

OUR LADY

Star of the Sea

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Inside Look at Our Music Ministry

Enhancing the Liturgy

With the Gift of God-Given Talents

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Where would our Christmas season be without beloved songs like "Silent Night" or "Joy to the World"? Setting the mood for the season, these songs fill our hearts with joy, eliciting treasured memories of past Christmases and lifting up our spirits in anticipation for Christ's birth. Music Director Jim Goodell says this is the great power of music that, particularly in a liturgical sense, elevates our souls and prepares our hearts during the Advent season.

"As in all other liturgical seasons, our music is prayerfully discerned based on the readings and liturgy guides," Jim says. "Thus, in Advent, our music complements the themes of preparing the Way of the Lord and recognizing Mary and Joseph's 'Yes' to the Lord's plan for salvation. Then, later in the Christmas season, the music complements the hope that Jesus' birth represents and the love our Lord has shown in giving of Himself in this amazing way."

The role of the liturgical musician, then, is not to perform, but rather to humbly submit his or her musical talents at the foot of the Lord to help enhance the Mass. Jim says the musicians' persona is consequently critical, allowing the ministry to lead the liturgical music with both sincerity and excellence.



Whether your particular talent is playing an instrument or vocals, there is a place for you here at Our Lady Star of the Sea.



Inside Look at Our Music Ministry *continued from front cover*



Some of our youngest liturgical musicians lift their songs to the Lord.

“We must lead with musical excellence, but more importantly, we must believe the words,” Jim says. “We must show the impact through our voices and expressions, always with joy, sincerity and conviction. This must be shown both before and after the Masses, for we are not simply musicians. We are missionary disciples actively growing in our faith and sharing that faith with all we meet.”

To assist them in this process, Jim says that each liturgical cantor, musician and choir utilizes the prayer acronym P.A.L. before, after, and during liturgies. They begin by *praising* the Lord, recognizing their love and appreciation for His many blessings. Then there is an opportunity for them to *ask*, petitioning the Lord’s help for themselves and their loved ones. Then finally, musicians cultivate an attitude of *listening* in the quiet time before, during and after the Masses so that they may become more in tune with the Lord’s will.



Some of the Our Lady Star of the Sea musicians and singers, who enjoy the opportunity to joyfully lend their talents to Christ and His Church

Jim and his wife, Chris, who is his fellow Music Director, feel this element of prayer and reflection within the Music Ministry is essential. This is because it allows music ministers to continue growing through their service. It also helps remind them all that they are fellow sojourners on the road to holiness, and it ultimately assists them in achieving their heavenly goal.

“Our own formation has been greatly deepened by the sharing of experiences and testimonies within our musical family,” Jim says. “We will always be in ongoing formation, and we love that. Music is a great analogy; you are never done growing and learning as a singer. We also recognize that wherever we are on the journey, we need to bring others along with us. The Music Ministry has been a way for this as we gain encouragement through the Our Lady Star of the Sea community.”

If you have a musical talent, please prayerfully consider joining this beloved ministry after reviewing its mission, values and vision posted on the parish website at www.olsspvb.org/music-ministry-choir/. Right now, there is a particular need for additional volunteers for the 9 a.m. Joy Youth Ensemble, the 11 a.m. Chancel Choir, and the 5:30 p.m. Sunday Grace Band. To join or receive more information, please contact Jim Goodell directly at either 904-813-8132 or jgoodellperform@aol.com.



A Letter from Our Pastor

A Steward's Response to the Ultimate Christmas Gift

Dear Parishioners,

Christmas is America's favorite holiday. Consider for a moment the amount of effort we put into the holiday — decorating our homes with ornate light displays, buying boxes upon boxes of presents, addressing Christmas cards and attending seasonal get-togethers. When taken all together, it staggers the imagination. Whatever might happen to be next on the list of “favorite holidays” — Valentine's Day, Halloween or Thanksgiving — it can't hold a candle to our investment in Christmas.

I love Christmas, too, but I'm afraid that many of us somehow miss the main reason for our Christmas celebrations.

I've sometimes heard people say things like, “Getting everything ready for Christmas becomes so hectic, I don't want to do it every year. But, you know, Christmas is really for the children.” And occasionally, I've heard that Christmas is about the hope that a newborn baby brings to the world. Even in the early winter, when the days are short, we can celebrate babyhood, a new human life.

Both those sentiments are incomplete because they're too limited. Of course, it's true that many of our Christmas customs are for the children — we might not get to hang our stockings to be filled by Santa Claus otherwise. And it's true that the birth of a baby, any baby, brings joy and hope to all those around. Yes, many of our Christmas celebrations are centered on the children, and the birth of a child offers a promise for the future.



At Christmas, we celebrate not just any baby, but a particular baby. We celebrate His birth not because it's cute to see a baby in a manger filled with hay and surrounded by farm animals — instead, we celebrate this birth because of Who this baby is and what He did as an adult, for *all* of us.

A human baby is certainly a wonderful creation, made in the image of God. But Jesus is more than that, not less, for He is God the Son who took on human nature in order to redeem us from the results of the sin into which we had fallen. He didn't stay a baby. He grew up and taught and preached and healed. Finally, He was put to death “for our sake” as the Creed affirms and rose from the dead. That's why we celebrate

His birth more than 2,000 years later. That's why normal routines are suspended for a few joyful days each year.

In response to the gift the Father gave us with the birth of His Son, we joyfully exchange gifts with each other, share with the poor, and offer our gifts of time, talent and treasure to the Church. God gives to us — and as stewards, we must do our best to faithfully use those gifts.

A joyful and blessed Christmas to all of you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Keith Brennan
Pastor





MEET THE ALD

Reflecting Upon the “Ripple Ef

One of the most beautiful things about living as an intentional disciple is that we never know just how many people will be inspired by our example of active faith to walk more closely with Christ themselves. So often, when a parishioner is engaged in the stewardship way of life, their involvement can be traced back to an individual or family who invited them into parish life with an authentic love of faith and service.

For Kevin and Jill Alderfer, a warm welcome into the Music Ministry at Our Lady Star of the Sea set the stage for their complete immersion in parish life.

“When we first moved here from New Hampshire and came to Our Lady Star of the Sea in 2012, we met two of the kindest people we’ve ever known — the music directors, Jim and Chris Goodell,” Jill says. “They were so enthusiastic about their faith, so genuinely invested in serving their parish and the Lord, and they had developed a wonderful ministry for the teens. Kevin and I had a brand new baby, but immediately felt called to serve with the teens in the Grace Music Ministry. Jim and Chris welcomed us and gave us an opportunity to use our gifts of music to help lead Grace.”

In the years since, the Alderfers have added four more children to their family — newest addition Lucy is just two months old! While time is certainly at a premium for any family of seven, Kevin and Jill have continued to make participation in parish life a priority. The couple helped several other parishioners start our Youth Ministry in 2012, and both continue to assist with the ministry, with Jill serving as the assistant youth minister. They are still active in Music Ministry and have also participated in Christ Renews His Parish.

Kevin’s passion for helping guide teens on their walk with Christ stems from his own early experience with youth ministry.

“I will always remember the feeling I had when I first went to a youth ministry meeting as a teen,” he says. “It was an overwhelming feeling of acceptance and belonging. I continue to serve in youth ministry to this day because I know how



Jill and Kevin Alderfer with their four oldest children — (from left): Fin, Emelynne, Noah and Luke

important that was to me as a teen, and I hope I can help make other teens feel accepted for who they are as well.”

The Alderfers also have a personal connection to music ministry that keeps this form of service close to their hearts.

“Kevin and I met at the very spot we were married,” Jill says. “He played guitar in a contemporary music ministry with my best friend. When I graduated from college, I was looking to take my faith more seriously and decided to join their parish. Eventually I also began singing and playing keyboard for that music ministry. So it all started with a shared love of music and Jesus, and now we’ve been married for nine wonderful years!”



ALDERFER FAMILY: *Effect* of Intentional Discipleship



The Alderfers welcomed their fifth child, Lucy, in September 2019.

Now that the Alderfers' oldest child, Noah, is 8 years old, he has begun to show interest in following in his parents' footsteps by singing in the Youth Choir. He attends Faith Formation classes, and along with his younger siblings, enjoys participating in Family Ministry events.

Kevin and Jill pray that their example to the children will continue to keep them rooted in the faith for years to come.

"My faith is such a source of joy and wisdom, and informs everything I do," Kevin says. "I don't know where I would be without it, and I can't imagine not passing that joy down

to my kids. I feel that my whole purpose as a parent is to try to raise the next generation of saints."

Placing the faith at the center of their life together, the Alderfers have found their family life blessed and strengthened beyond measure.

"Serving in ministry together has been one of the best things we've ever done for our marriage and family," Jill says. "Sometimes it can seem like there isn't enough time, or that someone else would be better, but I can't emphasize enough that God always provides! If He wants you to serve, He will give you all the tools, time and resources you need."

Close to eight years ago, the Alderfers arrived as strangers at Our Lady Star of the Sea. Thanks to the warm welcome and invitation of our faith-filled parishioners, they have now become family. And as their own family continues to engage in parish life, the ripple effect of love and stewardship continues to grow.

"Being part of these ministries has been so inspiring," Jill says. "We are constantly surrounded by people of all ages who are true disciples of Christ and actively live their faith. Both music and youth ministry have had a profound impact on us. I couldn't imagine them not being a part of our lives now."

"Serving in ministry together has been one of the best things we've ever done for our marriage and family. Sometimes it can seem like there isn't enough time, or that someone else would be better, but I can't emphasize enough that God always provides! If He wants you to serve, He will give you all the tools, time and resources you need."

— JILL ALDERFER



Recognizing the Season of Advent, We Can Create Faithful and Loving Traditions

As the season of Christmas approaches, it is all too easy to get swept up in the frantic commercialism that tells us that Christmas is already happening — from now up until the 25th, and not a day more. To combat this misguided understanding, and to embrace what this time of year truly means, we might consider how to enter into the sacred quiet and careful preparation of the Advent season with our families.

Starting new Advent-centered traditions within our homes is a simple way to differentiate between the two seasons and embrace the grace that comes with this season of preparation. While hanging up the stockings, consider hanging up a stocking for Jesus. Family members can place their “gifts” for Jesus there. These can be sacrifices like giving up desserts during the week or committing to doing one extra chore for another family member. Advent can be as much of a time for fasting and almsgiving as the season of Lent — after all, both seasons are preparing our hearts for a great feast of the Church.

A similar activity is to create a manger bed for Jesus. For every good deed that a family member does, have them place a little straw in a small manger in a prominent place

in the house. By Christmas, there will be a fluffy bed in which the Christ Child can be placed.

Consider participating in the parish “Giving Tree,” and be sure that the whole family is included in the shopping by making it a family outing, or make a card for the child together. It’s easy to see those activities as a quick good deed, but anything that helps emphasize that there is another person on the receiving end helps to make the act much more meaningful.

While there are lots of activities that can help to prepare our hearts to celebrate Christmas, nothing centers us securely in this season of Advent quite like participating in the liturgy already prepared for us. As you are able, go to any penance services or live nativities, or take part in service opportunities offered in our parish. Spend some time with your kids in the adoration chapel or in front of the Blessed Sacrament, reminding them that the Christ Who dwells there in the monstrance is the same Christ Who came to this world as a tiny baby — for it will be there in the presence of Christ that we can truly sing, with hearts ready to receive Him, “Oh come let us adore Him, oh come let us adore Him.”

Advent Schedule

Advent Penitential Service

Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 7 p.m.

Anointing of the Sick Mass

Saturday, Dec. 14 at 2 p.m.

Breakfast with Santa

Sunday, Dec. 15 at 8:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Mass Times

*4 p.m., 4:15 p.m. (Cultural Center),
7 p.m., 10 p.m.*

Christmas Day Mass times

8:30 a.m., 11 a.m.



Witnessing the Power of God's Love Through the Cenacolo Community



There's no doubt about it — God's almighty hand is at work in the midst of the Cenacolo Community in St. Augustine, and many are blessed to watch His miracles of grace unfold therein.

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"It is so inspiring to see what a commitment the Cenacolo Community members have to Our Lord, as well as to prayer," says Bob McKeefrey. "It is wonderful to see how they use the presence of God to overcome their drug addictions. With His help, they beat their disease. They win the battle."

Bob is one of the many members of our parish who give their time, talent and treasure to making the mission of the Cenacolo Community a true success. Along with a group of other male parishioners, Bob visits the community members on a regular basis, brings them dinner, and prays the Rosary with them.

"During dinner and afterwards, we have great conversations with the members of the community," Bob says. "They speak about their life experiences and how they have come to know God better and overcome their struggles. They are such wonderful, faith-filled men."

Other members of Our Lady Star of the Sea support the community in various ways, such as by dropping off meals and donations. Recently, some of our parishioners helped to rebuild one of their buildings that had burnt down.

The Cenacolo Community is a powerful movement that was founded in 1983 by an Italian nun named Sister Elvira Petrozzi, known today as Mother Elvira. It offers a program that helps people struggling from drug addictions and other harmful habits to find freedom and peace with

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Cenacolo Community *continued from page 7*

God in their lives. The program usually involves a three-year commitment to work, prayer, study and service, though it may vary according to each individual. There are currently 71 houses present in 20 countries all over the world.

Recently, members of the Cenacolo Community came to Palmer Catholic Academy to give witness talks to the students and sing during Eucharistic Adoration.

“They talked about the consequences of making good and bad choices in life, and why it is important not to let other people to influence you in a negative way,” says Diane Foley, a religion teacher at Palmer Catholic Academy. “They also encouraged the students to follow Jesus Christ, and gain true joy in life from

Him. Overall, it was a very, very positive experience for our school to have them visit!”

Truly, their testimonies bear witness to the infinite mercy of Christ and the blessings He bestows on those who follow His commandments.

“Those who join the community are asked to pray the Rosary every day, dress modestly, study the Bible, go to adoration often, and not use cell phones or watch television,” Mrs. Foley says. “This helps them get rid of all of their distractions so they can just work on their relationship with God. Ninety percent of the people that come out of the community come out addiction-free and ready to participate in their local communities in a positive way.”

*If you would like further information about the Cenacolo Community,
please visit www.hopereborn.org or contact Sean Corrigan at 904-327-3166.*

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil - 5:30 p.m. | Sunday - 7:30 a.m.; 9:00 a.m.; 11:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Daily (Monday to Saturday) - 8:30 a.m. | Wednesday - 7:00 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Wednesdays from 6:00-6:45 p.m.

Saturdays from 4:00-5:00 p.m.