



ST. LEO THE GREAT
PARISH & SCHOOL

News & Views



Kristi Burkhart



Jonathan Goodfellow



Nichole Kirk



Amelia Morchak



Jay Warner

RCIA

St. Leo welcomes 5 at Easter Season

Many of us who were born Catholic often don't get the chance to experience the journey of candidates for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). And the following profiles of this year's class, including one about to be baptized, reveal the various backgrounds and motivations that enter into this decision of faith.

The five candidates—Kristi Burkhart, Jonathan Goodfellow, Nichole Kirk, Amelia Morchak, and Jay Warner—will be officially and warmly welcomed into the Catholic Church and, especially, the St. Leo Community at this year's Easter Vigil Mass. This is a special moment for them and their families and a special moment for the St. Leo community.

A career move brought **Kristi Burkhart** and her husband Karl to Old Brooklyn from western Ohio about two years ago. Kristi is a software engineer with three degrees and hopes to attain a fourth.

Besides looking for a new house, Kristi “wanted to find a sense of community and looked for a church”. After making inquiries, Kristi turned to one of the priests at her prior parish who suggested St. Leo's. “We went to a few services and loved it. I felt a sense of peace.”

Although not baptized, Kristi was raised in a family of Catholics. “My grandma was a big influence,” said Kristi. “She wanted her kids and grandkids to be baptized but never pressured me about it.” Kristi has always been intrigued by the history of the Church and watched with the rest of the world when Pope Francis was elected. Kristi discussed the feeling of peace she had at St. Leo's with Karl, who is Catholic and supported her decision to become Catholic.

Kristi began the RCIA process a year ago and said it doesn't feel like it's been a year. “I've learned a lot, not just about the Church and Catholicism but about my faith and myself. I'm looking forward to

receiving the sacraments in April. I hope as my husband and I settle further into the church, that we get to meet more members of the parish and make some friends.”

Jonathan Goodfellow's father is a Methodist minister and Jonathan is a baptized Christian. He was born and raised in Dubuque, Iowa, but he currently resides in Parma and his fiancée lives in Raleigh, North Carolina. Jonathan said he chose to become Catholic because he appreciates the symbols and traditions of the Catholic Church, and he wants to be of the same faith as his fiancée, Megan, whom he met in high school. Jonathan will be received into the church April 24 because Megan, also his sponsor, will be out of the country during Easter weekend.

Jonathan and Megan plan to get married November 5 at the Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral in Raleigh.

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70 years

St. Vincent DePaul

feeds the hungry

By Bernadine Vance

On the third Tuesday of each month, the normally quiet vestibule of St. Leo Church turns into a beehive of activity, as members of the parish's St. Vincent DePaul Organization distribute food donated by parishioners to feed the hungry in the parish community.

Shopping bags cover the tables set up for this monthly effort as Bernadine Vance directs the efforts of the organization's members to properly distribute these contributions. St. Leo parish has seen many changes throughout almost 75 years of history, but the mission of St. Vincent DePaul has gone unchanged since 1952.

That's when Fr. Sylvester Lux, St. Leo founding pastor, and six men started following in the footsteps of St. Vincent by providing aid to those in need within the St. Leo geographic area.

Feeding the hungry is a priority, but the Vincentians work behind the scenes in other ways to make life a little easier for those less fortunate. The "Sock and Underwear Drive" assists the St. Vincent dePaul Ozanam Center on Broadview Rd. and Searsdale Ave. Every August a Back-to-School Drive assists St. Leo students with school supplies, and money and other items collected on "Blanket Sunday" in October help take the chill out of winter.

But the big day each month follows the weekend before the third Tuesday of each month, when food generously donated by the parishioners is sorted and distributed

by the Vincentians and helpers to help feed 105 people in 36 families. Special food deliveries are also made for Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas to make the holidays a little brighter for these families.

Most of the cash donated to the organization is used to purchase food from the Cleveland Food Bank or Costco, but occasionally an emergency utility payment helps to prevent an emergency shut-off.



Nancy Haydoo (left) and Chris Lizzini load bags in the church for delivery to families in the St. Leo geographic area.

Money contributions can be placed in the collection basket at Mass, in the SVDP poor boxes at church entrances, or they can be dropped off at the rectory. Please mark the envelope "SVDP" or St. Vincent dePaul Outreach.

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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Sylvia Ciereszewski checks inventory before loading bags for delivery.

Judy Boyert checks the contents of bags about to be delivered to families on the St. Vincent DePaul list of needy families.

Leo community.

All parishioners can also help by being the eyes and ears of the organization. If you know of a family in distress, please call the rectory at 216 661 1006 to let the Vincentians know.

For the past 10 years, Bernadine has headed St. Vincent dePaul and worked with Vincentian members Chris and Tony Lizzini, Kathy Kowal, Mary Jane Kozlowski, Lauren Skelley and Jim Tisch. Assisting are Judy Boyert, Sylvia Ciereszewski and Nancy Haydoo. Cindy Nowak places Food Bank orders and sorts and organizes the storage cupboard assisted by Mary Dina.

The Vincentians are most grateful for the generous contributions of St. Leo parishioners who make their work possible.



And watching over all this activity is the organization's patron, St. Vincent DePaul.

St. Leo welcomes 5 at Easter season

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Nichole Kirk grew up on Cleveland's West Side and attended Lutheran and Catholic parochial schools.

In 2020, while exploring her faith, Nichole met Brandon Robinson, a Catholic who felt a desire to find his faith again. Brandon lived near St. Leo's, so they attended Mass here in late 2020 and were pleased by what they found. "It was the Holy Spirit that led us to St. Leo's," said Nichole, pointing to a sense of warmth and a feeling of belonging plus the personality, and inspiring homilies by Father Jim and Deacon Pat.

"I find a lot of meaning in the Mass, and Brandon and I often have conversations about the homilies and gospels." They recently registered as parishioners at St. Leo and plan to stay here.

Amelia Morchak, 35, and her husband recently moved from Parma to a new home in Seven Hills.

At their previous residence, the Morchaks befriended a Catholic neighbor who belonged to St. Leo the Great. This neighbor helped the couple in many ways, particularly when Amelia began a spiritual search in summer of 2021.

"He is someone we respect and trust," Amelia said of her neighbor, adding that she found the RCIA process "very welcoming and comfortable. There was no awkwardness and I never felt like an outsider." She described her husband Joe as "supportive and patient" as she progressed through the process.

Amelia was baptized in the United Church of Christ, so will be confirmed and will receive her first Holy Communion at the Easter Vigil. Amelia works full time and she and Joe also run a small business making pickles.

Amelia says she would like to become involved in outreach and other community activities. "I believe your neighbors are

your village," she said, and she considers it important to give back to her "village" community. She's not sure where her talents would be beneficial to the parish community, but she did say, "It won't be the choir—I really can't sing!"

Jay Warner, a baptized Christian since he was three months old, is married to Krista Warner and the couple have three sons—Austin, Joshua and Trevor. Austin and Joshua attend St. Leo the Great School.

Jay and Krista were married at St. John Vianney and have been married almost 13 years. Jay wants to join the Catholic Church because he wants to join fully with his family in the Catholic faith. Jay has been attending Mass regularly with his family and would like to fully participate with them at the Eucharist. He looks forward to the day when he can fully participate in celebrating the Mass with his family and the St. Leo Parish family.

Blessed events

April 6—Bereavement Sharing Group, 2 p.m.

April 8—Fish Dinners, 4:30–7 p.m.

April 8—Stations of the Cross, 7 p.m.

April 9—Have-A-Heart Drop-Off, Cafeteria, 2–4 p.m.

April 9—Palm Sunday Vigil Mass, 4 p.m.

April 9–10—St. Vincent de Paul food collection at all Masses

April 10—Palm Sunday Masses, 8 & 11 a.m.

April 10—Pancake Breakfast, 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

April 13—Respect Life, 1 p.m.

April 14—Holy Thursday Morning Prayer, 8:30 a.m.

April 14—Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper, 7 p.m.

April 15—Good Friday Morning Prayer, 8:30 a.m.

April 15—Stations of the Cross, 3 p.m.

April 15—Solemn Celebration of the Lord's Passion, 7 p.m.

April 16—Holy Saturday Morning Prayer, 8:30 a.m.

April 16—Food Blessing, 11:30 a.m.

April 16—Easter Vigil, 8:30 p.m.

April 17—Easter Sunday Masses, 8 a.m. & 11 a.m.

May 3—Primary Election

May 4—Bereavement Sharing Group, 2 p.m.

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

May 7—First Holy Communion, 4 p.m. Mass

May 8—Mothers Day

May 11—Respect Life, 1 p.m.

May 14–15—St. Vincent DePaul food collection at all the Masses

May 22—Bloodmobile

May 30—Memorial Day

June 3—Eucharistic Adoration, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

June 8—Respect Life, 1 p.m.

June 18–19—St. Vincent DePaul food collection at all the Masses

June 19—Fathers Day

St. Leo milestones

September 2021–February 2022

Baptisms

Dexton MacNamara

Louie Semoli

Mila Rogers

Alexandra Tehoke

Andrea Tehoke

John Tehoke

Funerals

Peter Lader

Darren Patrick Laux

Catherine Bujnak

Renada Germanatta

Bob McLaughlin

Rosalie Zupancic

Elizabeth Novak

Carol Phillips

Loretta Zola

Frances Culklin

Douglas Burcham

Beverly Habrat

Deborah Semancik

Thomas Simonski

Kevin Richard Austin

Patrick Crean

James Herrle

Daniel Henry

Renada Germanotta

Mark James

Dorothy Kaminski

Miriam Fontaine

Joseph Mackey

Shirley Ferraro

Irene Venesky

Dennis Dina

Jeanne Karasek

Rose Pelley

Betty Clancy