



# Blessed Sacrament Parish & Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## *Faith Community Welcomes* **FR. JIM BUERSTER** *Serving Our Parishes With Great Energy and Enthusiasm*

**Y**ou might say that retirement has kept Fr. Jim Buerster pretty busy. As he transitions out of his temporary role at Holy Trinity in Fairview Heights, he will transition to a long-term temporary administrator role here at Blessed Sacrament and Queen of Peace. Fr. Jim has been filling in for Fr. Carl Schrage in the wake of his cancer treatment and recovery.

Now, Fr. Jim will fill the open space as Fr. Godfrey Mullen steps back from our parishes to continue with his other roles. Fr. Godfrey appreciates that he can leave our parishes in good hands.

"Although retired, Fr. Jim has good energy for pastoral service in the diocese," Fr. Godfrey says. "He's beloved in the parishes where he's served and is respected as a great preacher. I'm very grateful for his willingness to serve here."

Fr. Jim started in early August.

"I'm not very good at retirement," he says.

Having had both hips replaced last year, Fr. Jim has good energy and feels blessed to be here. He's enjoyed being more active since the hip replacements. He's also looking forward to serving with Fr. Jack McEvilly.

For those who haven't met Fr. Jim, he has a few things he'd like people to know. He grew up in a small rural farming community in southeastern Illinois — Wendelin, to be exact. His parents farmed about 400 acres, mostly grain. He has two older brothers.

Fr. Jim is also a tennis and golf player, but doesn't play as much as he used to. He loves playing in the annual priest tennis tournament and appreciates that Pope Leo XIV also loves tennis.

"I always tell people that tennis is about service and love," Fr. Jim says.

Most of all, he wants people to know he's excited to be here and serve.

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*Fr. Jim Buerster began  
serving our faith  
community in early August.*

## STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

### *Giving to God First*

**H**ave you ever wondered why no one really becomes uneasy when someone brings up the first two “Ts” of stewardship — giving of your time or talents — but when the third “T” comes up, many of us become uncomfortable?

That third “T” is treasure, and some people simply become so annoyed by the subject, they tune out the words from the pulpit.

Why is there seemingly such an adverse reaction?

Our finances are such a personal subject.

Discussing money issues with others is not easy, and having someone tell us what to do with our finances is even worse. We earn the money, after all. So shouldn't we decide what to do with it?

Of course, the answer is “yes” — we decide every day how to spend our hard-earned dollars. Indeed, the monetary choices we make will either keep our finances in check, or put us into the red. The average American family has about \$7,000 in credit card debt — so finances certainly represent a challenge to our current society. Tight budgets, trying to “keep up with the Joneses” or poor financial management may be to

blame for our tight resources. Does this mean we do not have anything left over for God?

Stewardship, at its roots, teaches that we are not supposed to give God our “leftovers.” We should instead strive to return to God a portion of our “first fruits” — giving to God first and then using the rest for our other needs. God gave us our talents that help us earn a living, after all. He should come first.

This idea can be worrisome for many. If our finances are already strained, how will we ever find enough to give back to God? Or, if we do try to give God our “first fruits,” will there be enough left over to cover our required expenses?

Taking the correct financial steps toward good stewardship simply boils down to trust — believing that God, who takes care of all of His creation, will take care of us. Trust that in giving to God first, we are both acknowledging that our multitude of blessings come from Him, and that we are thankful He chose to give them to us. And finally, trust that if we give to Him first, that all else will fall into place — because He is in ultimate control.

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A LETTER FROM OUR PARISHES' ADMINISTRATOR

# Getting Our PRIORITIES IN ORDER

Dear Parishioners,

I know that many people are not on a school-year calendar. But for many of us, September brings a livelier rhythm to our schedules. Life just seems to get busier after Labor Day. Therefore, this month seems to be a good time to think about our priorities and to pray for God's guidance.

It has been said that the truly important is often pushed aside by the merely urgent. So, as you review your priorities, please make sure that you include what's really important!

First of all, be sure to include time for God, as well as for job, family, and recreation. Of prime importance, make sure that Mass on Sundays is a top priority — that's the most important event of the week. In addition, reserve some time for personal Scripture study, as well as prayer with your family or a prayer group — then incorporate that into your daily and weekly routine.

There are many forces pulling at us as we decide where to use our talents. For most of us, our jobs claim the lion's share of our efforts and sometimes threaten to engulf our whole lives. We also have responsibilities to our families and legitimate calls for service to the community — that obviously includes the Church. We have lots of areas for service right here in our own parish — religious education, music, serving as an



usher, or any one of the many ministries in which you may use your talents to grow closer to God.

Finally, we have to set priorities for using our money. As Christians, we are responsible to God for the use of the financial resources He has entrusted to us — no matter if it's a lot or a little — and to make a return to God in thanksgiving. In this regard, Scripture gives us the tithe as a goal. Working toward a tithe may mean some changes in your priorities, but I can tell you from personal experience that those who have adopted this

as their standard of giving experience a joy rooted in the spiritual growth that occurs as we continually live out the "three Ts" of stewardship — time, talent, and treasure.

Priorities are certainly a part of life. As you review your own priorities, especially now that many regular routines are starting up again, ask yourself how you will use the time, talent, and treasure entrusted to you by God.

Peace,

Fr. Jim Buerster  
Parish Administrator



## BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR OUR CAT

Approximately 10 years ago, we launched a Catholic Youth Program at Blessed Sacrament and Queen of Peace. Like many programs in the wake of COVID-19, it fizzled out. Gaining interest again has been challenging.

"I spent many evenings with snacks and food and programs ready to go," Deacon Tim DeRousse says. "After extensive advertising, I find myself sitting there by myself."

He wasn't alone. Many other parishes found the same trouble in building interest in their youth programs. A few, however, were doing okay with event-focused youth ministry instead of weekly or monthly meetings.

"The people who were previously helping with leadership were no longer available," Deacon Tim says. "I think the youth have a motivation to participate, but their parents are stressed to where they don't have enough bandwidth to do another thing."

Therefore, the Catholic Youth Program team had to find an alternative way to build this up.



*Deacon Tim DeRousse*

"A number of us got together," Deacon Tim says. "There was discussion about putting it all together for the city of Belleville as opposed to the various parishes in Belleville. What we've concluded is that, since parents cannot bring their kids to weekly meetings, we'd try to focus on event-type programs for the Catholic youth in the city of Belleville as a consolidated effort."

For Blessed Sacrament and Queen of Peace, it wasn't ground zero. Deacon Tim has been working with the Scouts and using that as a base for growing interest.

"Our Scouting program has thrived despite COVID," he says. "We emphasize the religious awards programs that are part of Scouting. We incorporate life with Jesus Christ in what we do in our Scouting activities. As a consequence, we have a good, solid core of young people, the Cub Scouts from kindergarten to 10 years old, and then Scouting America up to 18. And there are Venturing programs that are available from age 14 to 21."

With the Scouts as a base, Deacon Tim has been engaging youth and youth leaders to build what will be the new Catholic Youth Program in Belleville. It will be a conjoined effort of parishes in Belleville.

"The idea was that the different parishes would take a turn in doing an event," Deacon Tim says. "It started with an event at St. Teresa's Parish a couple of months ago,



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**— Deacon Tim DeRousse**



# CATHOLIC YOUTH PROGRAM

*A Place for Youth to Encounter Faith and Genuine Community*

where all were invited, and it was fairly well attended. It was a barbecue bash where there were tons of burgers, hot dogs, and stuff like that for the kids.”

As of this writing, the group is working on the next event pending the school calendar and other factors. More information will be available in the bulletin as details come.

Deacon Tim is working with a group of deacons in Belleville, led by Deacon Randy Riesenberger of St. Mary’s. Several priests have also expressed interest and support along with lay people with youth ministry experience. They’re looking to build up their volunteer base.

“For volunteers, we need people who are interested in the protection and preservation of Catholic youth and Catholic values,” Deacon Tim says. “We need those who are interested in helping children become the best version of themselves, finding fulfillment in their lives. You don’t have to be fun — we’ll take care of the fun.”

The program will be open to youth around ages 9

through high school, though events will be family-focused for now until the program builds.

“It’s important that Catholic children meet other Catholic children,” Deacon Tim says. “You can’t grow a church staring at a computer screen. You need to meet kids. They’re losing the ability to communicate with others in a meaningful way. It’s different than responding online — you don’t know if you’re chatting to a person. That can lead to false assumptions. With this program, they’re given the opportunity to form a young community in communion.”

*Those interested in participating may call or text Deacon Tim DeRousse at 618-541-8030 or email him at [deacontime@gmail.com](mailto:deacontime@gmail.com).*

## FAITH COMMUNITY WELCOMES FR. JIM BUERSTER

*continued from front cover*

“I look forward to being present to people,” he says. “I want to help people as much as I can.”

Fr. Jim is doing well physically and has a lot of energy — he looks forward to using it here.

“It’s another chapter that I’ve been able to do the past two years,” he says. “I’ve been able to help many parishes, some very rural, and it’s amazing — the faith communities that we have. I’ve been able to see it firsthand. It’s very uplifting. It’s beautiful.”

Fr. Jim wants to remind everyone to survey their gifts, talents, and abilities. Use them to serve God and our parishes.

“We are held accountable for how we use our gifts,” he says. “We need to be grateful for what we

***“I believe God will ask us, ‘Did you have a good time? Did you use the gifts I gave to you?’”***

**— Fr. Jim Buerster**

have and think, ‘How can I be helpful to other people who have less?’”

In turn, Fr. Jim wants to make sure he’s using his God-given gifts to glorify the Lord.

“I believe God will ask us, ‘Did you have a good time? Did you use the gifts I gave to you?’” he says.

Our community extends a big welcome and our heartfelt thanks to Fr. Jim!

# Highlights of Our 2025 STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL Pilgrims of Hope

This past spring, our Blessed Sacrament and Queen of Peace parish leadership conducted the 2025 Stewardship Renewal. The Stewardship Renewal gave our parish community the opportunity to discern how we are using our gifts of time, talent, and treasure in service to the parish and in return to God.

This month, we are happy to share with you some of the highlights of the Stewardship Renewal.

- There were 107 commitment cards received from 30 percent of active households.
- There were 1,043 prayer commitments — the stewardship of time — from 88 percent of participating households.
- There were 456 ministry commitments — the stewardship of talent — from 83 percent of participating households. Of these, 132 were new ministry commitments, while 324 were re-commitments to parish ministries.
- There were 88 offertory commitments — the stewardship of treasure — from 82 percent of participating households. The average pledge per year was \$3,286.

We thank all those who participated in our 2025 Stewardship Renewal. If you did not have the opportunity to fill out and return a commitment card, we invite you to consider the ways you may share your gifts of time, talent, and treasure with God and the parish community!

*Pilgrims of Hope*

312 650  
808 171  
342 372  
391

**2025 COMMITMENT CARD**

BLESSED SACRAMENT &  
OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE PARISH

First & Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse: *First & Last Name* \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse: *Phone* \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse: *Email* \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**REGISTERED PARISH:**

Blessed Sacrament  Queen of Peace

After completion, please bring this card to Mass on  
**May 17/18**, or mail using the envelope provided.  
Thank you and God bless you!



## MEET THE ST. ANN SODALITY

*A Group Sharing in Valuable Fellowship and Working to Benefit Our Parish*

**W**ith many needs to fulfill both behind the scenes and at the forefront of parish life, the St. Ann Sodality group seeks to help lighten the load.

"We are an altar sodality," says Carol O'Brien. "All our proceeds go to pay for the altar. Whatever is needed, we pay for."

The ministry consists of women in our parish who help out with various projects and fundraising to raise money for the needs of the parish. The main areas are for the wine, hosts, candles, and everything else that goes on and around the altar for Mass.

The sodality also helps pay stipends for visiting priests and supports our parish school. They have helped out with seasonal decorations such as new Christmas trees and flowers for the sanctuary. They have assisted the St. Vincent de Paul Society's needs, as well.

"We do the projects that we can," Carol says. "We see something we think Father needs, we will get it."

The group raises funds through their Bingo events and receives parishioners' donations, but its primary income is from their handmade quilts.

"You don't have to be a member of the sodality to quilt, but most of us ladies are members of the sodality," Carol says. "That's where we make the majority of our money which we have to support the parish. We've even got ladies who are not even parishioners who quilt with us."

Currently, many of the quilters are widows. For them, the group provides a community and a sense of belonging. While the parish and clergy benefit from the fruits of the ministry, the ladies themselves receive a place for fellowship and friendship.

"I like the companionship," Carol says. "I live alone, I'm a widow. It's a social thing for me."

While the quilting is a big component of their ministry, some ladies help in other areas, such as running errands, shopping, cleaning, running booths at the Bingo events, and other tasks. These tasks are often listed in the bulletin for ladies to sign up and help.

"We always find the workers," Carol says. "Everybody works together. Everybody can find something to do."

When Carol retired in 2008, her neighbor told her the group was looking for quilters.

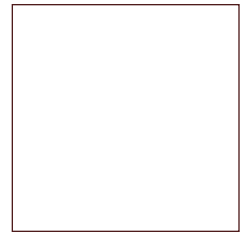
"I started quilting with them," she says. "Next thing I know, I'm the treasurer, I got elected. But I was always in the sodality."

Meetings for the sodality take place in the convent on the third Thursday of the month. Any woman of the parish aged 18 or older is welcome to attend.

***For more information about the St. Ann Sodality,  
contact Carol O'Brien at 618-772-8288.***



# Blessed Sacrament Parish & Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish



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bellevillecatholic.com



## MASS TIMES:

### Tuesday:

8:15 a.m. – Blessed Sacrament

### Wednesday:

8:15 a.m. – Our Lady Queen of Peace

### Thursday:

8:15 a.m. – Our Lady Queen of Peace

### Friday:

8:15 a.m. – Blessed Sacrament

### Saturday:

4:30 p.m. – Blessed Sacrament

### Sunday:

10:00 a.m. – Our Lady Queen of Peace

1955-2025  
COMMEMORATING

70 Years

OF OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE

*Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish is commemorating 70 years strong in spirit and service since its founding on Aug. 10, 1955. The first Mass was celebrated on Sept. 18, 1955, in the old Blessed Sacrament church/school building.*