2019 is a big year for St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Parish for it marks our 60th Anniversary as a parish! We hope that you will join us on September 21st, as we celebrate 60 Years of Spreading the Gospel!

We have grown a lot since 1959, when the first Masses in our parish were celebrated at Lincoln Elementary School and moving later to a small, temporary structure at 296 Rocky Fork Drive South in Gahanna. (The structure is no longer existing, but the location is approximately where Christian Center Church currently stands, near the entrance to the Big Walnut Creek Trail.)

Although our parish began with only 256 families (compared to over 2,200 currently), it was as active then as we are now! The parish immediately began offering the Sacraments, of course, but the congregation also quickly got to work building community. Early records kept by the Altar and Rosary Society report that the first bulletin from the new parish was issued on November 8, 1959, and that a clothing drive was announced at the same time. Also, in late 1959, a youth choir and a sewing group were formed, the Women’s Club held their first bake sale (making $132.15), and Euchre Parties were held at Lincoln Elementary.

By 1960, the parish had begun 40-Hour Devotions, had held a bazaar (making approximately $1,500.00), had inaugurated the Diocesan Development Fund (now called the Bishop’s Annual Appeal), had hosted a Fish Dinner at the VFW, had instituted a Rosary and Benediction service, and had begun catechetical instruction for high school students. Also that year, the men of the parish held their 1st Annual Chicken Barbeque and organized a $1,000.00 raffle that was held every six weeks.

From the very beginning, our parish has had the same mission: “As a community of believers who know, love, and serve Jesus Christ, we celebrate the sacramental life of the Church, proclaim the saving message of Christ, and share the love of the Lord, especially with the least, the poor, and the suffering.” In short, since our founding in 1959, we have been a people who worship, serve, and evangelize.

We are proud of our tradition and of our role in the Gahanna, Blacklick, and Pataskala communities, but our focus always and forever remains not on our achievements, but on spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are grateful for the support of our parishioners, all of whom work together with their prayers, time, talent, and treasure to ensure the future of our parish.

On September 21, the Feast of St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist, we will welcome Bishop Brennan for a special Mass of Celebration at 5:00 p.m., in acknowledgement of our parish’s 60 Years of Spreading the Gospel. We hope you will join us at Mass and then at a Parish Picnic following Mass.

We will also be having an Open House for the community on October 12, 1:00-3:00 p.m., and we will welcome anyone who would like a tour of our church or who would like more information about our parish. Both parishioners and non-parishioners/non-Catholics are welcome to attend!

St. Matthew the Apostle, pray for us!

Fr. Ted
EXULT
by Julie Ratliff

Our St. Matthew Parish community is blessed with many opportunities to gather in prayer, primarily when we gather as a community for the Holy Mass, our central act of worship. Additionally, St. Matthew has evenings of prayer for the Church, our nation, and monthly first Friday and first Saturday community Rosaries.

“Exult” is another impactful event which brings the charismatic “Praise and Worship” prayer into harmony with Adoration of the Eucharist. Each second Saturday of the month, parishioners gather to reverence Our Eucharistic Lord, to worship as we offer Him songs of Praise and encounter Him in a time of extended silence.

Here are testimonies from one of our St. Matthew teens and a recently married couple who regularly join us for Exult:

“Before I encountered “Praise and Worship,” I often viewed prayer as a chore. Whenever I knelt down to pray, I rushed through my Hail Mary as fast as possible and simply went on through the rest of my day, not ever taking time in my prayer to encounter the Lord nor attempting to understand what I was saying in my prayers. It was not until I was able to encounter prayer in a manner which inspired me to look deeper into what I was saying and whom I was saying it to, that I truly encountered our Lord. ‘Praise and Worship’ meets me where I am in my prayer life; it rouses within me a desire to encounter the Lord. I am now able to encounter the Lord through all forms of prayer, and I truly believe I would not have been able to reach this point of authentic encounter had I not had the opportunity to experience the prayer of praise and worship.”

“Praise and worship has been an essential part of our two years of marriage. We have learned that in order to stay unified as husband and wife, we must first be individually unified with God. In the craziness of our daily lives, this can be easier said than done. We have both found praise and worship to be an incredible way to connect with God. Praying with the words of the songs has always reminded us of how great He is, and allowed Him to speak truth into our own hearts using those same words. In these encounters with God, He has given us amazing amounts of peace and direction in times of anxiety, patience with one another, and freedom from the heaviness of life’s burdens. Come see for yourself! He loves you and will be there.”

This fall’s Exult Evenings will be September 14, October 12 and November 9, in the main church from 7:30-8:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to join us in prayer for all or some of the hour!

LETTER TO A SUFFERING CHURCH
by Pat Martin

In this pastoral letter, Bishop Robert Barron expresses his personal pain and outrage at the sexual abuse crisis in the Church. He issues what he calls “a cry from the heart” that we not leave the Church because of this crisis, but rather that we “stand and fight” not only for the Church, but also for the victims of this abuse.

While not minimizing the severity of the current crisis, Bishop Barron reminds us that from its beginning the Church has been beset by “sin, scandal, stupidity, misbehavior, misfortune and wickedness.” The teaching point is the fact that the Church has survived despite this behavior, proving that it is guided by the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, surely the Church would have destroyed itself.

A recent survey showed that 37% of Catholics are considering leaving the Church because of the scandal and many others have already left. Why should we stay? Certainly not because the Church leaders are perfect!

We should stay because:

The Church continues to speak about God in an increasingly Godless culture.

The Church reminds us of Jesus’ sacrificial love, death and resurrection.

The continued existence of the Church despite scandals assures us of the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Sacraments.

The saints, many of whom arose to reform and defend the Church in difficult times.

We can stand for the victims by demanding accountability from Church leaders for protection of the vulnerable.

Where else can we go – “Lord you have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:66-68)

But most of all, we stay because of the Eucharist, Christ Himself present to us every day on the altar and in the tabernacle. Nowhere and nothing else offers that.

Copies of Bishop Barron’s book are available in the church office, from wordonfire.org and Amazon.
CATHOLIC KIDS CAMP

This year’s Catholic Kids Camp was a huge hit! Our Cool Kingdom Party focused on Mary, the Queen of Heaven and Earth, and how she brings us closer to Jesus, our King. Through crafts, dance and song, games, saint station, and a faith station – students learned of Mary’s importance in our lives. A theme, Bible verse, challenge, and a virtue were introduced each day that highlighted Mary’s purity, obedience, faith, love, and joy.

The 1st through 5th Graders also got to meet a new saint each day in the Mary garden and Preschoolers were introduced to the Saint of the day through puppet shows. Everyone learned how much each Saint loved Mary, how she drew them closer to Jesus, how they loved Jesus and helped build the Kingdom of God. Our saints included: St. Dominic Savio, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Joseph, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Teresa of Calcutta. We concluded Our Cool Kingdom Party week with Fr. Peter leading us in a consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Together in Christ kickoff will be September 8th, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. We will have food, fellowship and a few surprises. All high schoolers are welcome!

PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION...AND WE ARE BACK!
by Ashley Hettinger

PSR begins September 8th with our 1st of four Family Nights located in the PAC Gym. Reminder that parent attendance is required for our Family Nights throughout the year. Families – please do not arrive any earlier than 5:45 p.m. for the evening. At Family Night, we’ll get started by talking about our focus for the year, some friendly reminders about PSR, and students will get a chance to meet their teacher, see their room, and meet their classmates! We’re excited for another year in PSR and we hope you are, too. Thank you to all parents for continuing your child’s religious education in your home and at St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Parish. We’ll see you soon!
It is with great enthusiasm that we begin the 2019-2020 academic year at St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School. There are so many things to look forward to this year with new leadership and several new faculty members. Each member of our team is ready to serve students in forming them academically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School continues to serve well over 600 students, providing each child with a rigorous academic path, strong spiritual foundation, and life-long learning targets. Moreover, our students, with the support of master teachers, exceptional support staff, and superior parental guidance, forge a community relationship for life-long learning. Our students continue to be at the top of their class, ready to be successful in a fast-paced, ever-changing world.

The St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic community is one of the strongest spiritual, harmonious, and giving Parishes in the area. We are so blessed to be able to continue offering exceptional programming, resources, and support for our students. This is due to outstanding leadership, spiritual guidance, and unwavering love, support, and giving from our Parish community.

On behalf of the St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School faculty and staff, we thank all community stakeholders and Parish members for your generosity, prayers, and support. May we continue to serve our children and raise them up in the image of our loving Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ,
Mark S. Oppenheimer, Principal
St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School

Thanks to all who helped make this year’s Festival a success! We would like to extend a special thanks to our Committee for spending many volunteer hours in making this Festival an enjoyable event for all. Also, this event would not have been possible without many additional volunteers from the parish. St. Matthew Festival earned over $36,000.00 this year! Proceeds from the Festival help to keep PSR tuition at an affordable rate, and also helps fund activities at our St. Matthew Catholic School. This is a great opportunity to celebrate friendships, make new friends, and promote our St. Matthew community. Please consider getting involved in the ministry. Feel free to email stmatthewparishfestival@gmail.com with inquiries.

Amy and Tom Minser,
2019 Festival First Chairs

WELCOME NEW ST. MATTHEW THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS

Stephanie Paul-Tiberio – Assistant Principal
Jacqueline Hinkel – Pre-K Teacher
Melissa Mengos – 6th/7th Grade ELA Teacher
Michele Telerski-Rees – Librarian/Media Specialist
Kristen Smith – Technology Coordinator
Sara Combs – Tutor
Ruth Friedman – School Counselor
Robin Kuhns – Latchkey Director
Rebecca Hogan – Pre-K Aide
Michelle Gegorski – Kindergarten Aide (Tate)
Beth Ryan – 2nd Grade Aide (Sanders)
Ariana Yokum – 2nd Grade Aide (Amweg)
Nancy Daily – 3rd Grade Aide (Macioce)
Leanne Chiavacci – 7th Grade Aide (Forker/Mengos)
OUR PILGRIMAGE TO TANZANIA
by ?

In May four pilgrims, Mary Humphrey, Carol Ann Lombardi, Yvonne and Ted Deibel, set off to meet Fr. Peter Asantebwana in his homeland of Tanzania. Each of us had different reasons and different expectations for this trip but we all had a desire to see and learn more about Africa and especially Fr. Peter’s home.

We landed at the Kilimanjaro airport and stayed at the Mwenge Retreat Center just outside of Moshi, the third largest city in Tanzania. This was our base for the majority of our stay and is a facility for retired priests and a retreat center for the Diocese of Moshi. During our stay a group of nursing students from Walsh University and environmental students from Washington University also stayed at the center. We exchanged plans for our day or experiences of the day with them over breakfast or dinner in the dining room. Our meals prepared for us over fire and served by the sisters consisted of seasonal fruit, sweet bananas were a constant, greens, kuku (chicken), beef, pork, rice and usually a sweet potato (different from those we have here).

Prior to our trip Fr. Peter had prepared a meal for us so that we would have an idea of what our meals would be like and though different from how we cook. Everything was delicious.

Fr. also tried to prepare us for the lack of reliable electricity, running (hot) water and the possibility to master the “bucket” bath! Our experience with all of these definitely made us grateful for those mornings when the water and power were both up and running!

Fr. Peter was our host, guide, interpreter and friend on our journey, as well as our Priest. We started most mornings with Mass at the retreat center. Mass was just Fr. Peter and us at the altar used by Pope St. John Paul II during his 1990 visit to Tanzania. On other days, we celebrated Mass at different parishes within the Moshi Diocese. We visited over 20 parishes, several convents, two seminaries, two hospitals/clinics, a college, a special needs school, and an orphanage. No matter where we traveled, we were always welcomed with smiles, special handshakes, open arms, and warm hospitality (which always included food and refreshments).

We met and shared a meal with Fr. Peter’s family and Carol Ann was privileged to spend the night with them. When we picked her up the next morning, we were off once again to visit another parish, where the parish priest shared with us his writings and a book he had written, as well as his love of music.

We were also blessed to have Fr. Philbert (Fr. Peter’s brother) join us on our three-day safari. Before we left, we were able to visit his parish and the three outstations that are part of his parish’s responsibilities.

There is so much more to share with you, the muddy roads (our visit was during their rainy season), the crowded markets, the amazing joy that we experienced from the people. So please stop us and ask questions of our stay, we all love talking about it. We received so much more than any of us expected. God blessed us greatly and we have all been enriched by Fr. Peter’s homeland. It was amazing to see our Catholic faith full and alive and so lived-out with these beautiful people.
LEDGER STAFF SPOTLIGHT
Michelle Dougherty, Communications Coordinator

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself.
A: My husband, Mike, and I have been parishioners at St. Matthew since 2003 when we moved here from Milwaukee, WI to start work at Ohio Dominican University. He is a philosophy professor, and I am an English professor, although I only teach 1-2 courses per year, in addition to working here at the parish. We have three children, all of whom attend St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School: Thomas (12), Benedict (10), and Cecilia (8).

Q: What is your role?
A: I am the Communications Coordinator at Saint Matthew. I manage all of our social media, the Gathering Space monitor, the website, and any other communications or marketing needs that the parish has.

Q: What do you like most about St. Matthew?
A: I really appreciate the way the parish has challenged me to grow in my faith. Although I’ve been Catholic my whole life, things like chanting at Mass or attending Eucharistic Adoration were pretty foreign to me a few years ago, but now I love both. I also really like the way the parish offers something for everyone. My family has gotten to know some amazing people by participating in various ministries here at St. Matthew, and, because we’ve been involved in so many different ways, I feel like a part of the community here. While I know we’re a big parish and it can be hard to get to know people, I always encourage people to become involved. It doesn’t take long to feel like you belong once you meet and pray with other parishioners!

Q: What are you involved with at St. Matthew?
A: The greatest blessing to me over the past few years has been Walking with Purpose. I feel so fortunate for this opportunity to talk, pray, and laugh with so many amazing women here at St. Matthew! I also like singing with the choir when I can (mostly just for special occasions), and my two younger children have sung with the youth choir for the past few years. My oldest son is an altar server, and he also attended Camp KRIC for the first time this summer. All of my kids have regularly attended Catholic Kids Camp, either as campers or volunteers. My husband regularly presents at RCIA and has participated in That Man is You in the past.

Q: What are some things about you that might surprise us?
A: I have a Ph.D. in 18th-century British literature, and I specialized in women writers from the later part of the 18th century and into the 19th century when I was in grad school at Marquette University. I do love Jane Austen, but I also love reading the women authors who came before her (and there were lots!). I still enjoy teaching when I can so I can get back to the literature I love!

Q: Anything else we should know?
A: I love my job here at the parish. We are celebrating our 60th anniversary as a parish this year, and it’s been so fun for me to look at old pictures and documents from the parish as I’ve been learning about our community. We are doing amazing things at St. Matthew, and it’s so uplifting to see the Holy Spirit working here!

Welcome to Our Recently Baptized!

Jesse Francis Suhocki
Ayla Beth Zebreski
Reiah Sarah Aklibosu
Aubrey Lynn Baine
Leila Rose Banfield
Delaney Rayne Dietrich
Justina Ann Fitzmartin
Lucy Lourdes Porter
Ivy Rose Martin
Margaret Jo Alford
James Stephen Ventura
Jonathan Albert Bowden
Robert Ryan Mancini
Francesca Anne Smith
Emily Marie Hess
Flint Michael Tabern
Kaylee Skylar Bihn
Theodore James Jackowski
Ruth Alice Runion
Andrew Jude Urda
Lucas Michael Urda
Jrose Mareann Maves
Ikechukwu Gospel
Ekeanyanwu
Jay Christopher Nau
Sebastian Grayson Parker

Congratulations to Melina McSweeney, who was awarded the Donald Barcza Memorial Scholarship at the annual Bishop’s Gold Classic Reception.
WHERE IN THE WORLD DID YOU GO TO MASS?
Are you traveling in the next few months? Share a photo of where your family went to Mass!
Send it to Karen Lackey at klackey@stmatthew.net.

The Gebharts attended Nuestra Señora del Carmen In Playa Del Carmen – Jessica and Rebecca Gebhart also practiced their Spanish with a group of Mexican nuns who made some phenomenal ice pops made from real coconut and blueberries for sale after Mass to raise money for charity and their convent.

The Lantz’s attended Maria Lanakil Catholic Church in Maui.

The Miller Family attended Kateri Tekakwitha Church in Northport Michigan.

Mason Barr (and family) attended St. Patrick in Washington, D.C.

The Bernard Family attended Saint Mark, the Evangelist church Westley Chaple, Florida
St. Matthew Mission Statement

As a community of believers who know, love, and serve Jesus Christ, we celebrate the sacramental life of the Church, proclaim the saving message of Christ, and share the love of the Lord, especially with the least, the poor, and the suffering.