



ST. LEO THE GREAT
PARISH & SCHOOL

News & Views

Their work continues

Their names have almost faded, but not their work.

They are the builders, the planners, the fund-raisers—but basically, like all of us, they were ordinary parishioners who responded to a call.

After 70 years, most members of today's St. Leo Parish would not recognize their names, but they might see their work as they walk through the school, the preschool or attend a weekday or Sunday Mass.

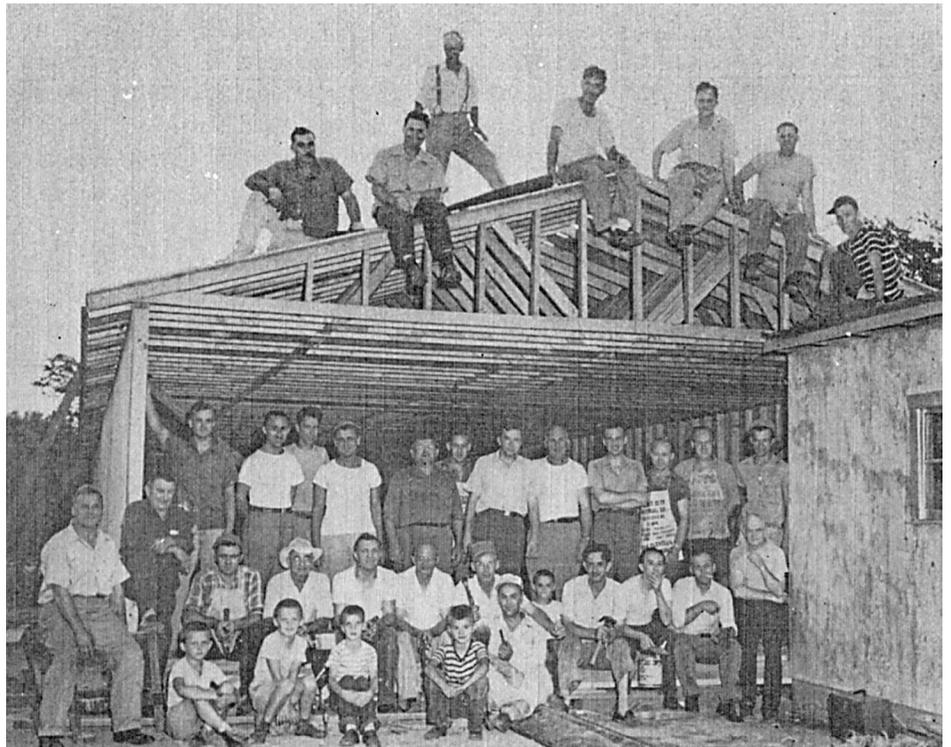
If their spirits could visit, they might be proud of the way we have taken care of their legacy, and they would be equally proud of the community spirit at liturgies, festivals, fish fries, picnics and many other smaller events.

We have a lot in common with these “founders.” They, like us, gathered for a common purpose—to worship God. And, after 70 years, that purpose is unchanged. Jesus is the center of our community just as he was for the first members of St. Leo's in 1948.

Neither time nor our surroundings can change that.

This issue of the St. Leo News & Views focuses on parishioners who were here in the early days, when the St. Leo community was still forming. And we talk about Fr. Sylvester Lux, St. Leo's founding pastor, a man of great foresight who was not afraid to make a change for the good of the community. And we interview one of the newest members of the St. Leo community, who joined through the RCIA program in 2017.

St. Leo's founders—their names may have faded, but their work continues in all of us.



Forward with hope

Armand is St. Leo's man for all seasons

By Alex Pavlick

Although he played an important role in developing activities and facilities that St. Leo's enjoys today, Armand Venditti is modest about the part he played and instead points to the community as a major factor. Armand and his wife Mary Lou joined St. Leo the Great parish in 1953, a time when parishioners were already showing their willingness to build and try new things.

"It really was a good place to be, a happy and exciting place," Armand said.

Mary Lou eagerly became an integral part of St. Leo and encouraged Armand to also join various parish groups. Armand joined the Holy Name Society, which he said already had more than 100 men at the time. There he met the pastor, Fr. Sylvester Lux, who "became my good friend and was an outstanding organizer," Armand said. By 1965 Armand had become president of the Holy Name Society, and Mary Lou headed the Altar and Rosary Society.

Armand and Mary Lou also became active in their children's programs, with Armand becoming a Cub Scout and Boy Scout leader as well as chairman of the Scout financing.

Mary Lou and Armand also helped organize and work various food-related events such as clambakes, Lenten fish fries and ham and chicken dinners. "Oh boy, if you want to meet and become friends with people, just supply good food, conversation, and fun; they'll show up," said Armand.

At the same time, the parish's athletic program was aborning to help organize the many young people.



Armand Venditti, at the Sunday 11 a.m. Mass

Annual festivals at St. Leo's included rides and booths, and many parishioners responded well to volunteering. Armand was a part of them.

Armand laughs and says he and Mary Lou came to be known as such great organizers and were so active at St. Leo's that they became the couple to call for organizing and helping out at various functions thereafter. He laughs and says the people knew, "if you want great organizers, call Armand and Mary Lou."

Most parish activities were held in the school basement. The school cafeteria was downstairs with the kitchen in the southwest corner of the basement. In an interview several years ago, Armand recalled that card parties were held in the basement hallway.

Fr. Bernard Bartis, St. Leo's associate pastor at the time, would go through rectory files and pull the cards at random to form a committee of 25 or 30 to plan events. He carried a cigar box and he would pass the box around, and the committee would contribute to cover expenses.

Armand recalled that Fr. Lux was the boss. "If he wanted anything done he would say 'this is what I think.'"

During St. Leo's early years, property owners on Silverdale were extending their yards 10-15 feet onto parish property, where they had gardens and swing sets. "Fr. Lux told the Parish Council that the fence was needed to prevent further encroachment," Armand recalled several years ago. "But when he made the announcement from the pulpit, he said, 'I met with the council and they decided.'"

After Fr. Lux's retirement and after the Second Vatican Council encouraged Catholics to become active in their parishes, Armand and Mary Lou responded to that call, joining the Liturgy Commission, which Armand eventually chaired, and the Education Commission, which encouraged Christian instruction, especially for adults. These groups and several others worked to build community at St. Leo's.

Throughout these decades of change, Armand and Mary Lou, who passed away in 2015, remained faithful members of the St. Leo community, even though they moved twice to cities outside the parish boundaries, and Armand currently resides in North Royalton.

Armand also organized and scheduled the "army" of lectors and Eucharistic Ministers who served at the Sunday 10 a.m. Mass.

Holy Week especially was important to both of them, with Mary Lou baking bread to be used during Communion at the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper and Armand personally fashioning the paschal candle lit at Easter Vigil and used throughout the liturgical year.

Armand can usually be spotted at the 11 a.m. Mass on Sundays, worshipping with the community he helped to nurture and looking back with pride and forward with hope.

St. Leo News & Views

The St. Leo News & Views is published three times a year. Articles and article ideas are always welcome.

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A voice for all of us

After 65 years at St. Leo's, Norma is still unstoppable

By Nina Capone

Long-time parishioner, Norma Janiak, has been a familiar face at St. Leo Parish for the past 65 years.

She and her late husband, Nestor, moved to Brooklyn Heights around the birth of their third son during Christmas 1953 and soon after joined the parish, which was under the leadership of Fr. Sylvester Lux.

Their children attended PSR classes at St. Leo's while attending public schools in Cuyahoga Heights. Norma made it clear in her interview how meaningful this church has been to her and how important the Catholic faith is to her and her family.

Norma and Nestor met in high school. After their graduation and marriage in 1941, Nestor went into the military service and after four years returned home to continue education and raise a family with Norma. Not being able to see himself behind a desk all day, he decided to open a service station at Schaaf and Broadview Roads in Old Brooklyn, now occupied by Ziggy's Produce Market.

He eventually moved his business, Janiak's Sohio, closer to Oak Park Avenue, where it is now owned and operated by their son.

"Nestor always offered his auto work to the nuns and priests of the parish free of charge," Norma said. "He had a strong belief in serving his church and he served them well."

Norma takes the same interest in her parish, and since 1979 has been a member of the St. Leo choir, where you can see her singing each Sunday with the same passion today as she did back when she joined.



Norma Janiak keeping busy with her knitting

She also meets weekly with a group of women to knit blankets and other items that are donated to organizations such as Malachi House to provide warmth and comfort for those who are in need of it most. With great appreciation, she mentioned St. Leo Pastor Fr. Jim Schmit for allowing the group to meet at the Community Center to continue its acts of service after their previous gathering place became unavailable.

The life of the church relies on its members, and Norma and her family have been among its strongest supporters. "Making time for your family is so important" Norma said. "Communication and role models—children need that. That's what my husband was. He was a wonderful father and gave so much of himself to others and in good faith."

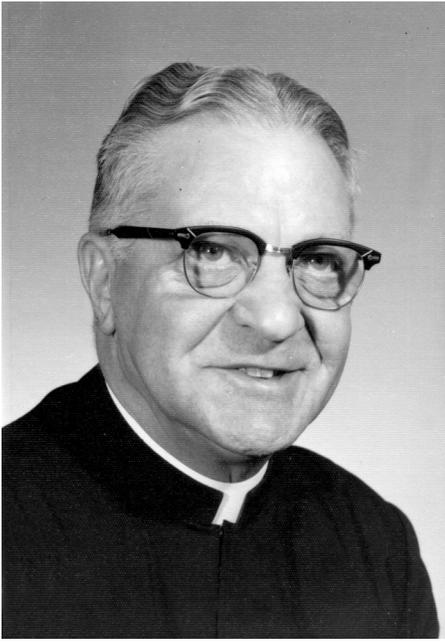
You could hear the smile in her voice as she added that "all three of our boys are very dedicated to their faith. Even when they travel or are on vacation they are sure to find a church to attend Sunday mass."

She went on to note a school assignment that one of her children had completed at a young age that was based upon his favorite time of the day. "He wrote that supper time was his favorite because that's when he shared his day with his family and learned about theirs."

Asked what she treasures most about St. Leo's, Norma quickly answered that she owes a debt of gratitude to several St. Leo pastors, and to parishioners and friends she's made over the years and the enormous support she has found both in the pews and at the altar.

Norma still lives in Brooklyn Heights, and when she is not volunteering at the church she enjoys attending exercise classes and spending time with her sons and grandchildren, one of whom, she proudly adds, is a Hollywood screen writer who works closely with actors like Leonardo DiCaprio and Julia Roberts and is currently putting something together for R.L. Stine's "Goosebumps" series. Another granddaughter is married to the writer of popular Netflix series "Stranger Things," although she admits that "science-fiction isn't my favorite category of film, but the writing is very interesting."

If you need inspiration in your mission or a welcoming face that will turn your day around, find Norma after Mass and introduce yourself. Her kind nature and honest smile is so pleasantly refreshing, joyful and uplifting.



Fr. Sylvester Lux, St. Leo founding pastor

By John Sabol

The founding pastor of St. Leo the Great Parish combined shrewdness and hard work to make the new parish succeed. And he even brought his own family into the act in more ways than most people realize.

Eleanor Jones, sister of Fr. Sylvester Lux, passed away in 2005, but in a 1998 interview she recalled the days of St. Leo Parish and the surrounding neighborhood, where she and her parents lived. In 1950, two years after the parish was established, Eleanor and her parents moved into Old Brooklyn. Her father, Emil, even worked as a school crossing guard for a year.

“I was working at Calvary cemetery in Cleveland, and I was alone with dad,” she recalls. “I left him alone for a while, but he would go out and fall down. We decided that he would have to go someplace else, and my brother took him over to the rectory. My brother gave my father his room and my brother slept in back of the altar in church.”

Mrs. Jones spoke of the activity at St. Leo in those early years, adding that she worked for the parish carnival each year. “We used to have a square dance every Friday night,” she said, although she could not recall where these events were held.

Fr. Lux

Building foundation for St. Leo Parish

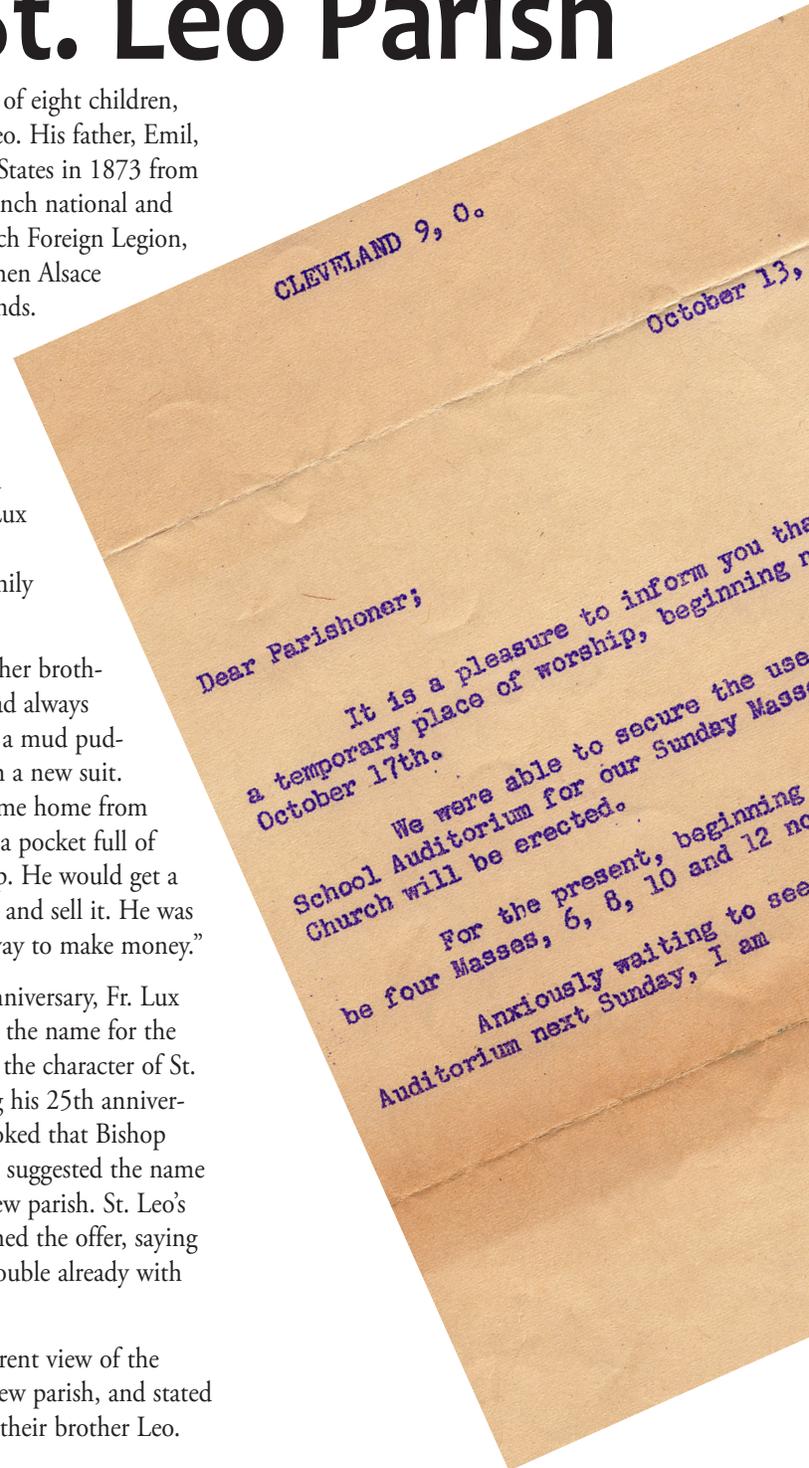
Sylvester Lux was one of eight children, including a brother Leo. His father, Emil, arrived in the United States in 1873 from Alsace Lorraine. A French national and a member of the French Foreign Legion, he fled the country when Alsace went into German hands.

Conversely, his wife, who was German, arrived in Ohio in 1880 when the area shifted back to French control. Most of the Lux children were born in Massillon, and the family later moved to Akron.

Eleanor characterized her brother as very shrewd. “Dad always said he could fall into a mud puddle and come out with a new suit. Every day when he came home from school he would have a pocket full of junk that he picked up. He would get a pile of it in the garage and sell it. He was always looking for a way to make money.”

At the parish’s 25th anniversary, Fr. Lux stated he chose Leo as the name for the new parish because of the character of St. Leo the Great. During his 25th anniversary homily, Fr. Lux joked that Bishop Edward F. Hoban had suggested the name St. Sylvester for the new parish. St. Leo’s founding pastor declined the offer, saying he had had enough trouble already with that name.

Mrs. Jones had a different view of the name choice for the new parish, and stated that it was named for their brother Leo.





Fr. Lux confers with two booth workers at the 1952 St. Leo Festival.

Upon arriving at his new assignment, Fr. Lux viewed the land that Bishop Edward F. Hoban had purchased for the new parish, on the east side of Broadview Road between Schaaf Road and Alvin Ave. “He wanted a bigger place,” Eleanor said. “That was when the realtor who worked for the diocese found 18 acres near Broadview and Brookpark. Then the state took two acres and left him with 16 acres.”

She said her brother did not know originally about plans to bring a highway through the southern end of the parish property, but he learned shortly after.

She said it was not too difficult to raise the money for the first permanent church (the building that is now Lux Hall) and the school. “I think it was because the congregation was so large,” Mrs. Jones said, adding that he did have a problem winning over new parishioners who wanted to continue their affiliation with Our Lady of Good Counsel or St. Francis de Sales.

At the time of this interview, Eleanor stood at her dining room table with a book full of remembrances about her brother and the rest of her family. “When he died, he passed on to us some first-class relics.” To the rest of us, he passed on a first-class parish.

Lent, Holy Week: days of solemn celebration

By Nancy Zola

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday when we embark on a season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

These forty days of Lent culminate in the celebration of the Easter Triduum, which begins with the Holy Thursday Mass, includes the Good Friday service, and starts the Easter celebration with the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday.

Each of these liturgies focuses on a different aspect of the suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord. The Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper includes the washing of the feet just as Christ washed the apostles' feet at the Last Supper, as well as the presentation of the new sacramental holy oils which were blessed at the Chrism Mass at the Cathedral Tuesday evening of Holy Week.

The Good Friday service reminds us of the final steps of Jesus leading up to his crucifixion and death.

Just as the Easter Vigil celebrates the new life in Christ with the blessing of the Paschal Candle and the waters of baptism, it brings new members into the Church through the celebration of the sacraments.

Make this the year that you gain a better understanding of these most holy days of our faith.

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on.

you at Ben Franklin School

Sincerely, your new pastor

Father Lux

‘Wow! I get to receive Communion!’

By Chris Rath

“Wow! I get to receive Communion!”

This was Lorice Yurek’s first response after she was received into the Catholic Church at the 2017 Easter Vigil.

Many who have grown up as Catholics tend to feel a sense of obligation about Mass and Communion, and that makes Lorice’s reaction all the more refreshing as she speaks about her experiences and journey through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

Lorice was not raised in any particular religion, although by the time she was in her 30s she was baptized in the Methodist church. Looking back, she says, “I was surrounded by Catholics growing up, but didn’t really know what it was all about. I had a lot of confusion.”

When she met her husband, Scott, she learned he was a lapsed Catholic. Now she jokes, “We brought each other to the Church!” because he has revitalized his participation as well. She notes that although they were married in the Church about five years ago, “I feel that April 15 last year (Holy Saturday) was my ‘real’ wedding day.”

Attending Mass and RCIA instructions during the year-long journey, Lorice got answers to “a lot of questions.” She said the people of the parish gave her a strong witness just by their presence. “I was wowed by all the people praying. So many people praying for me! For a whole year I couldn’t receive Communion. It’s such a privilege to be one with Christ. I still get emotional.”

Lorice likes the structure and rituals of the Church, even though some are still a bit of an issue. For instance, she says, “My first Confession was to a little old priest in another parish church, and I don’t think he understood it was my first time. It was scary!” Those who grew up in the days of the “box” and anonymity can probably relate.

“It’s such a privilege to be one with Christ. I still get emotional.”

But she has adjusted to many devotions that she finds helpful. “Instead of the TV news, I put the radio on the Catholic stations when I get up in the morning. I carry prayer cards and (pray) novenas. I like to get to Mass during the week,” although she

admits that can be a challenge, since she often works long hours in health care. She tries to get to either St. Charles or Mary, Queen of Peace for evening Masses whenever she can.

Although Lorice and Scott have no children, she is concerned for others: “What’s going to happen to these people who have no faith?” She understands that some young people like the music and dynamics of so-called mega-churches but counters that Catholicism’s discipline is reassuring.

Lorice was dismayed to learn that St. Leo’s has no candidates this year. However, when she reflects on her experience it was, as she says, “so awesome! How much better can it get?”



Lorice Yurek is welcomed into the Catholic Church and the St. Leo faith community at the Easter Vigil in 2017.

Fish dinners continue till March 23

Friday fish dinners will continue through Lent until March 23 in Lux Hall from 4:30–7 p.m.

Dinners are \$8 each with combo meals for \$10. Fish sandwiches are \$6 and kids meals

are \$4. Menu features an extensive list of a la carte items including soup of the day.

So stop by Fridays from 4:30-7 p.m. and enjoy a St. Leo tradition.



During the Lenten season, St. Leo's is sponsoring our annual Have-a-Heart, Lend-a-Hand program. Beginning Ash Wednesday and during Lent, baskets of hearts will be at all church entrances. Please take a heart (or two) and purchase the item requested on it for the organization listed.

You can drop off your donation in the school cafeteria on **Saturday, March 24, from 3:30-5 p.m.** and **Sunday, March 25, from 9 a.m.-Noon.**

The following organizations will be the recipients of your generosity:

- ♥ Birthright
- ♥ Broadview Multi Care
- ♥ Catholic Charities Refugee Families
- ♥ Holy Family Hospice
- ♥ Malachi BackDoor Ministry
- ♥ Malachi House
- ♥ Parma Care Center
- ♥ Providence House
- ♥ St. Colman Parish
- ♥ St. Leo/St. Vincent dePaul Outreach
- ♥ West Side Catholic Center

If you have any questions, please call Jeanne Sabol at 216/351-6247.

**Catholic Diocese
St. Leo the Great Parish
4940 Broadview Road
Cleveland OH 44109
216/661-1006**

Rev. James P. Schmitz, Pastor
Rev. James Vesely, in Residence

Mass Schedule

Sundays—4 p.m. (Saturday Vigil)
8 and 11 a.m.

Weekdays—Monday-Thursday 7:30 a.m.
Friday 8:30 a.m.

Holy Days of Obligation—8:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.

**For Holy Week and Easter Mass schedule,
please see calendar below**

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Cleveland, Ohio
Permit No. 688

Blessed events

Confessions every Saturday, 2:45–3:30 p.m. Please check bulletin for special Holy Week confession schedule.

March 9, Fish Dinners—4:30–7 p.m.

March 9, Stations of the Cross—7 p.m.

March 10, Confirmation—4 p.m. Mass

March 11, Bloodmobile—8:30 a.m.–noon

March 13, Lecture Series—12:30–2 p.m.

March 14, Seniors Meeting—11 a.m.–2 p.m.

March 16, Fish Dinners—4:30–7 p.m.

March 16, Stations of the Cross—7 p.m.

March 17 & 18—St. Vincent de Paul Food Collection

March 20, Lecture Series—12:30–2 p.m.

March 23, School Passion Play—1:30 p.m.

March 23, Fish Dinners—4:30–7 p.m.

March 23, Stations of the Cross—7 p.m.

March 24, Have-A-Heart Drop-Off—3:30–5 p.m.

March 25, Have-A-Heart Drop-Off—9 a.m.–noon

March 25, Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast—8 a.m.–noon

March 28, Seniors Meeting—11 a.m.–2 p.m.

March 29, Holy Thursday Morning Prayer—7:30 a.m.

March 29, Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper—7 p.m. followed by Adoration

March 30, Good Friday Morning Prayer—7:30 a.m.

March 30, School Passion Play—noon

March 30, Solemn Celebration of the Lord's Passion—3 p.m.

March 30, Stations of the Cross—7 p.m.

March 31, Holy Saturday Morning Prayer—7:30 a.m.

March 31, Blessing of Food Baskets—noon

March 31, Easter Vigil—7:30 p.m.

April 1, Easter Masses—8, 9:30 and 11 a.m.

April 6, Eucharistic Adoration—9 a.m.–5 p.m.

April 11, Seniors Meeting—11 a.m.–2 p.m.

April 21, Women's Reverse Raffle—5:30 p.m. (advance tickets needed)

April 21 & 22, St. Vincent de Paul Food Collection

April 25, Seniors Meeting—11 a.m.–2 p.m.

May 4, Eucharistic Adoration—9 a.m.–5 p.m.

May 5, First Communion—4 p.m.

May 9, Seniors Meeting—11 a.m.–2 p.m.

May 19, 8th Grade Graduation—4 p.m.

May 19 & 20, St. Vincent de Paul Food Collection

May 20, Bloodmobile—8:30 a.m.–noon

May 23, Seniors Meeting—11 a.m.–2 p.m.

May 28, Memorial Day Mass—9 a.m.

June 1, Eucharistic Adoration—9 a.m.–5 p.m.