



# THE SHAMROCK

*A Shamrock Legacy Publication*

ST. PATRICK SCHOOL/PARISH/ALUMNI EDITION

FALL 2025

## Shamrock Baseball Claims Division 4 State Championship



The Portland St. Patrick Shamrocks baseball team made history on Saturday, June 14, 2025, capturing the MHSAA Division 4 State Title at McLane Stadium at Kobs Field, Michigan State University.

The victory capped off years of dedication, stretching back to when many of these players were just eight years old, watching the 2017 Shamrocks team make its own championship run.

“Since these boys were eight or nine years old, this state championship has been on their mind and their goal,” said Head Coach Bryan Scheurer. “They were always around the older players, especially the 2017 team, and they wanted to do the same thing.”

The Shamrocks struck quickly in the championship game, seizing momentum in the first inning.

“We jumped on them early, and it shook them,” one player said. “The atmosphere was a dream—seeing all the fans, the whole community there, even Father Mike was being rowdy.”

The final out came not from a strikeout or fly ball, but from an overthrow after a defensive bobble—an unexpected ending that made the win feel surreal.

“When that happened, we all blacked out,” said one of the play-

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### Shamrocks by the Numbers

- Record: 34-1
- Playoff Wins: 7 straight
- Runs Scored in Playoffs: 55
- Runs Allowed in Playoffs: 15
- State Final Score: 10-0 over Plymouth Christian Academy
- Titles: 2nd in school history (2017, 2025)

### Roster

1	Hudson King	Jr
2	Logan Howe	So
3	Jerryd Scheurer*	So
4	Caleb Pline	So
5	Braden Simon*	Sr
6	Ben White	So
7	Sean Fedewa	So
11	Brady Leonard*	Jr
12	Charlie Thelen*	Jr
15	Simon White	Sr
17	Tyler Thelen	So
18	TJ Chamberlain	Jr
19	Isaiah Rockey	So
23	Grant Pline	Sr
27	Nathan Fears	Sr
30	Mason Simon	So

\*First Team Division 4 All State

Head Coach Brian Scheurer was named Division 4 Coach of the Year.

The team also received the Division 4 All State Academic Award.

## Sister Bernita Marie Celebrates 75 Years of Service

On July 27, 2025, Sister Bernita Marie (Genevieve Gensterblum) celebrated her 75-year jubilee as a Sister of St. Joseph — a truly remarkable milestone in a life of faith and service.



Born in Portland on June 10, 1929, to Peter and Helen (Fernalz) Gensterblum, Genevieve grew up as a member of St. Patrick

Parish and attended St. Patrick School, where she was taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph (SSJ). Inspired by their example, she entered the congregation on July 1, 1950, received the name Sister Bernita Marie the following year, and professed her final vows in 1956.

Sister Bernita Marie spent over 27 years teaching in elementary schools, including eight years at St. Patrick School from 1969–1977. She not only taught academics, but also shared her deep faith and the values of the Gospel with her students. Vatican II opened new opportunities for her to help plan parish liturgies and become more deeply involved in parish life — something she cherished.

In 1979, she returned to Kalamazoo to establish a full-time physical therapy program for the Sisters living at the Nazareth Motherhouse. She found great joy in helping others regain mobility and dignity, living out the Gospel as she “walked with the lame, the blind, and the deaf.” Later, she attended a renewal program at Wellsprings, followed by seven inspiring weeks at the congregation’s mission in Peru.

Over the years, Sister Bernita Marie embraced change — including the merger of the Nazareth SSJs into the Congregation of St. Joseph and the move from the beloved Mother House to a new residence. Through it all, she has remained grounded in her belief that “people have always been more important to me than things.” She credits her strength to God’s providence, and the love and support of her community and family.

Sister recently celebrated her 96th birthday. She is in generally good health, and would love to hear from friends and former students. Her address is: Sr. Bernita Marie Gensterblum, 2929 Nazareth Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49048.

## Mail Call

I am sensing a pattern developing lately. Every time I read the latest Shamrock that notes those St Patrick’s folks who have passed on to the better place I identify with more of them. The spring issue is a good example.

Father Don Weber was a warm and friendly presence in the parish in my experience. I marvelled at his memory when I encountered him in later years. He was helping out at the Dominican Center twenty years after I had last seen him at Mass one Sunday morning. I stuck out my hand and said "Hi, I'm Jim....and he grabbed my hand and said : "You're Jim Schneider; welcome home ....how's your Mom?"

Then there is Sister Joyce. Yeah, Sister Joyce, school principal, what a lady! She was so many wonderful things. I got sideways with her more times than I care to admit over the years and she came down on me every time with both feet! There was nothing in the world more intimidating than standing somewhere within the sound of her when she said "Mr. Schneider.....". She was tough on me and on any other petty criminals under her watch. The times I stood (guilty, as usual) in front of her desk have warped me and probably molded me into whatever man I am today. In spite of it all, I knew she cared for me and I loved her for it...still do.

The good, they die young (even after they are ninety years old!).

Jim Schneider (1969)



Sister Bernita Marie gets a hug from fellow Portland St. Patrick graduate, Sister Diane Densmore (1967).

# In the Spotlight



## JAKE MOYER (2014)

Jake Moyer's connection to St. Patrick's is a story of deep roots and a full-circle journey. As a fourth-generation alumnus, the school has always been more than just a place of education for Jake; it's a foundational part of his identity. Today, as a licensed Professional Engineer (PE) and a Civil Engineer at the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Jake's path from a "rambunctious jokester" to a respected professional is a testament to the community that shaped him.

Looking back on his middle and early high school years, Jake admits he was "a bit rambunctious." He credits a significant turning point in his life to meeting his now-wife, Mari, when they were 16. From that moment on, his academic focus sharpened, a transformation that some St. Patrick's teachers still refer to as one of the school's "biggest comeback stories." This personal connection to the school is one of his most cherished memories, a place where he not only received a solid education but also met his lifelong friends and the woman who would become his partner in life and faith.

Jake's interest in engineering began at a young age, working with his father in the family's concrete business, Moyer Construction. He always enjoyed math and knew he wanted a career where he could build things. His mother encouraged him to explore civil engineering and to apply for a co-op/internship at MDOT while in college. This led him to pursue a degree in Survey Engineering from Ferris State University.

### Building Bridges, Literally

Motivated by a personal goal to graduate without college debt, Jake focused intensely on his studies, graduating Summa Cum Laude. He credits his time at both Lansing Community College and Ferris for preparing him for the challenges of his career. Now, at MDOT, he finds his work incredibly rewarding.

As a Civil Engineer in the Hydraulics Unit, Jake works to ensure the safety and functionality of Michigan's infrastructure. He is responsible for figuring out the size and shape of culverts and bridges across the state. What most people might not realize as they drive over a bridge is the immense amount of work that goes into its design, from calculating flood capacity to determining how deep the foundations need to be. Every day brings a new challenge, and Jake particularly enjoys the large bridge projects over big rivers, finding them both challenging and exciting. "I always enjoy driving over a bridge that I helped design and work on," he says with pride.

### A Deeper Faith

Jake's journey has also been one of spiritual growth. When he and Mari got engaged, they made a conscious decision to deepen their faith. They found guidance from Father Mike and were profoundly impacted by the "Omega Project," a Bible study group. This experience inspired them to continue learning and growing in their Catholic faith and their relationship with God.

In his quest for a strong faith community, Jake was drawn to the St. Patrick's men's group. For the past five years, he has tried to attend as often as possible, despite the demands of raising three young children. He finds the camaraderie and wisdom of the men in the group to be "life-giving" and

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# 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 April 8, 2026.*

## BIRTHS

To **Allison (Hodge, 2015) and Jason Vismara**, a son, Bennett Thomas Vismara, on June 2, 2025.

To **Tyler (2010) and Aubrey Smith**, a daughter, Monroe Marie, on June 10, 2025.

To **Adrienne (Thelen, 2011) and Justin Schafer** a daughter, Leah Florence, on May 9, 2025.

To **Seth Hoppes (2020) and Kenzie Feldpausch**, a son, Elliott Andrew, on July 9, 2025.

To **John (2006) and Christina Thelen** a son, Daniel John, on June 9, 2025. He joins sisters Lucy (10), Kate (8), and Claire(4).

To **John (2020) and Lainey (Schrauben, 2018) Schneider**, a son, John Daniel Jr., on June 6, 2025.

To **Casey (2009) and Julia (Sandborn, 2009) Schmidt**, a son, Warren William on August 9, 2025. He joins siblings, Kennedy (6), Lyndon (4), and Andrew (2).

To **Sydney (Bartlett, 2014) and Jake McLaughlin**, of Gaines, MI, a daughter, Tatum Marie, on July 9, 2025.

## BAPTISMS

*The following baptisms took place at St. Patrick Church between April and August 2025:*

**Estelle Marie Fischer**, daughter of Timothy and Jill Fischer

**Fiona June Kramer**, daughter of Zachary and Abigail Kramer

**Rowan Marie Kramer**, daughter of Zachary and Abigail Kramer

**Parker Joseph Weller**, son of Joseph and Cammi Weller

**Cooper Michel Gehrcke**, son of Bryan and

Rachel Gehrcke

**Kreed Taylor Diamond**, son of Mitchell and Madison Diamond

**Matilda Jo Gentile**, daughter of Tory and Victoria Gentile

**Spencer Lee Dalman**, son of Jack Dalman and Samantha Leonard

**Damon Walker Michael Culver**, son of Steven and Anna Culver

**Warren Michael Priest**, son of Justin Priest and Kaylee Becker

**McKenna Lynn Kreiner**, daughter of Joseph and Victoria Kreiner

**Zoey Marie Nurenberg**, daughter of Jacob and Katherine Nurenberg

**Grace Mae Lantz**, daughter of Joshua and Heather Lantz

**Eli James Schweitzer**, son of Eric and Morgan Schweitzer

**Lainey Ann Vallier**, daughter of Nolan and Krista Vallier

## ENGAGEMENTS

**Ryan Lay (2020) and Lydia Gross** will be married on September 12, 2026.

**Zach Spitzley (2020) and Faith Russman** will be married on June 20, 2026.

## WEDDINGS

**Seth Hoppes (2020) and Kenzie Feldpausch** were married on August 9, 2025, in Fowler.

**Cameron Bremer and Karlie Bartlett (2017)** were married at St. Patrick Church on May 17, 2025.

**Kelsey Schneider (2017) and Ray Vigo** were married on August 9, 2025. The couple live in Saline, MI.

**Chase Fitzsimmons (2021) and Marian Pearson (2021)**, were married on August 16, 2025, at St. Patrick Church.

## IN MEMORY OF

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

**Therese (Teri) Pung**, of Fairfax, VA, died on March 15, 2025. Therese was born on February 17, 1943, in Portland, MI, the daughter of Louis and Florence Pung. She graduated from St. Patrick High School in Portland, and from Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI. Therese is survived by one sister, Sr. Mary Pung, CSJ; four brothers, Lawrence, Paul, James, and Anthony; and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her husband, James Naughton; her parents; and two brothers, Joseph and William.

**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). Surviving Rita are her beloved husband, Michael Chamberlain; sons, Daniel Chamberlain of Pass Christian, MS and 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 Mulletken, 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. 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.

**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.

**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. A 1960 graduate of St. Patrick High School, Chuck proudly served in the National Guard and was a longtime member of the Knights of Columbus #2168 and St. Patrick Church. 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.

**Marie M. (Theis) Cook**, age 91 of Portland passed away peacefully surrounded by family on April 27, 2025. She was born in Riley Township, Michigan, the daughter of John and Leona (Platte) Theis. She married William J. Cook on October 28, 1954, they were married 35 years. He preceded her in death in 1990. She was a devout member of St. Patrick Parish in Portland. She was preceded in death by her husband; parents; 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 (Christie) Cook, Judy Kransz, Dale (Mary) Cook, Lisa (Andrew) Barrone, Ken (Mary) Cook, Diane (Tim) Hafner, William Cook, and Joe (Lindsey) Cook; 25 (plus one on the way) grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren. Also, surviving are her in-laws, Wilma (Francis) Trierweiler and Carl Huhn; and many loving nieces and nephews. 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. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Father Flohe Foundation, Portland Knights of Columbus or VFW Post 4090 of Portland.

**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 married James J. Miller of Fowler, MI on June 13, 1959, and they resided at 106 Donna Drive for many years. They were members of St. Patrick Catholic Church and were married for 50 years. Sandra is preceded in death by her parents; husband, James Miller on April 8, 2009; 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; grandchildren, Crystal (fiancé, Sean McCoy) Shivilie, Alicia Miller, Marissa (Roy) Kenyon, Shianne

(Joshua) Miles; great-grandchildren, Logan Braley, Oliver, Addison, and Hayle Shivilie, McKenzie, Alexander, and Savannah Miles, Matthew and Jordon Kenyon, Annie, Vince, and Gabe Kenyon; sister, Donna Eder; and sister-in-law, Theresa Fox.

**Jerry Walter Fedewa**, of Lake Odessa, Michigan, passed away on May 14, 2025, at the age of 59. He was born on October 10, 1965, in Lansing, Michigan, and was a graduate of St. Patrick High School, Class of 1984. Jerry earned his master's degree from Northwood University and built a successful career in the aeronautics and automotive industry. Preceding Jerry in death are his father, Donald Fedewa and sister-in-law, Yvette Fedewa. He is survived by his mother, Shirley Zimmer; siblings, Pat Fedewa, Sandy (Pete) Baker, John Fedewa, Karen Fedewa, David Fedewa, Stephen Fedewa, and Mark (Deb) Fedewa; 15 nieces and nephews; 6 great-nieces and great-nephews; and special friends, Roya Khavari and Lori Roche.

## 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](mailto: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.

**Ronald Leo Smith**, age 85, of Portland, passed away suddenly on Tuesday, May 27, 2025. He was born on August 7, 1939, in Portland, the son of Isadore and Nora (Pung) Smith. Ron was a member of St. Patrick Catholic Church and a proud veteran of the United States Air Force. Ron is preceded in death by his parents; wife of 49 years, Barb Smith; sister, Kathleen Smith; brothers, Don, Dave, and Dan Smith; sisters-in-law, Jackie Smith, Kathleen Smith, and Mary Beard. Surviving are his sons, Mark (Amy) Smith, Scott Smith, and Steve (Adie) Smith; grandchildren, Tyler (Aubrey) Smith, Jerrid (Holly) Smith, and Mackenzie (Jared) Loomis; Hailey (Colin) Machada; Alysa Smith, Nicholas Smith, Shelby Chapco, and Channon Smith; brother, Tom Smith; sisters-in-law, Mary Smith and Faith (Roy) Kissane; and many nieces and nephews.

**John D. Jenkins III**, of Portland, passed away on May 28, 2025, at the age of 81. He was born on August 23, 1943, in Flint, Michigan, to John "Jack" and Donna (Yeomans) Jenkins. John is survived by his friend and life partner Marilyn (Huhn) Selden, his chil-

dren John (Tina), Terri (Charley), Tracy (Kelly), Jina (Cory), Jason (Jackie), stepchildren Eric, Cheri, Jessica (Jeff), 24 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, and 10 siblings.

**Ellen Mary (Platte) Bailey** passed away on June 3, 2025, at the age of 81. She attended St. Patrick Catholic Church and was a member of the Ladies Auxiliary #4090. She was preceded in death by her parents Harold and Viola (Simon) Platte; sisters, Kathleen (Herman) Miller, Bernice (Joe) Esch, Rose Marie (Herman) Gensterblum, and Beatrice Platte; brothers Jerry, Edward (Shirley), Delbert (Marguerite), and Armon; brother-in-law, Frank Koenigsknecht; and Bailey in-laws, Larry and Loretta. Ellen was married to Kenneth for 50 years, and they had two children, Monica (Daniel) Johnson and Greg Bailey. She is survived by her sisters, Joann Koenigsknecht, Ann (Paul) Thelen; brother, Bernard (Sharon) Platte; sisters-in-law, Charlotte Platte, Joane Platte, and Noreen Bailey; many good friends, including Kathy (Dave) Berquist, Kathleen Fedewa Bengel, and Judy Brahman; and many nieces and nephews.

**Mary Ellen Morgridge**, 87, of Charlevoix, passed away on June 13, 2025. She was born on April 27, 1938, in Portland, MI, the daughter of William and Dorothy (Werner) Stump. Mary Ellen attended St. Patrick's School in Portland before studying education at Michigan State University. She would go on to be a lifelong educator. Mary Ellen was preceded in death by her husband, Bob, in 2021 and son, Dennis, in 2020. She is survived by her sons, David (Carrie), Jeff (Lenore), Jim, one daughter-in-law, Robin; eight grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. In lieu of flowers, donations in Mary Ellen's name may be made to Michigan Parkinson's, 30400 Telegraph Rd, Suite 150, Bingham Farm, MI 48025.

**Kenneth Lee Bailey**, of Portland passed away on June 30, 2025, at the age of 77. He was a member at St. Patrick Catholic Church and the Portland VFW Post #4090. Ken was preceded in death by his wife Ellen; parents Norwood and Cecilia (Ziegler); brother and sister-in-law Larry and Loretta; in-laws Kathleen (Herman) Miller, Bernice (Joe) Esch, Rose Marie (Herman) Gensterblum, Beatrice Platte, Jerry Platte, Edward (Shirley) Platte, Delbert (Marguerite) Platte, and Armon Platte. He is survived by his children, Monica (Daniel) Johnson and Greg Bailey; his sister Norrine Bailey; in-laws, Joann Koenigsknecht, Ann (Paul) Thelen, Bernard (Sharon) Platte, Charlotte Platte, Joane Platte; and many nieces and nephews.

**Harold Patrick Zoll**, age 101, passed away peacefully on July 12, 2025, in Portland, Michigan, surrounded by the family he loved so dearly. Harold was born on April 28, 1924, and grew up on a farm in rural Wau-

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# School News!

## A Conversation With Our New Elementary Principal

*St. Patrick School is blessed to welcome back one of its own. Casey (Miller, 2001) Lenneman, an alumna, former teacher, and now the new elementary principal, reflects on her journey, her vision, and her faith as she steps into this important role.*

### Coming Home to St. Patrick

“Being back at St. Patrick School as first a teacher and now a principal is a total God Wink,” she shared. “I never thought I would end up back where I went to elementary and high school. God had other plans, and I am so excited and thankful to see what He has in store for our school.”

Some of her fondest memories as a Shamrock include first grade with Mrs. Rosenberg, who inspired her to become a teacher, making her First Communion, celebrating May Crowning, and trips to Michigan’s Adventure and Cedar Point with her classmates.

### Lessons in Leadership

Before returning home, she gained valuable experience teaching at two other Catholic schools. “I was blessed with seven principals—five at St. Thomas Aquinas and two at St. Mary in Westphalia. They all had amazing qualities, and I know I can utilize the characteristics I appreciated most to become a successful leader at St. Patrick.”

Her vision as principal is clear: “The most important aspect of Catholic education is remembering our true goal. Yes, we want our students to reach their potential—whether that means college, a trade, or becoming a homemaker. But ultimately, our goal is Heaven, not Harvard. When our Shamrocks leave as seniors, I want them to be prepared to discern their vocation in life and to know that God’s plans, even when different from their own, are always good.”

### Faith-Filled Vision for the Elementary School

Looking ahead, her excitement is rooted in faith. “I’m so excited to bring Christ more alive in our building. He is here and ready, and I can’t wait to set that on fire.”

The school theme for this year is her favorite verse: “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

“As a school, we need to slow down and ask ourselves why we are doing things. If what we are doing is not bringing glory to God, then we shouldn’t be doing it. My hope is that our teachers are so on fire with the love of the Holy Spirit that it trickles down to our students and inspires them to evangelize.”

Her message to families is simple but powerful! “Christ is always first. Put Him first, and everything else will work out. Prioritize Christ, prioritize your family, and the career piece won’t feel so overwhelming because you’ll have His and your family’s support.”



### Balancing Family, Faith, and Leadership

As a mother of six, she brings not only professional experience but also the wisdom of family life.

“When Christ is prioritized, your kids understand,” she explained. “When I accepted this position, some of my kids had mixed feelings because they liked me being a teacher. I told them that if we truly live our lives answering to Christ, we need to listen when He calls. God called me to this role, and I had to listen.”

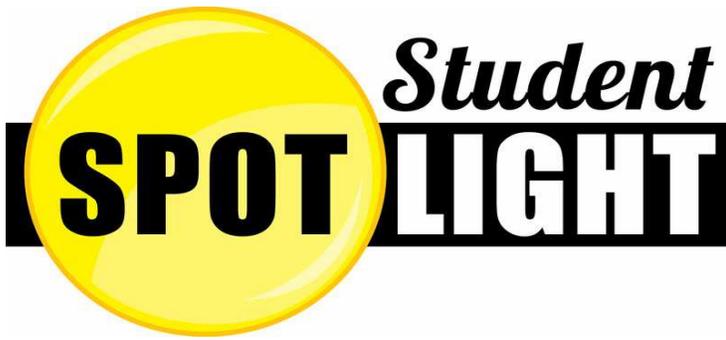
She and her husband Bob have six children, Carter (11), Camden (9), Conner (7), Colten (5), Audrey (4), and Annley (2). “Our first blessing is our marriage. Our second is that God chose us to be their parents. Yes, we’re busy, but we are so blessed, and we have such an amazing support system.”

Her faith anchors her as both mother and principal: “I’m human, I make mistakes. But I’m prayerful, and when I feel pushed by the Holy Spirit, I dive deeper in prayer to figure out what He wants from me.”

### Deep Roots in Portland

With her husband’s local business, the family is deeply tied to the Portland community. “We love Portland and want it to thrive. We are committed to the area and want St. Patrick to be a place where all families feel welcome. This summer Bob had five high school students working with him, four of them Shamrocks. He wants to help them see another side of earning a living and spark an interest in the trades. It’s one way we hope to give back to the community that has given so much to us.”

*(Continued on page 17)*



# Student SPOT LIGHT

## Brody Beckhold

*This month, our student spotlight shines on senior Brody Beckhold, the son of Jeff (1993) and Angie Beckhold. He has one sister, Aurora (2020).*

Brody keeps busy with a variety of extracurricular activities, including being a member of the football and golf teams. He serves as the senior class president and is a member of the student council.

Brody had this to say about his time at St. Patrick School: “ I have really enjoyed the one-on-one ability we students have with our teachers; the bonding of students no matter the grade; the many different options of online classes we can attend such as RefReps; and the strengthening of our faith in God.



As class president I would like to see my class grow closer than ever and have as much fun as ever. Also, being the center of the varsity football team has come with many challenges which I hope will enable us to bring home the state title for the school and for the community!!”

## Welcome New Teacher

Joshua Pung, the new middle school math and religion teacher, is the newest member of the St. Patrick School teaching staff. He is a graduate of Michigan State University with a bachelor’s in social studies education. He spent his internship teaching at Holt High School. He is a graduate of Portland High School and is a parishioner here at St. Patrick Parish.

Mr. Pung loves to spend time with friends and family. He is

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## St. Patrick Parish 2025-26 Mega Rock Raffle

We are excited to launch the **fourth annual MEGA Rock Raffle**—our only major fundraiser for St. Patrick Parish, School, and Athletics. Since it began, the raffle has raised nearly \$660,000 in just three years, reducing the need for multiple smaller raffles and fundraisers.



### How It Works

Tickets are \$500 each, with a “buy two, get one free” special through September 30.

Tickets may be purchased online by using the QR code below, by mail (sent to all benefactors), or at the parish and school offices. There is also a link on the home page of the school website.

Individuals can share a ticket by pooling funds.

Winning tickets go back into the drawing—so you can win more than once!

### Prizes

Four MEGA Drawings will be held at parish events, each awarding \$11,250 in cash prizes:

- Oct. 5, 2025 – Fall Festival
- Feb. 14, 2026 – Marriage Gala
- Apr. 24, 2026 – Shamrock Auction
- Jun. 27, 2026 – Parish Festival

Prize breakdown at each drawing:

- Grand Prize: \$5,000
- 2nd Prize: \$2,500
- 3rd Prize: \$1,000
- 4th Prize: \$750
- 5th Prize: \$500 (2 winners)
- 6th Prize: \$250 (4 winners)



In addition, there will be monthly \$500 drawings on the last Friday of each month from September through June (10 total).

### A Community Effort

We recognize \$500 is a significant cost. If it’s difficult to purchase a ticket individually, please consider splitting with friends or family.

For questions, contact Deacon Randy Hodge at (517) 647-7551 or [randyhodge@portlandstpats.org](mailto:randyhodge@portlandstpats.org)

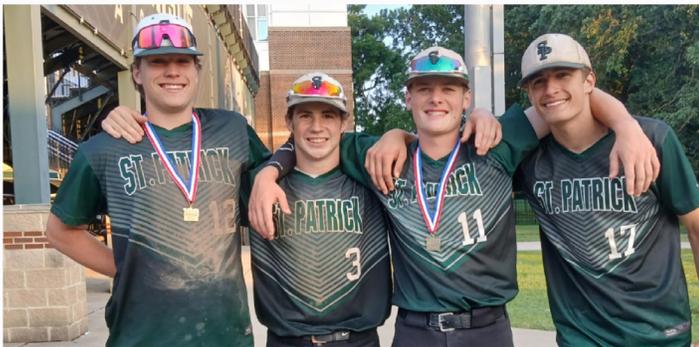


## From Bat Boys to Champions: A Dream Fulfilled

Several of the players on this year's Shamrocks squad served as bat boys during the 2017 title run—a tradition that made them feel part of something bigger.

"The older guys embraced us back then, and now we try to do the same for the younger kids," one of the players said.

Parents watched with pride as years of work paid off. "Since they were seven or eight, their summers were spent at the ball field," one parent said. "They always said they were going to get a ring—and they put in the work to make it happen."



Batboys in 2017—State Champs in 2025! Charlie Thelen, Jerryd Scheurer, Brady Leonard, Tyler Thelen.

Another parent added, "The 2017 state championship team embraced the younger boys and made them feel like part of the team. They were excellent role models and gave our little boys someone to look up to. That acceptance makes our young men want to pass that same tradition down to the next group."

Coach Scheurer sees the championship as the result of both athletic skill and life lessons learned along the way.

"Our program teaches young men to run toward the hard things in life. Anything worth achieving isn't supposed to be easy," he said. "They learned discipline, perseverance, and selflessness. This season was no mistake—this was a special group."

According to the players, St. Patrick School shaped them for this journey by:

- "Helping us realize we need to go through difficulties—life is not supposed to be easy."
- "Teaching us discipline."
- "Showing us the value of keeping the bar high."

At St. Patrick School, traditions are a way of life. The younger kids are always watching the older ones, and using them as role models.

The 2025 champs have this advice for the younger kids who are coming up: "Always have the 'we' over 'me' mentality. Don't take any days for granted. Don't take any days off. Accept failure and learn from it. Always, 'Bring the Juice'."

Perhaps those boys who are leaning on the fence, admiring and watching, will be state champs themselves one day!



Father Mike Alber cleared his schedule to travel with the team, pray with them before games, cheer from the stands, and even join the on-field celebration.

## Brotherly Love

Senior Brayden Simon got to live out his dream on Saturday—and share it with his brother, Mason. Ever since watching the 2017 Shamrocks win it all, he’s wanted to pitch in a State Championship game.



In fact, as a 6th grader, he saved a bag of Bigs sunflower seeds—taco flavor—from that special season just for this moment. Before the final game, he made the whole team eat some—even though they expired in 2020!

Mom, Dana Simon, said, “Thankfully, no one got sick, and the tradition became a symbol of his long journey.”

“There were lots of challenges along the way, but I never stopped working,” Brayden said. “What a fun way to go out as a senior.”



## BASEBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

ers. “Our stomachs dropped, and then we jumped into the dog pile. It was more than we ever imagined—a dream come true since we were eight.”

This championship didn’t come easy. The Shamrocks faced the toughest postseason draw in program history—seven straight ranked opponents, including five of the top 11 teams in the state.

“Five of the pitchers we faced were All-State,” said Coach Scheurer. “These kids earned this title.”

According to the coach, the program emphasized life lessons as much as baseball fundamentals.

“We had many conversations with the team about pressure being a privilege. We wanted to teach them the benefits of running toward the hard things in life. And they responded—they sharpened their discipline and grew in the virtues of fortitude, temperance, hope, and faith.”

The team’s signature “small ball” style—bunts, steals, and forcing the defense to make plays—was key to their success.

“Small ball is what this team is good at,” Coach Scheurer said. “They can all make the necessary adjustments on the fly. They all have a very high baseball IQ.”

## Portland Turns Out to Celebrate the Shamrocks



From Portland Police Department send-offs to a state police escort home, the Shamrocks’ playoff run became a city-wide celebration. The police officers even allowed the students to decorate their cars.

State Trooper Tom Barnes led the motorcade from MSU back to “the barn,” where crowds waited to welcome the team home. “The consistent outpouring of support at every game is something special,” said Coach Scheurer. “These moments go way beyond baseball.”

# A Lasting Gift from the Heart

Nancy Willemin's life was one of dedication, compassion, and quiet generosity—and now her legacy will continue touching the lives of St. Patrick School students for years to come.

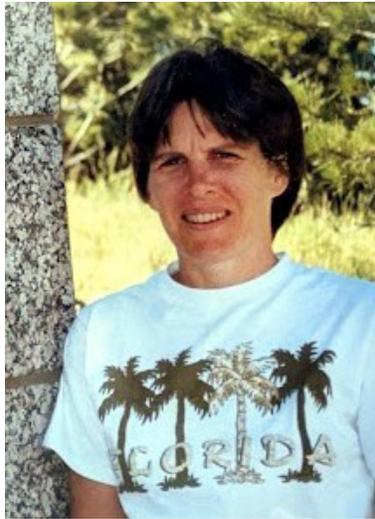
A 1977 graduate of Portland St. Patrick High School, Nancy went on to earn her bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University and a Master of Social Work from Michigan State University.

She devoted 40 years to child welfare, beginning at Child and Family Services in Alpena, MI, before returning to the Lansing area to work at St. Vincent Catholic Family Services. She then spent over 20 years at Bethany Christian Services in Grand Rapids, eventually leading Bethany's Lansing office.

Nancy's career left an indelible mark. One former supervisor described her as "one of the most ethical, devoted, and informed child welfare workers in the Lansing area... always putting children's best interests first, supporting birth parents, foster parents, and adoptive parents alike, all while keeping a positive attitude and hearty laugh."

A colleague recalled how Nancy could ease the sting of a difficult case or court hearing—offering humor, compassion, and encouragement at just the right time.

Her accomplishments were nothing



short of remarkable: between 1995 and 2005 alone, 336 children found permanent homes under her leadership—195 of those adoptions were handled personally by Nancy.

Nancy's connection to St. Patrick's went far beyond her student years. She was a member of the school's inaugural women's basketball and softball teams—the first softball team was coached by her father, Dick Willemin, along with Bob Hirschman.

Throughout her adult life, Nancy remained a devoted supporter of girls' athletics, particularly basketball, volleyball, soccer, and, of course, softball.

In the final weeks of her life, when

it became clear she would not win her battle with cancer, Nancy made plans to give one final gift to the students and athletes she loved so much. At her request, her family established **The Willemin Family Softball Legacy Fund**, entirely funded by her own bequest.

This fund will provide \$10,000 to every female who meets these three criteria:

1. Two years of varsity-level participation on the Portland St. Patrick High School softball team
2. Membership in the National Honor Society
3. Graduation from Portland St. Patrick High School

The gift comes with no strings attached—recipients may use the money for further education or in any way they choose. Annual awards will continue until the Legacy Fund is depleted. There is no limit to the number of young ladies who can receive the awards each year.

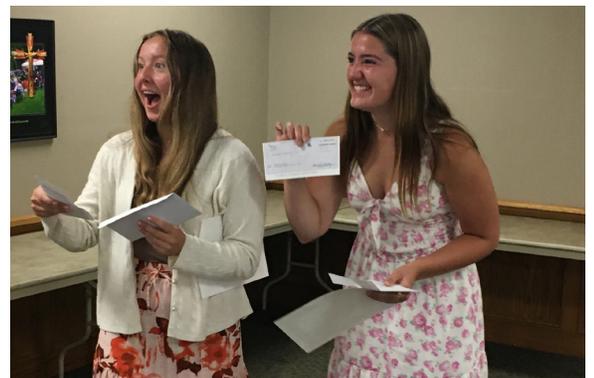
Nancy may no longer be with us, but her generosity, her commitment to young people, and her belief in the power of athletics and education will continue to inspire and support St. Patrick graduates for years to come. We are deeply grateful for her life, her work, and her extraordinary final gift.

## First Recipients

On Sunday, June 15, 2025, the first two awards from the *Willemin Family Softball Legacy Fund* were presented to Bella Russman and Olivia Rockey, each receiving \$10,000 in memory of Nancy Willemin.

Per Nancy's wishes, the only criteria for the award are:

1. Two years on the St. Patrick Varsity Softball Team
2. Membership in the National Honor Society
3. Graduation from St. Patrick High School



Olivia Rockey and Bella Russman reacted with joyous surprise when they opened their envelopes. The young women were the first recipients of the *Willemin Family Softball Legacy Awards*.

(Continued on page 13)



**Parish NEWS**  
Welcome  
**Father Logan Weber**



*St. Patrick Parish is blessed to welcome Father Logan Weber as our new Canonical Administrator. Father Weber was ordained to the priesthood in 2022 and has spent the past three years serving as Parochial Vicar at St. Robert of Newminster in Ada under the guidance of Father Tony Russo. As of July 1, 2025, he has joined us here in Portland while also serving the Diocese of Grand Rapids as Associate Director for Ongoing Formation of Priests.*

**A Faith Journey Born of Loss**

Father Weber grew up in Greenville, Michigan, attending public schools and CCD classes through fourth grade. By then, he had grown tired of it and told his parents he wanted to quit. His family always went to Mass on Saturday night, and he continued to be an altar server, but he didn't know what to believe. The way he had experienced the faith being represented, it all seemed like a fairytale, too good to be true. It was around this time that the enemy began to place obstacles in his spiritual life.

During his freshman year of high school, Logan faced three devastating losses that changed his life forever. His grandfather and uncle, both devout Catholics, died within a short time of one another. Their Catholic funerals exposed him to the healing power of the Church's liturgy for the first time. Around the same time, he lost a close childhood friend who was not Catholic. When it was announced at school that he had passed, Logan went to the counseling office and spent some time grieving alone. He kept hearing a gentle voice encouraging him to go to the church. Confused, he called his grandmother, who brought him to St. Charles. Even more of a surprise, the church was open, so he went in and began to pray. "I just kept asking, 'God, what is happening?'" he recalls. The parish Director of Religious Education found him there and gently encouraged him to speak with the parish priest. That first conversation gave him a glimpse of the healing that comes through the priesthood—a seed that would one day bear fruit.

**A Call Takes Shape**

A year later, at the invitation of a friend, Logan attended his parish Youth Group for the first time. He was hesitant, thinking the group might be "weird," but that day was a NET retreat. For the first time, he saw young adults on fire with their faith—people who could at least begin to answer some of the questions that had been on his heart. The encounter awakened something new.



Ordination day. Parents Chuck and Kim Weber, Father Logan Weber, older brother, Garrett Weber.

After high school, he enrolled at Ferris State University to study Plastics Engineering. But during his sophomore year, he discovered the Newman Center and Eucharistic Adoration. Spending time before the Blessed Sacrament stirred a deeper hunger.

One evening while in Adoration, he realized an emptiness, that what he was studying wasn't truly fulfilling. So he prayed, "Lord, I don't know what you want me to do with my life, but whatever it is, I will do it." Suddenly, he felt a breeze move through the chapel and heard a whisper: "Priesthood." Looking up, he saw his pastor, Father Chuck Schwartz, kneeling before the monstrance. This began a period of real discernment, and it wasn't easy.

**Come and See**

A few years later, he found himself heading to the seminary after leading a retreat with the Newman Center, to see what the seminary was all about. During his retreat with the Newman Center, he heard in the silence "Do not be afraid." On his first night at the seminary, he entered the house chapel and saw a phrase in Latin in the sanctuary, "Nolite Timere." The phrase brought great consolation to his heart, even though he didn't know what it meant. The priest then walked in and said, "Nolite Timere, Do not be afraid." This gave him the confidence to move forward and enter into formation.

It wasn't straightforward, making the switch. In fact, after two years, he along with those responsible for his formation agreed that it was time to leave formation. That summer however, he learned St. Ignatius of Loyola's 14 Rules for the Discernment of Spirits, and made an 8-day silent Ignatian retreat. Guided by wise confessors and spiritual directors, many of the obstacles from the enemy were eased and removed from

*(Continued on page 13)*

# alumni news

## Reunion Reports



The *Class of 1979* held their 45-year reunion on October 5, 2024. The night began with Saturday evening mass at St Patrick's Church, followed by a gathering of 22 classmates, and their guests at Marie (Fedewa) and Bob Schafer's home. They enjoyed a hearty meal catered by Swedes, followed by lots of catching up with each other, laughter and looking through their yearbooks and past reunion pictures.



The *Class of 2005* celebrated its 20-year reunion on August 16, 2025, at ConfluxCity Brewery with a night of laughter, memories and reconnection. Classmates gathered to reminisce about old times, share life updates and celebrate the milestones of the past two decades. It was a wonderful reminder of the strong bonds and lasting friendships that began at St. Patrick.



The *Class of 2010* had their 15-year reunion on July 11, 2025, at ConfluxCity Brewing. There was a great turnout with 13 of the 18 classmates attending. Everyone had a great time catching up and sharing laughs. Congrats to Chance Hoppes and Audrey Russman for winning the free drinks!



The *Class of 2015* celebrated their 10-year class reunion on August 23, 2025. Nineteen of the 24 members gathered to reminisce and reconnect, sharing laughter and memories over a seafood boil. The evening was filled with yard games, a bonfire, and plenty of stories from the past decade.

## Reunion Alerts

The *Class of 1965* will hold their 60-year reunion on Saturday, September 20, 2025, beginning with the 4:30 Mass at St. Patrick Church; classmates will sit together in the Chapel. At 5:30, everyone should meet at the Wagon Wheel Patio Room for dinner. If you have questions, please text Carol Kahn (517-331-1276) or Nancy Schueller (517-290-8046).

These reunions were held too late to print in this issue. Organizers--be sure to send in a write up and group picture and we'll print it in the spring issue.

- Class of 1970--September 7, 2025
- Class of 1975--September 6, 2025
- Class of 1980--September 7, 2025

Many other classes had tentative plans. If you held a reunion or any type of get together, please let *The Shamrock* know!



## Attention Class of 1976

Mark your calendars now so that you are able to attend your special 50-year reunion celebration next fall. The date is tentatively set for the Saturday after Labor Day, September 12, 2026. You'll receive more information next year.

## Reunion Reminder

Classes who graduated in years that ended in 1 or 6 will be planning reunions for next year. Send information to [shamrockeditors@gmail.com](mailto:shamrockeditors@gmail.com), and we'll help you get the word out. Deadline for the spring issue is May 8, 2026.

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!

## WELCOME FATHER WEBER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

his heart, and he could receive the call to be a priest in a new way. It was no longer merely a cross to bear, but an invitation to love, an invitation to live His very life. Through prayer, formation, and trust, he discovered that God was not only calling him, but equipping him for this life of service.

### A Joyful Priesthood

On June 4, 2022, Logan Weber was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Grand Rapids. "I love being a priest," he says simply, with joy that is evident to all who meet him.

Now, as Canonical Administrator of St. Patrick Parish, he looks forward to shepherding a faith-filled community. "The people of St. Pat's are very invested in their parish," he says. "It feels a lot like home."

Welcome, Father Weber! We are grateful for your "yes" to God's call, and we look forward to walking with you in faith.

## FIRST RECIPIENTS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

Both recipients and their families were surprised and deeply moved by the generosity of this new scholarship.

Olivia's father, Dan Rockey, recalled the moment:

"We were asked by Deacon Randy to meet in the Parish Hall after Mass. I had no idea what it was about. When Deacon Randy presented the scholarship in Nancy's memory, I thought it was very cool. But when Olivia showed me the actual amount, I was literally flabbergasted. I didn't know Nancy personally, but her dad, Dick, was my baseball coach, and I know her brother Ralph, who has been so active at St. Patrick's. We are very grateful to Nancy and the entire Willemin family for their faith and generosity."

Bella's mother, Stacy Russman, expressed similar gratitude:

"What a beautiful honor it was for Bella to receive the *Willemin Family Softball Legacy Award*. We were shocked by the generous amount. Bella dreamed of attending Aquinas College, but the cost of tuition was a struggle. With this award, she was able to make that dream a reality. We will forever be grateful for this generosity and for all the work that went into making this happen in Nancy's honor."

Bella herself shared what it meant to her:

"Receiving this scholarship meant going to the school I dreamed of! I'm extremely grateful because it relieved so much financial stress. It truly was a blessing knowing my first year of schooling would be covered."

Olivia's mother, Jessica Rockey, added:

"Nancy's generosity is a testimony to St. Patrick Parish and School's commitment to its future while honoring its past."

The *Willemin Family Softball Legacy Fund* is a lasting tribute to Nancy's love for the game, her faith, and her desire to support future generations of Shamrocks.

The staff at St. Patrick School invites you to come and visit us and take a tour! Let us tell you about all of the good things that are happening here!

Call St. Patrick School (517) 647-7551

# From Florida to Portland: The Stollenwerk Story

*In the 1960s, a family of eight arrived in Portland, Michigan, via a rather unexpected route. Unlike the many families with deep, multi-generational roots in the community, the Stollenwerk family's time in Portland was a short but special six-year chapter. It left an indelible mark on them.*

The journey began with William "Bill" Stollenwerk, who worked for International Harvester. His career first took him to Toledo, Ohio, where he met and married his wife, Gerrie. Together, they had six children: Mark, Debbie, Sue, David, Dan, and Carol.

In January 1961, International Harvester transferred the family to Jacksonville, Florida. Just three years later, in January 1964, the company moved them again, this time to Lansing, Michigan. But, it was the nearby town of Portland that captured their attention. It was a safe, walkable community, with a beautiful church, and, most importantly, a Catholic school, Portland was the perfect place for the Stollenwerks.

The Catholic school was a must for the family. The Stollenwerk children were all admitted to St. Patrick's the following year, though their father had to work extra hard to get his daughter Debbie in. On the third day of class, she was finally enrolled.

The family's connection to the school deepened when, halfway through the 1967-68 school year, the principal, Sister Joyce, called Gerrie. The biology teacher had resigned suddenly, and with a degree in biology and a minor in chemistry, Gerrie was the perfect fit. She didn't have a teaching diploma, but she could fill in, temporarily.

Her one-semester commitment turned into three and a half years in the classroom.



The Stollenwerks' time in Portland came to an end in January 1970 when International Harvester transferred them once again, this time to Columbus, Ohio. The older children were especially sad to leave. Mark was a senior, Debbie a junior, Sue a sophomore, David in 7th grade, Dan in 6th, and Carol in 4th.



## Cherished Memories of a Small Town

The Stollenwerk children's memories of Portland are full of the simple joys of small-town life in the 1960s. For Debbie, it was her "absolute favorite" place to live. "Hands down. No comparison," she said. It was a place where friends were always around, and no car was needed. The town was full of kids, and there was always something to do.

Winters in Portland were especially memorable. The children would gather around the radio, listening for the school closings on snowy mornings, a morning of suspense that would give way to the delight of sledding, building forts, and making snowmen. Debbie speaks for all of them when she recalls the "joys of downhill sledding in the neighborhood or ice-skating until late in the evening." The famous 1967 blizzard, with its 26 inches of drifting snow, was a highlight, giving the kids a full week off school.

In 1968, the Detroit Tigers won the

World Series against the St. Louis Cardinals, a memory that brought the entire St. Patrick School community together. Sue remembers her teacher, Mr. McDevitt, bringing a TV on wheels into the classroom so they could watch the games. The final game was such a big event that the whole school, from elementary to high school, was ushered into the gym to watch on four or five televisions lined up in front of the bleachers.

The fall of 1969 was particularly memorable for the Stollenwerk kids, as it was Mark's senior year. A highlight of the homecoming celebrations was the annual Powder Puff Football game, where the high school girls played and the boys were the cheerleaders. Mark was a member of the Powder

Puff Homecoming Court, along with his classmate Dave Snitgen as the senior representatives. Ken Schneider was even crowned Powder Puff queen, complete with a gown, jewelry, and a tiara. This royal court made their grand entrance onto the football field on an old manure spreader with steel wheels, which they humorously named the "The Joy Spreader." While no one can quite remember who won the game, the spectacle itself is a cherished memory.



The 1969 Powder Puff Court. Queen Ken Schneider, Senior Reps Dave Snitgen and Mark Stollenwerk

That same year, Debbie took part in the real homecoming as the Junior class representative. Her escort was Keith Schrauben, and she was driven in a convertible by Pat Goodman.



The 1969 Homecoming Court. Back row: Denise Hoppes, Julie Schafer. Front row: Debbie Stollenwerk, Sue Stiffler, Kathy Kissane.

At the time, short skirts were in style, leading to a memorable household discussion when it came time to hem her dress. Debbie insisted on a shorter length, and her mother was adamant that it was "too short." Debbie won the debate, and her mother would later comment that her daughter "had the shortest hem of anyone on the court."

Sue recalls the huge bonfire on Father Flohe Field where students gathered to show their school spirit. And, after the game? Like every other Friday night in the 1960s, a downtown Portland tradition: a slow parade of cars, windows down, with kids just driving around, honking, and shouting. Mark even got a ticket once for making a "California stop" at the flashing light on the corner of Bridge and Maple, proving that even a slow parade had its rules.

The Stollenwerk children also benefited from St. Patrick's academic rigor. When the family moved to Columbus,

Ohio, Debbie discovered that her new public school's Spanish class was five chapters behind her St. Patrick's class. This allowed her to spend the rest of the year in study hall.

## A Lasting Impression

Leaving Portland was difficult for all the Stollenwerk children, especially the older ones. As Debbie said, "It was a good town to grow up in. It was a happy place, full of friends, freedom." She still prefers to vacation in northern, less populated areas of the U.S. and Canada, a clear influence of her time in Portland.

Sue echoes her sister's feelings. "When people ask where I grew up, I always say Michigan as those are my childhood memories. I hated moving to Ohio. Leaving Portland when I was a sophomore was gut-wrenching. I am not sure I adapted well to living in a large city... I wish my kids could have had the experience I had."

For the Stollenwerk family, their six years in Portland were not just a brief stop on a cross-country journey, but a formative chapter filled with lasting friendships, cherished memories, and a profound appreciation for small-town life.



Bill Stollenwerk passed away in January 1985. Gerrie lived to be 103, and died in December 2022. The picture above was taken at her 100th birthday party. Back row: Sue (retired psychoanalyst, lives with her husband Tom in Carmel IN. They have three children, eight grandchildren), Mark (retired engineer at GE Aerospace, lives with his wife Ann in Cincinnati, OH. They have three children, five grandchildren), Dan (retired teacher, lives with his wife Daniela in Auckland, New Zealand. They have three children now scattered over several continents), David (retired accountant for the US government. He lives in Columbus OH). Front row: Deb, retired acquisitions editor in educational publishing, lives in Delaware, Ohio), Gerry at 100 years old, Carol, works for the Diocese of Columbus, has three children, seven grandchildren, and lives in Columbus, OH).

## My Best Friend From Portland

by Dan Stollenwerk

I look back on my five-plus years at St. Patrick's with fond memories. I still recall the names and faces of classmates, all of us in ordered desks with pens in hand, or playing "keep away" at recess in Alton Park. We just assumed every child grew up with such a strong sense of Catholic community—we didn't know any other way.

My most significant memory from that time is of my best friend, Kelley Doherty. He lived just a block away on East Street, the fifth of nine children. From the first day of kindergarten, he showed me the way home, and from first through sixth grade, we walked to and from St. Pat's together almost every day.

One bitter cold day in second grade, we were walking home up Bridge Street when we saw smoke in the distance. Quite matter-of-factly, Kelley told me it was his house that was on fire. He was a storyteller, so I didn't believe him at first. But as we got closer to East Street, the smoke got heavier and fire truck lights swirled outside the Doherty home. It was true.

It was quite a drama for us at that age, but it also turned into a unique experience. For several months while his house was rebuilt, Kelley got to live with my family.

Sadly, Kelley passed away in 2021, but I'll always cherish those memories of our childhood together.



Kelley Doherty and me at graduation from kindergarten. Kelley knew how to dress. Our family had just moved from Florida, so, I thought that shorts and a t-shirt were appropriate for such an occasion.



# St. Patrick Parish

## *Continuing Restoration*

*By Ken Schneider*

Plans are underway to begin the long-awaited restoration of Saint Patrick Church. A Building and Grounds Committee has been formed to guide the process and ensure the parish's liturgical and pastoral needs are met.

### Focus on the Sanctuary

The first phase will center on the sanctuary. The plywood platform, added during the 1970s renovations, will be removed to reveal and polish the original terrazzo floor, a beautiful mix of marble chips set in tinted cement. A new altar and ambo will be installed, while the tabernacle will remain on the historic wood altar that was restored in 2019. That altar, saved from the first Saint Patrick Church destroyed by fire in 1931, connects today's parish with its earliest roots.

### Structural and Aesthetic Updates

Other key projects include repairing the deteriorated mortar in the turret, replacing the frost-damaged Church Street steps, and refinishing pews harmed by COVID-era disinfectants.

Additional improvements under consideration:

- Restoring terrazzo floors in the aisles
- Returning the original wrought-

iron chandeliers to the main body of the church

- Enhancing lighting inside and out
- Protecting stained glass with energy-efficient panels
- Updating landscaping

All major plans must be reviewed and approved by the Bishop and College of Consultors before work can begin.

### Meeting Future Needs

Two long-term goals remain pressing:

- Expanding church seating. Attendance has increased since COVID resulting in inadequate seating at many Masses
- Creating more office space. Currently, Deacon Don and Music Director James Tavadze share the basement choir room as an office.

The hope is to complete sanctuary restoration in time for the church's 100th anniversary in June 2027. Parishioner support, prayers, and contributions will be vital as work moves forward. Donations may be placed in the Sunday collection (marked Church Restoration) or given through the QR code at the right.



## Other Parish Improvements Completed This Summer

### Parking Lot:

Cook Brothers removed the old asphalt; McKearney Asphalt paved the lot between the church and school with 420 tons of asphalt.

### School Upgrades:

Classrooms in the 1950s/60s portion of the school now feature polished concrete floors and whiteboards with updated multimedia equipment.

### Gym Repairs:

Purus Masonry Restoration (owned by parishioner Tom Dailey) completed year three of a four-year plan to repair deteriorating mortar joints.

### Organ Restoration:

The 1927 M.P. Moller organ console was refinished by Folwer-Herbert Organ Co., with new keyboards, toe pedals, digital controls, and additional pipes. A new blower was also installed.

### Church Bell:

The bell is currently at The Vernon Company in Cincinnati for a full overhaul and automation upgrade. Once complete, it will ring before Mass and for the Angelus at noon, and 6 PM. It is expected back by Christmas.



Repairs to the deteriorated mortar joints on the north and east walls of the gym have been completed. This is year three of a four-year plan to make the necessary masonry repairs to our school building.



## JAKE MOYER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

a source of encouragement as he raises his own family in the faith. It was through this group that he discovered the practice of a daily rosary, a ritual that has become an essential part of his life.

### A Full-Circle Moment

Today, Jake and Mari are raising their three children—Peyton, Reese, and Lane—and they love spending as much time outside as possible. Their family life is a reflection of their values, from tending to their vegetable garden and roadside flower stand to recently adding chickens to their home.

Looking to the future, Jake hopes to continue growing in his faith and to encourage his kids in theirs. He is particularly excited about what he calls a “full-circle moment”—seeing his own children attend St. Patrick School. His advice to current students is to dive into their faith, surround themselves with good people, and trust that God will see them through. “It’s all going to work out,” he says. “Worry less and trust in God more.”



## WHAT'S HAPPENING (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15)

kon, Iowa. He is survived by his children, Steven (Colleen) Zoll, Susan (Sue McConnell) Zoll, Elaine (Jim) Fedewa, Thomas and (Melissa) Zoll, and Greg (Laurie) Zoll; eight grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; his brother Daniel (Tina) Zoll. He was preceded in death by siblings Anna Mae Zoll, Charles Zoll, Helen (Ken) Hilts, and Dennis Zoll. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Patrick Catholic Church. The family would like to express a special thank you to the staff at The Brook for their wonderful care.

**Marcia Mae Sandborn**, of Portland, died on July 16, 2025, at the age of 92. She married Richard (Dick) C. Sandborn on June 10, 1949, and they were married for 76 years. She was a member of St. Patrick Catholic Church, in Portland. She was very devoted to attending weekly mass and even watched services on television when she was unable to attend in person. She is survived by her husband Dick; sons Terrance and Dan; daughters Deborah (Scott) Little and Collen (Dave) Fischer; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; siblings Ed Huver, Jack (Cheryl) Cahill, Pat (Marve) Nyenhuis, DeeDee Bridgeman; in-laws Margo Huver, Gary Sandborn, Mike Jameson, Judy McCrumb, Betty Russell and Barb Sandborn, along with many nieces, nephews and special friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, her parents-in-law, siblings, John (Rosie) Huver, Butch (DeWayne) Huver, Joan (Mike) Stearman; in-laws Jim Bridgeman, Rita Huver, Riley (Maxine) Sandborn, June (Bob) Higbee, Maxine

(Paul) Volk, Howard (Mary) Sandborn, Louis (Mary) Sandborn, Joyce (Don) Lyons, Janet (Gerald) Gilbert, Kendall Sandborn, Al McCrumb, Bonnie Jameson and Tom Russell. The family would like to thank the staff of Portland Assisted Living & Memory Care and Optimal Hospice and Lehman Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Patrick Church in memory of Marcia.

**Roy R. “Butch” Schrauben**, age 80, of Portland, Michigan, passed away on August 13, 2025. He was born on November 12, 1944, to Herman and Bertha (Trierweiler) Schrauben and was raised in Portland. On June 18, 1966, Butch married the love of his life, Carolyn (Coady) Schrauben. Together they shared 59 wonderful years of marriage, building a life filled with love, family, and cherished memories. He is survived by his devoted wife Carolyn; daughter Tracy (Edward A.) Hengesbach; beloved granddaughters Erin, Alyssa, and Amanda Hengesbach; brother Michael (Bobbi) Schrauben; sisters-in-law Carole Schrauben, Rita Schrauben, Donna Schrauben, Janiece Steinke, Jeanette Denton, Rosemary Pyke, Evelyn Coady, and Patricia Coady; many nieces and nephews; and special friends across the country who enriched his life and provided the family with countless happy memories. Butch was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Herman Schrauben Jr., Gerald Schrauben, and Kenneth Schrauben; sisters Bernie Fitzmaurice and Janet Sutherland; brothers-in-law James Coady, Patrick Coady, Clarence Frost, Richard Steinke, Franklin “Mick” Denton, Donald Spreeman, and Lyle Pyke; and sisters-in-law Edith Frost and Anne Spreeman. Donations in Roy’s honor can be made to Children’s Miracle Network.

## CONVERSATION WITH NEW ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

### Engaging Alumni in the Shamrock Tradition

For alumni, her message is heartfelt. “Being back after all these years, I have a totally different appreciation of what it means to be a Shamrock. I want that to mean something to people. When alumni leave, I pray they have nothing but admiration for our school.”

She also wants alumni to know the direction of the elementary program. “Our entire staff is dedicated to making St. Patrick everything Christ intends it to be. But we can’t share what we don’t have. That’s why we’re committed to deepening our own relationship with the Lord—so we can pass that love on to our students. When anyone leaves this school, my hope is that they’re so on fire with faith that they can’t help but evangelize and bring others closer to Christ.”

From Shamrock alumna to principal, she embodies the full circle of faith, family, and community. With her leadership, St. Patrick School is poised to continue its mission: forming young hearts and minds for Christ—and for Heaven.

## WELCOME NEW TEACHER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

proud of being a Godfather to his niece, Kyla. When he is outside of work, you can find him either on the golf course or cheering for his favorite Detroit sports teams and his Alma Mater.

Mr. Pung is excited for the opportunity to work with middle school students in the area where he grew up. He looks forward to teaching students to grow as students, along with growing in their faith.

*May blessings outnumber the  
shamrocks that grow, and  
trouble avoid you wherever  
you go. ~Irish Blessing*



# THE SHAMROCK

A Shamrock Legacy Publication

by Sue Vanlente

It's been 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.

## 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](http://www.portlandstpats.com/school)  
Parish website: [www.portlandstpats.com/church](http://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](mailto:shamrockeditors@gmail.com)  
Alumni site: [www.portlandstpats.com/schoolalumni](http://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.*

# Upcoming EVENTS

- Homecoming .....September 27, 2025
- Mega Rock Drawing (no Fall Festival) .....October 5, 2025
- Veteran's Day Celebration.....November 11, 2025
- Shamrock Legacy Winter Issue*.... End of November, 2025
- Christmas Break.....Dec 20, 2025-January 4, 2026
- Catholic Schools Week ..... January 25-31, 2026
- Spring Break ..... April 3-April 12, 2026
- Graduation ..... May 17, 2026
- Shamrock Legacy Spring Issue* ..... Early June, 2026



## Lost Sheep

We need help! Call Amy at the Parish Office if you know where any of these alumni are.

- 1953 Roy Bauer
- 1956 Rita (Bauer) Cummings
- 1961 John D. Pung
- 1961 Donald Mleko
- 1965 Steve O'Leary
- 1966 Mike Feldpausch
- 1972 Wayne Thelen
- 1973 Mark F. Brooks
- 1975 Susan Thelen
- 1975 Patricia Cook Leppo
- 1976 Cathy Clark
- 1977 Fred Tallmadge
- 1977 Rick Bailey
- 1979 Harold Pierce
- 1980 Angie Young
- 1980 Patrick Ellis
- 1982 Jeff Strang
- 1983 Steve Lehnert
- 1983 Rich Strang
- 1983 Kirk Noren
- 1983 Marilyn Tallmadge
- 1983 Dale Fedewa
- 1985 Scott Osmar
- 1991 Christel Lawrence Lanz
- 1993 Darcy Hinds Vandecar
- 1994 Thersa Schoenherr Fensom
- 1996 Paul Theuerkauf
- 1997 Jenny Chamberlain Barbosa
- 1997 Jason Fedewa
- 2000 Jeffrey Pung
- 2002 John Carter
- 2004 Don Volman
- 2004 Cara Monks
- 2005 Anthony Fedewa
- 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 should give you something to think about. 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 OCTOBER 1, 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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

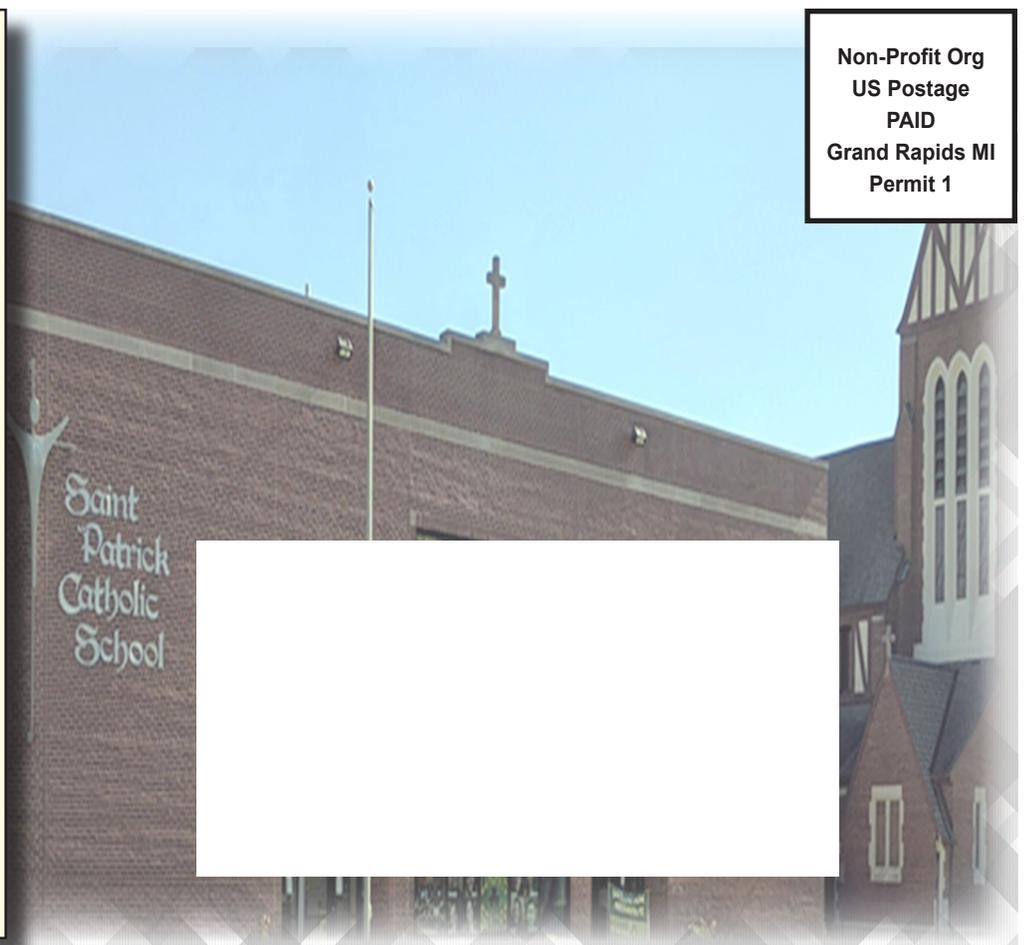
- |          |         |            |             |            |
|----------|---------|------------|-------------|------------|
| ALTAR    | BIOLOGY | GIFT       | NANCY       | SMALL BALL |
| AWARDS   | BONFIRE | HOMECOMING | ORGAN       | SOFTBALL   |
| BASEBALL | BRIDGES | JAKE       | PIPES       | STEPS      |
| BAT BOYS | CASEY   | JOKESTER   | RESTORATION | TESLA      |
| BELL     | CHAMPS  | JUBILEE    | ROOF        | TRIVIA     |
| BIGS     | FAITH   | LEGACY     | SISTER      | WEBER      |

The hidden phrase in the last issue was *BE GRATEFUL FOR WHAT YOU HAVE, THERE ARE PEOPLE WITHOUT ANYTHING WHO STILL MANAGE TO SMILE*. Tom Fryover of Portland, was the lucky winner, drawn randomly from all correct entries. He received \$50 for his efforts. Congratulations, Tom!

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**We Pray!**  
**We Learn!**  
**We Achieve!**

