

A quarterly publication of the  
St. Stephen Cathedral parish



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# the Parishioner

## Trunk or Treat

Photos by Brenda Clark



## Honoring Ruth Ann

By Larry Lyon

Parishioners honored Ruth Ann Carricco during St. Stephen Cathedral's Third Annual Epiphany Hymn Festival and Potluck Dinner on Sunday, January 3. Ruth Ann is retiring after 11 years as our Office Assistant.

During the seven years that I worked alongside Ruth Ann she was great and professional in every way. She was my favorite "go to" person for help and answers for all sorts of computer software questions. Being the first contact for everyone that came into our office, she was always cordial, gracious and smiling. One of her favorite tasks was learning new software, but her very favorite task, I think, was being the Editor of the parish bulletin. Most importantly, to me, she was a faith-filled parishioner who knew our parish members, old as well as new, and could always come up with a suggestion for the question "Who can we get to volunteer for this function?"

We love you, Ruth Ann, and wish you well for whatever your new endeavors may be. (Please leave your cell number for all future software questions!)



Ruth Ann receives a key to the city  
from Mayor Ron Payne.

## Third Annual Epiphany Hymn Festival and Potluck



Sr. Antonia, Sr. Florence, Sue & Audie Cooper



John-Henry Booth, Will Hemingway & Andrew Ellis

# St. Stephen Cathedral Supports the Arts in Owensboro

By Joan Perry



KY Youth Chorale performed a Christmas Concert Dec. 17th.  
Photo by Tony Taylor



The Mixed choir ATENEO of Palacky University Olomous performed Nov. 14th at St. Stephen, performing classical, folk, pop, blues, spiritual, and gospel pieces.

Did you know that when groups come to visit Owensboro, they sometimes make it a point to ask for a tour of our Cathedral? There are even groups within the Western Kentucky area, Catholic and non-Catholic alike who come to appreciate the wonderful art that is present inside our doors. Did you know that our historic painting of St. Stephen and the talents of our parishioners participate in art exhibitions at our Museum of Fine Arts? Did you know that The Owensboro Symphony Orchestra has made a performance at our Cathedral as part of their “Stained Glass Series” every year? Did you know that St. Stephen Cathedral has a special fund, *Cultivating the Arts at the Cathedral*, to support some of the arts so that all of God’s people may enjoy the arts?

The arts are expressed in many different forms. These arts are a means of elevating our souls into the realms of the divine and the beautiful, because they are an expression of God’s creation given in thanksgiving and praise. We can give that expression by using our talents and/or we can appreciate that expression by exposing ourselves to the talents of others.

One of the ways that we can help the people of our community raise their souls and minds to God is to financially and physically support the arts if we do not possess one or more of those artistic gifts ourselves. Think about the offerings right here in Owensboro: Live theater both dramatic and musical, Bluegrass and Country Music

Festivals, The Owensboro Symphony Orchestra, The Fine Arts Museum, The Owensboro Dance Theater. Really there is so much around us; it is difficult to choose.

Let’s take the time to look at one of the opportunities that St. Stephen Cathedral hosts in the Spring each year. The Stained Glass Series of the Owensboro Symphony Orchestra comprises three concert dates that are free and open to the public. Join others as the community and The OSO are brought together to celebrate the human spirit through the universal medium of music. Each of the three “Stained Glass” concerts combines a chamber orchestra with a choir in some of Owensboro’s most beautiful churches for an uplifting experience. One of those churches is OURS! You haven’t heard the likes of what angels sound like until you have experienced a great symphony and a marvelous choir letting the chords of their music echo through our marble walls and floor underneath our vaulted ceiling. If you close your eyes during the performance you will think that you are definitely in heaven. Become a part of the Art Culture.

**“In every age the Church has called upon the arts to give expression to the beauty of her faith and to proclaim the gospel message of the grandeur of God’s creation, the dignity of human beings made in his image and likeness, and the power of Christ’s death and resurrection to bring redemption and rebirth to a world touched by the tragedy of sin and death,” said Pope Francis.**



# Chrismon Tree Repair

By Denise Payne

In the mid 1970s, the parishioners of St. Stephen worked to create Chrismon ornaments. These ornaments depicted symbols of Christ. They were all made of pearls, gold beads, gold or white ribbon, sequins, etc. After being used on a large tree in the sanctuary for several years, they were loaned to the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art. The Chrismon tree has since become a popular one at the annual Holiday Forest in the museum. The docents at the museum say it's a favorite and people come to the exhibit hoping to see it again. After being used for many years, the ornaments were in need of restoration.

At the museum's request, a group gathered to restore the ornaments. Many were as beautiful now as they were 40 years ago. Others had deteriorated, but many were able to be brought back to their former beauty. A lot of glue, sequins, ribbons, pearls, roses, glitter, and artistry made them as lovely as before.

They will again be a part of the Holiday Forest at the Art Museum. You who were part of the project 40 years ago can enjoy seeing your artistry again on display for many years to come. Thanks to Joan Perry, Mary Ann O'Bryan, Mary Horn, Brenda Clark, Rose Mary Payne, Nancy Hendricks, and Denise Payne for spending many hours working to keep Christ in Christmas.

The Holiday Forest has been taken down as of December 31, but will be back again next year. Hopefully you can make a stop next Christmas to see the handiwork of fellow parishioners past and present.



Mary Ann O'Bryan and Joan Perry work diligently on repairing Chrismon tree ornaments

# Five Boys for Christmas

By Danny May *(reprinted with permission)*



“Sometimes God just has a different plan,” said Meghan Payne, of Owensboro, fully admitting that adopting five boys ranging from 6-14 years old at one time might seem crazy to a lot of people.

But Meghan would say Christmas came early last Monday, Dec. 14, when a judge terminated parental rights and the boys’ adoption was finalized. “I’ve always known I was called to be a mom. This is definitely not the way I thought that would pan out for me. But what I do know is that God has a purpose and a plan and that He works all things for good for people that love him; so here we are together now.”

It was an exciting day for Kevin, 14; Dustin, 9; Romer, 8; Kennedy, 7; and Brian, who coincidentally turned 6 on his adoption day. Not to mention the sight of nearly 100 family and friends who gathered to witness the occasion, making it the largest crowd Judge Castlen had ever seen for an adoption finalization. As a small memento, Judge Castlen gave each of the boys a pen with their name engraved on it which he used to sign each of their papers.

The road to their adoption day had a few twists and turns; for the boys and for the Payne family.

Meghan’s parents, Tom and Amy Payne, went through foster parenting classes and turned in their paperwork to the state so their home could be a foster home. Meghan took the classes too, but did not turn in her paperwork immediately.

The boys were Tom and Amy’s first placement, which was on August 28, 2013.

“The social worker called and said she had five brothers that couldn’t be placed together anywhere else without being split up, except for our home,” Amy explained. “People ask us all the time why we fostered five boys at one time. My answer became ‘why not?’ They’re fine young men who need a home. And we have a home available to share with them.”

“It’s just a ‘God-thing,’” Tom Payne added. “I always think of Mary’s ‘yes’ that she gave God. We all – at some point – take a step of faith. We felt it was the right thing to do.”

That’s when Meghan moved back home, both to pay off graduate school loans and to help with the boys. Several months later, Amy had a spinal chord tumor removed, and the Paynes decided Meghan would become the foster parent in her “foster home” once she got her paperwork turned in, even though they all still lived under the same roof.

“When we knew the boys would be an adoptable group, I explored it in prayer,” Meghan explained, describing her decision to adopt the boys. “The thing that I kept coming back to in prayer was to focus on what is in front of me right now and to not worry about tomorrow. Even parents who have kids biologically don’t know what tomorrow holds for your family. So, I’m going to love them and raise them to the best of my ability and pray that they grow up to be good men. We’re meant to be a part of each other’s journey.”

What does it mean for the boys to be adopted together? “It means a lot,” said Kevin, the oldest brother. “Before we were here (with the Paynes) we were split. It was me, Dustin and Romer, and then Kennedy and Brian were in another home. If we weren’t here, chances are high that we would be split up forever. It wouldn’t be the same. This means a lot.”

It’s certainly not fair to call Meghan a single parent of five. “It would be crazy to try and do something like this by myself,” Payne admits. Judging by the number of people who were there in the courtroom to celebrate, Meghan is in no way in this by herself. Plus, Tom and Amy are right there to help with the boys all the time. And Meghan’s sister, Sarah, is in town and helps however she can. “It would not have been fair to the boys if I didn’t know there was a bunch of people that love them, and love me, and will be here to help raise them,” Payne said.





Duncan Kaai & Samantha Taylor

# MIDNIGHT MASS

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## CHRISTMAS VIGIL





Top: Hannah Padgett, Jade Flaherty, Sarah Murphy,  
Adam Hayden, Kevin Payne, Christian Leigh  
Bottom: Haley Fitzgerald, Fr. Suneesh Mathew, Molly Payne, Hope  
Johnson, Brooklynn Reynolds, Mary-Katherine Gough



Top row: Molly Payne, Jade Flaherty, Haley Fitzgerald, Brooklynn  
Reynolds, Hope Johnson, Kevin Payne, Father Suneesh Mathew,  
Christian Leigh  
Bottom row: Hannah Padgett, Sarah Murphy, Adam Hayden,  
Mary-Katherine Gough

# NCYC *By Jade Flaherty*

The National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) is a powerful, biennial, three-day experience of prayer, community, and empowerment for Catholic teenagers (of high-school age) and their adult chaperones. This past November, there were ten youth from our parish that made the pilgrimage to Indianapolis along with more than 23,000 other Catholics from across the country. I'm confident in saying that we all enjoyed these three days of pure joy. This has been undoubtedly the most astonishing experience of my life.

When we walked into Lucas Oil Stadium for the first time, I was so excited and overwhelmed by the sight of so many young Catholics on fire for the Lord. A popular Catholic singer, Matt Maher, spoke to us about building our prayer lives. Something I really liked that he said was, "Prayer is a surge of the heart." I found this especially true during the Eucharistic adoration. I was waiting to get this rush of emotion since they brought the host in the monstrance out, but I had a paradigm shift. I realized that I wasn't getting extremely emotional because even though Jesus is present in the host, He is always and continuously present in our daily lives. Coming to this realization, I simply thanked God for always being with me. Receiving God's grace in the Sacrament of Confession was also comforting. Somewhere I saw the quote, "No matter how many steps you take away from God, it only takes one to get back." And to have 23,000+

people silent and worshipping at the same time was truly beautiful.

During this trip, I strengthened my relationship with God which is what I'm always striving for. It was awesome to deepen and build friendships with people that go to our parish, not to mention in our diocese, which is much bigger than I thought. Even in a sea of people, every time I turned around I saw a group of blue hoodies that represented the Diocese of Owensboro. We also got to meet some compassionate people when we helped pack food for families in Africa with a project called Helping Hands. I believe everyone that served for this project accomplished putting together 50,000 packages of food. It was a very humbling involvement, and I'm happy we could aid those less fortunate.

I know I am certainly fortunate and especially grateful to have gotten to go to NCYC. First and foremost, I want to thank Father Suneesh for planning and organizing many months in advance. It's clear that this trip would not have been the same or nearly as much fun without him. I also want to thank Haley Fitzgerald for being a spectacular chaperone and role model. We really appreciate all of the prayers and messages from home while we were away. And to everyone who donated financially, whether by letting us wash your car or coming to the pancake breakfasts, it was greatly appreciated because this experience was priceless.





# From Rome to Owensboro: Door to Door

By Fr. Jerry Riney



When I was in Rome in September, I moseyed around St. Peter Square and celebrated Mass in the iconic St. Peter Basilica. The Holy Year Door at the Basilica caught my eye, and immediately connected me with thoughts of our “Holy Door” at St. Stephen Cathedral in Owensboro. I had to take a picture!

Pope Francis opened the Holy Door at St. Peter Basilica on December 8, and announced that every diocese in the world—640 archdioceses and 2206 dioceses—would open a “Door of Mercy” in each and every cathedral, as a symbol of the limitless possibilities to know God’s compassion, forgiveness, and mercy. And with great ceremony Bishop William Medley opened our Door of Mercy at St. Stephen Cathedral on Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday, December 13.

A Holy Door has been used as a ritual expression of conversion since the 15th century. Near our baptismal font, at the entrance to our church, we recall that the Sacrament of Baptism is the door through which one enters the community of faith. Jesus said, “I am the door, the gate” (John 10), and

the Door of Mercy has true meaning only when the believer associates the door with Christ and his infinite mercy.

Each one of us is encouraged to make a pilgrimage, to pass through our Door of Mercy as a reminder of God’s boundless, extravagant, healing mercy, available to us simply for the asking. A door can be a barricade of exclusion and separation or a threshold of welcome and hospitality. Pilgrims and penitents pass through it as a gesture of leaving the past behind, crossing the threshold from sin to grace, from slavery to freedom, from darkness to light. Not a magic ritual, it is usually accompanied by prayer, sacrifice, Reconciliation, Eucharist—that which leads to conversion. The Jubilee Year of Mercy could be the time for you, for each of us, to let go of past hurts, transgressions, misunderstandings, to pass through that Holy Door, coming home to God’s mercy, and in turn to become instruments of that mercy. What a wonderful symbol of the limitless possibilities to know God’s compassion and forgiveness! How does the Gospel message of Luke 6:37-38 challenge you? Is there someone you need to forgive? Could that someone be you?



**St. Nicholas Feast Day**  
St. Nicholas visited the children of St. Stephen Cathedral on December 6!

# Learning Joy

By Hope Johnson



*This past October, Hope Johnson, a junior at OCHS, travelled to Haiti for her fall break with a mission team from Sts. Joseph and Paul Parish. This was not meant to be a play on the beach with friends trip, but rather a mission trip. Here is her story:*

My October break trip to Haiti was a journey to a whole different world, illuminated by the brilliance of God's goodness. My favorite part about Haiti was the joy that the people have despite their poverty. I witnessed that joy in many ways, but especially in the way they sang and danced. I have never heard a church sing so loudly; their participation was a testimony of their faith. Our days were filled with school visits, checking the progress of the water filtration project, praying and playing together.

Upon arriving in Haiti, Father Evaeno, our host priest, picked us up and escorted us over bumpy, almost impassable roads made of dirt and mud for several hours. His English was broken and difficult to understand, but I understood "God loves me so much!" For me, this whole trip was understanding those words more deeply. We may live more comfortably and have more luxuries than they do in Haiti, but they are definitely blessed. At home, many think we are in control of our lives, but the Haitian people know that only God is in control. They know that their next meal isn't promised, but they continue to have hope and faith that God will provide for them. They know that no matter what happens, God has blessed them in many pure and simple ways, and they are thankful for that. Close to the end of our trip, one of my new friends, Lucianna, repeatedly called my name from the opposite side of a fence that surrounded the rectory where

we stayed. Upon greeting her, I tried to understand what it was that she wanted to tell me. "What, what?" I asked her. She smiled with her whole face and beautiful white teeth and began to sing, "Go make a difference, we can make a difference, go make a difference in the world!" in clear unbroken English! Learning this song was her gift to me, one that I will never forget. The inadequate feelings that I first felt were replaced with hope. We really can make a difference. Maybe just one person at a time, but together we can make a difference! Her song was sung just for me; it touched my heart and still resonates in my mind.

The truth of the old saying that "the heart cannot feel what the eyes cannot see" was made evident to me during this, my first missionary trip. I could have looked at all the pictures of Haiti and other third world countries ever taken, but would never have understood the way they live until I saw and experienced it for myself. It's like a sunset- pictures never do it justice. Actually interacting with the people and seeing their way of life firsthand touched my soul in a way that a picture or someone telling me about it never could. Ironically enough, God's grace and blessings that they shared with me were much more valuable than the material gifts I brought for them. My hope is that other teens in the Owensboro Diocese are given this same life changing opportunity.





# Building Faith— Inspiring Lives

By Dirck Curry, DO, Deacon

The Diocese of Owensboro sent 10 faith-filled Catholics to the Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica, October 11-18 to share their time and talents to strengthen the relationship between these two dioceses. Fr. Jerry Riney led the group—Dirck Curry, Laurie Hicks, Mark Heinz, Donna and Jim Duffy, Janet and John Colgan, and Donna Murphy-- with the support of the Diocesan Director of Social Concerns, Dick Murphy.

There has been progress in Mandeville since the last time our parish visited almost 10 years ago. At least the infrastructure showed improved roads and an upgrade in accommodations. Yet the people on a whole were without social and economic improvements in their lives. Women and children were not honored in married and family life as we know it here in the U.S. In Mandeville the Church strives to protect the poor and oppressed, yet the Church is often looked down upon in Mandeville as an organization that has resources but not much faith.



Over the course of a week, our group provided much needed services to many. In three days, we built a house for Claudia, a single mother, and her two children, who had been living in her father's home with nine other people. This was a team building process that supported a poor Jamaican family, giving them greater dignity and comfort. We visited St. John Bosco Home for Boys, where troubled boys are given a second chance through the efforts of the Church to learn a skill for life and thus avoid jail time. We visited the Mustard



Seed Community where children and adults with disabilities lived in community and were cared for with compassion. A Kenyan Sister shared with us her experience in caring for the rejected AIDS population, and the Missionaries of Charity from India opened their doors to a nursing home where they were caring for the elderly, some of whom had been abandoned.

After our house build, the team journeyed in various directions throughout the Mandeville Diocese to see what inroads the Catholic Church had made in the Jamaican peoples' lives. Fr. Jim, a Passionist priest, spent the day with Fr. Jerry, informing him and demonstrating to him how the Church was assisting people spiritually. Donna and Dick Murphy followed up on the Water With Blessings outreach which continues to make a difference in the quality of life there. Mark Heinz and Janet and John Colgan visited a new Catholic school and the Catholic College of Mandeville, which educate the children of Jamaica, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, giving them hope for their future. Laurie Hicks, a nurse, and I worked at the Health Clinic at Holy Spirit Parish where the Sisters of Sacred Heart from Poland were medically caring for people; we also visited the homebound elderly in their region.

Hope, a Mandeville Diocesan coordinator, showed the group where funds had been invested to start up small businesses through the Pilgrims of Hope Project, which is supported by our annual Owensboro Diocesan Ash Wednesday collection. Through almsgiving, prayer, and the talents of many, the Universal Church does great things for the Jamaican people. Still more is needed in the sense of social outreach, education, home grown business opportunity, and medical care for these people. Bishop Tiedemann conveyed his deep gratitude to the Diocese of Owensboro for our financial, material, and spiritual support over the years. Be generous this Ash Wednesday, February 10.



# Bathing with Donkeys

By Mary Keaton Clemens

Going to Haiti was one of the best experiences I've ever had. I learned not to take anything for granted. We have so much here in the United States and we are so fortunate. Things such as fresh water, food, and even homes are not common there. You start to miss things that are a part of your everyday life, like taking a hot shower (instead of going to the river to bathe and you see a donkey doing the same 20 feet away) or even having a toilet (which we were lucky enough to have because they are not common). I was lucky enough to stay in an orphanage where the kids had plenty of food and actually had a filtration system for clean water. You never really know what someone is going through until you witness and actually experience it. In Haiti, people do not have to be somewhere every minute. They don't have practices to go to, they don't have meetings, and they're lucky if they even get to go to school. It's so peaceful because they just live. It's terribly sad to think of these children living in these conditions, but it's what they've grown up with and it's the only life they know. The kids were so funny and sweet, even though we didn't speak the same language. My faith and my outlook on life changed on that trip. Seeing the beautiful mountains, the ocean, and the stars at night make you realize how great God is and recognize the amount of power He has.



## Youth Group



John Kurtz teaching the youth how to cook.



Paul David, Max, Ava Grace, Noah, & Mary Evelyn  
Knoop playing after church



Fr Suneesh rabbit hunting on the McNulty farm





## Preschool News

By Pam Weafer

### Registration Time!

Believe it or not it is time to think about registration for next year for preschool. Cathedral Preschool has been in the business of getting children ready for kindergarten for 30 years! We provide:

- \* Daily prayer in the classroom as well as a weekly Bible lesson
- \* A research-based academic curriculum that will prepare children for kindergarten
- \* Minds-in-Motion program for supporting the child's physical and academic development
- \* A Christian environment using age-appropriate teaching methods where children learn socialization, good listening skills, independence, and how to follow directions
- \* Lots of fun with plenty of time to play

We have half day classes for 3 and 4 year olds. Also, a 5 year old pre-k class is available for children old enough to enter kindergarten but not ready for an all-day class. This class is 4 hours per day.

\*\* Early registration for currently enrolled families and St. Stephen Cathedral members begins February 8th at 7:30 a.m. Registration is open to the public beginning at 7:30 a.m. on February 16th. Call the preschool to be added to the mailing list for registration packets or come by for a visit. (270)926-1652.

## St. Stephen Cathedral Parish would like to welcome the following new parishioners since January 2015

Mary Lou Kapfhammer  
 Glenn, Kristine, Danielle & Isabella Henning  
 Heather & Bryan Dant  
 Patrick & Alison Serey  
 Agnes & Andrew Reynolds  
 Bruce Gray  
 Ryan, Ali & Elanor Crowe  
 Ben & Kelsey Rhodes  
 James & Jimmy Stiveson  
 Ed and Mary Riney  
 Bradley Sawyer  
 Charles David, Stephanie & Sarah Young  
 Tony Clayton  
 Cheri Clark  
 Gary, Ellen, Nolan, Cary and Andrew Aud  
 Leah Collins  
 Tyler Winklepleck  
 Matt, Sara & Nicholas Lisby  
 Michael, Angela, Ayden, Addison & Maitlin Puckett  
 Allen Herzog  
 Brett, Lindsey, Ryleigh, Brystal & Karmen Hudson  
 Mark & Anndrea Mahoney  
 Jeanette New  
 Erin Moore  
 Sheila Howard  
 Peter & Whitney Carroll  
 Chris, Annette, Natalie & Logan Sapp  
 Patricia Baker  
 Duncan Kaai  
 Shirley Howard  
 Tracy & Taylor Mayfield  
 Catherine Ray  
 Ann Osborne  
 Kathryn Wimsatt  
 Stuart Squires



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## Celebrations



Vicky & Antonio Montalvo with their newly baptized Leonardo Francesco Montalvo, with godparents!



On Dec. 27, Fr. Jerry baptized Addison Leigh Calhoun, daughter of Patrick & Nicole Calhoun



Congratulations to Fr. Suneesh who celebrated his 8th anniversary as a priest on Jan. 2!



Fr. Jerry welcomed Jackson Thomas Pierce, son of Aaron & Lauren Pierce, into the church on Dec. 27.



Brent & Holly McCarty, the proud parents of Grayson McCarty, asked the Church to baptize their son.