

# The Shrine of Saint Joseph's Friends, Inc.

## NEWSLETTER

1220 N. 11th Street • St. Louis, Missouri 63106-4614 • Rectory Phone (314) 231-9407  
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**SUMMER-FALL ISSUE 2021**

### ITE AD JOSEPH - THE "YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH" FERVENTLY CONTINUES

When Pope Francis proclaimed this year in honor of St. Joseph and when Archbishop Rozanski officially marked this momentous year in the Archdiocese of St. Louis by celebrating Mass on the Solemnity of St. Joseph at the Shrine, it sparked great interest in honoring our patron saint and visiting the Shrine. Archbishop Rozanski, in his March 19th homily, succinctly described the many ways St. Joseph is the perfect role model for the times in which we live. Our rector, Father Wunderlich, reminded us that St. Joseph, a just and righteous man, was the only one referred to in that way in over 2,000 years of Christianity; that St. Joseph was not in the background but he was an engaged father; and that he had skills as a craftsman which he used in his community and most certainly taught to Jesus. Furthermore, he was responsible for raising the human side of Jesus.

It seems that people from a wide geographical area are visiting the Shrine to learn more about it, making a pilgrimage, and praying to St. Joseph. There has been a definite increase in the number of folks staying after Sunday Mass for a tour. Also, there have been, and continue to be, parishes who, together with their priests, are coming to the Shrine to experience the tour followed by their priest celebrating Mass here during the week or on Saturday mornings.

Even though officially the "Year of St. Joseph" ends on December 6, 2021, you are invited to the Shrine during any time of the year. Tours immediately follow the 11 am Sunday Mass and the 12 noon Mass on the First Friday of each month. To arrange for a tour or visit during the week we recommend that you call in advance (314) 231-9407 (Tuesdays or Thursdays are the best days to call); E-mail your inquiry to: [info@shrineofstjoseph.org](mailto:info@shrineofstjoseph.org); or visit the Shrine Website ([www.shrineofstjoseph.org](http://www.shrineofstjoseph.org)) and click the Shrine Tours Link.



Statue of St. Joseph and the Christ Child from the Shrine's Altar of Answered Prayers

### SIGNS OF HOPE AS RESTRICTIONS EASE - FRIENDS RETURN TO THE SHRINE

After nearly a year and a half of COVID restrictions, we are beginning to witness a gradual return to the traditions that have contributed to making in-person worship at this beautiful, historic landmark a memorable and sacred experience. We thank Jim Blum, our Board president, who has led the way during these trying times to keep the Shrine as safe as possible and we believe that he succeeded in that effort. However, "gradual" is the operative word because, as of this printing, we must still be mindful of, not only lingering, but renewed concerns in the St. Louis area. Should there be a need to return to restrictions, the Shrine will adhere to whatever guidelines are recommended by the City and the St. Louis Archdiocese. We shouldn't be surprised if there are some bumps in the road along the way, so we ask for your patience and understanding in advance. For example, on July 26, the mask requirement was reinstated due to a spread of the delta variant.

So as we move very cautiously and prudently in stages toward "normal", what will total normal eventually look like?

- Every other pew had been cordoned off to provide for social distancing. But by the end of June all of the center section pews were once again permitted to be used.
- As in most Catholic churches, the distribution of communion was changed in order to have safe social distancing. Here, partly due to the pews which are divided in the middle, Communion is given out by Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, so that worshipers don't have to leave pews.
- The veneration of the relics of St. Peter Claver and St. Padre Pio have been offered from a distance. Based on guidance from the Archdiocese, Fr. Wunderlich will tell us when we can safely return to personal veneration of the relics.
- Although Church choirs were not permitted, the Shrine utilized a small number of singers, socially distanced who have served as cantors, who with our Organist/Choir Director, David Byrne, to provide music for our Liturgies. We look forward to the return of our full choir on August 22nd, as we celebrate

the Feast of St. Louis IX, King of France, Patron Saint of the Archdiocese.

- Tours after Mass were canceled for many months but they are already safely back. Jim Allen, the Shrine's lead docent, is currently providing tours for quite a number of people who are staying after Mass to learn more about the Shrine.
- The Shrine Shoppe in the lower level of the Church, which sells gently-used items at good prices had also been closed. Despite closure, Volunteers were preparing this area for re-opening, which occurred at the end of June. It had been and still is a great gathering place for a cup of coffee and enjoyable conversation before and after Mass.
- Weddings have already resumed with over 40 scheduled this year! Kathie Schmid, one of the wedding coordinators, says she is still accepting requests for weddings into 2022.

The Dispensation from Mass attendance ended on July 1, 2021 in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. While there is a benefit to offering live-streamed Masses during the pandemic, it's not a substitute for in-person worship. Nothing is more important than the celebration of the Mass and the reception of the Eucharist in person. We look forward to the return of our full regular worshipping community. Evidence that this is already beginning to occur is the increase in attendance for Masses on the Feast of St. Joseph, Mother's Day, and the resumption of the traditional Labor Union Mass followed by the Joseph Pilgrimage.

The founders of the Friends, Inc., had faith and a belief—a belief that by saving the Shrine, it would become, not just a museum, but a vibrant, Sacred Catholic Church for generations to come. We sincerely hope that returning to normal, will include a return of all our "old timers" as well as new worshipers. With Father Dale's welcoming spirit and thoughtful homilies, our beautiful choral music, and magnificent, irreplaceable historic church, people have good reason to believe their attendance will help them to develop a deeper appreciation of God's presence and a closer relationship with Him as we gradually and cautiously "return to normal."

## COVID-19: A Reminder of Shrine's 1866 Cholera Epidemic

In 1866, St. Louis came to a halt as some 280 daily deaths throughout the city occurred due to a cholera epidemic that apparently began without warning. There were 15 to 25 funerals each day here at St. Joseph's for two months of the summer that year. Although this was the 5th major cholera epidemic in the fledgling city, the best medical minds were still not totally in agreement about its cause or any treatment. A person could come down with the dreaded disease of cholera one day and be dead the next.

Some felt it was due to filth -- St. Louis back then was known for dragging its feet on cleaning up the city. The editor of The Republican newspaper said, "no city in the U.S. has spent so much for cleanliness while still remaining filthy." Vacant lots along 11th Street sometimes served as dumping grounds for garbage. Other experts felt the culprit was an ineffective sewage system -- there were several large sinkholes in and around the downtown which were simply used as sewers that eventually fed into the river. One notorious sinkhole was right outside of the church at 10th and Biddle Street. Henry Kayser, the city engineer, tried using this one also as a sewer. It would stop up and then create a large body of water resulting in nauseating smells and swarms of flies on a hot summer day which was angrily referred to by the local frustrated residents as "Kayser's Lake." Others thought it was due to its transmission by immigrants coming up from New Orleans. Still others blamed cholera on eating sauerkraut. Gradually, the medical experts, began to sense a strong relationship between this 1866 cholera epidemic and contaminated water. Cholera, unlike COVID, is not air borne but entered people's bodies most likely through contaminated drinking water.

In the summer of 1866, the cholera had reached epidemic proportions. The Jesuit Fathers and Brothers here at St. Joseph's did what they could to render assistance, but the health situation was quite critical. Father Weber, parish pastor, gathered the parishioners after all the Masses one Sunday in early August and he asked them to make a vow to God that if, through the intercession of St. Joseph, they could be spared of any more cholera deaths, they would have a monument in honor of St. Joseph built. They were asked to sign this solemn vow.

To the total amazement of the pastor, the parishioners, and medical experts, not one person who signed the vow or their immediate family died of the cholera after that Sunday. In thanksgiving of this miraculous occurrence the parishioners decided to have the massive 50 foot high main altar built which became known as the "Altar of Answered Prayers."

After 1866, major strides were made in improving the infrastructure of St. Louis which was suffering from neglect. The city established a Board of Health and gave it the power and money necessary to clean up sewage and water systems. The city went on to become, for a short time, the 4th largest city in America and was regarded by many as a world-class city that created in 1904 one of the grandest World Fairs with visiting dignitaries from all over praising the city.

St. Joseph's Church, with its newly acquired magnificent Altar--"the Altar of Answered Prayers"--quickly became the largest, most active parish in the city and came to be referred to as the "Church of Miracles."



**+The Altar of Answered Prayers+**

The Altar of Answered Prayers was installed in 1867 at a cost of \$6,131. The high altar is entirely made of wood with some outstanding marble-looking faux painting. The altar had been spray painted with an off-white color along with some "carnival colors" The restoration process which occurred in 1990 at a cost of \$36,000, involved discovering the original color that was underneath six layers of paint. Using a process called "controlled paint removal", the original colors were meticulously found and quickly documented because this delicate color pigment would actually change colors after being exposed to the outside air. These original colors were the ones used in the restoration. There are 7 life sized statues on the altar with a very unusual depiction in the center of St. Joseph with the child, Jesus. One can look at this altar for hours and always find something new for study, meditation, and prayer. To this day, the altar is still regarded as a special place of holy splendor and pilgrimage, and has received a great deal of attention during this year - the Year of St. Joseph.

### KATHLEEN SCARBOROUGH, VIOLINIST LENDs TALENTS TO THE SHRINE'S MUSIC PROGRAM



Kathleen Scarborough, Violinist

The Shrine is happy to have Kathleen Scarborough, a professional violinist, who is volunteering her talents here at the Shrine occasionally. Kathleen is the daughter of Ted and Phyllis Wofford. Ted, the architect who has led and directed the Shrine's restoration, is also a violinist and Phyllis is a fine pianist and singer so evidently their talents have passed onto their daughter. Kathleen, an extremely accomplished instrumentalist, has a vast repertoire including classical, jazz, blue-grass, folk and pop, and has played at several jazz clubs on the east coast, in several symphonies and orchestras. When not lending her talents to the Shrine Kathleen teaches music and is available for private music lessons. You can contact her at [scarboroughkathleen@gmail.com](mailto:scarboroughkathleen@gmail.com).

### OKTOBERFEST

Join us on  
Sunday  
October 10, 2021

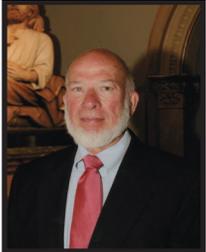


immediately following the 11 am Mass  
in the courtyard behind church  
fun-food-fellowship  
help us celebrate the  
Year of St. Joseph!

## ANNUAL BOARD MEETING SCHEDULED FOR SEPT 12TH

The Shrine's Board of Directors suspended the by-law pertaining to the annual spring meeting by moving it from March to September 12, 2021 this year due to COVID concerns which will hopefully result in greater participation. Voting will take place from 9am to 12pm (Noon) followed by general meeting at 12:30pm. All active members are invited to vote and will receive a letter of invitation.

The following incumbents are running for another 3-year term:



Jim Blum



Sherry Chibnall



Frank Fessler



Kevin Finazzo



JoAnn Geisz

The ballot will also contain proposed changes to the by-laws regarding the classification of membership, its rights and privileges, and the description of voting eligibility.

## 1981 - LOOKING BACK 40 YEARS

When the Friends organization was formed and then given financial stewardship of the Shrine by the Archdiocese in 1980, it was warmly accepted by the early founders. But they realized what a huge challenge this financial undertaking would be based on the meager donations in the beginning. The situation at the Shrine in the 1970's was so dreadful that most people today would not even recognize the sad shape into which it had fallen.

But 40 years ago— 1981—was truly a transformative, pivotal year for the Friends organization because the following took place:

- the piazza in front of church was built along with the beginnings of a brand new neighborhood called Columbus Square.
- the first spring festival occurred bringing large crowds of supporters.
- the rectory was fully restored by Charlie Rallo and his workers.
- an anonymous Jewish man gave \$100,000 toward the restoration effort.

Charlie Finninger, our first Board president, some years later before his death reminisced and said, "as I look back on that year, it was a year where, for the very first time, I really and truly believed that we had a good chance of succeeding at restoring the Shrine back to its former glory."

## AIR AND STEAM CLUB NEWS

John Colao, the chairman of Air and Steam Club office, reports donations from its members of almost \$6,000 during just the last few months, which are earmarked to help pay for utilities, specifically heating and air conditioning. Kevin Finazzo, treasurer, feels that these recent donations should be enough to cover most all of the heating bills for the upcoming winter months. We gratefully thank all of you and appreciate your continued support.



John Colao

Photos courtesy of Arteaga Photography

## ANNUAL LABOR MASS RETURNS

A long-held tradition has been the Union Labor Mass appropriately celebrated on the first Sunday in May in recognition of St. Joseph, the Worker. The day before, Union members worked, weeding, planting flowers and sprucing up the area near the front entrance of the Shrine. Before Mass, the huge American flag was patriotically lifted in place between two firetrucks near the Shrine's entrance. This return of labor members to their annual Mass after the pandemic restrictions have eased, has special significance for the Shrine because Robert Kortkamp, a labor leader, encouraged union members to support saving this Shrine. As a result, in the early 1980's, shortly after the Friends organization was granted stewardship, much infrastructure work was accomplished by Union members—new electric wiring, brick tuck-pointing, ceramic tile, bathrooms—nearly all done pro bono by union workers enthusiastically dedicating their Saturdays, their day off, to this effort. We humbly and gratefully welcomed back our Labor Union friends who did so much for the Shrine and for our fledgling organization in the early days.



## SPRING FUNDRAISER

Once again, we are greatly blessed by so many of you who took part in this recent spring fundraiser and answered the call to support our Shrine by providing us with financial help through this difficult period last year. Said Barb and Lee Bilbrey, chairpersons, "people have been so generous...this is so gratifying...we are very appreciative."



L to R: Fr. Wunderlich, Mary Matthews, Barb & Lee Bilbrey

The four winners for this fund raiser drawn on June 13th were: 1st place: Martha Wiegman, Carlyle, Illinois; 2nd place: Nadine Mues, St. Peters, MO; 3rd place, Walter Drone, Naperville, Illinois; and 4th place, Mark & Laura Hitz, Wentzville, MO.

## JOE STUCKEY



Joe Stuckey

We want to introduce to our readers, a newer volunteer who has become extremely devoted to the Shrine. Even though he has been with us for only about 3 years he has developed a remarkable, distinguished commitment, having become the epitome of reliability. Joe is Fr. Wunderlich's main server at Mass; now he is also a part of the lector group; and has joined the group of volunteers who serve at weddings. Joe says that he has always had a special devotion to St. Joseph and he feels a special honor to be serving at the Shrine. The future of our organization will certainly depend on more people like Joe willing to volunteer their time and dedication.

## In the News

- Jim Allen, Shrine's head docent, was interviewed about the Shrine's rich history and religious significance, which was subsequently aired on June 6 on the Covenant Catholic Radio Station. Jim also did a YouTube interview with Father Ed Looney about the Shrine.
- A feature article with color photos of the Shrine appeared in the travel section of the March issue of the National Catholic Register going out to 800,000 subscribers across the country.
- Shrine article was in a new book—A Traveler's Guide to Catholic America --along with a gorgeous full page color photo of the sanctuary.



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 St. Louis, MO 63106-4614



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Please clip the address panel and mail it to us noting your correction or request.

### Mass Times

Sundays: 11:00am

First Friday of each Month: 12:00pm (Noon)

Holy Days of Obligation: See Website [www.shrineofstjoseph.org](http://www.shrineofstjoseph.org) for details

Veneration of St. Peter Claver Relic or St. Padre Pio Relic following Mass

Fr. Dale Wunderlich, Rector and Recipient of the Aquinas Institute "Great Preacher" Award.

Staying in touch with the Shrine:

• Website: [www.shrineofstjoseph.org](http://www.shrineofstjoseph.org) • Facebook: [Facebook.com/shrineofstjoseph](https://www.facebook.com/shrineofstjoseph) • YouTube: StJoseph Shrine •

## Supporting the Shrine with Your Membership



Sherry Chibnall

The restoration and on-going maintenance of the Shrine is accomplished strictly through private contributions. Annual membership dues are only \$10 per individual. All donations are tax deductible. If you are already a member, we **GRATEFULLY THANK YOU** and ask for your continued support. If you are not currently a member, please consider joining. **Your financial support is**

**necessary** to help in the preservation of this irreplaceable historic and religious landmark for future generations. If you have any questions, please contact Sherry Chibnall, your Membership Committee Chairperson, at (314) 231-9407.

### Please Remember the Shrine in your Will or Trust.

Application for Membership  
 Shrine of St. Joseph's Friends, Inc.  
 Dues are \$10 per person, per year

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ms. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Check \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make Checks payable to:  
 Shrine of St. Joseph's Friends, Inc.  
 1220 N. 11th Street, St. Louis, MO 63106-4614

## Air & Steam Club

Members of the Air and Steam Club have, since the beginning of the restoration, helped to cover utility costs. We need your continued support for the Shrine. Your donations last year contributed approximately 60% toward the Shrine's heating, cooling, gas and water bills. **Thank you! Thank you! Please continue your support for the Shrine. If you aren't currently participating, please consider joining now. Your help is needed!** There are Monthly Drawings for prizes totaling \$200. Tickets are \$12 each for a 1 chance to win each month. There's no limit on the number of tickets you can purchase. To join the Air and Steam Club, complete the form below, and mail it with your check payable to:

"Shrine of St. Joseph's Friends, Inc."

1220 N. 11th Street, St. Louis, MO 63106-4614.

If you need more information, please contact **John Colao** at (314) 231-9407.

Air and Steam Club  
 Shrine of St. Joseph's Friends, Inc.  
 1220 N. 11th Street, St. Louis, MO 63106-4614

1st Prize	\$100
2nd Prize	\$50
3rd Prize	\$50

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please enter my name. I do not wish to make a donation at this time.

### Special Notice:

Please be aware that the Shrine does not give or sell names and addresses on our mailing list to any other groups or organizations.