 1977 when the parish sponsored a Vietnamese family with seven children and housed them in Joachim Hall for a number of years. The father served as parish custodian and all the school-aged children attended Saint Ann school. We also supported and sponsored a Cambodian family with eleven children in the early 1980s. Parishioners found them a small rental house on Wilson Boulevard, took them shopping for clothes and shoes when they first arrived, and made regular donations to support them for several years.

In 2003, Saint Ann became involved with the Arlington Diocese's Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) efforts to resettle refugees. At a Catholic Charities meeting, Monica Shumann, a founding member of the Saint Ann Social Outreach Committee, spotted the MRS table with information on its "House in a Van" project. The committee had been looking for a parish outreach activity and this looked ideal. The project called for collecting contributions of everything needed to resettle a refugee family. The parish response was amazing. Thirty-five people came to the first meeting about the

project, and we were on our way. We decided to start the collection, although we didn't know the family, its size, or arrival date and used the Parish Hall as our storage space.

A few weeks later, we learned that an Afghan family, a mother (Farzeneh) and five children aged 6-21, would be assigned to Saint Ann and arrive the next week. The abstract became human. Farzeneh's husband had been killed by the Taliban, and she had fled with her children to Peshawar, Pakistan, where they spent 3 years in a refugee camp. Finally, the State Department accepted them as refugees and they flew to Newark, and eventually to Northern Virginia.

MRS found them an apartment and paid the deposit and rent for six months. The family came to Saint Ann to select their furnishings from the collected items, and we helped move them to their new home, which was supposed to be all we were going to do. But how could we just say "goodbye" to a woman with no work experience, very little English, and five children trying to support themselves? So, in addition to MRS support, parishioners visited the family several times a week over the next year – tutoring English, setting up a computer, driving them to doctors and school appointments, and to stores, trying to find employment, and simply talking. They were unfailingly hospitable and always offered

visitors refreshments. We learned about Afghan traditions, family life, Muslim feast days and how they felt about living in America. It was harder than they anticipated. Going to school and having a part-time job was overwhelming for the older teens. But, somehow, they survived and flourished.



Kitchen goods collected for Bhutanese refugees and stored in former Chapel for pick up by MRS, 2008

In 2008, the parish served as a MRS collection site for donations to support Bhutanese refugees arriving in Northern Virginia. Saint Ann volunteers used the former chapel space (now the Saint Ann Room) to sort and store donations from our parish, and several other local parishes. MRS sent a van to pick up all the donated items which our volunteers helped load.

In 2010, MRS asked Saint Ann to help with 70 Iraqi refugees, arriving in the next few months. Remembering "our" Afghan family and understanding something of the difficulties, we responded and called on four other parishes to help. Together we collected all the needed household furnishings for this large number of people. Again, the response was enormous and MRS was overjoyed. Later, in 2013, we collected sufficient toiletries for about 50 refugees sponsored by MRS.

In 2014, Monica was joined by Michele Mrozek and Peter Fox to help coordinate refugee support efforts. That year, parishioners donated enough items to equip 12 kitchens, more than double the goal set for us by MRS.



Similar collections now occur annually to coincide with World Refugee Day in late June, and these focus on the most pressing household needs identified by MRS each year. In response to the influx of Afghan refugees during the fall of 2021, a special coat and hygiene kit collection was organized, with dozens of coats and over 1,300 pounds of kits donated to MRS.

MRS van arrives to pick up coats and hygiene kits for Afghan refugees in 2021 (above). Van loaded with items donated by Saint Ann parishioners (right).



In addition to our June collections, MRS has been one of the beneficiaries of our annual Advent Giving Tree for many years. MRS has sent numerous expressions of gratitude to Saint Ann for parishioners' extraordinary generosity.

Even though we cannot always put faces to those we have helped, we remember Farzeneh and her family, along with the Cambodian and Vietnamese families. We know that behind each refugee there is a tragic story, one of sadness but also of courage, determination and hope. We feel privileged to be able to give these new immigrants some assistance and comfort. For more information or to volunteer, contact Michele Mrozek, mmrozek@ggic.com; Peter Fox, petmon@verizon.net



“Plot Against Hunger” Community Garden

by Laura Ryan

Be sure to visit our garden at Site 7 of the Saint Ann History Walk!

The Saint Ann Community Garden is a "Plot Against Hunger" garden, built and maintained to grow crops for local food pantries. It is one of a network of community gardens fostered by the non-profit Arlington

Friends of Urban Agriculture to promote healthy, sufficient, sustainable food for all Arlingtonians. Inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home," our purpose is to help alleviate food insecurity in our community in a sustainable way. We keep our garden organic, with no herbicides or pesticides ever used. We experiment with pest control by companion planting with



Just-picked produce packed and loaded for delivery to AFAC.

flowers like marigolds. Most recently, our freshly-harvested produce has fed clients of Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) and the food pantry at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church in South Arlington.

Volunteers plant and care for the crops, harvest the produce as it ripens, and package it for delivery to the food pantries. The garden also gives our volunteers an opportunity to learn practical gardening skills while growing their faith through their work for others. Parishioner Laura Ryan has overseen the garden since its start in 2016.

Many volunteers are needed to keep our garden growing. We welcome new volunteers,

including students and families. Check the Saint Ann Church website for contact information or email stanncg@gmail.com. Ann History Walk!

School Supply Drive

by Laura Fisher

The Saint Ann School Supply Drive is nearly 30 years old. In 1992, Fr. Chuck McCoart came to Saint Ann from St. Mary of Sorrows where they held an annual School Supplies drive. The next year, he organized a similar venture at Saint Ann. For parishioners who remember the old church, large purple collection bins were set up each August in the St. Joseph wing of the church. The School Supplies drive was well received by our parishioners. At first, the ministry collected supplies for school children in grades K-12, distributing the donations to the Arlington Community Temporary Shelter (TACTS) as well as directly to some county schools. Later the effort focused on TACTS and Sullivan House, a shelter for women and families. By 2001, we were donating solely to TACTS (later known as Doorways), and we collected supplies for elementary school students.

In 2007 we began collecting school supplies for our neighbor, Carlin Springs Elementary School. The move to focus on Carlin Springs was inspired by a couple who were Saint Ann parishioners who also volunteered at Carlin Springs and saw the need. We have been working with Carlin Springs Elementary School ever since. The School Supply Drive, held every year in August, collects individual and classroom supplies as well as financial donations. For further information, contact Laura Fisher, lauraleonardFisher@yahoo.com

Slippers & Socks Collection

Compiled by Stephanie Smarr

The Slippers & Socks Collection started in 2009. At that time, the priests were told they should not wash the feet of women on Holy Thursday. Father Greenhalgh, the pastor at the time, wanted a way to include all parishioners. Someone suggested the idea of serving the feet of the homeless and elderly

by donating footwear, and that is how the Slippers & Socks ministry was created. Monica Shumann headed up the ministry the first year. Athletic socks were donated to the Arlington Street People's Assistance Network (A-SPAN) and other socks and slippers were donated to Catholic Charities' St. Martin de Porres Senior Center. Later, Marie Cincotta and her daughter, Marina Douglas, assisted Monica in organizing the ministry and began counting the donations. At its peak in 2018, the parishioners of Saint Ann donated over 1,350 pairs of socks and slippers! The ministry was disrupted by the pandemic in 2020, but returned in 2021 with resumed donations to A-SPAN. In 2022, donations were split between A-SPAN and the Mother of Light Center (MOLC) in Alexandria, expanding our reach to those in need. We continue to stay in touch with Catholic Charities to ensure that our donations go where they are most needed.

As intended, this has become a ministry that all parishioners can share. The signs for the collection bins are often made by the children from the faith formation classes. Students at Saint Ann School have had fun competitions trying to collect more socks than the other grades. The collection now starts a week before Palm Sunday and ends on the Sunday of Divine Mercy. For more information or to get involved, please contact Stephanie Smarr at thesmarrs@gmail.com.

Ministry at Sunrise Retirement Home at Bluemont Park, Arlington, VA

by Mary Stephenson

Lasting change sometimes begins with a single idea, a desire to reach out to others in faith, and volunteers to make it happen. That outreach journey began almost 25 years ago when a dedicated group of Saint Ann volunteers took an initial step to gather each Sunday at Sunrise Retirement Home to share the Word of God and the Eucharist with elderly residents unable to attend Sunday mass.



Mike Duffy, Emma Duffy and Jim August singing Entrance Hymn at Sunrise (left).



Altar prepared for Liturgy of the Word and Communion at Sunrise (right).

Now the 1:30 PM Sunday service is a fixed part of weekly life at Sunrise on Wilson Boulevard. Since the start of this endeavor, many have been involved in this ministry as presiders

who conduct the liturgy, musicians who provide musical and vocal accompaniment, and readers who proclaim the Word of God from the Sunday readings. Over the years, we have had children (daughters or sons of volunteers) help as readers, and occasionally young musicians perform after the service to the delight of residents.

On the third Wednesday of each month, one of our parish priests offers the opportunity for residents to attend mass. The number of residents who attend Sunday and monthly mass services may vary from week to week; but whatever the number gathered, we look into the eyes of God's holy people living in the Sunrise Community and see their hunger for His Word, their desire for communal worship and fellowship, and their incredible thankfulness for the gift of the Eucharist.

What began a quarter of a century ago is truly a blessing, especially for those who volunteer. We see in the elderly how faith has nourished and enriched lives; how pain and suffering can be overcome with hope and trust in the risen Lord; and most of all we, who volunteer, know the joy and blessing of reaching out to others in faith. Thanks to those who began this journey a quarter of a century ago and to those who continue the journey today. Sunday Service Coordinator: Mary Stephenson; Music Coordinators: Michael Montemurro and Christine Strasser. Contact Mary Stephenson at rpsmps@verizon.net for more information.

MORE PARISH STORIES

My Saint Ann Story including Hispanic Ministries

by Aida Veliz

In the life of every Catholic family there are events that allow us to find the presence and love of God who builds his plan of salvation, little by little and with much love, in the life of each member of the family. That was precisely the experience of my family.

After a few years of arriving from Peru, faithful to the religious values that our parents instilled in us since we were little, we went as a family to the San Thomas Moore parish to participate in the Eucharist, but the Lord's plans were different for us.

In 1993, we discovered Santa Ana Parish precisely when we were looking for a Pre-School to register our youngest son, Alexander, who was 3 years old. Since then, we began to go to this parish to participate in the Mass in Spanish, however, we did not have a priest designated for these masses. For this reason, Jesuit priests from Washington DC attended, as well as other priests from Peru, Mexico and Bolivia, who were studying at the University in Washington DC and were invited to give the Masses in Spanish.

Parish communities are said to be measured by how well they serve members and how they assist priests in their ministry of evangelization and doctrine. Therefore, it is necessary to recount those priests who helped the Hispanic community in the parish of Santa Ana.

The Dominican Priest Federico Barahona from Peru in 2002, was one of the first who was very committed to our Hispanic Community. Father Barahona encouraged us to organize and celebrate a very active and participatory Christmas among the parishioners, especially young people and children. It is pleasing to remember the representations that were made of the Holy Family with the participation of the faithful who took the role of Joseph, Mary, the Child Jesus, the Magi and the shepherds. All this to involve in faith and in the sacred mystery of the incarnation of our Lord. After the mass, we all participated in a sharing where the other traditional Christmas characters such as Santa Claus, the Christmas tree, etc. were represented, with the help of adults and young people. But that was not all,

particularly, Father Federico Barahona was the priest who encouraged me to participate in the Proclamation of the Word, which helped me a lot to be able to speak in public.

Another of the priests who also helped strengthen the Hispanic community of the Santa Ana parish was Jesuit priest Miguel Cruzado from Peru. Thanks to Father Miguel we were able to Celebrate the Lord of Miracles, a Peruvian devotion and one of the greatest displays of faith in the world, for a few years it has also been spread and celebrated in many states. In particular, I can affirm that Father Miguel Cruzado was the one who encouraged me to participate as a catechist for the Kindergarten children. This was one of the most beautiful experiences that I had in my life due to the innocence and encouragement of the children. Likewise, I was appointed as Extraordinary Minister of Communion taking the Body of Christ to the Hospice, where I saw the living presence of Jesus, which helped me much in my spirituality and to be able to bring a few words of encouragement to the families.



In 2013, the priests Mel Portula and Fred Mizengo Mabe, and later Pascal Kumanda, arrived at our parish. They encouraged that Posadas Navideñas also take place in the homes of Hispanic families. In addition, both priests promoted the celebration of Novenas to the Virgin of Guadalupe, another example of Hispanic religiosity spread throughout the world. These two activities continue to be repeated every year with great fervor and in community. It fills me with joy and pride to be able to participate in the coordination and direction of these celebrations with our Hispanic Community.

Home gathering for Las Posadas Navideña, December 2018.



One night of the Novena to the Virgin of Guadalupe, December 2018.

We also celebrate Lent every year with great devotion and perform a live representation of the Way of the Cross with the participation of many members of the Hispanic community.



Living Stations of the Cross: Station 14, Jesus is laid in the Tomb.

As Pope Francis reminds us, our parishes need to be “islands of mercy in the sea of indifference”.

Responding to this call, our priests and Deacon José Pardo asked my husband Angel Veliz and me to form the Couples Group. The objective of this movement is to accompany other Hispanic couples in their faith and in strengthening their family ties. For this reason, we offer talks to improve communication and coexistence as a couple. Likewise, we organize activities to improve living together

as a family, such as the pilgrimage to the Lourdes Grotto, in Maryland, or recreational gatherings to share with the family, with games, raffles, and other healthy distractions. We feel blessed and strengthened in this Group, since, with the life testimonies of the participants, we feel that we are truly contributing to strengthening mercy in a society full of indifference.

My husband Angel Veliz also participates each year as a contractor representing the Santa Ana parish in "Work Camp", from 2014 to the present. "Work Camp" is a solidarity activity organized every



year by the Diocese of Arlington during the summer. The goal is to help the most needy people in our community. It consists of making repairs to houses, such as changing windows or doors, painting, making ramps for the disabled, etc. This is done thanks to all the volunteers, whether men or women, and also includes the youth of the participating parishes. My husband Angel is also involved as a coordinator in the Women's Ministry, regularly involving young people to carry out this Ministry.

Workcamp crew returns to Saint Ann 2014

In June 2019, we were lucky enough to receive a visit from Father Angel De los Monteros from Mexico, who visited us to give a talk entitled: "My family, my best company." Father Angel de los

Monteros is the author of the book: "The Ring is Forever" translated into several languages, among other publications. He worked for seven years as a family counselor in Guadalajara, was director of Cumbres de Medellín, Colombia, and collaborated in adult education in Paris, family counselor, in the Cumbres high school in Mexico, he has also given lectures on marriage, family values and spirituality in different cities of Europe and America. It was a very enriching activity due to the trajectory and the profound message that Father Angel shared with all the attendees and because we were able to invite and involve the other parishes in the area.

To finish, I can only thank the Lord for giving me the opportunity to serve in the Parish in different Ministries, which help me grow spiritually and walk in Community. Try to be light and salt of the world, which is what we are called as children of God.

My Saint Ann Story, including my Legion of Mary, Eucharistic, Hospital and Usher Ministries by Elly Escobal



I first came to the United States—and Arlington--in 1986. At that time, I worked for a State Department family as a nanny for their two children. I first worked for this family when they were assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Manila, the Philippines. When they were sent to new assignments in other countries, I accompanied them, living in Iran, Turkey and Germany. Here in Arlington, we lived in a house on N. 13th Street. Two days after we arrived, I asked my employer where I could find a Catholic Church, and she directed me to Saint Ann Catholic Church.

Legion of Mary. On my first visit to Saint Ann's, I spent an hour inside the church in private prayer. At the end of my prayer, I saw someone working at the altar. I introduced myself to him and asked about the Mass schedule. He introduced himself and said he was a deacon at Saint Ann. He welcomed me and gave me \$10, saying I may need pocket money. He was very friendly. A few minutes later the pastor, Father John Cilinski, came into

the church. I introduced myself and told him I was a member of the Legion of Mary in the Philippines. I had opened the Legion of Mary Senior Presidium in my province, on the island of Leyte. Father Cilinski told me there is a Legion of Mary meeting once a week on the corner of 10th and Frederick Streets [the old Parish Center]. He invited me to follow him to the rectory and gave me a Rosary that he used when

he was in the seminary. It was very beautiful--crystal with lots of images of our Blessed Mother. Before I left him, he urged me to attend the Legion of Mary meeting.

I felt blessed and grateful to have his Rosary and I treasured it. Unfortunately, a few years later, I visited my uncle in Chicago, and I lost that Rosary on the airplane. I was so disappointed. I hope that whoever found that Rosary used it devotedly and found it helpful for her or his prayer life.

I joined the Saint Ann Legion of Mary presidium. The members welcomed me and gave me lots of support and love. After meeting with the group for a few weeks, the president assigned me to work with Chet Morneau, going door-to-door to let Catholic families know that Saint Ann's parish would welcome them for worship and spiritual support.

During that time, I experienced tremendous pain in my feet due to bunions. My discomfort was especially acute on cold, snowy days. I was limping. Br. Chet Morneau was very kind, supportive and helpful to me. He encouraged me to get surgery to remove my bunions. I told him I had just arrived here in the United States, and I did not have health insurance. Br. Chet Morneau talked to Fr. Cilinski, asking for help. Father Cilinski and Chet Morneau talked to Dr. White, an orthopedic surgeon who was a parishioner at Saint Ann. Dr. White said he would do surgery on my feet. He told me I would need to have my parents take care of me for six weeks because I would need to keep my feet elevated until they healed from the surgery. But my parents were in the Philippines. I cried. Br. Chet Morneau told me not to worry, that he would take care of it. Dr. White said not to worry about paying him. He asked me to pray for him, because he was going to Germany for more medical studies after my surgery.

Dr. White removed the bunions on both of my feet. While I was in the hospital, Fr. Cilinski came to the hospital early in the morning to give me Communion. Br. Chet Morneau arranged for me to spend my recovery weeks at the home of a minister of the Third Order Franciscans and his wife and nine children. They were very kind to me. The minister and I prayed the Liturgy of the Hours every evening. His wife helped me practice using the walker until the casts were removed from my feet. Members of the Franciscans and the Legion of Mary, including Sr. Vitt and Sr. Jean Dodd, brought me food each day.

Once I recovered, I resumed my apostolate works with the Legion of Mary. On one occasion, while doing the door-to-door census with Br. Chet Morneau, we had an unpleasant experience with a man who was a heavy drinker. He was angry with us and told us not to come back to his home. His wife talked to me and asked me to explain the meaning of the Rosary. I was holding a blue plastic Rosary when we knocked on the door. She said she had a dream and saw our Blessed Mother holding the Rosary. Ten years later, I received a call from Fr. Schardt about a lady who wanted to be a Catholic. Father Schardt said she needed a sponsor for baptism, communion, confirmation and for their marriage vows. Father asked me to sponsor her husband and to help find someone to sponsor her. I told Father her husband was very mean to us during our visits. During the sacramental ceremony, Father told me to touch the shoulder of the husband when he blessed their marriage. After the ceremony the husband apologized to me, with tears in his eyes. This couple adopted a boy from Peru and they want me to be a proxy for his Confirmation because his Godmother from Peru cannot come to the United States.

Usher Ministry. When I started going to Sunday Masses, I wanted to be with people. People bring joy like a family. One Sunday a parishioner, Don Stocking, asked me to help him with ushering. I helped him greet the people and take the collection. I was a little shy initially, but he encouraged me to continue volunteering as an usher every Sunday. The old Saint Ann church had two wings. Mr. Stocking assigned me and a partner to the main entrance of the church. During our work, there was an announcement about doing an Easter Egg hunt after Mass. The nuns hosted that event. They hid eggs and candies outside of the convent. That day was a joyful moment. Children were dressed beautifully and carried their decorative baskets. Parents were with them, watching. Everyone enjoyed a glorious day.



On the first day of May, there was a crowning of our Blessed Mother outside the main church before Mass. One young lady with a white dress crowned our Blessed Mother and the children dressed in white and brought flowers to honor our Blessed Mother. They placed the flowers near the altar and Mass began.



We had nuns who were friendly, like a loving and caring mother. One Saturday, a nun invited me to the convent after Mass. She said all the sisters were relaxing that day. When I entered the convent, all the nuns were wearing pajamas and slippers and watching football on TV. I was surprised that they had fun together watching that sport. They were very happy, and it was fun to watch them.

Since the new Saint Ann Church was built, the duties of an usher changed because the church is bigger and more people are coming. I dedicate my work as an usher to our Blessed Lord. During church services, I take part in some way. I help to take up the church offering and make sure it is put in the proper place. I also help with Communion. Each usher works to minimize distractions during the service. I am a doorkeeper at the house of my God.

My spirituality focuses on meditation. Through a quiet, sacred silence, I invite the living Jesus into my heart. In union with Him, I praise Him dearly. My days often are full of contentment, and I am occupied nonstop all day. At the end of each day, I offer my prayers of thanksgiving to God for all the gifts and blessings that I have received.

Eucharistic and Hospital Ministries. My hospital ministry began when I was invited to attend a workshop for Eucharistic ministers at St. Thomas More Cathedral. Sister Antonia and I attended as representatives of Saint Ann's parish. Fr. Donald Greenhalgh, then the pastor of Saint Ann's, blessed all the Eucharistic ministers during Masses. I began this ministry distributing Communion during Masses. A few months later, Fr. Lino Rico Rostro asked me to accompany him on a visit to a 98-year-old lady who wanted Communion. After that visit, he handed me a pyx that I can put on my neck. I use that every time I bring Communion to homebound and hospitalized persons.

I brought Communion to the 98-year-old lady every week for a few years. She died at the age of 101. I've brought Communion to several other parishioners. One lady recognized my voice when I called her. She knew that March 16 is my birthday. Another lady had no clothes on when I went to give her Communion. She had just had shoulder surgery and was in pain and could not even raise her arm. She frequently asked me to go to the grocery store for her and gave me a check, but the check was not honored at the store. I used my credit card. Sadly, no one in her family would help her. One day I went to her apartment and found a pile of packages, but no one was home. I don't know what happened to her. That was the end of my visits to her. I felt bad. I hope her family helped her.

Someone asked me to visit the hospital to give Communion to the sick. I attended a workshop. There are many requirements before you can serve. First and foremost, I need to be sure I am healthy. I accompanied other Eucharistic ministers for a few weeks of training, then began visiting patients on my own. When I started on my own, I got lost in the hospital a few times. But the visits with patients were very rewarding. I felt that I was bringing them comfort, along with my prayers for them. I felt good when they asked me to pray for them if they could not have Communion by mouth. Those visits were often very sad, especially when the family surrounded the patient. Blessed Lord Jesus showed me faith, strength and courage to find our brothers and sisters who needed Jesus to save them eternally. I shared my Jesus with those who needed Him. Jesus guided me directly to those who are waiting for Him. I visited one patient who was a deacon and who was sick with cancer. After I prayed and gave Communion, I stood up to leave and he asked me to come back so he could bless me. He said I was doing his job. I was touched and thanked Jesus for his presence as I served Him.

It is a beautiful feeling that our Blessed Mother helped me find her children to come back to meet Jesus in her home. Praise God.

I thank God for everything. I might not have come to the United States without our Almighty God and our Blessed Mother guiding me. I am a stranger here and I came to this country with nothing except my legal papers.

To Jesus through Mary. Amen

“Music Amid the Chaos of War [Scott Brown’s Story]”

as published in the Arlington Catholic Herald, February 25, 2009 (update added)



Scott Brown, Choir Director at St Ann Church in Arlington, plays piano during rehearsal for a Christmas Concert.

Music Amid the Chaos of War

[Dave Borowski](#) | Catholic Herald

2/25/09

Scott Brown, choir director at Saint Ann Church in Arlington, has worked in some of the most dangerous places in the world. He’s helped put countries reeling from war and financial instability back on a solid economic path. Although the connection between financial systems and dangerous places may appear tenuous, it’s very real.

The Princeton and George Washington University graduate joined the Federal Reserve as an economic assistant and worked there from 1974-78. He joined the U.S. Department of Treasury in 1978 as a senior economist for the Office of the Assistant

Secretary for International Affairs (OASIA), helping to guide the international policy of the federal government. In 1984, he joined the State Department as a special assistant to the undersecretary for economic affairs.

Dangerous places

After a two-year tour at State, he joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF) His first post-conflict assignment was in the beleaguered country of Uganda, arriving there soon after the notorious regime of Idi Amin ended. “The country was destroyed,” Brown said. It was difficult and unpleasant work, but Brown saw a chance to help them restart the banking system.

After Uganda, he was sent to Bosnia from 1995-98 to fix the country’s ailing economic system that suffered from years of internecine warfare. In the summer of 1999, he went to Kosovo and worked there for six months.

In all these locations he was able to find a place to worship. Brown was a convert to Catholicism, entering the Church in 1987. He’d been married for nine years to Kathleen, and went to Mass even before converting, “but having children made it more timely,” he said.

Some places were easier to worship than others. In Kosovo, Brown attended an ad-hoc church, set up wherever Catholics could find space and a priest. Christians were a minority in Kosovo. In Bosnia it was easier to find a church. "In Bosnia, there was not a big cultural divide," Brown said.

Music had been a part of Brown's life since he was a boy. He took piano lessons at age 8 and played the trumpet and sang. But the guitar was the instrument he loved.

Music was part of his tours of duty, too. He brought a guitar on most of his assignments.

"I generally took a guitar once I knew I would be traveling to a country often. Good for me, and a good bridge-builder in dealing with the people there," Brown said.

This was all dangerous work, but through most of it he felt safe. "I never really feared for my life," he said.

Real dangerous places

After Kosovo, Brown worked for the IMF in Washington, D.C, for several years until he was loaned to the United Nations relief effort in Iraq in 2003. He went to work for Sérgio Vieira de Mello, the special representative of the U.N. Secretary General. Vieira de Mello was a career U.N. diplomat well respected for his humanitarian work throughout the world.

Brown was excited about the prospect of working for Vieira de Mello as his economic adviser. In Baghdad he quickly began meeting with U.S. officials to begin dealing with refugee issues.

On Aug. 19, 2003, Brown's world changed. He was working in the U.N. compound when a suicide bomber drove a truck bomb near the U.N. Assistance Mission. Brown was returning to his office when the bomb exploded. The blast threw him out of his office. The explosion was horrific and the aftermath equally devastating.

"My face was flayed by shrapnel," Brown said. The blast also shattered his left arm.

The man he worked for and admired, Vieira de Mello, was killed. Brown was in rehab for six months and went back to work in Washington part-time for another six months.

The injuries to his arm and fingers were troubling. His left arm and fingers were partially paralyzed, and a man who plays guitar and piano needs working fingers and a working arm. He doesn't play the guitar anymore, but he can still play the piano. His left arm won't flex, but the surgeons who stitched him up "put it in a keyboard position," Brown said.

A peaceful place

After years of helping countries fix their monetary problems and putting himself in physical jeopardy, Brown retired from the IMF in 2008.

He was involved with the Saint Ann choirs as a volunteer for 20 years before retiring, but he's now the director of the contemporary choir. It was a way to combine his love of music and his faith.

"Our faith is wrapped around our lives," Brown said of the importance of his beliefs to him and his family.

When Brown reflects on his years of service in perilous places, he's struck by the humanity that was found in those areas.

"I was inspired. Most people were decent," he said. "We're all God's creation. People can choose to be good."

Update to ACH Story: Scott had been a cantor for Saint Ann's Saturday Vigil Masses from 1988 to 1997. He first sang and played guitar with the Contemporary Choir at a concert for the 50th Anniversary of the Parish, in 1997. He continued with that choir until he left for Iraq in 2003. After his return and rehabilitation from his injuries, he rejoined the Contemporary Choir, playing piano this time,

and he later became its director. Although retired from the IMF, he left again to take a multi-year consulting assignment in Afghanistan in 2011, and then did work in Mongolia and El Salvador before “retiring for good.” He returned to the U.S. and Saint Ann in 2015. He currently sings in the traditional choir, and he helps out with monthly family masses at Our Lady Queen of Peace.

A Little History of How Our Hispanic Community Started

by Mary E. Melendez

Thanks to my daughter Marie, I was able to talk to Mary Ramirez, deacon Eduardo Ramirez’s wife. As she recalled, the first Spanish-speaking priest at Saint Ann was Fr. Jerry Pokorsky. I don’t remember if he said the whole Mass in Spanish or only part of it. He did not stay long at Saint Ann.

Eduardo Ramirez was our first Spanish-speaking deacon at Saint Ann and stayed for many years. His wife Mary taught Spanish classes for adults at the church, and she sang in the choir for the Spanish Mass too.



Mary and Angel Melendez at Parish Picnic 2012

One day during the winter, my husband Angel Melendez and I, along with our two girls, helped to deliver the inter-parish Spanish Bulletin from the Hispanic Apostolate to Saint Ann. We had seen Sr. Jorge Biztuarte, riding his bike from the Cathedral of Saint Thomas More to Saint Ann in the winter cold. Angel told him that he would continue doing these deliveries. Well, Deacon Eduardo saw us bringing the bulletins one evening (Mass was then at 5:30PM) and that how we started at Saint Ann in 1991, going to 2 masses every Sunday. First at the Cathedral of Saint Thomas Moro (we were Eucharistic Ministers there) and then at Saint Ann. At that time, Saint Ann had:

- a Spanish Prayer group directed by Sra. Dalia Castro was also the coordinator of lectors.
- A Rosary recitation led by Sr. Angel Cosio before mass (he was also a lector).
- A beautiful choir directed by Sra. Morena Penozo and, much later, by Marcelo Bocaflor.

When Fr. Pokorsky left, the old Hispanic Apostolate for the diocese was on S. Walter Reed St. Arlington. The director’s secretary Sra. Gilda Ferrer helped us find priests from the diocese to give Mass in Spanish and to do baptisms. She also gave Angel the names of other priests in the diocese who spoke Spanish. Angel was then in charge of getting a priest every Sunday if the Hispanic Apostolate could not

find one for us. Later, Fr. Ovidio Pecharroman was appointed director of the new Hispanic Apostolate, and he also came to help us when a priest could not be found.

We were blessed to have to Fr. Antonio Rubio, who was studying Ecumenism at Catholic University, serve as our priest for about a year. With Fr. Rubio, and Sister Theresa Sullivan as our first DRE, five Spanish-speaking catechists and I prepared our first group of children, and our community had our first celebration of First Communion and Confirmation at Santa Ana.

Next came Fr. Barahona, a very humble priest from Peru. He introduced to us to the idea of celebrating Las Posadas. Angel and I had been in Puerto Rico during his mother's illness and death, but when we returned, Father had everything ready for Las Posadas. Our pastor Fr. Schardt found some neighbors' houses to visit on the night of December 24th. We thought this was a beautiful celebration and continued the tradition the same way Fr. Barahona did it. (We do not celebrate Posadas in P. R. instead we celebrate Misa del Gallo at 6:00 am). Holly Conrad, the next DRE, joined us the following year, as did the children's choir led by Margie Fransen. We had a nice celebration afterwards in the Parish Hall with Hispanic dancers, food and gifts for all the children.



Christmas celebration in the Parish Hall

We were blessed when a Bolivian priest came after Fr. Barahona, Fr. Cesar Maldonado, who studied at Georgetown University. Every Sunday, Angel would go to pick him up. One Sunday after the final blessing, Fr. Maldonado asked us to bring fruits in a plate or basket, after mass the next week. The next week, we put the fruit at the edge of the altar (Mass was then in the gymnasium of the school), and at the end of Mass each person took one. That was a lesson to share with each other.

At that time, there was a nun who was very active in the diocese, Sister Eloina, who had tremendous energy and ideas. She called together all the Hispanic Catechists of the diocese who were in the



Children processing into the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception behind the Saint Ann banner, Children's Pilgrimage 2000.

Hispanic Apostolate, with the idea of making a Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington — "The Children's Pilgrimage 2000." One of our parents, Mr. José L. Govea made and painted the banner for our children to carry that day. It was so beautiful. The children of the different parishes wore their typical costumes.

On April 30, 2005, our priest Fr.

Miguel Cruzado, S.J., from Peru celebrated the dedication Mass with Fr Schardt and Bishop Loverde came for the ceremony of the blessing of the church. At that time, we had a group of Jesuit priests who took turns saying our Spanish Masses, all of them very humble. Angel and I were very close to them. Every Sunday, as one of them came, I said "Father, today we are going to celebrate this"; he would answer "ok, Mary, tell me, I will let you know if that is ok." It was always OK. My husband knew a lot about the Liturgy, so I always checked with him before doing anything.

When Fr. Schardt left Saint Ann, my good friend Fr. Don Greenhalgh came. Fr. Chuck Merkle, who had served here a long time with Fr. Schardt, stayed on for a time. Once, Father Greenhalgh went on vacation and left his beloved puppy "Market" in the care of Fr. Merkle. When Fr. Greenhalgh returned, he found Market standing still in front of the T.V. Fr. Greenhalgh asked, "What's wrong with the dog?" Fr. Merkle answered, "Ah, I taught him to watch TV!"

Fr. Merkle was transferred to be Chaplain at Fairfax Hospital, and Fr. Paul Grankauskas, who became like a son to me, arrived. Because Fr. Paul did not speak Spanish, Fr. Greenhalgh named Angel to be Coordinator of the Spanish Community and also the first Hispanic member of the Parish Council. I was put in charge of Spanish religious education and translated some materials used in our classes. We both helped with validations of marriages, baptism preparation and served as lectors, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, and catechists. Angel often helped Fr. Greenhalgh as a simultaneous translator at times when there was no Spanish-speaking priest. We both participated on the FORUM - Foro Norte Americano Sobre El Catecumenado (North American Forum on the Catchumenate), directed by Saint Ann parishioner James M. Schellman, which was an intense three days' workshop held by Catholic University in Emmitsburg. In my time as a catechist and leader of the Hispanic program, I worked with five Directors of Religious Education: Sr. Theresa Sullivan, Holly Conrad and her assistant Wilma Anderson, Stephanie Dannemiller, Susan Escobar, and Amy Strickland.

When Fr. Paul was transferred, Fr. Lino Rico, from Mexico, was appointed to Saint Ann along with Deacon Jose Pardo, who stayed for about a year. Fr. Lino was a good listener and was very direct. He fully supported the Hispanic community. He was very active in our catechesis and preparing our children for the sacraments. He asked me if they had been taught the commandments and sacraments because, as he said, “if we prepare them badly, they leave empty – ‘Bad Catholic, future Protestant’!” Fr. Randy from Missionhurst also came to help minister to us. He is a wonderful priest, funny, but very strict at the time of the mass. He said things in a funny way but right to the point.

When Fr. Greenhalgh retired in 2013, we were blessed to become a mission church of Missionhurst. Fr. Mel Portula, CICM, was appointed our pastor and continues with us now. Our Missionhurst vicars have included Frs. Fred, Francis, Pascal, Leo, and Ange. Our Missionhurst priests all speak or learned Spanish in order to serve our community.

Recollections of Parishioner Christine Strasser

Notes on a conversation

Christine moved to parish in 1976 with her husband Dick. Their six children all attended Saint Ann School, and she was and is active in many ministries. This is a summary of some of her recollections as told to Mona Fox in March 2022.

Soup Supper: In about 1979, Msgr. O’Connell commented one Sunday after Mass that he was anxious to “restart” soup suppers. Christine agreed to take it on; another older parishioner, Cathy Hayes, told her what was needed, so Christine thinks she may have worked on earlier ones. The supper was advertised in the Arlington Catholic Herald and hundreds of diners, many more than they expected, showed up for the first supper. “We had to run to Safeway to buy cans of soup to feed everyone that night,” Christine recalled. The donations offered for the meals during her tenure went to So Others Might Eat (then newly started by Fr. John Adams), and Martha’s Table in D.C. Alvina Pettit followed Christine after a few years and led this ministry for about 10 years.

1979 Fun Festival. That spring, Christine went to a planning meeting at the old Parish Center [Stop 3 on the History Walk]. Gene Mattingly and others were there and were delighted to see a fresh face asking how she could help. She had just done a festival at her son’s McLean Montessori School and suggested a “Petting Farm,” as that school had done. She contracted with Pet a Pet Farm in Reston, which brought goats, sheep, and chickens and set up the animals on the lawn next to the cemetery. The animals would be given breaks from the excitement throughout the day and returned to their trucks. Coincidentally, Ethel Kennedy wanted to hire the animals that same day for her annual fundraising party at Hickory Hill (documented each year by columnist Art Buchwald). Since Saint Ann had already booked them, Mrs. Kennedy had to move her party date that year! Carol Naill ran the ticket booth for the festival, which she decorated in calico. Shirley Saunders did a display of plants that was a gardener’s paradise. Many parents volunteered to lead the games. It was an exciting day for all!

Bible Group: In the late 70s, the parish had a Bible Group that met at the back of the Parish Center on Frederick St. For several years, the group held a potluck Passover Seder at someone’s home. One year they held a larger Seder in the Parish Center and included children and families. It was an unusual Seder, written by Dr. Frank D’Aguilar and a close Jewish friend of his. As Christine described it: “One end of the table [held] the Old Testament, and the other end [held] the New Testament. We included all the symbolic foods a Haggadah would have. After the story was told at the table and the ceremony completed, we all [joined] in a potluck meal. Everyone learned a lesson in Biblical history!”

Meghan Donnelly, who was then about 13 or 14 years old, provided the music and played 2 Seder songs.

Construction of Route 66: Christine recalls that, when construction started in the late '70s, many displaced turtles overran the campus, and many possums were spotted. The sisters living in the Convent were afraid that it would collapse as the road came so close to it.

Saint Joachim Hall: The old house [stop 9 on the History Walk] served as a girl scout meeting place after the Parish Center was sold [1987]. Earlier, from 1979 to 1986, a group of 12-14 parish women ran a food co-operative and used the Hall as a distribution center. Once a month, two members shopped for fresh food from vendors in the Florida St. Market in DC. They then sorted and bagged the food in Joachim Hall, and the other members would come to pick up their share. They bought spices in bulk about once a year. Maureen Donnelly, Barbara Vitt, Marion McKinney, Sue August, Joan Howe, and Lois Crean were members, to name a few, and many more, even some non-parishioners, joined over the years. This co-op was a way to eat more healthy foods and be more environmentally friendly, as well as being economical.

FISH: for 30 years, Saint Ann participated providing transportation to low-income seniors for medical appointments and food shopping, after local bus routes were eliminated. From '78 through the mid-'80s, Ginny Reagle directed this program, then Christine and Dottie Olsen took it on. Drivers and Captains included Al Olsen, Bill O'Donnell, Kathee Swennes, Margaret Baranowski, Cathy Hayes, Connie Chesley, Paul Noring, Mike Duffy, Warren Kaufman, and Winter Simpson. FISH ultimately dissolved due to liability issues, and Arlington County took over such transportation services.

Saint Ann School:

Playground: In 1985, Dick Strasser was PTO President and Cindy Shea was Vice President. The PTO wanted to put in a real playground (not just blacktop) for the younger grades. They got approval from the pastor, Fr. Cilinski, and installed the first playground in the same spot where the primary playground remains today. Parishioner John Lange, who had the equipment from his business, removed 40 tons of asphalt and installed playground mulch in its place. A group of fathers built the climbing structure, which had been designed by parents. Butch Wlashin acted as engineer to ensure a sound structure. The PTO raised \$1000 for materials and at least 000 work hours were donated by Saint Ann parents. The children had the first, non-blacktop play area thanks to these volunteers.

Shakespeare Theater Festival: Christine was also highly instrumental in bringing the Shakespeare Theater Festival experience to Saint Ann School students in the 1980s. The Folger Theatre in DC allowed 7th-8th graders to participate in its Shakespeare Festival. Michael Garcia and Christine were excited to prepare and bring Saint Ann students there to perform. Because of their initial success, the Folger asked Christine to arrange an all-day Saturday program for NOVA teachers at Saint Ann School, in 1988-89. This got SAS on the map, and for 6 years the Folger always included SAS in this school festival. Each school presented a ½ hour version of a Shakespeare play, as 1 of 8 plays a day over the 4-day festival. The students were critiqued by the professionals at Folger, who always had positive feedback for our students. In 1992-93, Dr. Cathy Bashian of Marymount instituted the Diocese of Arlington's own Shakespeare Festival for middle school students, held each year at Paul VI High School.



Talent show finale, 2000

Talent Shows: These were a much-loved Spring event that drew many attendees from the parish. Leslie Healy and then Chris Chelak organized and produced these events for years through the '90s and '00s. Groups and individuals from each grade prepared their acts and the show always ended with an all-participant finale that brought the house down. Christine directed many group acts over the years of her children's schooling. This event continues today.

Irish Nights: Christine and Sr. Johnmarie produced these at St. Patrick's Day for 6 years, presenting students in Irish dance

groups. One year a Saint Ann mom who was a Celtic Harpist from the White House performed. Another year, a student dressed as St. Patrick and told his story. John Jimison played Irish songs on the piano and all the students sang along!

Martin Luther King Day: Christine arranged for the Mount Zion Baptist Church Children's Choir to sing at the school on January 16, 1989. They performed a 40-minute program of gospel music and hymns. It was a huge success. Christine missed the performance as her 10-day old baby girl, Chrissy, became gravely ill that morning. She was baptized in the hospital by Fr. Ruskamp, who was then a parochial vicar at Saint Ann. Chrissy recovered [and later became a great Irish step dancer and as well as an enthusiastic participant in many Saint Ann School performances! (Ed. note!)]

March for Life: For many years, SAS has participated in the march. Our 8th Graders joined parishioners most years, meeting at the Saint Ann parking lot and taking the close-by Metro to the March route to the Supreme Court. Some years our priests would lead us. Fr. Ruskamp guided us in the '80s, and Fr. Mel and Fr. Paschal joined us in 2014!



7th and 8th graders at the March for Life 1992.

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Blessings and happy 75th Anniversary to Saint Ann Parish.

The History Subcommittee of the 75th Anniversary Committee

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Sharon Johnsen, John Greco, Ann Gaffey, Andy Brown, and ad hoc members
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Our faithful being renewed at the 2019 Parish Lenten Mission.



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