



THE SHAMROCK

A Shamrock Legacy Publication

ST. PATRICK SCHOOL/PARISH/ALUMNI EDITION

SPRING 2025

A Fond Farewell to Father Mike

On the weekend of May 3–4, 2025, Father Mike Alber stood before the people of St. Patrick Parish and shared the difficult news that he would soon be leaving for a new assignment. The church fell silent—except for the soft sound of a few sniffles—as his words settled in. It was clear that the community was processing more than just an announcement. We were beginning to say goodbye to a pastor who has meant so much to us over the past seven years.

During his time at St. Patrick, Father Mike became more than just a spiritual leader. He became a part of our lives. He helped guide our parish through some of the most uncertain and challenging times, including the COVID-19 pandemic, offering stability, hope, and faith when we needed it most. Through it all, he worked to renew our sense of community and deepen our spiritual connection.

His compassion extended to all corners of our parish. On First Fridays, Father Mike regularly celebrated Mass at The Brook assisted living facility and heard confessions there during the Easter season—ensuring that those who couldn't attend church still felt connected to the faith and the parish.



What many found most meaningful was his honesty. Father Mike never shied away from sharing his personal struggles. His willingness to speak openly and vulnerably made him relatable and was a reminder that even our pastors are human.

Outside of church, Father Mike was just as approachable. Whether sitting down to chat about hunting over a cold beer or making time for a casual conversation,

he had a gift for putting people at ease. And though he could sometimes come across as firm or no-nonsense, his softer side often emerged—especially when he preached on topics that touched deeply.

his heart

It's never easy to say goodbye, especially to someone who has given so much of himself to our parish family. While we will miss him tremendously, we are grateful for the time we had and the spiritual foundation he helped strengthen. His presence, his honesty, and his service will not be forgotten.

Thank you, Father Mike. May God bless you on the next step of your journey.

A Legacy of Stewardship: Building & Grounds Highlights Under Father Mike

By Ken Schneider

When I thanked Father Mike for all the facility improvements he did at St. Patrick, he quickly replied, "What WE did." And he's right—thanks to the generosity of our parishioners, more than \$1.4 million has been invested in maintaining, updating, and improving our parish campus since 2018. Here's a look at what's been accomplished:

School & Church Roofs: The aging, leaky roofs were replaced; the church roof was funded by insurance after storm damage.

Bathrooms & Lounges: Four school restrooms were fully renovated, and a staff lounge with two new bathrooms was added to meet diocesan safety guidelines.

Flohe Field Building: The athletic facility that was destroyed in the 2015 tornado was rebuilt.

Masonry Repairs: Years of Michigan winters took their toll on the school's exterior brickwork, which has now been restored.

Church Interior: The historic organ was renovated, original terrazzo floors in the front portion of the sanctuary were polished, and the tabernacle returned to its central place atop the beautifully restored original altar—framed by a new gothic-style arch.

Statues & Stained Glass: Many statues and the original crucifix were professionally restored; protective glass was installed over the chapel and sacristy windows.

Foundation & Steps: Major repairs to the church foundation and new front steps now ensure long-term structural integrity and added safety.

(cont'd on page 17)



THE SHAMROCK

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by Sue Vanlente

It's been nearly two years since we combined our two newsletters, *The Shamrock* and *The Shamrock Legacy*, but there is still confusion about their content.

The newsletter is now published three times per year. The spring and fall issues contain school, parish, and alumni news, including the popular *What's Happening* section.

The most frequent question we hear is, "Why weren't the obituaries in the last newsletter?" They are published in the spring and fall issues only.

The winter issue contains school and development information, including a donation envelope.

If you have questions please contact me at (517) 575-8000 or Deacon Randy at (517) 647-7551.

Why St. Patrick Catholic School?

- Preschool through 12th grade on one campus
- The only Catholic High School in Ionia County
- Leading standardized test scores
- Earn college credits through dual enrollment classes
- STEM curriculum
- Safe and supportive environment
- Low staff turnover
- Inclusive clubs, activities, and athletic teams for all students

Our education is centered around virtue, respect, prayer, and traditional family values.

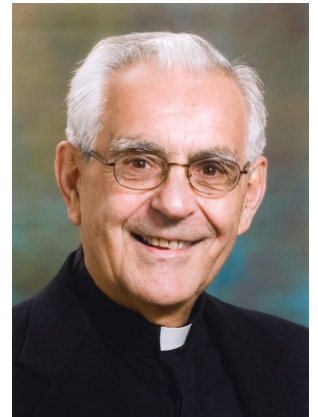
Come and see for yourself. Take a guided tour, explore academic and extracurricular opportunities, meet school teachers and staff, talk to current school families, review scholarship and tuition options, and learn about a school where a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is fostered.

Schedule a private tour by contacting
Deacon Randy Hodge,
randyhodge@portlandstpats.org or 517-647-7551

We Pray! We Learn! We Achieve!

Two Former Leaders Pass Away

Father Donald Weber passed away on October 18, 2024. Father Weber was born on January 26, 1932, in New Salem, Michigan, son of Harry and Rose (née Smith) Weber.



Father Weber attended St. Mary elementary school in New Salem, St. Joseph Seminary in Grand Rapids, Seminary of Philosophy in Montreal, Canada, and Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, Texas. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 24, 1958, by Bishop Allen J. Babcock at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew.

In May 1958, Father Weber was appointed parochial vicar of St. Bartholomew in Newaygo; in September 1963, appointed parochial vicar of Our Lady of Grace in Muskegon; in September 1965, appointed parochial vicar of Sacred Heart in Muskegon Heights; in July 1967, appointed canonical administrator of Watson Mission of the Sacred Heart in Allegan; in September 1970, appointed pastor of Our Lady of Grace in Muskegon; in June 1974, appointed pastor of St. Patrick in Portland; in June 1983, appointed pastor of St. Francis de Sales in Holland; in July 1993, appointed pastor of Holy Name of Jesus in Wyoming; in November 1997, appointed Vicar for Priests.

He continued to serve as Vicar for Priests after being granted senior priest status on June 30, 2003. In November 2008, he was appointed canonical administrator of the Basilica of Saint Adalbert; in September 2012, appointed canonical administrator of St. Patrick in Portland; in October 2017, appointed canonical administrator of St. Bartholomew in Newaygo and St. Joseph in White Cloud; in August 2018, appointed canonical administrator of Holy Redeemer in Jenison. He returned to senior priest status on July 1, 2019.



Joyce Herr, age 95, of Mount Morris, MI, died on November 22, 2024. Joyce was born on November 30, 1928, in Port Huron, MI, the daughter of Albert and Marion Herr. For 29 years she was a nun with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth, Michigan. She served as principal at Portland St. Patrick for several years in the 1960's.

For many years, she worked in various administrative roles within the Catholic School System. Left to cherish her memory are many nieces, nephews, and great-nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents and siblings, Donald Herr, Catherine

MacCallum, and Margaret Sovereign.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen. Please keep Father Don and Joyce Herr and their families in your prayers.

In the Spotlight



BEN LAWLESS (2012)

From a young age, Ben Lawless had a clear vision for his future—literally. What began as a childhood dream in fifth grade grew into a fulfilling career in optometry, driven by compassion, service, and a love of learning. A proud graduate of St. Patrick School, Ben's journey is a testament to the power of purpose, perseverance, and faith. We're excited to spotlight his inspiring path and the meaningful work he's doing today.

Ben Lawless knew he wanted to be an optometrist all the way back in the fifth grade. That early dream never wavered, and with years of dedication and hard work, it became a reality. After graduating from high school, Ben attended Ferris State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in biology/pre-optometry in 2015. He then continued on to the Michigan College of Optometry, graduating in 2019 with his Doctor of Optometry degree.

Along the way, Ben gained valuable experience working at SVS Vision and Rx Optical, where he spent three years learning the ins and outs of the field. His career took an exciting turn when he and his wife moved to Sault Sainte Marie, where he began working at the Sault Tribe Health Center. There, he practices full-scope optometry—everything from managing chronic eye conditions to prescribing glasses and contacts, treating infections, and even removing foreign bodies from eyes. It's work that keeps him engaged and challenged, but more importantly, it's work that deeply fulfills him.

Ben finds the most joy in getting to know his patients and helping them improve their quality of life through better vision and eye health. Serving the Sault Tribe community has given his work even more meaning, and he's grateful for the opportunity to make a difference.

He's especially proud of reaching the goal he set as a child, and of the chance to go on two mission trips during optometry school, where he helped bring eye care to underserved communities. Those experiences blended his professional calling with his desire to give back—something that has always been close to his heart.

Ben credits St. Patrick School with laying the foundation for both his academic journey and his personal values. The strong sense of faith, community, and service he experienced there has stayed with him and continues to guide his choices today. The encouragement of his teachers and the support of the St. Patrick community helped instill in him a strong work ethic and a deep desire to help others—both of which have been key in his path to optometry.

In 2019, Ben married his wife, Jaquie, who has been by his side through it all. Together, they've built a life they love in northern Michigan. In his free time, Ben enjoys brewing, leatherworking, 3D printing, reading, and traveling—but his favorite place is simply at home with Jaquie, whether they're working on a project or just enjoying a quiet evening together.

Ben is also actively involved at St. Joseph Church and with the Sault Tribe. Giving back to his community continues to be an important part of his life, and he takes pride in being able to serve in meaningful ways.



WHAT'S HAPPENING

If you have information that you would like included in the next issue of The Shamrock, please send it to shamrockeditors@gmail.com. Deadline is August 25, 2025.

BIRTHS

To **Nick (2009) and Emily Shattuck** of Kalamazoo, a daughter, Noa Germaine, on March 26, 2025.

To **Cammi (Schneider, 2016) and Joe Weller (2016)**, a son, Parker Joseph Weller, on March 22, 2025.

To **Aaron (2006) and Becky Thelen**, a daughter, Matilda Agnes, on January 17, 2025. She joins two sisters, Emmelyn (8) and Nora (6).

BAPTISMS

The following baptisms took place at St. Patrick Church between November 2024 and April 2025

Sigismund Ignatius Grzywacz, son of Luke and McKenna Grzywacz

Teahgan Jaymes Olney, daughter of Ryan Brelinski and Samantha Olney

Rhett Jerome Wambaugh, son of Joshua and Stephanie Wambaugh

Clayton McCoy King, son of Ashton and Kristen King

Callan Hayes Bigham, son of Brandon and Cristin Bigham

Tate Nicholas Davis, son of Nicholas and Samantha Davis

Allison Clare Brown, daughter of Benjamin and Megan Brown

Asa Matthew Goodman, son of Matthew and Alexis Goodman

Walker Thomas Pung, son of Paul and Victoria Pung

Clara Ann Hazen, daughter of Zachary Hazen and Roberta Schroeder

Elizabeth Rieslynn Hazen, daughter of

Zachary Hazen and Roberta Schroeder

Delta Renae O'Neill, daughter of Christopher and Cali O'Neill

Baylor Ryan Halfman, son of Ryan and Samantha Halfman

Briar Hensley Halfman, daughter of Ryan and Samantha Halfman

Harvey Ivan Lay, son of Nathan and Olivia Lay

Bennett Russell Orr, son of Ryan and Danielle Orr

Davis Paul Parkhouse, son of Dustin and Jocelyn Parkhouse

Adalyn Mae Sober, daughter of Joseph and Emily Sober

Samuel Stephen Spitzley, son of Brendan and Courtney Spitzley

William Gregory Spitzley, son of Brendan and Courtney Spitzley

Matilda Agnes Thelen, daughter of Aaron and Rebecca Thelen

Adults who were welcomed into the Church during the Easter Season:

Evan Paul Erickson

Cari Lynn Gross

Kevin Scott Sandborn

Ronald Neil Simmons

Joseph Robert Sober

Courtney Amber Spitzley

Matthew Anthony

Karen Caffaro

Julie McDermid

Nathan Popinski

Nick Sandborn

Roberta Schroeder

Michael Sullivan

ENGAGEMENTS

Grace Thelen (2021) and Evan Erickson will be married at St. Patrick Church in September 2025.

WEDDINGS

Stephanie Miros (2012) and Joshua Haga (2011) were married on October 15, 2024 in Castle Rock, Colorado.

The following weddings took place at St. Patrick Church:

Collin Trierweiler and Amber Wieber, September 7, 2024

Michael Schafer and Mary Schrauben, October 12, 2024

OTHER

Stephanie Miros (2012) received her Master's of Business Administration from Purdue University in June 2024

IN MEMORY OF

Complete obituary information for the deceased who were local can be found at <https://www.lehmanfuneralhomes.com/>.

Leanne Marie Simon, of Portland, passed away surrounded by her family on June 1, 2024, at the age of 64. Preceding Leanne in death are her father, Forrest "Bud" Peake; brother, Bill Peake; father-in-law, Dave Simon; and great-niece, Margot Hengesbach. Surviving are her husband of 43 years, Kevin Simon; sons, Brett (Lauren) Simon, Nick (Nicole) Simon, and Adam Simon; six grandchildren; mother, Eleanor Peake; siblings, Randy (Donna) Peake, Susan Hengesbach, Nancy (Ted) Schrauben, and Sharon Peake; mother-in-law, Janice Simon; in-laws, Cindy (Tom) Brown, Jim (Jan) Simon, and Amy (Dave) Zimmerman; and many special nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews. For those wishing memorial contributions may be made to the Portland Soup Project or Backpacks for Bellies in memory of Leanne.

Gary John Fedewa, age 73, of Cedar Springs, MI passed away June 30, 2024, surrounded by loved ones. Born June 8, 1951, in Lansing, MI to Kenneth and Patricia Fedewa, Gary grew up in Portland, MI, and was part of the St. Patrick Class of 1969. Gary is survived by his wife Kathy; children, Michelle (Mark) Freeman of Homewood, IL, Ryan (Mindy Bradford) of Lansing, MI, and Jonathon (Elaine) Reder of Avilla, IN; seven grandchildren; four siblings, James (Elaine) of Saranac, Kevin of Steamboat Springs, CO, Judith Brown of Lansing, and William of Winter Park, FL; and many beloved cousins, nieces and nephews.

Lynn Marie Bader, of Omaha, Nebraska, passed away on October 2, 2024. Lynn was born on May 20, 1958, the daughter of Frank and Ginger Lehman. She was preceded in death by her brother, Dean Lehman; grandparents Mary and Floyd Green and Fred and Ann Lehman. She is survived by her husband of 34 years, Keith; parents, Frank and Ginger Lehman; sons, Brandon (Jess) Bader and Austin Bader; siblings, Dawn (Scott) Sochor, Denise Lehman, and Scott Lehman; many nieces and nephews; and countless friends and relatives.

Keith Edwin Huhn passed peacefully in his home on August 30, 2024, surrounded by his family and dear friends. Keith was preceded in death by his parents, Edwin and Ruth (Augst) Huhn, his mother and father-in-law, Medford and Monica Bailey, his brothers, Tom Banish and Doug Huhn, and his sister, Dolores Beard. Keith is survived by his loving wife of 52 years, Sandra (Bailey) Huhn; his children, Kelly (Mark) Wooters and Kyle Huhn and wife Sonja Perakis; three grandchildren; his sisters, Marilyn (John Jenkins) Selden, Mary (Roger) Miller, and his sister-in-law, Paulette Huhn; his brothers-in-law, Ed (Sue) Bailey and Rick Bailey, 19 nieces and nephews, many great-nieces and nephews, and MANY dear friends.

Ruth Martha Polhamus, age 95, passed away peacefully on September 14, 2024. Ruth is preceded in death by her parents, Herman and Lena Hall; first husband, Jack Stahl; children, Jackie Stahl (Martin) and Mark Stahl. Survivors are her husband, John Pohlman; children, Lynne (Ron) Judge, Michelle Remington, and Kyle (Janice) Stahl; seven grandchildren; and 21 great-grandchildren.

Mary Anne (Leik) Ferrari, 79, of Wyoming, MI, passed away on September 20, 2024, after a courageous battle with cancer. Mary Ann graduated from Portland St. Patrick in the Class of 1963. She was preceded in death by her husband, Jack; son, Alan; and parents, Henry and Mary Rose Leik. She is survived by her daughter, Annie Marie (Scott Douglass); siblings, Phillip Leik, Thomas (Mary) Leik, and Ellen Leik; four nieces and nephews; and many cousins, great-nephews, and great-nieces. Those wishing to make a memorial contribution can send it to Faith Hospice Hope Network.

Colleen Marie (Hurley) Mauren passed away peacefully on Tuesday, September 24, 2024, at the age of 60. Colleen is survived by her former husband, Mark Mauren; children, Joshua Mauren, Sarah Mauren (Taylor Wood), and Rachel Mauren; three grandchildren; and siblings, Mark Hurley and Susan (Gary) Williams. She was preceded in death by her parents, James and Patricia Hurley; brother, Brian Hurley; and sons, Noah Richard and Elijah Robert.

Rose Mary Manning, born April 5, 1942, in

Portland, MI, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on September 27, 2024, in Sitka, Alaska.

Kenneth V. Schrauben, age 83, of Portland, devoted father, husband, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend went to be with his Savior Jesus Christ on October 11, 2024. He was born on July 24, 1941, in Riley Township, the son of Herman and Bertha (Trierweiler) Schrauben Sr. Ken is preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Herm Schrauben, Jr., and Jerry Schrauben; sisters, Bernie Fitzmaurice and Janet Sutherland; in-laws, Clarence and Agnes Hahn; brother-in-law, Roy Pung. Surviving are his wife of 62 years, Donna; children, Cynthia (Mike) Ward, Pamela (Terry) Blundy, and Kenneth (Angela) Schrauben; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; brothers, Roy "Butch" (Carolyn) Schrauben and Mike (Bobbi) Schrauben; sisters-in-law, Rita Schrauben, Carole Schrauben, Kathy (Paul) Verska, and Charlene Pung; many nieces, nephews, and cousins; and very close friends, Jim and Dee Leik. For those wishing, memorial contributions may be made to the Al and Carla Schrauben Athletic Fund or the Father Flohe Foundation in memory of Ken.

PLEASE NOTIFY US OF DEATHS

If your friend or loved one passes away and the funeral is held anywhere except Portland, please send a notice to shamrockeditors@gmail.com or contact Amy Smith at (517) 647-6505, ext. 410.

This applies to former students, former teachers, or anyone who was part of St. Patrick Parish in the past.

Janette Christine Kramer, 94, passed away on November 3, 2024. She was born on July 4, 1930, in Westphalia, to Arthur and Rosalia (Schueller) Smith. She was preceded in death by her parents; siblings, Helen, Irene, Rita, Marie, Margaret, and Charles; Kramer in-laws, Marguerite and Robert. Surviving are her loving husband of 69 years, Jerry; children, Doug (Lynne) Kramer, Fred (Jude) Kramer, Sue (Stacey) Bosworth, Kathy (Sharon Breton) Kramer, Jean (Jon) Shattuck, Ken (Kim) Kramer, Karen (Tony) Trierweiler, and Mary (Ken) Cook; 23 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; brother-in-law, Dave (Judy) Kramer; many nieces and nephews. The family would like to thank longtime caregivers Nancy, Jo, Autumn, Angie, and Char for the compassion and care they provided for Janette over the years.

Donald Robert Gross, age 86, of Portland, passed away on Wednesday, November 6, 2024. Don graduated from St. Patrick

School in 1957. He was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Annie (Wayne) Schrauben; brother, Stanley (Jane) Gross; brothers-in-law, William Schrauben, Thomas Zimmerman, and Gordon Lehman; grandson, Joshua M. Heminger; father and mother-in-law, George and Sue Lehman. Don is survived by his wife of 64 years, Dee; children, Susan Heminger, Robert (Stacy) Gross, Elizabeth Gross, Thomas (Robin) Gross, Craig Gross, and Scott (Rachel) Gross; 14 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren with one on the way; siblings, Marie Schrauben, Rita (Steve) Snitgen, Alice Zimmerman, Mary (Rocky) Beckhold, and Gary (Carolle) Gross; sister-in-law, Patricia Ann Ollar; many nieces and nephews.

Philip J. Spitzley, of Sunfield, Michigan, passed away at the age of 95 years old, on November 11, 2024, at his home with his family by his side. He was born January 12, 1929, in Portland, to Leo and Therese (Fox) Spitzley. Phil was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Elizabeth; his youngest son, Doug Spitzley; all ten of his siblings: Leo Jr., Robert, Harold, Dave, Alvin, Roy, Jim, Joan (Eddie) Schmitz, Wilma (Rip) Schmitz, and Alice (Louie) Esch. Phil is survived by his children, Steve (Vikki) Spitzley of Lake Odessa, Randy (Brenda) Spitzley of Freeport, Debbie (Dave) Crumbaugh of Perrinton, and Becky (Brian) Haskin of Sunfield. Phil is also survived by 13 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be directed to St. Patrick Catholic Church or to the Portland VFW, Post #4090.

William "Bill" G. Clark, of Portland, passed away peacefully on November 13, 2024, at the age of 93. He was born in Lansing on June 6, 1931, to Newton and Elsie (Harp-er) Clark. Preceding Bill in death are his parents; wife, Helen (Hengesbach) Clark; children, Brenda Clark and Steven Clark; grandson, Lee Martin; brothers, Larry, Robert, and Herbert Clark; sisters, Sharon Armstrong, Hazel Pratt, and Patricia Batchelder; and brother-in-law, Jim Bollinger. Surviving Bill are his children, Cathy Clark, Sharon (Jim) Hall, Laurie (Ken) Martin, Tom (Stacey) Clark, Mark (Julia) Clark; 11 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; siblings, Russell Clark, Betty Monroe, Mary Lynn Bollinger, Phyllis (Jim) Rollinson, and Dennis Clark; brother-in-law, John Batchelder; and life-long best friend, Marie Schafer. Those wishing may make memorial contributions to St. Jude's Children's Hospital in honor of Bill.

Vickie L. Thelen, age 71, of Portland, was called home to spend eternity with her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on November 14, 2024. She peacefully passed away surrounded by loved ones, but not before making sure to leave this world with as much laughter as she could. Vickie was born on November 26, 1952, in St. Louis, Missouri,

(Continued on page 15)

School News!

Principal Cortney Smith Retires

After six impactful years as principal of St. Patrick Catholic School, Cortney Smith has announced she will step down at the end of this school year. Her decision comes with deep gratitude for the experiences, relationships, and growth she has shared with the St. Patrick community.

"It has been an honor to work with such dedicated teachers, supportive families, and inspiring students," she said. "Together, we have faced challenges, celebrated successes, and built a school environment that fosters faith, growth, and excellence."



Smith's journey with St. Patrick began over six years ago, but her connection to the school runs even deeper. Deacon Randy Hodge recalled first hiring her as a kindergarten teacher under unusual circumstances. "We had a teacher resign the day after the open house, and I asked Cortney to step in. I told her she could take a couple of days, but she didn't want the kindergarteners to start the year without a permanent teacher. That spoke volumes about the kind of educator she is—always putting the students first."

Over the years, Smith's leadership has been marked by collaboration, commitment, and care. Deacon Hodge reflected, "It has been a pleasure working side by side with her. She has a vast knowledge of elementary education, and together we've accomplished a lot over the past six years. I will miss her passion for St. Patrick Parish and School."

Though stepping away from her professional role, Smith and her family will remain deeply connected to the St. Patrick community. Her children will continue attending the school, and the Smiths will remain active parishioners.

"After 21 years in education, I realize it's time to find a better work-life balance and focus more on my family," Smith said. "Every parent knows how fast the years go. I want to make the most of these moments with Benjamin, Henry, and Allena while they're still young."

As she helps the school prepare for a smooth leadership transition, Smith remains confident in the school's future. "St. Patrick Catholic School will always hold a special place in my heart. I know it will continue to thrive with its strong mission and passionate educators."

Father Mike Alber said, "I am profoundly grateful to Cortney for saying yes to the school in so many ways the last six years. She has been a tremendous resource for St. Patrick School, bringing a wealth of knowledge and fortitude. It was a pleasure to work with her. She leaves the school a better place!"

The St. Patrick community is grateful for Cortney Smith's years of leadership and dedication—and wishes her all the best in this next chapter.

St. Patrick Catholic School Enters the Esports Realm

Video games have come a long way since the days of Super Mario. Today's esports connect players across the globe and promote critical thinking, communication, and teamwork. With over 3 billion gamers worldwide, esports has become a dynamic, inclusive global phenomenon.

In Spring 2024, four students from St. Patrick Catholic School kicked off the school's first esports season, competing in Rocket League and finishing 12th out of 26 teams. It was an exciting debut that sparked enthusiasm for what was to come.

Building on that momentum, a full season launched in Fall 2024 with seven middle schoolers competing in titles like Rocket League, Madden 25, NBA 2K25, Brawlhalla, and Minecraft—some matches even livestreamed on Twitch. The program offered students a new way to connect, compete, and grow in a structured team environment.

Two players, Noah Schneider and Jason Geissler, made the national playoffs in Brawlhalla, and the program welcomed its first high school participant in the spring. Esports at St. Patrick is off to a strong start and is sure to continue to grow.



The Shamrock esports team and their coach, Ross Schneider.

Student SPOTLIGHT

Maizie Pelc

This month, our student spotlight shines on junior Maizie Pelc, the daughter of Bernie and Michele Pelc. Maizie has two siblings, Caiden, a wrestler at Newberry, and Isaiah, a cheerleader at Notre Dame.

Maizie is a highly involved member of both our school and parish communities, participating in a wide range of extracurricular, athletic, and faith-based activities. She is a competitive gymnast at R-Athletics in Grand Rapids and a member of the St. Patrick Trap Shooting Team.

In the 2025 Gymnastics State Championships, Maizie placed 2nd on vault and 3rd on beam, earning her a spot in the U.S. Regionals, where she went on to place 1st on beam and 10th on vault. In the 2024 Trap State Competition, she placed 35th in the women's novice division and 98th overall in the novice division.

Beyond athletics, Maizie is a vibrant leader in Campus Ministry and parish Youth Ministry. She has played a key role in organizing school-wide Advent, Lent, and May Crowning assemblies, as well as leading Stations of the Cross, middle school retreats, and community rosaries.

In recognition of her faith and leadership, Maizie was awarded the **2025 Golden Rose Award**, which honors high school women who exemplify excellence in living, promoting, and practicing the Catholic faith. The award celebrates her virtue, service, and commitment to sharing Christ's love with others.

"I am grateful to be in a community where living out my faith is encouraged and where I've been given so many opportunities to grow within it," Maizie says. "I strive to take this encouragement beyond St. Patrick School and to welcome others into a life filled with Christ and His love. Everyone deserves to know



Maizie receives the 2025 Golden Rose Award from Bishop David Walkowiak

the love the Father has for them."

Maizie is also a dedicated member of the National Honor Society (NHS). For her ongoing service project, she volunteers with 7th and 8th graders preparing for Confirmation. Additionally, she has partnered with Portland High School and the Ionia County Youth Advisory Council to collect peanut butter donations for the IM Kids 3rd Meal program. She also helped organize a Mental Health Week for students, working alongside the school counselor and St. Patrick alumna Kyra Kinsman.

We're proud to recognize Maizie for her achievements, leadership, and faithful witness to Christ. She truly embodies what it means to be a Shamrock.

St. Pats Mega Rock Raffle

The MEGA Rock Raffle continues to pay out thousands of dollars to the lucky ticket holders. The latest winners, drawn at the Shamrock Auction in April were:



\$5,000: Fr. Karl Pung
\$2,500: Bill Clark
\$1,000: Joe and Bonnie Wieber
\$750: Brenda Lenneman
\$500: Marleah Quimby
\$500: Jack and Janet Wilcox
\$250: Charlie and Kathy Schrauben
\$250: Jerry and Linda Huhn
\$250: Diane Hafner
\$250: Mike Weller

Our Monthly \$500 Winners:

September: Ann Pelc
October: Kathy Schomisch
November: Randy and Michelle Hodge
December: Herb Schrauben
January: St. Patrick School (*from a ticket purchased by an anonymous donor in the school's name.*
Thank you, Father Richard Vanlente!)
February: Ann Goodwin
March: Dennis Schneider
April: Dave/Amy Zimmerman and Diane Zimmerman

There will be two more monthly drawings (May and June) with one Mega prize winner being announced at the Parish Festival on June 21, 2025. Remember, winning tickets are put back into the drawing each time, so it is possible to win multiple times. If you have any questions about the MEGA Rock raffle, please contact Randy Hodge by calling the school at (517)647-7551 or by email at randyhodge@portlandstpats.org.

From Shamrocks to Marines: Connor Cross and Devin Cook

Connor Cross (Class of 2021) and Devin Cook (Class of 2024) made the life-changing decision in November to join the United States Marine Corps. On January 14, 2025, they boarded a bus in Lansing for the long trip to Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, where their transformation from civilians to Marines began.

Although both had trained hard during their years on the football field, nothing could truly prepare them for the challenges of Marine Corps boot camp. Widely known as one of the toughest military training programs in the world, the 13-week experience is designed to push recruits to their physical, mental, and emotional limits.

From day one, recruits face early mornings, intense physical conditioning, strict discipline, and nonstop pressure to meet high standards. Along the way, they learn essential skills like marksmanship, martial arts, first aid, and close-order drill, while also studying the Marine Corps' history, customs, and core values: Honor. Courage. Commitment.

Their training culminates in The Crucible, a 54-hour field exercise that tests everything they've learned under conditions of sleep deprivation, limited food, and physical stress. Only those who complete this final challenge earn the coveted Eagle, Globe, and Anchor, officially becoming United States Marines.

Their families first saw the results of that transformation on Family Day, a five-hour reunion filled with pride, tears, and hugs. The following day's graduation ceremony, held on the historic parade deck, celebrated their achievement in true Marine Corps fashion—disciplined formations, crisp uniforms, and a deep sense of honor.



Connor and Devin returned home for a brief 10-day liberty, reconnecting with loved ones and savoring a bit of freedom before heading to the next phase of their journey: the School of Infantry (SOI). There, they'll receive advanced combat training before moving on to specialized assignments or global deployments.

Please join us in keeping these brave young Shamrocks—and all those serving in uniform—in your prayers. May God bless and protect them always.

Thank you to Ben Cross for providing the information for this article.

#shamrockpride

Senior Shamrocks Commit to College Athletics

We're proud to celebrate four senior Shamrocks who will be continuing both their academic and athletic careers at the collegiate level.

Brayden Simon, son of Justin and Dana Simon – Kellogg Community College (Baseball)

Landon Simpson, son of Mark and Brooke Simpson – Grand Rapids Community College (Golf)

Bella Russman, daughter of Pat and Stacy Russman – Aquinas College (Track & Field)

Kenzie Fedewa, daughter of Jeff and Dawn Fedewa – Davenport University (Track & Field)



These students have shown outstanding dedication and perseverance, and we look forward to seeing what they accomplish in the years ahead. Congratulations to all!

An interview with Sister Jacque

Sister Jacque Wetherholt has been a beloved part of the Sisters of St. Joseph for decades, touching the lives of countless students and families through her teaching, leadership, and deep faith. In this special reflection, she shares memories from her time at St. Patrick Catholic School, what inspired her vocation, and the timeless values that have guided her journey.

What inspired you to become a Sister of St. Joseph?

I only attended a Catholic elementary school for one year—in fifth grade—and we had a class on vocations. I've always felt that was the year I decided I wanted to be a nun. When my family moved to Davison, Michigan, I had the Sisters of St. Joseph for Religious Education. Later, I attended Nazareth College (for just one year), and that's when I decided to pursue a vocation—because all the Sisters I had for class seemed so joyful!

What led you to teach at St. Patrick Catholic School?

At that time, teaching assignments were given directly by the Congregational Superior General. My first two years were at St. Dennis in Royal Oak, and then I was assigned to St. Patrick in Portland. That was the first of three times I served there. From 1961–1963, I taught 7th and 8th grades with Sister Marie Paul and Hal Brooks. I returned in 1969–1970 to teach high school math and religion, and then again in the fall of 1970, when I became the Director of Religious Education for the parish.

What are some of your fondest memories from teaching at St. Patrick?

There are so many, but a few stand out. I loved teaching students at all grade levels, though sometimes it was a challenge to keep track of who was who—especially when I had multiple Smiths, Thelens, or Schraubens in the same class! I remember once standing outside my classroom as a high schooler approached with smoke coming out of his pocket. I just started talking with him casually until he finally pulled out a cigarette—it had started burning his hand! I gave him a warning, but I couldn't help laughing. I also remember the Shamrock basketball team having a strong season—it was always fun to cheer them on.

How have you seen Catholic education evolve over the years, and what values remain timeless?

When I first taught at St. Pat's, my class had 63 students! You don't see numbers like that anymore. I only taught for 12 years before moving on to other ministries, so I'm not the best judge of today's classroom, but the core values—faith, love, and service—have always remained central.

Do you have any favorite stories about your students or colleagues?

One morning, I was in my classroom when I heard several boys outside calling, "Sister Aninny!" (That was their version of my religious name, Sister Annine.) I laughed so hard. I also loved teaching history. One year, we even hosted a Roman chariot race and a "slave market" simulation. Of course, we probably wouldn't do the market activity today—it wouldn't be considered politically correct!

What role has your faith played in your teaching and life's work?

Faith and prayer have always been essential in my life. I've always tried to share Christ's story, His values, and the importance of His ministry in everything I do. That mission has guided both my teaching and my life.

What advice would you give today's Catholic school students and teachers?

There's so much I'd love to share, but above all, I would point to Christ's two great commandments: love God and love your neighbor. For teachers, I'd encourage you to help students understand what it means to follow Christ—and to strive to be "perfect, as our Father is perfect."



LEFT: Sister Jacque teaching class at St. Patrick School in the early 60's. Who can identify the students in the picture?

RIGHT: The Sisters, dressed in their new, shorter habits. Sister Jacque said that there were a lot of changes happening at that time, and the new clothing was just one of them. There was a mixed reaction from the Sisters. Some thought they were sacrificing dignity; the majority though were happy and excited.



LEFT: Sister Jacque today.

A Letter from Fr. Mike

It has been a privilege and honor to be the pastor of St. Patrick Parish for the last seven plus years. Together we have accomplished some truly amazing things, during some very trying and difficult times, that can only be explained through the eyes of faith. And there are some truly amazing things that God wants to continue to accomplish at St. Patrick Parish with new leadership into the future. I can't wait to hear how God is going to continue the work he began in Portland so many generations ago!

I was named the pastor February 01, 2018, and for the next five months shared responsibilities between St. Patrick and St. John Vianney in Wyoming, MI. If you remember, I challenged you during those first weeks to go out and invite people who had not been to Mass in a while. You responded! Our weekend Mass attendance began to grow and with that the various ministries began to see growth as well. We were on our way, trending higher and higher with great excitement! Do you remember that first parish mission? How about the Mass during that mission when the walls were shaking because of the energy inside? The building began to shake, and the bats started flying! That is one thing I won't miss at St. Patrick, all the bats, HAH!!!! Bats in the rectory, bats in the office, bats in the church, bats in the confessional and bats during Mass.

And then, March 13, 2020, everything went silent with the lockdown. All the energy and excitement that was built for two years ceased in the blink of an eye. Eventually we began to stream Mass from the Adoration Chapel. While not the best, we managed to draw people from all over the world for those Sunday Mass live streams. The number of people "tuning in" was incredible. We were one of the first parishes to get back to Mass in person with our tent Masses in the parking lot...

even celebrating Confirmation and graduation in that tent. The difficulty came when we went back into the church and had to practice distancing. Our attendance numbers reflected the reality in which we found ourselves. Coming out of the lockdown would prove to be difficult and take some time. While we struggled to recover, God had a beautiful plan and that plan keeps me awestruck! Our young people began to thrive and desire more! The baptisms of dozens of young people started to happen! Our high school students began to attend Mass every weekend and they started men's and women's groups to grow in faith and fellowship which drew more young people to being baptized. Watching their parents grow in faith with them has been a great joy! And sure enough, Mass attendance began to grow. Four years later, our 4:30 pm and 8:00 am Masses are pleasantly full and if you attend the 10 am Mass it can be difficult to find a seat most weeks. All of this because you invited others to attend!

There are so many other things that I could share that I simply do not have the space to put to print so I will leave you with a couple of things that I am most pleased with as I wrap up my time with you:

- The Society of St. Vincent DePaul being established and flourishing
- The number of baptisms that have occurred because of the Catholic identity that exists in the school
- The number of men who have said yes to meet regularly as the Watchmen
- Leading the OCIA group this year has changed my life
- We are a better people and parish than we were seven years ago because you said yes to what God is calling you to be

Please remember me in your prayers and be assured of my thoughts and prayers for all of you AND KEEP SAYING YES!

The Night Father Mike Rocked the Tent!

If you attended Summer Fest in the years following the pandemic, you might have noticed that the Friday night entertainment tent wasn't exactly packed. But that changed on June 23, 2023, thanks to one determined DJ, a signature jumpsuit, and a pastor with a hidden rock star streak.

Ken Cook—aka DJ Jumpsuit—is always "cooking" up something creative. A few weeks before the event, he asked Father Mike Alber to help him stir up some excitement. Father Mike, never one to shy away from a challenge (or a little fun), agreed.

The show began with Ken on stage in his trademark jumpsuit. Before intermission, he teased a surprise. Sure enough, as intermission ended, the music started, the back of the tent opened, and the crowd parted like the Red Sea, as a classic convertible rolled in. A man in a red, white, and blue jumpsuit and wearing a mask was riding in the convertible. Everyone assumed it was Ken making a dramatic return.

The man climbed onto the stage and immediately launched into a high-energy performance, dancing and strumming a guitar while the crowd cheered wildly. Then came the twist.

The real Ken walked on stage. So, who was the masked mystery man? A few minutes later, he pulled off the mask—it was Father Mike.

Not only did it fire up the Friday night crowd, but it gave Father Mike the chance to tap into his high school band roots and surprise everyone with his hidden talent. As Ken later said, it was a chance for Father Mike to let his "other side" out—and for the crowd to see their pastor like never before.



(Father Mike Goodbye continued on page 17)

Brandon Scheurer

From Shamrock to the Big 12

From an interview with Brandon Scheurer (2019)

My journey from St. Patrick School to Division I college baseball—and possibly to the professional level—has been a path filled with hard work, faith, and the constant support of my family. I owe much of who I am today to my dad, Mark, and my uncle, Bryan. They weren't just role models—they were my coaches, mentors, and spiritual guides.

During my time at St. Pat's, we made two state championship appearances, winning it all in 2017. I had always dreamed of playing collegiate baseball like my dad and uncle did at Central Michigan University. My journey led me to Saginaw Valley State University, a Division II program, where I played from 2020–2024. It was extra special because I was recruited by Coach Steve Jaksa—the same man who coached my uncle at CMU.

My final season at SVSU was one for the history books. We broke the school record for wins (41), won the conference regular

season title, and hosted both an NCAA regional and super regional for the first time in program history. Personally, I was honored to earn All-GLIAC as both a pitcher and infielder, along with Midwest All-Region honors.

After prayer and reflection, I decided to enter the transfer portal and take a leap of faith. I landed at the University of Cincinnati, now in its second year in

the Big 12. Competing at this level has been an incredible experience, and I'm working toward the goal of playing professional baseball after this season.

High School Memories That Built a Foundation

Some of my favorite baseball memories still come from high school. Being coached by my dad and uncle was a blessing—something not many athletes get to experience. Our time wasn't just about wins and titles. It was about late nights in the batting cage, sharing stories, laughs, and lessons that shaped who I am today. I'm excited to give back in the same way, especially to my uncle Bryan and his sons, just like he always did for me.



Mental Challenges and Leaning on Faith

The transition to college baseball wasn't easy. At that level, every player was one of the best from their hometown. For the first time, I struggled. It was tough mentally. But leaning on my dad, uncle, and my faith helped me push through. I stopped measuring my worth by performance and started trusting the process, knowing the results would follow.

Faith That Grounds and Guides

My Catholic education helped me learn that my identity is rooted in Christ—not in stats or outcomes. That perspective became even more real after an elbow injury during my sophomore year. Baseball was temporarily taken away, but it gave me time to grow spiritually. That rehab season deepened my appreciation for the game and taught me to "let go and let God." My faith continues to be my anchor through every high and low of the season.

Favorite Moment and Future Goals

The highlight of my career is still winning the 2017 State Championship with St. Pat's. That team was on a mission after falling short the year before. I'll never forget hugging my dad and uncle after the final out and hearing, "This is why we put in all those extra hours." It was a powerful moment that validated years of hard work.

Now, my immediate goal is to help lead the University of Cincinnati back to an NCAA Regional. It hasn't happened since 2019. On the professional side, I'm hoping to earn a chance with a Major League organization or an independent league after the season ends.



Words for Today's Shamrock Athletes

To today's student-athletes: Dream big and work hard! I came from a graduating class of just 25 at St. Pat's—and now I'm playing Big 12 baseball. You can do big things no matter where you start. Focus on getting 1% better each day. That consistency compounds over time. And don't forget to lean on your faith. God will take you places you never imagined if you trust in Him.

Please pray that God continues to guide my path. Whether that includes professional baseball or another journey, I want to become the person He created me to be. I'm grateful for every bit of support from the St. Patrick community.

Education at St. Pat's is centered around virtue, respect, prayer, and traditional family values.

alumni news

Many of the first graduating classes from St. Patrick School don't hold reunions any longer, but we would still like to recognize them. Congratulations to the **Class of 1955** who is celebrating 70 years since graduation!

Classes who graduated in years ending in 0 and 5 are celebrating this year. Be sure to send your information so that it can be printed in *The Shamrock*. Deadline for the fall issue is August 25, 2025.

Reunion Alerts

The **Class of 1960** would like to hold a class reunion in September, but right now, no definite plans have been made. Joyce Rogers and Patty Wilcox are the contact people.

The **Class of 1964** is looking to the fall for a reunion but no definite plans yet. Contact Carol Kahn for more info.

The **Class of 1970** will hold their 55-year class reunion on Sunday, September 7, 2025. Classmates can attend the 10:00 Mass at St. Patrick Church, followed by coffee and donuts at the home of Ken and Karen Schneider. Lunch, catered by Olivera's, will be served at 1:30. Invitations will be mailed in July.

The **Class of 1980**, will hold their 45-year class reunion on Sunday, September 7, 2025, on the patio at Fabiano's restaurant at 1:00 pm. More details to follow. Watch your email! If you have any questions, contact Sharon (Rensi) Stegenga or Lisa (Pung) Fedewa.

The **Class of 1995** is working on a reunion, though no definite plans are available at this time. Contact Kelli (Fedewa) James, Jenny (Goodman) Anderson, or Laura (Bower) Krizov for information.

Attention **Class of 2005**! It's time to reconnect, reminisce, and relive the memories. Mark your calendars and spread the word—we look forward to celebrating with you! Please save the date for Saturday, August 16, 2025 for our 20-year class reunion. Details to follow but plan for late afternoon/evening. If you have questions please reach out to Brenda Lennemen, Brett Klein, or Julie Wight.

Class of 2020—Tyler Coyne is solidifying plans and will contact you soon.

Be sure to send a group picture and a reunion report to shamrockeditors@gmail.com after the reunions!

Reunion Reports



Twenty members of the **Class of 1984** celebrated their 40-year class reunion on September 7, 2024, at the home of Dan (Boomer) and Mary Trierweiler. Classmates came from as far away as Tennessee and Georgia, and an additional classmate attended via FaceTime. All agreed that it definitely does NOT feel like it's been 40 years since high school! It was a beautiful, relaxing day, pontooning on the Grand River followed by a meal catered by Taste of Heaven. The evening was spent around the bonfire, reminiscing about our days at St. Pat's, bragging and showing off pictures of children and grandchildren, and a whole lot of laughter, love, and off-key singing! A great time was had by all, and we cannot wait to celebrate 45 together!



The **Portland St. Patrick Class of 1994** held their 30-year reunion at the Portland Country Club on Saturday, October 12, 2024. A total of 15 classmates made the sometimes long trip to catch up and reminisce about old times.

CLASS OF
1975

50th
REUNION

Attention Class of 1975

Mark your calendars now so that you are able to attend your special 50-year reunion celebration this fall. The date is September 6, 2025. You'll receive more information soon.



The *Class of 2009* celebrated their 15-year reunion in August of 2024. Fourteen out of the 21 members of their graduating class attended *Beerfest on the Bridge*, in Portland, and then went to Julia and Casey Schmitt's house for food, a bonfire, and lots of talking and catching up.



The *Class of 2014* celebrated its 10-year reunion at Conflux City Brewing on October 19, 2024. They enjoyed reminiscing on the "10-years-from-now" predictions from their senior year, playing Shamrock trivia with different memories from school, catching up, and eating s'mores by the fire.

1997 Grad Promoted

Justin Fox (1997) of Midland recently received a promotion to Lieutenant as a result of his hard work and dedication to the Midland Fire Department. Lt. Fox, an MFD fireman since January 2008, is the newest Lieutenant on 'A' shift. He has been integral as one of the Hazardous Material Technicians, as well as part of the union's negotiating team for the last four contracts. Congratulations, Justin, on a job well done!



New Scholarship at St. Pat's in Honor of Alumni

When Jane Gross passed away in 2024, her children—Sheila Cook, Doug Gross, and Donalyn Lawless—wanted to do something meaningful to keep the memory of their parents, Jane and Stanley Gross, alive. They chose to establish a scholarship endowment at St. Patrick School in their honor: *The Stanley and Jane Gross Scholarship*.

Jane and Stan were part of the first graduating class at St. Patrick High School; they were married at St. Patrick Church; and they had all three of their children baptized, educated, and eventually married through St. Patrick Parish.

With the guidance of Deacon Randy Hodge, the family was able to establish the endowment through the Catholic Foundation of West Michigan. The scholarship amount is based on 4% of the annual growth of the endowment, which for the 2025–2026 school year amounts to \$1,200. This scholarship will be awarded annually based on the following criteria:

- Must be a parishioner of St. Patrick Parish
- Must complete the tuition scholarship application on Blackbaud (the scholarship amount will be determined based on the specific tuition needs of the selected family)
- Must be a returning or new incoming student at St. Patrick Catholic School

"We are deeply thankful to Sheila, Doug, Donalyn, and their families for founding the *Stan and Jane Gross Scholarship*," Deacon Randy Hodge, Development Director at St. Patrick School, said. "This scholarship will leave a beautiful and lasting memorial in their parents' name now and forever into the future."

Setting up a scholarship fund will help support the students of St. Patrick School in future years. If you have questions or would like to get started, please contact Deacon Randy Hodge at randyhodge@portlandstpats.org or call the school office at (517) 647-7551 for more information.



LEFT: Our National Honor Society recently inducted new members and recognized our second and third year members.



Take a Pilgrimage This Jubilee Year

By Deacon Randy and Michelle Hodge

Over the years, we used family vacation time to travel through much of the United States. As part of these trips we made it a priority to look for special Catholic sites to visit along the way. Thus, we discovered many beautiful churches and shrines that ranged from very simple to very elegant.

Since Pope Francis declared 2025 a Jubilee Year—a time of spiritual renewal and grace—with the theme “*Pilgrims of Hope*,” this is a perfect time for you and your family to take a pilgrimage, perhaps as part of an already-planned vacation.

Many of the sites we have visited offer the possibility of receiving a plenary indulgence, provided you meet requirements such as going to confession, attending Mass, and receiving Holy Communion.

Whether you're drawn to the spiritual graces of an indulgence or simply seeking deeper connection with your faith, we'd like to share some of our favorite pilgrimage destinations—both nearby and farther afield.

Start Local

If you're just getting started or don't want to travel far, begin right here in our own Diocese of Grand Rapids.

- **St. Andrew's Cathedral** in downtown Grand Rapids is the bishop's official seat, often called the “mother church” of our diocese.
- The **Basilica of St. Adalbert** is another special stop, designated as a basilica for its historical and spiritual significance.
- The **Shrine of St. Francis Xavier and Our Lady of Guadalupe**, also in downtown Grand Rapids, is a beautiful site for prayer and reflection.

Explore Michigan

For a day trip, we recommend the **Solanus Casey Center** in Detroit. Blessed Solanus, who is on the path to sainthood, needs just one more confirmed miracle before canonization. Learn more at solanuscasy.org.

Want to go further? Head north for an inspiring road trip:

- **The Cross in the Woods Catholic Shrine** in Indian River is a must-see.
- On Mackinac Island, visit **St. Anne's Catholic Church** and its rich history museum.
- In St. Ignace, stop at the **Fr. Jacques Marquette National Memorial**.
- In Sault Ste. Marie, don't miss the **Holy Name of Mary Pro-Cathedral**—once the seat of the diocese.
- Finally, in L'Anse, visit **The Shrine of Bishop Baraga**, the beloved “Snowshoe Priest.” On your way, consider stopping for

Mass at St. Peter Cathedral in Marquette.

Cross into Wisconsin

If you're still up for an adventure, travel west to **The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion** in Dorr County, Wisconsin—the only approved Marian apparition site in the United States. Learn more at championshrine.org.

East Coast Favorites

One of our personal favorites is the **National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton** in Emmitsburg, Maryland (setonshrine.org). Just down the road is the **National Shrine Grotto** at Mount St. Mary's University (nsgrotto.org). Both are spiritually rich and located just 45 miles from Gettysburg.

Southern Sites

If you're traveling south during winter or spring break:

- In Cullman, Alabama, visit the **Ave Maria Grotto** (avemariagrotto.com), which features 125 mini replicas of famous Catholic shrines, handcrafted by Brother Joseph Zoetl, O.S.B.
- In Mobile, Alabama, attend Mass at the **Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception**.
- In St. Augustine, Florida, stop at the **National Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche** at Mission NOMBRE De Dios and the **Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine**.

Other Notable Pilgrimage Destinations

Some other remarkable churches we've visited include:

- **Proto-Cathedral of Bardstown, KY** – located in the Bourbon Capital of the World
- **Basilica of St. Francis Xavier** in Dyersville, Iowa – near the Field of Dreams
- **St. Patrick's Cathedral** in New York City
- **Cathedral Basilica** in Savannah, GA
- **St. Louis Cathedral** in New Orleans, LA
- **San Fernando Cathedral** in San Antonio, TX – believed to hold the remains of Alamo defenders
- **Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi** in Santa Fe, NM – while there, visit the Loreto Chapel and its “Miraculous Stairway”



The Cross in the Woods in Indian River

No matter where your family goes for vacations, look around and see what Catholic sites are nearby. I promise that you will not be disappointed!

Planning a pilgrimage, whether near or far, can deepen your faith and connect you to the broader Church. If you have other favorite pilgrimage sites to share, we'd love to hear from you. Please reach out to me at randyhodge@portlandstpats.org.

Let this Jubilee Year be a time of grace, growth, and spiritual discovery.



WHAT'S HAPPENING (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

the daughter of James and Betty (Hufker) Reilly. Vickie is preceded in death by her parents; her daughter, Angela; in-laws, Gregory and Florence Thelen; and sister, Susan Rowe-Testolin. Surviving her are her husband of 52 years, Russell; children, Jeff (Ellie) Thelen; Melissa (Corey) Carpenter; nine grandchildren; siblings, Jim (Peggy) Reilly, Dan (Ann) Reilly, JoAnn (DK) Keller, Tom (Julie) Reilly, Mike (Molly) Reilly; as well as many nieces, nephews, and cousins. For those wishing, memorial contributions may be made to the St. Patrick's Tuition Angels Fund in memory of Vickie – <https://giving.parishsoft.com/App/Giving/stppob211>, or checks can be mailed directly to St. Patrick's School.

Pamela Sue Brown, our loving Mother, Grandmother, Great Grandmother, Sister, and remarkable woman passed away on Friday, November 22, 2024, at the age of 73, in her home, surrounded by family. Pam was born on September 7, 1951, in Portland, Michigan, the daughter of Robert and Elizabeth (Moyer) Wieber. Pam is preceded in death by her parents, Robert and Elizabeth, and in-laws, Burton and Marian Brown. Surviving her are her husband of 55 years, Bill; children, Sandy (Rob) Pearson; Dave (Melody) Brown; Burt (Stacey) Brown; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; siblings, Jim Wieber, Jeanne (Wieber) Adams, Mike (Lori) Wieber; uncle, Barry "Bud" Moyer; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Those wishing to make a donation in her honor may give to Portland Right to Life or Portland St. Patrick Church.

Constance Lynn Chapman, of Eagle, passed away December 10, 2024 at the age of 77. Connie was born June 28, 1947, in Lansing to the late Robert M. and Mary L. (Cody) Feldpausch. She graduated from St. Patrick Catholic High School in the Class of 1965. Connie was preceded in death by her parents; daughter, Amy Manning; and brother, Danny Feldpausch. She is survived by her husband, Jeffrey Chapman; children, Vincent (Colleen) Manning and Meghan (Ricardo) Pereira; five grandchildren; siblings, Michael Feldpausch, Patrick Feldpausch, and Cheryl (David) Coffman. Memorial contributions may be given to the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 1640, Hagerstown, Maryland 21741.

Charles "Chuck" Miller, born October 28, 1951, passed away surrounded by the love of his family on the evening of January 8, 2025. Preceding Chuck in death are his parents, Wilmer Miller and Edna Fernholz (Art); brothers, Ronald Miller (Linda Miller), David Miller, Joseph Miller, and Gary Miller; in-laws, Sharon and Jim Hoppes; brothers-in-law, Larry Keilen, Herb Platte, Joe

Hoppes; and sister-in-law, Elaine Miller. Charles is survived by wife, Toni; children, Steve (Melanie), Kevin (Nate Leale), Nick (Katey), and Kristin Silberman (Stephen); seven grandchildren; siblings, James Miller, Peg Keilen, Alice Bengel (Rich), Jerry Miller (Elaine), Mary Sandborn (Jack), Kathy Walker (David), Junior Miller (Ann), JoAnn Anthony (Matt), and Jean Miller; Hoppes in-laws, Craig Hoppes, Bonnie (Bob) Rockey, Michelle (David) Nurenborg, Kirk (Michele) Hoppes, Victor Hoppes, Becky (Scott) Hodge, Kristina (Dan) Platte and Marian Hoppes.

Diane Marie Peiffer of Grand Ledge passed away January 13, 2025, at home surrounded by her loving family. Diane was born September 12, 1946, in Portland, Michigan, to the late Nicholas and Helen (Simunek) Zimmerman. She graduated from Portland St. Patrick High School in the Class of 1964. Diane was preceded in death by her parents; siblings, Jack Zimmerman, Tom Zimmerman, and Virginia Zimmerman. She is survived by her husband of 56 years, Jerry; children, Zak (Molly Keenan) Peiffer and Madelyn (Kelly Thompson) Majewski; three grandchildren; one great grandson; siblings, Jerry Zimmerman, Linda (Steve) Spedoske, Kathy (Charles) Schrauben, Lois (Doug) Musbach, and Donna (Harold) King; sisters-in-law, Diane and Alice Zimmerman; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins. Memorial contributions may be given to the Capital Area Humane Society, 7095 W. Grand River Avenue, Lansing, Michigan 48906

John Patrick Manning, of Portland, passed away on January 16, 2025, at the age of 80. He was born on September 26, 1944, the son of Donald and Florelle (Morelle) Manning. Preceding John in death are his parents; infant daughter, Amy Manning; and brother, Michael Manning. John is survived by his sons, Vince (Colleen) Manning, Derek (Jamie) Manning, and Ben Manning; six grandchildren; former wife, Cathy Clark; sister, Nancy (Larry) Schueller; brother, Steven Manning; and several nieces and nephews.

Edwin Q. Theis, age 95, of Portland, passed away on Monday, January 27, 2025. He was born on January 15, 1930, the son of Joseph and Catherine (Schmitt) Theis. He was preceded in death by his wife of 68 years, JoAnn; son-in-law, Mike Rutherford; siblings, Mary Smith, Henry Theis, and Catherine Haeck. Surviving are his children, Michael (Beth) Theis of Portland, Sandy Rutherford of Westfield, IN and Steven (Sparky Mowery) Theis of Dimondale; five grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; sisters, Rose Kolp, Josephine Fox and Chris Smith; and many nieces and nephews. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Patrick Parish or the Soup Project in Portland.

Eleanor Marie Peake, 93, of Portland,

peacefully passed away surrounded by her family on February 15, 2025. Born on July 10, 1931, she was the daughter of Peter and Helen (Fernholz) Gensterblum. Eleanor is preceded in death by her parents, Peter and Helen (Fernholz) Gensterblum; beloved husband of 64 years, Forest "Bud" Peake; son, William "Bill" Peake; daughter, Leanne Simon; great-granddaughter, Margot Hengesbach; siblings, Bernita Gensterblum, Richard (Marcella) Gensterblum, Leon (Helen) Gensterblum, Elizabeth (Gerald) Huhn, Geraldine (Albert) Hodge, Marvin (Lois) Gensterblum, Virginia (Neil) Shimp, Lucille (Carl) Redman, Alvin Gensterblum, Dolores (Allen) Houser, Paul (Judy) Gensterblum, Robert (Mary) Gensterblum, Larry (Janet) Gensterblum, and Barbara Densmore; Peake in-laws, Wilbur (Mary) Peake, Margy (John) Moyer, and Lynn Peake. Surviving are her children, Randy (Donna) Peake, Sue Hengesbach, Nancy (Ted) Schrauben; daughter-in-law, Sharon Peake; son-in-law, Kevin Simon; 12 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; siblings, Sr. Bernita Marie Gensterblum, Mary Louise (Bill) Hanes, Jim (Louise) Gensterblum; in-laws, Cecelia Gensterblum and Leon "Pete" Densmore; and many special nieces and nephews. A special thank you goes to Eleanor's wonderful caregivers, Riz Bashir, Kim Bower, Michelle Rodriguez, Michelle Schmeichel, Michelle VanSlambrook, and Angie Weber and Heart to Heart Hospice, especially Sam, Kelly, and Hailey for the kindness, loyalty, and love they shared with Eleanor.

Mary Ann (Thelen) Gardner, 72, of Lansing, MI, passed away on February 1, 2025. She graduated from St. Patrick High School, Class of 1970. She was preceded in death by her her parents, Ernest and Betty Thelen; her beloved husband, Gary Gardner; her sister, Susan Sanders (Thelen); and her brother, David Thelen. Surviving are her brothers, Charles (Santee) Thelen and Rick Thelen; her brother-in-law, Phillip (Mary) Gardner; and many nieces and nephews. Contributions in Mary's memory may be made to St. Therese Catholic Church, 102 W Randolph St., Lansing, MI 48906 or St. Patrick Catholic Church, 140 Church St., Portland, MI 48875.

John H. Polhamus, of Portland, passed away peacefully on February 4, 2025 at the age of 91. He was born on February 7, 1933, the son of James and Marion Polhamus. He was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Ruth Polhamus; son, David Polhamus; stepdaughter, Jacqueline Martin; and stepson, Mark Stahl; and several brothers and sisters. John is survived by his children, Debra (Rick) Doak and Laurie Hansen; stepchildren, Lynne (Ron) Judge, (Karen) Stahl, Michelle Remington, Kyle (Janice) Stahl; 8 grandchildren; many great-grandchildren; daughter-in-law, Karen Stahl and brother, Jay (Marsha) Homan and sister-in-law, Janet Homan.

WHAT'S HAPPENING (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15)

Judith Marie Sorensen, age 89, of Greenville, passed away at Mission Point of Cedar Springs on Friday, February 7, 2025. She was born in St. Johns, MI on May 28, 1935, the daughter of Frederick Eberhardt and Theodora Ann (Klein) Trierweiler, who preceded her in death. In 1953, Judy graduated from St. Patrick Catholic School in Portland, part of the first class to do so from the newly built school. She will be deeply missed by her husband, Donald Sorensen; children, Dennis (Sue) Sorensen, Sandy (Sanford) Dick, Lorrie (Jim) Wooster; eight grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; siblings, Dan Trierweiler, Barb Sines, Carolyn (Bill) Bengel, Bonnie (Rich) Schmitt, Marlene Green, and Janice (Dan) Beech. Memorial contributions may be directed to Quality Care Hospice.

Ellen T. Leik, age 75, of Holland, Michigan passed away on February 8, 2025, at Faith Hospice at Trillium Woods. She was born on August 14, 1949 and grew up in Portland, Michigan. She graduated from Portland St. Patrick School in 1967. Ellen was preceded in death by her parents Henry M. and Mary Rose Leik; her beloved sister, Mary Anne (Leik) Ferrari; and her nephew Allen Ferrari. She is survived by brothers, Philip Leik and Thomas (Mary) Leik; four nieces and nephews; and several great-nieces and nephews. Those who wish, may make a memorial contribution to Faith Hospice at Trillium Woods in Ellen's name.

Brian Edward Fedewa, of Portland, passed away peacefully on March 6, 2025, at the age of 72. Born on May 17, 1952, to Vernon and Dorothy (Cross) Fedewa, Brian was a devoted member of St. Patrick Catholic Church for many years. Preceding Brian in death are his parents; father and mother-in-law, Anthony and Norma Simon; sister, Jan Tefft; brothers-in-law, Steven Simon and Dean Smith; and sister-in-law, Jerie Fedewa. Surviving Brian are his loving wife of 52 years, Annette Fedewa; children, Brian Fedewa, Jeremy (April Nickols) Fedewa, and Amy (Jim) Johncox; six grandchildren; siblings, Valarie (Doug) Erwin, Tonya (Michael Nowik) Fedewa, Brad Fedewa, Wendy (Don) Cole, Gregory Fedewa, Christopher (Lisa) Fedewa, Andrea (Dave Haines) Fedewa, and Lynne (Joe) Vermillion; brother-in-law, Michael Tefft; Simon in-laws, Larry (Sandy) Simon, Kathy Lehman, Dennis (Gladys) Simon, Judy Smith, Mary (John) Black, Anthony (Teresa) Simon, and Teresa (Dennis) Martin; and many nieces and nephews. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you pray for Brian as he enters into eternal rest.

Helen Krzeminski, age 99 years, of Portland passed away on Thursday, March

13, 2025. She was born on February 7, 1926, in Patten, Pennsylvania, the daughter of Michael and Agnes Psioda. Helen is preceded in death by her parents; husband, Raymond; sisters, Stella, Vicki, Mary, Eleanor, Sophie, and Margaret; brothers, John, Jake, and Joe. Surviving are her children, Elaine, Cindy, Tim, Luke, and Julie; five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Patrick Catholic Church in memory of Helen.

Ann (Lenneman) Denslow, 64, passed away peacefully on Monday, March 17, 2025, in Arizona. She was born on December 19, 1960 to Erwin and Anna Lenneman. She is preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by her husband of 43 years David Denslow; children, Cheryl Denslow Cavoletto, Nichole Denslow Gowen, and Christopher Denslow; nine grandchildren; siblings, Jim (Betty), Bob (Patty), Marie (Gary) Wight, Don, Florian (Cindy) and Erwin (Michelle).

Margaret Mary Mleko, known as "Maggie" age 76, of Baraga, Michigan, passed away peacefully on Monday, March 17, 2025, at her home, surrounded by her family. Margaret was born on April 20, 1948, in Portland, MI, to Louis and Theresia (Bengel) Spitzley. She was preceded in death by her parents; son, Thomas Mleko; daughter, Theresia Whitman; brother, Daniel Spitzley; and her sisters, Betty Spitzley and Marie Manning. Margaret is survived by her husband, Joseph Mleko, of Baraga; her children: Steve (Debra) Mleko of Rapid River, MI, Kevin Mleko of Pelkie, Paul (Stacey) Mleko of Woodruff, WI, Jennifer Mleko of Baraga, and her dog Merle; son-in-law Dan Whitman; her brother, Gene (Fran) Spitzley of Lansing, MI; ten grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Nancy Elizabeth Willemin, of Lansing, age 66, passed away on March 20, 2025. Nancy was born to Ellen (French) and Richard Willemin of Portland, MI. She was a member of St. Gerard Catholic Church in Lansing, MI. Nancy graduated from Portland St. Patrick High School, and was a member of the inaugural women's basketball and softball teams at Portland St. Patrick High School. She is preceded in death by her father, Richard Willemin. She is survived by her mother, Ellen Willemin-Lentz; brothers, Ralph (Mary), Steve (Luann), Tom (Sherri); lifelong friend, Liz Martin; Aunt Janice Trierweiler; many nieces and nephews; many great nieces and nephew; and friends.

Herbert Thomas Balderson, of Portland, age 86, passed away Thursday, March 20, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. He was born on February 20, 1939, the son of Herbert and Doris (Phillips) Balderson. Preceding him in death were his parents; wife, Marylin; sister, Patricia; in-laws, Jack Feldpausch, Sylvester and Bernita Dutcher,

William and Joyce Dutcher, and Richard and Ellie Bigford; grandsons, Fred Lowery III and Carson Reed. Surviving Tom are his children, Kurt (Julie) Balderson, Rick (Barbara) Balderson, Amy (Fred) Lowery, Doug (Lisa) Balderson, and Lisa (Gordon) Belt; ten grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren and one on the way; special friend, Gladys Heckman; sister, Roxanne Feldpausch; and brother, Joe (Sue) Balderson. Contributions may be made to St. Jude's or the Portland Conservation Club in memory of Tom.

Shirley Ann (Jestila) Dorsky, age 87 of Portland, passed away on Saturday March 29, 2025, surrounded by her family. She was born on May 27, 1937 in Baraga, Michigan the daughter of Waino and Rosemary (Vizina) Jestila. She was preceded in death by her parents; son, John Dorsky; daughter, Diane Dorsky; granddaughter, Brianne Seigo Rochester; and brother, Ronald Jestila. Surviving are her husband of 69 years, John; children, Larry Dorsky, Mark Dorsky, Connie (Joe) Butler, Mary (Ron) Simmons, Colleen (Mike) Seigo, Daryl (Timi) Dorsky, Lynda (Scott) Clark, and Stacy (Pat) Russman; 17 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren and 1 on the way; and 1 great-great grandchild. For those wishing, memorial contributions may be made to St. Patrick Church or Heart to Heart Hospice in memory of Shirley.

Joy Marie Goodman, of Portland, passed away March 29, 2025, at the age of 82.

Colleen H. Kramer of South Yarmouth, MA passed away on March 25, 2025, surrounded by her family. She was born in Lansing, MI, the daughter of the late Matthew and Evelyn Kramer. She graduated from St. Patrick School in 1971. Colleen is survived by her husband Rockwell "Rocky" P. Ludden; children, Maryl Ludden and Rocky M. Ludden; and her siblings Joyce, Dale, Larry, Roseann and David.

Sandra M. (Slowins) Miller, of Portland, Michigan passed away on April 29, 2025, in Lowell, Michigan. She was born on August 11, 1936 in Lake Odessa, Michigan to Donald F. and Crystal L. (Brake) Slowins. Sandra is preceded in death by her parents; husband, James Miller; brother, Grayden (Ann) Slowins; and brother-in-law, James Eder. Surviving Sandra are her children, Carolyn Marie (Darryl Sprague) Miller and David James (Melissa) Miller; four grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; sister, Donna Eder; and sister-in-law, Theresa Fox.

Rita S. (Koenigsknecht) Chamberlain of Portland, age 74, beloved wife, devoted mother, and grandmother, passed away on Monday, April 21, 2025, surrounded by her family. Rita was born on May 3, 1950, in St. Johns, MI, the daughter of Arnold Koenigsknecht and Loretta (Hengesbach). Preceding Rita in death are her parents, Arnold and Loretta Koenigsknecht; in-laws George and

Odelia Chamberlain; daughter-in-law, Andrea Chamberlain; brother-in-law, Francis Chamberlain; sisters-in-law, Evelyn Sias and Dianne Chamberlain; and nephew Timothy Chamberlain. Surviving Rita are her beloved husband, Michael Chamberlain; children, Daniel Chamberlain of Pass Christian, MS, John Chamberlain of Portland, Jennifer (Daniel) Barbosa of Palm Beach Gardens, FL, and Julie (Nick) LaVoy of Lansing; 13 grandchildren; siblings, James W. (Cherie) Koenigsknecht of Mulliken, Lawrence L. Koenigsknecht of Fowler, Mary (Charles) McCausey of Fowler, Agnes (Gene) Goerge of Fowler, Geralyn (Keith) Fedewa of Westphalia, and Jane Rademacher of Lansing; Chamberlain in-laws, Patricia (James) Glossi, Janice Chamberlain, Thomas Chamberlain, and Donald (Kathleen) Chamberlain.

Charles Elon Goodman, age 82, of Portland, passed away on Friday, April 25, 2025. He was born on July 10, 1942, the son of Robert and Dorothy (Smith) Goodman. Chuck was a 1960 graduate of St. Patrick High School. He is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Judie Goodman; his sons, Mark and Steve Goodman; and daughter Donna (Matt) Moran; seven grandchildren; sisters Jean Schafer and Jude (Jan) Baxter; and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Jerry Phil Kramer, of Portland, passed away peacefully on April 24, 2025, at the age of 94, surrounded by the love of his family. Born on December 24, 1930, in

Lyons Township, Jerry was the son of August and Elizabeth (Stump) Kramer. Jerry was a faithful member of St. Patrick Catholic Church for many years. He was preceded in death by his parents; beloved wife of 69 years, Janette (Smith) Kramer; brother, Robert (Shirley) Kramer, sister, Marguerite (Don) Cook-Bitner; sisters-in-law, Helen, Irene, Rita, Marie, and Margaret; and brother-in-law, Charles. Surviving Jerry are his children, Doug (Lynne) Kramer, Fred (Jude) Kramer, Sue (Stacey) Bosworth, Kathy (Sharon Breton) Kramer, Jean (Jon) Shattuck, Ken (Kim) Kramer, Karen (Tony) Trierweiler and Mary (Ken) Cook; 23 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; brother, Dave (Judy) Kramer; and many nieces and nephews. A heartfelt thank you to Jerry's caregivers throughout the years, especially Jo Phelps, Nancy Thelen, and Angie Weber for the kindness and compassion they have shown.

Marie M. (Theis) Cook, age 91, of Portland passed away peacefully on April 27, 2025, surrounded by family. She was born in Riley Township, Michigan, the daughter of John and Leona (Platte) Theis. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, William Cook; daughter-in-law, Michele Cook; sisters, Germaine (Gerald) Miller and Geraldine (Denis) Nurenberg; brother, Donald Theis; sisters-in-law, Revella (Marvin) Lawless, Lorraine (Tony) Pohl, Marie (William) Harvey, Joan Huhn; brothers-in-law, Julius (Marjorie) Cook and Norman (Blanche) Cook. Surviving are her brother, Leon (Mary) Theis; children: Keith (Kathy) Cook, Carol (Dale) Kramer, Bruce

(Khristie) Cook, Judy Kransz, Dale (Mary) Cook, Lisa (Andrew) Barrone, Ken (Mary) Cook, Diane (Tim) Hafner, William Cook, and Joe (Lindsey) Cook; 25 grandchildren and one on the way; 18 great-grandchildren. Also, surviving are her in-laws, Wilma (Francis) Trierweiler and Carl Huhn; and many loving nieces and nephews. Donations may be made to Father Flohe Foundation, Portland Knights of Columbus, or VFW Post 4090 of Portland. A special thank you to the residents and staff at Portland Assisted Living and Heart to Heart Hospice for their kindness and dedicated and loving care.

Julie Ann Leonard, of Portland, passed away peacefully on May 4, 2025, at the age of 75. She was born in Portland, on June 11, 1949, to Julius and Julia (Feldpausch) Smith. Preceding Julie in death are her parents, Julius and Julia Smith; brothers, John, Bill, Leo, Richard, Chuck, and George Smith; and sisters, Rita Scheurer, Viola Dutcher, and Rosemary Simon. Surviving Julie are her beloved husband of 55 years, Daniel Leonard; children, Jason (Kimberly) Leonard, Jarrod (Brenda) Leonard, Susan Leonard, and Jennifer (Roy) Thomas; eight grandchildren; sisters, Helen Simon, RuthAnn Hengesbach, and Jean VanOsteran; brother, Joe Smith; special great-niece, Helen Brayman; and mother-in-law, Geneva Leonard. Those wishing may make memorial contributions to the Portland Senior Center in honor of Julie.

A Legacy of Stewardship

Con't from page 1

Heating, Cooling & Lighting: School HVAC systems were upgraded to resolve condensation issues, and outdated fluorescent lights were replaced with energy-efficient LED fixtures.

Baptismal Font: A new, accessible baptismal font was installed to meet mobility needs.

Rectory Remodel: Father Mike personally helped remodel the rectory to accommodate two separate living quarters, preparing for a potential future associate pastor.

Handicap Access: A new entrance door was installed on the church's west side to improve accessibility.

And looking ahead? A long-needed addition to increase church seating and provide parish office space is still in the early planning stages.

Thanks to Father Mike's leadership and your continued support, these improvements will serve the St. Patrick community well into the future.

A Confession to Remember

In the letter from Father Mike, on page 10, he mentions that he won't miss the bats. He is not exaggerating! A young man from St. Pat's has a bat-in-the-confessional story to share!



One young parishioner had a particularly memorable experience during confession that quickly became legendary. Midway through confessing his sins, Martin White, age 14, noticed a small dark smudge in his peripheral vision. Looking up, he discovered a bat hanging from the ceiling of the confessional.

Faced with a dilemma—keep quiet or warn the priest—he chose the honest route and cautiously said, “Uh, Father, don’t panic, but there’s a bat on your ceiling.”

According to Martin, he had never seen a man move so fast. Had he been standing in the priest’s path, he might not have lived to tell the tale.

The priest regained his composure after a moment, and the two emerged from the confessional—one laughing, the other possibly trying not to cry. The priest calmly announced to the waiting line, “Other side, guys—there’s a bat in my room.” Martin’s confession was finished in the chapel, and he walked away not only absolved, but armed with a unique bit of leverage he’s never had to use... yet.

SUMMERFEST

SAVE THE DATE - JUNE 20-22, 2025



Please join us in saying goodbye to
Father Mike Alber
Sunday, June 22, 2025
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
in the Summer Fest Tent

Upcoming EVENTS

Graduation May 18, 2025
First Communion June 7-8, 2025
Class of 1975 50-Year Reunion Sept 6, 2025
Summer Fest June 20-22, 2025
Fr. Mike Going Away Party June 22, 2025
Next Issue of *The Shamrock* September 15, 2025

How to Stay in Touch!

It's so easy to stay up-to-date with what's happening at St. Patrick School and Parish.

School website: www.portlandstpats.com/school
Parish website: www.portlandstpats.com/church
School Facebook: St. Patrick School-Portland-MI
Alumni Facebook: St-Patrick-Alumni-and-Friends

How to Contact Us

140 Church Street, Portland, MI 48875
Phone (517) 647-6505 Fax (517) 647-7807
Text: (517) 575-8000 (Be sure to say who you are.)
E-Mail: shamrockeditors@gmail.com
Alumni site: www.portlandstpats.com/schoolalumni

Information can also be dropped in the collection basket in an envelope clearly marked Shamrock Newsletter. To prevent errors, we require all information to be submitted in writing. Be sure to mark it ATTN: SHAMROCK NEWS.

The Shamrock newsletters are published three times annually and are mailed free of charge to all St. Patrick alumni, St. Patrick parishioners, and upon request.

Lost Sheep

Call Amy at the Parish Office if you know where any of these people are.

1953 Roy Bauer	1983 Steve Lehnert
1956 Rita (Bauer) Cummings	1983 Rich Strang
1967 John D. Pung	1983 Kirk Noren
1961 Donald Mleko	1983 Marilyn Tallmadge
1965 Steve O'Leary	1983 Dale Fedewa
1966 Mike Feldpausch	1985 Scott Osmar
1972 Wayne Thelen	1991 Christel Lawrence Lanz
1973 Mark F. Brooks	1984 Thersa Schoenherr Fensom
1975 Susan Thelen	1996 Paul Theuerkauf
1975 Patricia Cook Leppo	1997 Jenny Chamberlain Barbosa
1976 Cathy Clark	1997 Jason Fedewa
1977 Fred Tallmadge	2000 Jeffrey Pung
1977 Rick Bailey	2002 John Carter
1979 Harold Pierce	2004 Don Volman
1980 Angie Young	2004 Cara Monks
1980 Patrick Ellis	2005 Anthony Fedewa
1982 Jeff Strang	2013 Dakota Bonner



The Word Search Puzzle below contains 26 words that pertain to articles in this issue of The Shamrock. Find all of those words, and the letters that are left over will spell out a phrase that we should all pay attention to. Good luck!

ENTRY FORM AND RULES

Send this entry form by email, fax, or mail (see page 18) or drop in the collection basket in an envelope clearly marked SHAMROCK CONTEST. Entries must be received by June 15, 2025. Cash prize of \$50 will be awarded to the winner who will be chosen by random drawing from all correct entries. You must be 18 or older to enter. Limit of one entry per person.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

ANSWER: _____

B P E N E L G P R A S T C E E F
 U I I O L F L O A I R I W H I A
 T H Z I Y O U A S N N H A V U E
 L S I N T T H T B C D S E K Q R
 A R A U N E E A I E U E C R C E
 N A M E P R N N G M S O M G A T
 O L T R J E N O M Y R A O I J A
 I O E O B A O E O R P L B L C B
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 E S H Y E R M I N M H A B I T S
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 N H T N G O O W A T C H M E N S
 O T E A I S T R O P S E L L M A
 C S P R E S C H O O L N A G E T
 O S M I P I L G R I M A G E L E

BASEBALL

BAT

BEN

CINCINNATI

CONFESSIONAL

ESPORTS

FATHER WEBER

GOLDEN ROSE

GOODBYE

HABITS

JACQUIE

LEGACY

MAIZIE

MARINES

MEGA

OPTOMETRY

PANDEMIC

PILGRIMAGE

PRESCHOOL

REUNION

ROCK

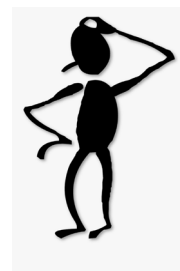
SCHOLARSHIP

SISTER JOYCE

SUMMERFEST

TENT

WATCHMEN



The hidden phrase in the last issue was **THE WORLD WILL BE CHANGED BY YOUR EXAMPLE, NOT YOUR OPINION.** Brett Klein, of Portland, was the lucky winner, drawn randomly from all correct entries. He received \$50 for his efforts. Congratulations, Brett!

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Saint
Patrick
Catholic
School

Little Shamrocks Daycare is Growing!

In response to increasing demand, we expanded our program last fall by opening a brand-new toddler room to accompany our existing infant and preschool rooms. This exciting addition allows us to serve more families while continuing to provide high-quality, faith-centered care in a nurturing and educational environment.

The toddler room is led by Mary Hengesbach, who brings warmth, experience, and dedication to her role as lead teacher. Her approach aligns beautifully with the overall philosophy of Little Shamrocks, creating a consistent and loving experience for all children in our care. The response from the community has been overwhelming—in the best way! The new classroom filled quickly, and we currently have a waiting list.

If you're interested in joining the list or learning more, please reach out to Director Aaron Thelen at aaronthelen@portlandstpats.org.

We Pray! We Learn! We Achieve!

