



Saint Joseph's | Immaculate Conception | Holy Name Of Mary

Who's Who at Avon Thames Catholic Family of Parishes?

Our Family of Parishes was just getting organized and Covid 19 became our new reality. As our staff stepped up to the challenges of dealing with a pandemic, there was little time for introductions of the existing staff, new members, their positions and related duties. We thought a newsletter would be a great way to provide that information and tell you a little bit about Clergy and the Staff Members of the Avon – Thames Catholic Family of Parishes.



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2020

Our Pastor ~ Rev. David Butler



I just recently became the pastor of the newly formed Avon-Thames Catholic Family of Parishes. What is a Pastor? A pastor is a priest who has been entrusted by the local bishop with the care of souls within a particular geographic area; for me, that is Stratford and St. Marys area. The pastor's role is to promote the faithful's spiritual welfare by preaching, administering the sacraments, teaching and governance. I know a big responsibility, right! However, I do not have to do it alone. During my tenure as your pastor, I will be collaborating with the parish team and you, the faithful people. I hope that with your prayers and support, we can develop a vision and mission that will help us live our baptismal call of evangelization and making disciples.

How will this happen? Over the past ten years of priesthood, I have learned more and more to let go and let God. As your pastor, I will rely on the grace of God, who reminds me that "my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9). It is a great joy to serve you as a pastor, and I look forward to seeing where the Holy Spirit will lead.

Our Associate Pastor ~ Rev. Christopher Pietraszko



As associate pastor my call from the Bishop is to assist Fr. David Butler in his vision for Avon-Thames Catholic Family of Parishes in regard to the three-fold ministry of the ordained priesthood: To teach, to Sanctify, and to Govern. This threefold ministry is ultimately tied to the Church's mission to make disciples and evangelize under the particular leadership of the Bishop, in communion with the Universal Magisterium. In the 8 years I've been ordained I hope one day to be entrusted with the responsibility of pastor, yet I am joyful to be a priest in any circumstance. My passion is to work towards teaching a clear message of the gospel, and demonstrating the intelligence of the Church's teaching in regard to all of Her exhortations. I continue to have a learned passion for the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas and consider myself his disciple when it comes to theology and philosophy.

Business Manager ~ Nancy Bomasuit

I am a lifelong resident of Stratford and area and have been a member of all three parishes in our Family and also a support staff member at Holy Name of Mary for 10 years. My professional career has spanned 25 years in the not-for-profit sector as an association executive. I was employed for 12 years as the General Manager of the Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce, 8 years as an Area Manager for the Heart and Stroke Foundation and also served as Executive Director of ShelterLink. Some of my professional affiliations over the years have been as President of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Executives, Chair of the Ontario Chamber's Tourism Committee, Curriculum Development Chair for the Chamber of Commerce Executives of Canada for the Canadian Institute for Organization Management and also a founding director of the Rotary Club of Festival City Stratford. The development of the Business Manager's position in the new family of parishes is "a work in progress" but the ultimate goal is to oversee the business operations of the three parishes with regard to property, human resources and general management of day-to-day needs. My background in the private sector along with member-service and volunteer-driven organizations gives me a unique perspective and equips me for the work of our parish family as we move forward through this time of change and challenge. But with all change and challenge comes opportunity - opportunity to use our God-given gift of creativity to work together as a mission-focused church as we move toward the future in love and faith. Hebrews 11:1 **11** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Administrative Assistant ~ Mary Chisholm

Married to Ken for 35 years, Mum to 5 beautiful children and Grandma to 2 wee ones. Born and raised in Stratford and a member of St. Joseph's Parish all my life. Studied business with the University of Waterloo and currently enrolled in theology and catechetical courses through the University of Dayton, OH, who partners with our Diocese. I have had the privilege of being a member of the Parish team at St. Joseph's and Immaculate Conception churches for 14 years and am thrilled to now to be part of Holy Name of Mary Parish and the new Avon Thames Catholic Family of Parishes. I am committed to supporting and servicing our parishioners as office administrative assistant. Helping with sacramental preparation and meeting families, chatting with our beautiful senior parishioners, assisting our priests and deacon, and responding to needs and questions is all such a joy for me and I consider myself very blessed to help build up God's Kingdom in this way. While our Parish team is changing and evolving our commitment to being the hands, feet, eyes, ears and heart of Jesus remains steadfast.

Bookkeeper ~ Maureen Marcelissen

I am privileged to hold the position of bookkeeper for the Avon Thames Family of Parishes. Our family of five moved to Stratford 38 years ago, grew to a family of seven and we have been Parishioners in this Family of Parishes since then. Our children received most of their Sacraments at St. Joseph's and now our grandchildren celebrate here too. Before we became a Family of Parishes I was the bookkeeper for Holy Name of Mary Parish in St. Marys. As the bookkeeper for the Family of Parishes I am charged with the responsibility of making sure that all of our financial records are kept in orderly and complete fashion, government reports are completed accurately and in a timely manner. Since Covid it has been very busy but also very satisfying to be working with the staff in the office. I feel truly blessed to work with the Pastoral staff and the Administrative staff in the Avon Thames Family of Parishes.

Music Coordinator ~ Amanda Vander Ploeg

It is with much joy and excitement that I begin in this new role of Music Coordinator. As a wife and mom of 2 boys (Samuel 13 & Benjamin 11 years old), music has always played an integral part in my life. My passion for music and singing led me to pursue a degree in Music. For the past 15 years, I have been a member of the St Cecelia Choir and a Cantor. Currently, I am preparing Liturgical music schedules for all masses and special celebrations including cantors and choirs at Immaculate Conception & St Joseph's Parishes. I am the liaison for our Pastor, Fr David, with the Choir leaders and musicians at Holy Name of Mary Parish. While we continue to record a weekly Liturgy of the Word, I will ensure there are musicians and readers present. I am here to support and serve our thriving music ministry. There is so much talent and commitment here and I'm looking forward to praising our Lord together! Someday, Lord willing, we will sing together again!

"I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble."

Psalm 59:16

Organist St. Joseph's / Immaculate Conception ~ Anna Checinska

I have been the Principal Organist and Accompanist at St. Joseph's and Immaculate Conception churches. For the past 32 years I have enjoyed working with the choirs, soloists and cantors to "... help enhance the celebrations of the liturgy "as quoted about music ministry by Howard Galloway (1910-1994), dedicated Choir Director at St. Joseph's church.

Organist Holy Name of Mary ~ Anita Ruthig

In 1986 Father Charles Campbell contacted me. He was looking for an organist for the Saturday evening mass. I was working at the time as organist and choir director of 3 choirs at St Marys United Church.

I agreed to play at Holy Name of Mary on Saturday and for one year I played at 2 churches.

Since 1987 I have played at Holy Name of Mary Catholic Church. I led the Saturday Congregational hymn singing and also performed solo as cantor, especially during Easter Vigil etc. When the organist of the 9 a.m. Mass retired I took over and became director of the St. Augustine choir. Fr. Ross Bartley asked me to start a children's choir which I directed for 11 years (St. Cecilia Choir). I am still enjoying every minute of making music and praising our Lord.



Part-time Secretary / Housekeeper ~ Elizabeth Manto

Early in our marriage my husband and I were fortunate enough to move to Stratford. We found a warm welcome to both our new city and a vibrant faith community at St. Joseph's. I enjoyed those early years as a stay-at-home mother to our two daughters while doing some volunteer work at their school and participating in a small faith group. As my family got older I started looking for a job just as the parish was seeking a housekeeper. I have been working as a housekeeper here for the last 17 years and I enjoy being of service to our priests. I also work in the office as the parish secretary part of the week. It has been a pleasure to speak with so many parishioners both by phone and in person. I hope to have the opportunity to meet many more of you!

Custodian St. Joseph's Parish ~ Brian Bambrough

I have proudly been the Custodian at St Joseph's for just over two years now and it has been such a blessing to my family. I am married and have 3 children all at home. I worked at Shurgain in St. Marys for 19 years as a forklift driver. Our family is heavily involved in minor sports in the town of Mitchell where we live. My daughters are in ringette, my son in hockey and my wife is on the Executive Board for Mitchell Ringette. I am the chauffeur and sports equipment manager. I enjoy my work here at St. Joseph's and I hope to continue to work hard for the parish for years to come. Feel free to let me know if there is anything that needs to be taken care of.

Custodian Holy Name of Mary/Immaculate Conception ~ Michael Lynch

I am blessed to have been given the opportunity to work within the Avon Thames Catholic Family of Parishes as the Custodian at Immaculate Conception and Holy Name of Mary. I retired last year from the London District Catholic School Board where I was the Consultant for Special Education. I knew when I retired that I was too young to completely stop working and that I would eventually find a new career, I just didn't know what it was! Then one day, my wife Tammy mentioned she had run into someone from Church. With the whole COVID thing going on, I decided to go online and read the bulletin to get caught up. I saw the ad for this position, and immediately thought what a great fit, and the rest is history. The Lord truly does work in mysterious ways!

