



St. John BEFORE THE LATIN GATE

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

AS PARISH LIFE RESUMES, WE WELCOME NEW STAFF MEMBERS

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Our parish is thrilled to have two new staff members who bring their talents and love of service to help us all in our walk with Christ. Janice Hoss is our new Parish Secretary and Ashlee Elmore is our new Music Director.

Janice, a St. John parishioner, began her duties here on March 30, having worked previously at St. Catherine Parish in Tulsa for six years. When Fr. John asked her to consider the secretary's post here, "I said, sure!" she says.

The pandemic slowed down parish activities — and Janice's workload — but now things are gradually starting to pick up.

"Normally, I answer the phone, and guide people to where they need to go," Janice says. "I record the sacraments and send notification of the sacraments to other parishes, prepare for funerals and such. The calendar is a big thing — lots of events go on it. I set it up for the year and I've been in the process of that for the last three weeks."

The fact that most parish activities have been curtailed has given Janice the opportunity to learn all the details of her job. Although the pace in the parish office has been slow, that has not squelched the welcome Janice has received. "People have



Janice Hoss, our new Parish Secretary, relaxes with the family puppy, Annie.



Ashlee Elmore, our new Music Director, brings a variety of skills to her new post. She also teaches music and performs in a jazz ensemble.

GETTING TO KNOW OUR PARISH STAFF!



Carey Auschwitz
Director of CRE – 1 year
Favorite thing about working here: Knowing that I am showing the love of Christ to all the children in our program, one act of love and kindness at a time!



Everardo Ramirez
Hispanic Ministry Coordinator – 16 years
Favorite thing about working here: Working for the church has led me to a more intimate relationship with God and to witness how people discover the love of God in their lives. Putting the talents that God has given me in His service is what I enjoy the most.



Fred Auschwitz
Facilities Manager
Hobbies: Spending time with grandkids, fishing, catching the lawn mower on fire — not really, but it did happen!



Cassie Rebeor
Youth Director – 1 year
Favorite thing about working here: The people! It's a really welcoming, active community.



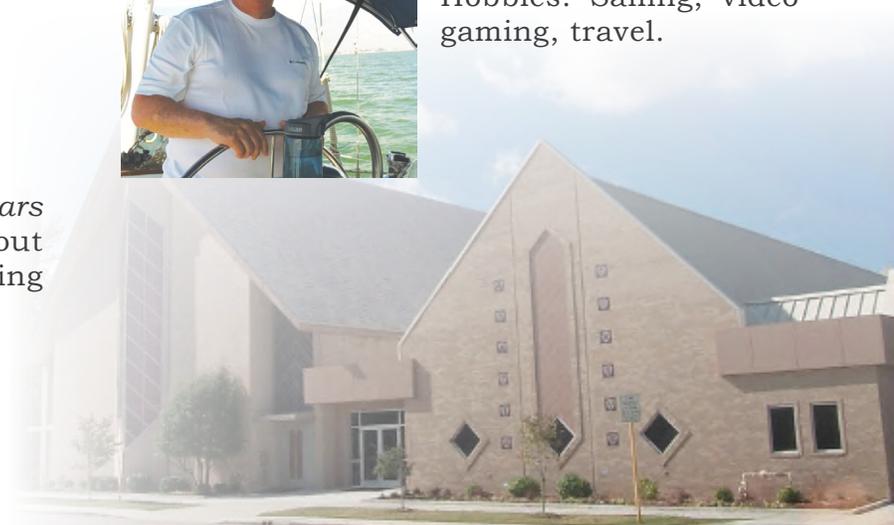
Teka Buesser
Director of MDO – 6 years
Favorite thing about working here: Making a difference in the lives of the children and their families.



Deacon Jerry Rutherford
Business Manager – over 4 years
Hobbies: Sailing, video gaming, travel.



Ritagail Burleson
Bulletin Editor – 17 years
Favorite thing about working here: Laughing together.



A Letter From Our Pastor

Understanding God's Gift of Time

Dear Parishioners,

With the arrival of August, I find myself reflecting on what a strange summer this has been. Of course, some of us have done our best to enjoy a “staycation” at home, while focusing on the positive during this unprecedented — and often stressful — time. Nevertheless, August also means that many of us start the transition back to our fall routines.

I once heard a quote from a psychologist who said time seems to pass more quickly as we get older because we’re experiencing fewer “firsts.” When we’re continually experiencing new things, time tends to stand still while we’re living them. After we’ve repeated those events numerous times, they don’t faze us much anymore — and before we know it, months have passed, seasons have changed, and it’s time to start the annual cycle again.

Yet, we should not allow our time to be something that simply evades our grasp, trickling through our fingers. After all, time itself — every moment on this earth — is a gift from God. We each have 24 hours today and seven days this week to use however we please.

At this point in time, let us reflect on how we chose to use our time during this pandemic. Did



we set aside time to pray? Did we spend additional time with our family? Have we allowed for time to serve others? Did we devote time each day to serve God?

When we assess the use of our time, we must make a spiritual examination — “Have I been a good steward of the time given to me?” Maybe now is a good time to make some changes in our lives. There is no better time than right now to seek out ways to grow closer to

God. This is what it means to be a good steward!

As the last days of this most unusual summer hopefully give way to the activity of fall, remember to keep God in your hearts, in your minds, and on your tongue as we continue our stewardship journey as a parish family.

Please pray for me as I continue to pray for all of you. God is good all the time, all the time God is good!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. John O'Neill".

Fr. John O'Neill
Pastor



THE VOLUNTEER GRANT PRO

Parishioner and school mom Elise Enterkin had been volunteering at St. John School for years before she heard about Phillips 66 Volunteer Grant program. Since she and her husband were already putting in extensive time volunteering at the school, she thought, “Why not apply and get potential funding, as well?”

“We ended up hearing about the program from another Phillips 66 family and several school families — myself, the Durrells, and the Bierschenks, among others — decided it was a great opportunity that we ought to take advantage of, as well as encourage everyone who was eligible to participate in,” Elise says. “In the period from August to December

alone, myself and Cristina Durrell maxed out our volunteer grants. That’s \$8,000 that went to the school from just two people! Imagine how much more we could bring in if even 10 families applied for volunteer grants.”

Elise says that any Phillips 66 employee, retiree or spouse is eligible to participate in the volunteer grant program. Individuals are awarded \$500 for every 20 hours of service done for an eligible 501(c)(3) non-profit while teams of four or more can apply for grants of \$1,000. Participating individuals can raise as much as \$4,000 each year per person or \$8,000 per couple.

“Participants keep track of their volunteer



PROGRAM: A TRUE “WIN-WIN” SITUATION

hours, and use their log in at phillips66.yourcause.com to log their hours,” Elise says. “Payments from P66 are made quarterly [April, July, October, and December] and applicants have until Jan. 31 to log hours for the prior year.”

Elise says that participating in the volunteer grant program is truly a win-win for the school. First, it motivates parents and community members to pitch in at the school, giving of their time, talent and treasure in a wide variety. This collectively helps ensure the long-term success of St. John Catholic School.

“There are opportunities for everyone,” Elise says. “We have parents that come in and do supplemental math or read books with students. Others help with more mundane tasks like photocopying. Oftentimes, my own volunteer hours are done after my kids are in bed. I’ll sit at my kitchen table and put packets together, or work on tallying fundraising money. Not very glamorous, but it’s something that needs to be done and fits my schedule.”

The volunteer grant program helps provide an incentive for volunteerism while also helping the school further by providing needed funding for school updates and maintenance, new curriculums, technology, and more.

“Most recently, we used funds from the volunteer grants to purchase items such as STEAM materials for the classrooms — art supplies, books and even more mundane items such as organizational materials for the classrooms,” Elise says. “We’ve had families allocate volunteer grants to go towards bringing special events and speakers to the school.

Families can also designate the money go towards the school’s general fund.”

As a parent with young children, Elise says it’s easy to feel overwhelmed by life’s obligations. When this happens, the temptation is to let oneself off the hook when it comes to serving, pushing it off onto someone else, or waiting until we’re older and will have more time. But the truth is, that the perfect time doesn’t really exist. Part of stewardship is taking that leap of faith and doing our part, even when it’s difficult or stretches us.

“I view volunteering as a way to put my faith into action,” Elise says. “We are all capable of small actions. As St. Therese teaches us, our small works can be manifestations of our love for God and each other.”

That’s why Elise encourages school parents and parishioners to get involved, whether you are eligible for the Phillips 66 volunteer grant program or not. No matter who you are, no matter what your age or stage in life, there is something you can do to help strengthen our St. John Catholic School.

“If you are looking for your call to volunteer, here it is,” Elise says. “If you are unsure of what you can do to help, just ask. If you are a retiree and have time to come read a book to the kindergarten class, we would love to have you. If you love to bake and can help make treats for teacher appreciation week, we would greatly appreciate it. Teenagers and young adults are also welcome to help. When the younger children see teenagers, young adults, parents and grandparents volunteering, they are better able to visualize themselves one day filling these roles.”

If you would like more information about the volunteer grant program and volunteering in general at St. John School, please contact Elizabeth Thrash, Director of Development and Mission Advancement, at ethrash@sjcs-ok.org.

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

FORMING A CONSCIENCE AND MORAL CODE

As Christians, it is important that we recognize the difference between right and wrong — both morally and ethically. Sometimes, though, this line can become blurred.

Many situations we encounter in our lives include variables that can leave us internally conflicted and unsure of how to move forward in accordance with God's will.

So, how do we work through these moral conundrums? One way is to develop a solid Christian conscience.

A moral conscience exists in the heart of every individual. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking. Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed" (1777, 1778).

Think of your conscience as the "angelic" version of yourself sitting on your shoulder, giving you sound advice.

While everyone is blessed with a conscience, each individual has a responsibility to develop this conscience from the time they are young. Parents obviously play an important role in developing their children's consciences. As the primary educators of their children on ethical issues and the Catholic faith, parents have a responsibility to teach virtue to their children and help them to avoid



fear, selfishness and pride. As we grow older, we take on the lifelong challenge of continually forming our own consciences, and establishing a moral code that enables us to make the proper judgments.

One valuable tool in forming a conscience is the practice of introspection. "It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience" (CCC 1779). In contemporary society, where there are so many distractions and routines, it

is extremely important that we take the time to look inward and truly listen to what our inner voice is telling us.

Another way to ensure we are developing a good moral code is by conforming to the mind of Christ. God the Father gave us Christ, physically present on this earth and recorded in Sacred Scripture, as the ultimate example of what to do and how to behave according to God's will. In turn, when we act in loving imitation of Christ, we are certain to make practical judgments of conscience.

The next time you are faced with a moral dilemma, take some quiet time to look inward, weigh the positive and negative outcomes, and listen to the voice of your conscience. Read the Gospels for examples of Christ's teachings. By making this a regular practice, you will find that the voice of your conscience will come in louder and more clearly than you may have initially expected.

Congratulations TO OUR CONFIRMATION STUDENTS!

We congratulate all of our young adults who were confirmed on June 17. Please keep our youth in your continued prayers, that the Spirit will work through them in their personal faith journey.



St. John BEFORE THE LATIN GATE



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New Staff Members continued from front cover

been awesome!” she says. “They have been so kind and welcoming. It’s been fantastic!”

As the comfort level for face-to-face meetings grows, Janice looks forward to personally meeting more parishioners.

Ashlee Elmore returned home in February to St. John Before the Latin Gate and her family in Bartlesville to take on the role of parish Music Director. Her relationship with music began very early in life, as she began singing in public at 5 and started piano lessons at age 6. Ashlee received a bachelor’s degree in Choral Conducting and Vocal and Instrumental Music Education in 2001, when she began her role as Elementary Music Specialist, Middle School Choir Conductor and Assistant Band director at Dewey Public Schools.

In 2004, she began Elmore Music Instruction, a private music education program. She has taught voice, piano and guitar to over 600 students since the program’s inception, which continues to this day.

That year, she also began a four-year stint as St. John Catholic Church’s Saturday Mass Music Director. In 2008 she left to pursue her Master’s Degree in Music Education, which she received in 2010 at the University of Oklahoma. Ashlee moved to San Francisco in 2019 to help found a musical theatre program.

Now back at St. John Before the Latin Gate, Ashlee is in charge of all music planning for each of the three weekend Masses. She will train and rehearse with the Mass cantors, although there currently is no congregational singing. At this time she is playing piano for the weekend Masses, and singing the Communion song.

“I have a background in various types of church music, traditional to contemporary, and I have served in Catholic, Presbyterian, and Unitarian churches,” she says.

As we return to parish life, let us offer Janice and Ashlee our welcome and support as they enter their new roles with us.

..... LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday: 5 p.m. | **Sunday:** 8 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. (en Español)

Tuesday: 7 a.m. (chapel) | **Wednesday:** 5:15 p.m. (church) | **Thursday:** 7 a.m. (chapel), 7 p.m. (en Español)

Friday: 8:15 a.m. (church during school year/non-school days in chapel)

Reconciliation: Saturday: 4-4:45 p.m. | Sunday: 12:30-1:15 p.m.