

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

October 2026

What Kind of Parish?



What kind of parish do you want to belong to? What kind of parish do you want St. Patrick to be?

Many people say they value St. Patrick as a friendly, welcoming place. If you've lived here for many years, perhaps your whole family feels rooted here. If you've been active in various ways, perhaps the friendships that you have formed enrich your time here. What can you do to help others find friendship and welcome? Do you ever greet people you don't know and introduce yourself? Do you ever welcome someone to a table or pew with your family and friends? We have a special need for ushers just now; is that something you could do to extend welcome?

St. Patrick has people from many lands, which helps us all to remember that the Church is not confined to any part of the world. We will continue to celebrate this with our International Fair next month. Could you help with that? We celebrate it when the Congolese Choir sings at Mass. Do you do your best to participate in God's praise with them? Do you welcome someone who doesn't look like you, and are you patient with an English language learner or someone with a difficult accent? These are all ways that you can help St. Patrick to be an image of the universal Church, and of God's love for all peoples.

Some people say that they love our vibrant, reverent praise and worship of God. It's important that we all participate in Sunday Mass consciously and actively. It's important to accept the best from every song, every reading, every homily, and to seek out what God wants you to hear. Could you make it easier for others to experience this by sharing your musical talents, your joy in proclaiming the scriptures, or your reverence for Jesus in the Eucharist? Could you help our shared worship as an altar server, sacristan, or video streamer?

Perhaps you value St. Patrick as a place of faith and prayer. This happens in the ways that we care for one another and pray for one another. Those who mourn the loss of a loved one receive support and a nice meal with their family and friends. Those who bring children to be baptized receive support in their faith. Our children receive training in the faith and in service. Those in need of prayer are prayed for. Could you help with any of these things?

See **Parish** on page 6

It's Coming!

Get ready! It's earlier this year. What's coming? The entertaining event of the year! It will occur on Saturday, October 17, starting at 5:30 p.m. in St. Brigid Hall. The event is titled, "LKO 2026: Breaking Up Is Hard To Do." The LKO, if you haven't figured it out, stands for Ladies Knight Out, the annual event when the Knights of Columbus treat the women of the parish to food, wine, and a show by the amazing Cath'lic Boys.



Jim Mayer elaborates on the "breaking up" event by adding, "Can the rumors be true? Can it be that the Cath'lic Boys cast is splitting up after 30+ continuous years of music and theatrical shenanigans? You'll have to come to this year's show to find out for yourself!"

But before all the tomfoolery, wine will be poured, as well as coffee, tea, and soft drinks. The dinner this year will include hors d'oeuvres consisting of trays of cheese and crackers, vegetables, shrimp, meat balls, chicken strips, and desserts.

We can't wait for the comical buffoonery and the singing, which gets better every year. See you there!



Altar Servers



Would you like to be an altar server? St. Patrick's welcomes boys and girls to come for training. Altar servers need to have made their first communion, remain reverent through the Mass, and have a true personal desire to be an Altar Server. Future altar servers get a short form to fill out from Mary Tate. Nick Arend is St. Pat's Altar Server trainer. He meets individually with servers for training. Family groups can request that they serve together.

Altar servers help with tasks to make the service run smoothly and reverently. Their tasks may include: carrying the cross, candles, and incense during processions; holding the Roman Missal for the priest to read; ringing the altar bells during the consecration of the Eucharist; and pouring water for the ritual washing of the priest's hands. The servers wear a



white alb with a cincture. The color of the cincture corresponds to the liturgical year. Experienced servers wear a black cassock and white surplice. They lead the other servers and mentor novices. Through the generous

donations of our parishioners, we were able to buy cassocks and surplices and are ordering additional albs.

Parishioners, if you would like to learn about the liturgy by assisting the priest and deacon during Mass, consider becoming an altar server. It is an experience that you will value for a lifetime.



Why is October Holy Rosary Month?

The feast day, Our Lady of the Rosary, was originally called Our Lady of Victory, in 1571, by Pope Pius V. But the Rosary began much earlier according to Dominican tradition. It began in 1206 when Dominic de Guzman was trying to convert Albigensians to the Catholic faith and was failing. Dominic received a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary who gave him the Rosary as a tool to use against heretics.

Now back to 1571, and the impending sea battle at Lepanto between the Holy League and the Turkish Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire had more men and more ships than the Catholic Holy League. For decades the Ottoman Empire had terrified Europe with their brutal victories. They even conquered Christian Constantinople in 1451, which was founded by Constantine the Great in 330. Therefore, Pope Pius V urged all of Europe and all the sailors going into battle to pray the Rosary for the Virgin Mary's help.



The Ottoman forces were sailing westward from their naval station in Lepanto when they met the fleet of the Holy League which was sailing east from Messina, Sicily. Though the Ottomans had more men and 274 ships against 212 ships of the Holy League, the Holy League won the battle of Lepanto. They destroyed 200 hundred Ottoman ships and killed up to 40,000 Ottomans. The Holy League also freed 18,000 Christian slaves. It was the last major sea battle using galleys, ships rowed by men, usually slaves.

The Holy League credited their victory to the Virgin Mary whose intercession with God, implored by all those praying the Rosary, caused the victory. Pope Pius V instituted a new Catholic feast day of Our Lady of Victory to commemorate the battle of Lepanto. It is now celebrated on October 7, as the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Now you know why October is Holy Rosary month.

For 20-plus years, CREW traveled the states on mission trips

In the year 2000, 20 teen members of CREW, our parish youth group, undertook their very first mission trip. Accompanied by ten adult chaperones, CREW (Christ Renews Everyone's World) traveled to the Washington, D.C., area to the Maryland towns of Brentwood and Ranier, where they helped to paint and landscape three homes.



Working together on the houses for four days, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., teens and adults touched the lives of the residents and created a memorable experience for everyone involved in this special endeavor. Many remarked later that



their experience was life-changing, and not only for themselves: “. . . one of the children at my [work] site said: ‘I want to be like you when I grow up. I want to help people just like you helped me.’”

Many of the teens who participated in this mission trip returned year after year – helping others, of course, but also gaining something themselves that they sometimes found it difficult to express (although they did very well, in fact): “I feel closer to God, closer to the Church,” “How many people need help!” “I have a different appreciation for my faith journey,” “Greater appreciation for my Church and the people in it,” “Hope for more reverence and serenity,” “I feel this is a starting point for something great for me.”

In subsequent years CREW traveled to Grand County, Colorado; Dunkirk, New York; East St. Louis, Missouri; Winnebago, Wisconsin; Frenchville, Pennsylvania; Chicago, Illinois – to name just a few. They always worked under the cooperative supervision of a local organization, always worked hard for four days, always ate well and rested well, always participated in the spiritual exercises that drew them into understanding the values of their mission for themselves as well as for others.

The pandemic decreed a pause in the CREW mission trips, although some few teens were able to coordinate with others locally to keep their momentum, most recently with a group of teens from seven other churches. Will the CREW mission trips resume one day? It is to be hoped that they do, for the effects of their good work for others, and for what the participating members of CREW may experience themselves.



To each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it . . . to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

—Ephesians 4:7, 12

Cellar to Garret Strikes Again!

Several hundred bargain hunters and enthusiastic shoppers descended on the rooms full of items, looking for treasures and household necessities at the annual Cellar to Garret sale sponsored by the Women of St. Patrick each summer. This year's sale took place August 6-8 in St. Brigid Hall and four adjoining classrooms. All items are donated, and funds are used to help support a variety of parish activities and needs.



This major event involves several weeks of planning and labor with dozens of dedicated volunteers involved throughout the process. Anna Conner and Bernadette Nelson have served as general co-chairs of the event for many years and work tirelessly to coordinate each step. Early in June, volunteers are trained as committee chairs or co-chairs and provided with folders with detailed instructions. This year's committee chairs included Chris Whippo for Volunteers, Jill Slack for Publicity, Shirley Splittstoesser for food and kitchen helpers, Mary Lee Brady and Barbara Sipes (for set-up) and Sally Czapar (for tear down), and many others who generously gave of their time during the two weeks of organizing, placing, and pricing the many donations.

Many men coordinated the furniture sale in the parish garage and

worked tirelessly in the heat to pick up and load furniture on trucks. Special recognition is also due to Alicia Millsap, who worked in the kitchen daily, and Sandy Anderson and Kathy McKenzie, who worked daily organizing, sorting, and pricing donations. Shirley Splittstoesser coordinated the Better Room again this year.

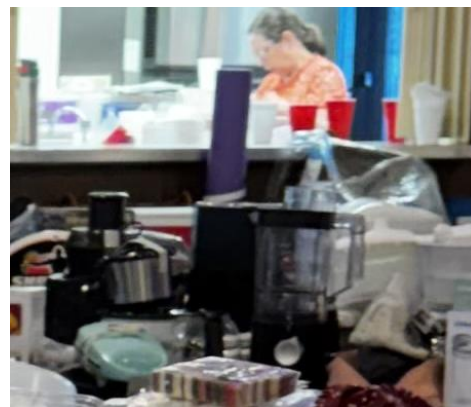
St. Brigid Hall was filled with a variety of clothing of all types and sizes, housewares, sporting goods, linens, tools, holiday decorations, and pet and gardening supplies. Smaller rooms are devoted to books of all genres, children's items, shoes, and the "better room" where collectibles, vintage and designer clothing, and other treasures are offered. Furniture was available in the church garage.

The event follows a traditional schedule of Thursday evening hours with a door entry fee of \$3, a full Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. of open sales, and a Saturday morning special of \$2 bags which patrons may fill as they choose. On Thursday, the line reached around the parking lot, and a steady flow of shoppers continued through Saturday.

Before the event begins, patrons of the St. Vincent De Paul Food Pantry receive a \$10 coupon, and all children receive a coupon for one free book. All leftover items are then donated, with Salt and Light and the YMCA taking the bulk of the items and other social service agencies receiving the remainder. The goals of the event are to serve the community in an atmosphere of service and spirituality.



Final figures are, as of this writing, not yet calculated, but this year's event brought in about \$18,000, the largest amount since the event began.



Individuals and groups seeking funding from the Women of St. Patrick are advised to complete the Grant Request form, available electronically as a Word document through Mary Tate, Patricia Fowler, or Roxanne Munch. The Board has recently approved a grant of \$500 to defray costs for several young parishioners to attend the beatification Mass for Bishop Fulton J. Sheen on September 24. WSP will again host the American table at the International Festival on October 4.

The Fall general meeting, scheduled for Sunday, October 25, will have several potential charitable donation items on the agenda, including the Maryknoll Lay Missioners, FOCCUS college ministry, Spirit Catholic Radio, and Catholic Charities. Requests for funding and information about Women of St. Patrick may be directed to Roxanne Munch (Roxanne_munch@sbcglobal.net) or Mary Tate (mary.tate@stpatsurbana.org).

All women of the parish are automatically members, and we hope to see you at the many events sponsored by the Women of St. Patrick!

Q: Who made the cross that's hanging above the back of the church?

A: "The Rising Christ" was made by Nick Britsky, an artist and Professor of Art at the University of Illinois. Born in Ukraine, Nick was a parishioner at St. Patrick from the early 1950s until his death in 2005. Nick and his wife, Anne, were very active and involved parishioners. In retirement, Nick created a number of beautiful works that have enriched our worship at St. Patrick for many years.



Amazingly, "The Rising Christ" was only Nick's second effort at sculpture. He modeled the hands on the hands of then-pastor Fr. Doug Hennessy. Jesus' physical appearance was based on people he saw during three visits that he and Anne made to the Holy Land.

Installed in 1981, "The Rising Christ" was suspended from the ceiling of the sanctuary by 20-foot stainless steel wires. The wires drew the light down onto Jesus but were otherwise virtually invisible, giving the impression that the crucifix was floating above the altar. A parishioner described coming into the church for the first time after the installation: "I found the difference between the former wooden cross it replaced very striking, and humbling."

Nick's contributions didn't stop there. He carved and painted two panels that flanked the altar. The one above the Tabernacle (which was then situated to the west of the altar), was a representation of the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire. The other, above the baptismal font, depicted John the Baptist baptizing Jesus..

Another project Nick undertook was the creation of a Marian shrine in the alcove to the east of what used to be the front doors of the church. In addition to refurbishing our Mary statue, he made colorful acrylic panels back-lighted to resemble stained glass windows, as well as specially designed votive candle stands.

A drawing he made of St. Patrick hangs in the office hallway of the parish center, while the large painting of Venice that hangs in the lounge is one Nick painted for a local couple who willed it to the parish.

For nearly 34 years, "The Rising Christ" seemed to float above the altar, reminding us of the mystery and the joy of the Resurrection. When the church was expanded and renovated in 2015, the Marian shrine was displaced, though Mary's statue, refurbished yet again in recent years, remains. The Tabernacle was moved behind the altar, and the Holy Spirit panel was put in storage. John the Baptist was moved further to the side. New Diocesan requirements meant that we had to commission a new crucifix to hang above our new altar. Fortunately, "The Rising Christ" found a home on the back wall of the church, where it no longer floats but can still inspire and thrill us with the joy of Jesus' rising, as well as remind us of how Nick Britsky served God so well with his art.



Saints for October, by Fr. Frank Wuellner

Defending human life also includes welcoming, protecting and assisting immigrants, whose hopes, sacrifices and contribution have formed part of the history of this country from its very beginning.

— Pope Leo XIV, Letter on the 250th Anniversary of the Founding of The United States of America

News from the Parish Nurses

The Faith Community Nursing ministry promotes the care of body, mind, and spirit. Our parish nurses coordinate educational opportunities on health-related issues and provide information on illness and injury prevention.

We provide the following services to members of the parish:

1. **Blood Pressure Screenings** Conducted the second Sunday of every month from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. in the parish lounge.
2. **Healthcare Navigation** Assistance with navigating the healthcare system and connecting with available community resources.
3. **Health Information** Monthly health tips and resources posted in the parish center, and on the Health Bulletin Board located in the north hallway of St. Brigid Hall.

Interested in volunteering? To join the Parish Nurses, you must be a registered nurse. Volunteers are required to complete formalized training through the Faith Community Health program sponsored by Carle. The next class is scheduled to start at the end of January.

For assistance or more information, please contact Roxane Lowry (rmlowryster@gmail.com), or call the parish office (217-367-2665).

Donating a weekend to RAM

Parishioners Donald Kaap and Craig Goad spent a weekend helping with services provided by RAM (Remote Area Medical Clinic) in Terre Haute, Indiana. RAM sets up clinics around relatively depressed areas where there is a greater need for medical attention due to people not having adequate health insurance. RAM provides free dental, vision, and medical care. Doctors, nurses, technicians, and volunteers donate their time to the clinic.

On Friday, Donald and Craig joined volunteers to transform two local high school gyms into a temporary medical facility by helping to cover the gym floors with tarps to protect their finish. Next, small tents were set up and their plastic "walls" were erected. Each of these tents became a dental office. Each tent had large air filtration vents attached and a lab where dentures can be printed with 3D printers.



Donald Kaap and Craig Goad



An experienced leader took Donald and Craig on a tour of the optical side of the operation held in a smaller gym where several vision measuring machines were set up on long tables. They toured the optical truck, which has all the equipment necessary to cut lenses and fit them to the frames. Craig used his expertise to help rescue a bat, who was hiding from all the action going on in this gym. After a long day, Donald and Craig had dinner and crashed early. Saturday, Donald and Craig reported at 5am to help with Patient Registration and directing patients. As patients arrived, they registered them into the system, provided their work papers and sent them on to triage to the service they wanted. Depending on the number of doctors available, a limit was set on the number of patients they could see in the day. They turned people away by noon. Several of the patients chose to sleep in their cars overnight to be available on Sunday. The optical and medical areas continued all day until 5pm. Donald and Craig went to evening Mass at St Pat's of Terre Haute and then dinner. Craig agreed to watch the parking area during the night, working a 10pm to 2am shift. From there he went to the motel to sleep. Donald reported in at 5am Sunday for the patient registration. Sunday was a short day with 20 dental appointments available, although they fit in 25. Services stopped at noon. Craig helped in the kitchen during lunch. Then the teardown... all that work on Friday had to be taken down, packed up and loaded in the semi-trailer sitting in the parking lot (see photo). RAM reported they treated 260 patients that weekend.

Donald and Craig summarized their experience, "Seeing adults and children leave with new glasses, dental treatment, and grateful smiles made the long hours worthwhile. It was a very rewarding weekend, an inspiring example of people helping people. It takes a village."

Parish from page 1

Perhaps you value our parish's outreach to those in need. Could you help with the food pantry? Could you and your kids help assemble Thanksgiving meals for those who have none? Could you pitch in on a service project occasionally?

Ultimately, St. Patrick is what we make of it, with the help of God. Together we decide how welcoming, how prayerful, how generous our parish is. Sometimes this is in organized ways, ways that we talk about when we consider the sharing of our time and talents. Sometimes it is in the small, daily, interpersonal decisions that we make, and the ways we find to share God's love. What kind of parish do you want St. Patrick to be?



Each of these tents became a dental office

Join the Music Ministry!

Do you love to sing? Do you play an instrument? Do you have children who love music? St. Patrick Church has



a wonderful history of celebrating beautiful liturgies, giving glory and praise to God, especially through song. There are many opportunities for beginners through advanced

musicians to volunteer in assisting your parish through the gift of music. Please prayerfully consider your own musical gifts and how God is calling you to use those gifts to serve your parish family.

Singers and instrumentalists have a variety of opportunities for service. Additional cantors are always welcome and have flexibility in scheduling choices. Adult choir members for the 10:00 a.m. Mass practice on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. and arrive for Mass at 9:15 a.m. for warmups and final practice.

The Contemporary group is composed of a combination of singers and instrumentalists and generally practices and sings once a month. Funeral Schola choir members are on call as funerals take place, and notice may be short. Most funerals take place on weekday mornings, and practice occurs before the Mass.

The Congolese Choir is a part of the Music Ministry, and all choir members are welcome to sing with them. They generally sing in French and a variety of African languages and practice on Saturday evenings.



No auditions are required for any of the choirs, but potential new cantors need to meet with the Music Director.

Instrumentalists of all varieties are welcomed, and opportunities include playing for special holiday Masses, playing with the contemporary choir, joining the handbell choir, and occasionally subbing for other musicians. Instruments are used for both traditional and contemporary music, and scheduling is flexible. A set of chimes is now available and in use for the Children's Choir. They learn the chimes at Music Camp and at special rehearsals for holiday Masses. Additional members are especially sought for the Handbell Choir, which will now play twice a month. The handbell musicians are learning some new solo pieces to enhance their repertoire.

Young musicians are especially welcome for all opportunities to play. The entire range of strings, percussion, woodwinds, and brass are welcome!

Anyone of school age or older who reads music, is willing to learn, or just wants to share in making beautiful music is welcome to serve in any music ministry. For more information, or if you would like to volunteer in the music ministry, please contact James Rossi, Director of Music (217-367-2665, office; 321-505-6725, cell; or james.rossi@stpaturbana.org), or see James after any of the weekend Masses.

Vocation Prayer

Loving Father, you know my heart. Help me to know the path I am to walk. I seek your vision, your wisdom, your guidance for my journey in a life of service. I trust you, Father. If you call me to consecrated life, to married or single life, with your help I will follow. Help me, Father, to know the path I am to walk, and be with me on my journey.

Parish Council News

At their August meeting Council members shared their reviews of the 125th Anniversary celebration with Bishop Tylka, genuinely pleased overall with the participation of parishioners and the



pervasive joy expressed by so many. The bishop commented on our parish diversity, how well we work together, and the joy and spirituality he himself observed.

Members then turned to this fall's Time and Talent campaign. Jon has updated the online signup information, and staff will produce an updated 2026-27 Parish Ministry Directory for distribution in late September. Mary Tate will take new photos of Council members and staff for it. The weekend of October 10-11 has been reserved for the T&T campaign, and current plans include having ministry representatives at tables in the Gathering Space after Masses to answer questions and assist with signups.

As for the proposed development of an adult formation program, the Knights of Columbus were asked whether they'd be interested in sponsoring such a program for the parish, perhaps like the one offered by the KC. This may be discussed at the next KC meeting.

See **Council** on page 8

Council from page 7

A similar proposal was made to Sally Czapar, food pantry coordinator, perhaps using the spiritual formation videos developed by the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Sally observed that she would want to review the videos before planning to use them, but she also noted that the current reconstruction of their storage and work areas make it difficult to undertake such a project at this time.

An information folder for a 2015 adult formation program based on Pope Francis' *Evangelia Gaudium* might serve as a model for one focused on Pope Leo's *Magnifica Humanitas*. Further discussion of the proposed adult formation program was tabled until early 2027.

The Young Adult retreat dates under consideration are February 20, February 27, or March 6. A possible location for the retreat is a cabin in Indiana offered by Deanna Wright.

Fr. Anthony mentioned several infrastructure projects underway or planned: broken plexiglass protecting stained-glass windows; more panels in Trinity Hall; some malfunctioning church lights; external re-grouting; the confessional is being reconfigured for easier access to the light switches; old carpeting in the classrooms to be replaced; carpeting in the family room to be replaced with tile, and sound panels are to be added there.

Fr. Anthony also mentioned that there are currently 15 people coming for OCIA meetings, and the staff are looking into filling a Youth Ministry coordinator position.

So much to do, so much to help with, so much to pray for. Parish Council members are grateful for your prayerful support. And don't overlook the help you can be by offering your time and talent!

Quick Fixin's from the kitchen of...

Lauretta Taylor

Cornbread Pie

1 lb ground beef
1/4 t pepper
1 large onion, chopped
1 c whole kernel corn, drained
1 c green pepper, chopped
1 T chili powder
1 can tomato soup
2 c water
1 t salt
3/4 c corn meal (self-rising)
1 T flour (self-rising)
1 egg
1/3 c milk
1 T sugar
1 T butter



Brown beef and onion. Add soup, water, and corn, and mix well. Add green pepper, salt, pepper, and chili powder. Mix well and simmer 15 minutes. Pour into 13 x 9 x 2 baking dish, and set aside. Mix remaining ingredients and pour over pie mixture. Bake at 400 degrees for 20-30 minutes.

*

Do you have a favorite quick and easy recipe to share? Something your family and friends really enjoy? Please send it to Mary Lou Menches (mmenches@illinois.edu) – our readers are always looking for that great addition to a meal!



St. Patrick's Parish In Focus is published on the last weekend of the month in Urbana, Illinois. News items and information may be submitted by the first weekend of the month for an upcoming issue. Materials must include the name and telephone number of the person submitting them.

Please send news items to infocusstpats@gmail.com. You may also send them to any Communications Committee member (see below). All submissions are subject to review and/or editing by the committee and staff. Bylines are generally omitted.

Editorial board:

Judy Fierke, 217-352-7670,
j-fierke@comcast.net
Elizabeth Hendricks, 217-328-2184,
elizabethwahlend@gmail.com
Mary Lou Menches, 217-344-1125,
mmenches@illinois.edu
Alia Rdissi, 281-382-1623,
aliardissi@yahoo.com
Cathy Salika, 217-367-7861,
csalika@illinois.edu
Stan Yanchus, 217-352-9894,
yanchusfamily@comcast.net
Laura Wright, 217-821-5148,
gelsthorpe@gmail.com

Associates: John Colombo, Charlotte Kiesel, Rick Partin, Kyle Sondgeroth, Shirley Splittstoesser, Jerry Walsh, and Lena Wright.

Articles, information, and photos for this issue were provided by Craig Goad, Judy Fierke, Elizabeth Hendricks, Roxane Lowry, Mary Lou Menches, Roxanne Munch, Alia Rdissi, Cathy Salika, and Shirley Splittstoesser. This issue was edited by Mary Lou Menches; page layout was prepared by Kyle Sondgeroth. Saints for October by Fr. Frank Wuellner.



Deadline for submission of articles and news items for the next issue of *In Focus* (November) is **Sunday, October 11.**