



Living Our Faith... Sharing Our Blessings

SAINT ANNE - SAINT CATHERINE COLLABORATIVE

Greeters Offer Welcome and Caring Farewells

Who are the friendly people offering a welcoming “hello” before Mass and a farewell blessing after Mass? It’s our Greeters Ministry of 30 parishioners, under the direction of Susan Haug at St. Anne.

Susan has been a member of the ministry for about three years and was named coordinator in August.

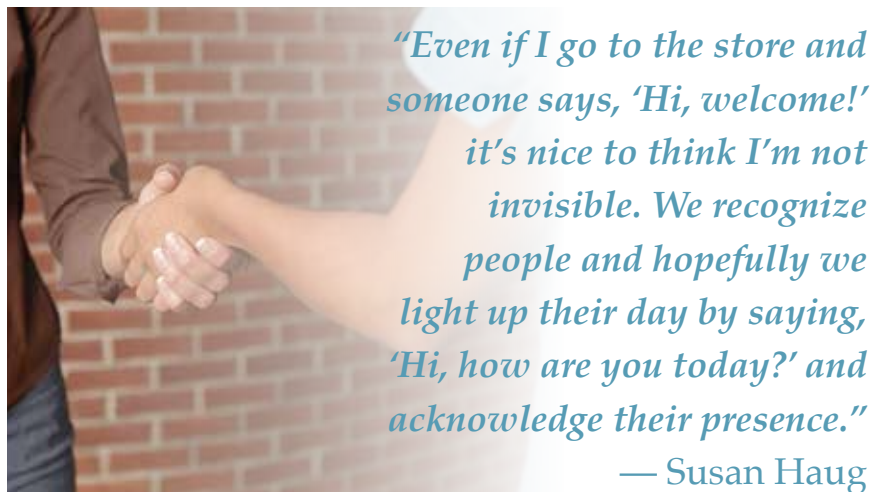
“The members are warm, friendly, upbeat people who stand at the doors and say ‘hi’ and ‘welcome’ to everyone,” Susan says. “It’s a ministry where you can meet new people, maybe develop some friendships, and share a smile to brighten someone’s day. That’s why I became a greeter.”

Greeters arrive at the church about 30 minutes before the start of each Mass and pin on their identification badges. If the weather is good, they will

stand outside the church entrances to welcome everyone. If the weather is cold or rainy, they will stand just inside to perform their duties.

“Sometimes we assist people when they get out of their cars and open the doors for them, especially if it’s rainy weather,” Susan says.

The greeters answer any questions arrivals may have, such as the location of the restrooms, elevator, crying room or parish hall. If needed, the greeters help ushers with seating. At the end of Mass, the greeters pass out the bulletins, offer farewells and conversation, then tidy up the pews by putting the missals and envelopes back into the holders. If it is the last Mass of the day, the greeters assist the ushers with shutting the windows and locking the doors.



“Even if I go to the store and someone says, ‘Hi, welcome!’ it’s nice to think I’m not invisible. We recognize people and hopefully we light up their day by saying, ‘Hi, how are you today?’ and acknowledge their presence.”

— Susan Haug

“When people are leaving, we thank them for coming, and I say ‘thank you for praying with us,’ or offer words of encouragement,” Susan says.

Likewise, if there is a need, the ushers will also help out at greeters..

By their service, the greeters are offering hospitality, which is the first pillar of, and essential for, Stewardship.

“Of course” Susan says. “Even if I go to the store and someone says, ‘Hi, welcome!’ it’s nice to think I’m not invisible. We recognize people and hopefully we light up their day by saying, ‘Hi, how are

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CHRISTMASTIME STEWARDSHIP

How We Can Bring Jesus to the World

When contemplating the gifts that you will give to others this Christmas, remember that Jesus gave Himself to us at the first Christmas. And, as always, we should strive to imitate Him by giving of ourselves in some way as we celebrate the anniversary of His birth. But there is a way to give even more than just ourselves — by giving the gift of Christ to others. The seasons of Advent and Christmas are perfect opportunities to share the love and message of Jesus with others in a beautiful way.

As human beings, we bear the likeness of God. As Christians, Jesus Himself inhabits our very souls. As Catholics, our Lord literally dwells within us when we receive Him in the Eucharist. Based upon this logic, we do so much more than imitate Jesus when we selflessly give of ourselves to others. Indeed, just as Mary carried Christ in her womb when she visited her cousin, Elizabeth, and just as she brought Him in her arms to Simeon as a newborn child, we can also bring Jesus Christ to the world.

What a profound task Our Lord has laid out for us this season! As He grew in Mary's womb, Jesus could only go where Mary chose to

take Him. Mary became His hands and feet, and even His voice. Mary could have stayed at home during her pregnancy, resting and preparing for life with a newborn, as most mothers do. But instead, the Blessed Mother helped her Son begin His mission by bringing Him to her cousin, Elizabeth. Today, in much the same way, Christ invites us to share Him with the rest of the world. He chooses to make His presence known through us. And so, as the spiritual writer Caryll Houselander beautifully stated, "We must carry Jesus in our hearts wherever He wants us to go, and there are many places to which He may never go unless we take Him to them."

How do we bring Jesus to those in our parish and community? There are many ways. Eucharistic Ministers bring Jesus in the form of the consecrated Host to the homebound, those in nursing homes and those in the hospital. We might visit with a sick parishioner over the holidays, providing fellowship and support in their time of need. We may consider serving at Neighborhood Supper or Cor Unum, or a food pantry like Loaves & Fishes or the Westford Food Pantry and doing our part to make sure that the hungry are fed. We can sing Christmas

carols for our neighbors, bringing true joy and love to their homes. Perhaps we could help a tired friend clean her house, making her life a little bit easier during this busy season. Or we can share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others. We might even try going to work with a cheery disposition, or donating money to St. Vincent de Paul to help the needy in our communities. These are just a few examples of how we can practice stewardship.

The positive effects of monetary gifts aren't always as visible as gifts of time or talent. But when we give of our treasure, the love of Jesus can travel to places we could never go. Sometimes, God doesn't just ask us to be His hands and feet, but to enable someone else to be them, as well.

Advent and Christmas give us the opportunity to reflect on Jesus' call to live as stewards and disciples of His Word. God has put us in a particular place, given us a certain amount of time, and asked us to perform particular tasks and selflessly share a portion of our gifts. This is all for a singular purpose — to bring His Son into the world, and make Christ's presence just as real as when He first became man more than 2,000 years ago.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Strengthening Our Hearts
This Christmas and Beyond

Dear Parishioner,

In listening to a parishioner a few months back who was in deep distress, she echoed what I think many people seem to be struggling with themselves. She said, "I feel like the two foundations of my life are crumbling. Look at what is happening to our Country, which I love. What has happened to the values we all stand for? Where is our civil discourse and respect for the other person when it comes to political discussions? We appear to be demonizing and dismissing one another so quickly just because the other person does not agree with our strong opinion. Then, take a look at our Church, which is supposed to be our shepherding light and guide in the midst of the world we live in. I am brokenhearted and feel I have no compass to guide me in life. I have lost the very ground I stood on for so many years for support."

Oh boy, where does one go with heartfelt feelings like that? Fortunately, how truly fortunate we are that the Holy Spirit is forever alive and continues to be active in our world and in our hearts! In pondering what this woman said, I unintentionally came across a brochure, and I have no idea where it came from. In it, there was this reflection by Pope Francis that startled me with its poignancy:

*"In the face of so many wounds that hurt us
 and could lead to hardness of heart,
 we are called to dive in to the sea of prayer
 which is the sea of God's boundless love
 in order to experience His tenderness."*

What amazing grace was active in Pope Francis to utter such needed wisdom, guidance and truth in the midst of the unbelievable turmoil the Church, our Country, and our World is facing — to be able to pull us back and ground us in the truth of God's steadfast boundless love and strength. What a gift this shepherd is to his people! I cannot describe how deeply touched I was by that statement. My heart was filled with hope, joy and strength in the face of all that continues to be unfolding before us.

PLEASE, PLEASE, take some time yourself to ponder the wisdom of this reflection. I believe if you do, then the joy, hope and love that Jesus Christ's coming at Christmas is all about will strengthen your heart — a heart which possibly may be in great need of God's tender and loving presence like mine is.

Wishing you and your family a joyful Christmas celebration!

God Love,



Fr. Peter Quinn, Pastor



*News
 about our
 Newsletter!*

*Our Collaborative
 newsletter will now be
 published quarterly.*

*Watch for the next issue
 coming March 2019!*

Join the Family: The Role of Our

You walk in and are warmly greeted — with a smile, and maybe a hug. Caring relatives ask what’s going on in your life and offer wisdom from their own. You feel at home, surrounded by those you love, and who love you. Sounds like a perfect family gathering, doesn’t it? Hopefully, it’s a similar scene when you join the parish family at St. Anne and St. Catherine.



St. Catherine Welcome Ambassadors — (from left) Gina MacLure, Pratibha Monteiro, Debbie Rorke, Carole Prest, Gail Poulter and Christine Berthold.

“I’m from a big family,” says St. Catherine’s parishioner Gina MacLure. “I’m sure some people walk into our parish and think, ‘Oh my gosh, this is so overwhelming and I don’t know anybody.’ I hope they find people to connect with. Hopefully they’ll know we’re a vibrant, large, community-based, caring parish.”

“We want people to know they’re welcomed and they’re valued. We’d love to have them get involved so that they get to know other people, and have a sense of community,” adds Sue Gormley, one of our Collaborative Pastoral Associates. “We want them to

know we’re here to support them. We’re all part of the universal Church and the mystical Body of Christ. In a family, people care about each other and share with each other. When we welcome people into our collaborative, we want to treat them that way, like family members that we care about and value.”

Gina, Sue and others from both parishes who serve as Welcome Ambassadors take seriously the responsibility of helping new members to feel welcome and “part of the family.” From sending out welcome packets with information about the parish, to making phone calls to personally greeting new Collaborative parishioners, and helping them feel connected, it’s small gestures that make a big difference.

Along with helping to coordinate the ministry, making welcome phone calls is one of the primary ways that Gina serves.

“The families are very appreciative and they do have questions,” Gina says. “We feel like it’s beneficial, reaching out to them.

“It makes it so much more personal,” she adds, “Hopefully they’ll feel good that we’re interested in them and interested in them participating here.”

“Sometimes when you’re new, you don’t know who to direct your questions to,” Sue says. “Welcome Ambassadors reach out to ask what questions or interests you might have, so they can direct them to the right people and get them involved because there’s more here than just going to Mass.”

Welcome Ambassadors hope to encourage people to become more engaged and involved in the parish, finding community and support in their faith, as well as opportunities to serve.

“When we moved here, we had one daughter and another on the way,” Gina says. “I knew no one in Westford. The first place I thought of going was to the

If you would like more information on the role of the Welcome Ambassadors, or to become involved, please contact Gina MacLure at RandDplus5@gmail.com (St. Catherine), Christine Berthold at chris@chrisjoycomm.com (St. Catherine), or Sue Gormley at SueG@lwcatholic.org (St. Anne).

Welcome Ambassadors



St. Anne Welcome Ambassadors — (from left) Deborah Bayles, Jennifer DiNoia and Sherrie Morey.

church, and I went. There, I found my best friend in town. We're still close. That's the feeling that you want parishioners to have. Our Collaborative is where you connect with people and share your faith."

Sue says, "We're trying to gently encourage people to recognize all of their gifts that God has blessed them with and out of a sense of gratitude to want to use their gifts to serve others."

Sue and Gina encourage other members of the parish to consider serving as a Welcome Ambassador.

"It's a very flexible ministry you can do from your home," Sue says. "It's a nice way for a caller to get to know new people and make new friends."

"It doesn't take a lot," Gina adds. "It just takes a simple phone call, giving your time and sharing in a simple welcoming gesture."

"We want people to know they're welcomed and valued. We'd love to have them get involved so that they get to know other people, and have a sense of community. We want them to know we're here to support them. We're all part of the universal Church and the mystical Body of Christ. In a family, people care about each other and share with each other. When we welcome people into our collaborative, we want to treat them that way, like family members that we care about and value." — Sue Gormley

Greeters Offer Welcome and Caring Farewells

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you today?' and acknowledge their presence."

While there are no formal training sessions for a new greeter, there is an in-depth walk-through of the church.

"We show them where everything is," Susan says. "Where the phone is, water, the bathrooms, fire extinguishers, fire alarms and the defibrillator. They need to know what to do if someone gets sick. There is a kit for cleanup and paperwork to complete if there is an accident. We just show them the church and familiarize them where everything is, and how to use it."

The greeters have no organized schedule. When

they arrive at Mass, they sign-in the liturgical minister log book to step up to serve if they are needed.

"We can always use people," Susan says.

If you would like to learn more about the Greeters Ministry, please contact Susan Haug at 978-486-0273.

Begin the Journey Home for Christmas

Christ was born the son of a poor carpenter. This was by no means an accident. His birth profoundly revealed the glory of God. Infinite power and wisdom took the form "of a servant, coming in human likeness" (Phil 2:7) — not as a warrior, but a poor and vulnerable babe.

Every aspect of Christ's birth, from the swaddling clothes to the three kings carries meaning. The proclamation of the angel, therefore, is also important: "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people" (Lk 2:10). This message, meant to be for "all the people," was announced to a group of shepherds in a field. Was this accidental? Not at all.

The shepherds, who received a personal invitation to greet Christ at the manger, reveal that God's love extends beyond boundaries of distance and transcends social classes. Unlike persons of this world who yearn to gain recognition with those of influence,

Christ cries out to all in society, even the lowly shepherds in the distance. He reaches out in love, desiring a relationship with every single person, no matter their status.

wealth or beauty, Christ cries out to all society, even the lowly shepherds in the distance. He reaches out in love, desiring a relationship with every single person, no matter their status. This is the "good news of great joy for all people" — Christ was born for us all.

Christmas is the perfect time for lost sheep or distant wanderers to begin the journey home. The angel's greeting extends to all those who feel estranged from the Church or separated from God's love. Those who have fallen away from the faith can be comforted by these words: "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born

for you who is Messiah and Lord" (Lk 2:10-11).

Be not afraid. The Christ Child awaits your arrival. Begin the journey back to Christ by drawing near to His body, the Church. Through prayer and reception of the sacraments, you will discover the great joy that accompanies a relationship with God. Take a moment to ask the Lord to bring peace to your heart and guide you in love towards Him. Please join our Collaborative for the final preparations of Advent, as well as the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses.

You have read this entire article and have received a personal invitation to begin the journey. Accidental? Not a chance.

Christmas Mass Schedule

Monday December 24

4:00 p.m. Vigil Mass – St. Anne

4:00 p.m. Vigil Mass – St. Catherine

6:00 p.m. Vigil Mass – St. Anne

7:00 p.m. Vigil Mass – St. Catherine

Tuesday December 25

9:00 a.m. Mass – St. Catherine

10:00 a.m. Mass – St. Anne

11:15 a.m. Mass – St. Catherine

Ushers Serve as Faithful Ministers of Hospitality to All Who Enter Our Doors



Members of the Saturday Vigil Mass usher team — (from left) Vladimir LeMaine, Tom Kelley, Joe Rorke, John Miller, and John Mullen

As a young boy, St. Anne parishioner John Boroski remembers being fascinated with the Usher Ministry. Each Sunday, he would watch the ushers quietly perform their duties, welcoming parishioners into the church and taking up the weekly collection. He was even asked at one point to begin helping them. So when he was asked many years later to begin ushering

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at St. Anne’s, it seemed like a natural progression.

Now, 30 years later, John continues to faithfully serve in this ministry of many hats. For in addition to taking up the collection, ushers are also responsible for welcoming all who enter and exit the church, guiding guests to their seats when necessary, passing out weekly bulletins and other information, and generally being present to assist parishioners and guests whenever needed. They also, on occasion, assist with church clean-up and are first responders in the event of an emergency.

“We are oftentimes the first people that everyone sees and interacts with as they enter the church — the welcoming, happy faces inviting everyone to join us in service,” he says. “We’re also the people who assist anyone who needs medical attention or has special needs. We’re the ones who call for an ambulance or other required aid, and who continue to aid or seek additional help as needed.”

Like John Boroski, John Miller has been part of the

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Saint Anne - Saint Catherine Collaborative
75 King St. • Littleton, MA 01460
978-486-4100 (St. Anne) • 978-692-6353 (St. Catherine)
www.LittletonCatholic.org • www.StCatherineParish.org

MASS SCHEDULE:

St. Anne Parish:

75 King St., Littleton, MA 01460

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday: 7:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish:

107 North Main St., Westford, MA 01886

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

Collaborative Weekday Schedule:

Monday: 8:00 a.m. Mass - St. Anne

Tuesday: 8:00 a.m. Mass - St. Anne

Wednesday: 8:00 a.m. Prayer Service - St. Anne

Thursday: 8:00 a.m. Mass - St. Catherine

Friday: 8:00 a.m. Mass - St. Catherine

Confessions:

Saturdays: 3:00-3:45 p.m. at both parishes

(or as requested)

Ushers Serve as Faithful Ministers of Hospitality to All Who Enter Our Doors *continued from page 7*

Welcome Ministry as both a greeter and usher at St. Catherine's for many years now. He enjoys the many ways he has been able to serve through this ministry, even taking on some special initiatives himself such as maintaining the Baptismal font. John Miller also particularly enjoys the greeting aspect of the ministry, which has allowed him to get to know many parishioners that he might not have met otherwise.

"Many people go to Mass week after week and never learn the names of the people sitting near them," he says. "It's not that they're unfriendly, it's just that people tend to not go out of their way. So this has been

a way for me to learn the parishioners names, to say 'hi' to them on their way in and wish them well on their way out."

Through their hospitality and quiet service, ushers help ensure a more welcoming, smooth and reverent liturgy. And in so doing, John Boroski adds, it's a great way for parishioners to further live out stewardship.

"This ministry is one of the many ways parishioners can live out the talent or service part of stewardship," he says. "It helps ministry members get more involved in parish life as an expression of gratitude to God and as a way of better living our discipleship."

The Usher Ministry is open to anyone 18 years or older and is currently in need of some additional volunteers. For more information, St. Catherine parishioners may contact John Miller at 978-692-7651, while St. Anne parishioners may call John Boroski at 978-486-8306 or email John at jboroski@msn.com.