

GRATITUDE NEWS



Students Preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation

Submitted by: Sue Majer

In preparation for their sacrament of Confirmation, grade 7 students from St. Ignatius, St. Michael, and St. Paul's had their Confirmation Retreats at the Basilica on November 4, 5, and 7th.

Students spent a portion of the day reflecting on Jesus, their own faith, and ways that they could engage in prayer. For another portion, they had a tour of the Basilica as well as some time to explore on their own. Father Ian provided a wonderful pizza lunch after which students went up into the Basilica and participated in Adoration. They also had the chance to learn about the Basilica's relics of St. John Paul II and Blessed Carlo Acutis.

For the students, the retreat was a day of reflection, prayer, and thinking about next steps in the journey of their faith. Congratulations to the students from our parish schools who received the sacrament of Confirmation at the end of November.



Young Adults Group – The Frassati's Carabiners – All Saints Day Party

Submitted by: Elise Reidy

On Sunday, November 3rd, Frassati's Carabiners hosted an All Saints Day Party for the children of the deanery at the Basilica.

Children came dressed in saint costumes and enjoyed visiting different saint-themed activity stations, including Bowling with the Brothers, St. Veronica's Photo Booth, word searches with St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, etc. At each station, the children learned about several relevant saints and had a blast playing with the young adult volunteers. Many families joined in the party, and both children and parents had a fun, informative, and faith-filled afternoon.

The All Saints Day Party will hopefully become an annual tradition at the Basilica!



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Wine Fundraiser and Wine Tasting Event

Submitted by: Laurie Vescio

Throughout the month of October, the Stewardship Committee from the Basilica partnered with Niagara-based Winery, Fielding Estates, for a unique fundraising opportunity. The fundraising campaign culminated on November 8th at a Wine Tasting Event held in our Parish Hall.

With more than 120 people in attendance, the Wine Tasting Event was a great success! Attendees were able to sample various Fielding wines being offered in the Fundraising campaign, to “try before you buy”. Tickets for the event were \$20 per person, which included an elaborate charcuterie, as well as five one-ounce samples of Fielding Estates wines being offered in the fundraiser. The charcuterie contained specially curated food offerings designed to pair with the wines that evening.

There was a diverse group of people in attendance enjoying the food, the wine and the socializing. The evening was enhanced by live piano performances by our own sub-organist, Julian Mason, as well as a student from Our Lady of Lourdes, Zach Alejo.

Many hands make light work, and so the evening would not have been possible without the many volunteers that helped to set up the hall, prepare the charcuterie, serve the wine, and sell tickets. A special thank you to members of our Young Adults Group who served wine, sold tickets and helped with clean-up. Thanks to Gerry and Kathy Gemin who also served wine throughout the evening. To the event organizing committee of Angie Hunt, Sue Majer, Morgan and Patrick McCarthy – many thanks! Recognition also to Susan and Amy in the Parish Office who actively supported our ticket sales and printing needs; and to Jody Lipke, a certified wine specialist, who designed the food and wine pairings and provided attendees with wine tasting knowledge and tips.

Overall, the fundraising efforts resulted in just over \$1,400 for the Parish. Thanks to all who supported this fundraising campaign, and we look forward to hosting future wine tasting evenings!



16th Annual Parish Picnic

Submitted by: Mark Sammut

On Sunday, September 8th we celebrated our 16th Annual Parish Picnic and Family Fun Day at St. Michael School. We were happy to see nearly 300 attendees! The weather did not completely cooperate with us this year – but it did improve throughout the afternoon.

The celebrations started at 1pm with Mass, normally outdoors, but we moved inside the gym to avoid the inclement weather. The skies cleared and Mass was followed by an afternoon of fun and activities for everyone which included children’s games, face painting, raffles, and both a euchre and cribbage tournament. A delicious BBQ dinner was served, followed by the raffle draws. A very special thanks to all the volunteers, groups, business sponsors and supporters. It’s because of all this support, that we were able to donate over \$1,500 to the Church Building Fund - all while keeping the ticket price for the BBQ dinner at only \$5.00 per person!!

Thanks to everyone for making this year’s Picnic such a great success! We hope to see you at next year’s Picnic -- please mark Sunday, September 7, 2025 on your calendars!



Canada Learning Bond

Submitted by: Betty Rowsell

Interested in starting an Educational Fund for your children to support post-secondary opportunities? If your answer is “yes”, and your net income is \$55,867.00 or less, and you have children born since 2004, you can qualify for free government money to set up a fund for your child(ren).

For more details, please email: socialjusticeclbguelph@gmail.com or leave your contact information with the Parish Office and a volunteer from St. Vincent de Paul Particular Council Social Justice Committee will contact you to explain the details and assist you with your application.

We have assisted eight children so far and look forward to helping many more precious children with access to post-secondary education.

St. Vincent dePaul Update

Submitted by: **Cathie Evans**

The Basilica's St Vincent dePaul Conference continues to serve those less fortunate in our community with weekly home cooked meals for those in the emergency shelter and at the temporary housing location on Norfolk Street.

The summer months proved to be especially difficult for those living in the City's three family shelters. While the accommodations within those shelters are safe and convenient for the residents, the buildings lack certain 'luxuries' that some of us take for granted during those hot, muggy days and nights! Air conditioning those buildings is unfortunately cost prohibitive. Through the generosity of our parishioners, however, we were able to purchase a quantity of oscillating fans that provided a bit of respite from the summer's sweltering heat.

In mid-summer, we received a special request from the University of Guelph's Student Food Bank to help provide hygiene articles to help those students facing serious financial hardship. We were able to purchase and deliver a considerable amount of hygiene products to help them stock their stores in preparation for the beginning of the school year.

In keeping with our commitment to help those living at the Grace Garden Supportive Housing complex, we replenished their pantry with all the necessary dry goods to help them cook their own daily meals. Residents are encouraged to learn how to make simple meals and enjoy them in a communal atmosphere in their shared kitchen and tv room.

Thanks be to God for his providence, and to our parishioners and benefactors for their continued support.

CWL Christmas Bazaar

Submitted by: **Bernadette Best**

On November 16, 2024, the CWL held their Annual Christmas Bazaar in the Parish Hall. There were a variety of vendors, a bake table, a 50/50 draw, a penny table and a silent auction. A delicious chili lunch was also served. Thank you to all who came out in support and a huge thank you to our volunteers, those who made donations and our vendors. Proceeds will be donated to local charities and the needs of the Parish.



Photo (left): Joan Smith selecting the winning 50/50 ticket.



Welcome to the Basilica – Father John Iyekowa

Submitted by: **Laurie Vescio**

Father John Amayinke Iyekowa OSA, was born in Uhen town of Ovia North East local government area of Edo state Nigeria. His decision to come to Canada was inspired by his desire to seek out a new experience away from the norms of what he had been used to for the past 11 years serving in Nigeria as a priest. *"I am filled with gratitude and excitement for the new chapter that has unfolded so far"*, says Father John.



When asked about his decision to become a priest, he indicated that *"it was not a sudden epiphany but rather a gradual process of discernment and discovery"*. It was a journey that started at the age of eighteen when he began to feel an inexplicable pull towards the love of God. He was admitted into the order of St Augustine in 2005, and had to undergo philosophical and theological studies and formations, which helped him develop the necessary skills and knowledge to become a priest on July 12th, 2013. The journey to priesthood was not without its challenges. He had to navigate the discernment process, which involved prayer, reflection, and guidance from spiritual directors.

As a priest, his vocation is a significant part of his life but he also believes that having interests and hobbies outside of his priestly duties are essential for his well-being and personal growth. His hobbies include a desire for travel. As a priest, he has had the opportunity to travel to various parts of the world, experiencing different cultures and meeting people from all walks of life. *"Travelling broadens my perspective, challenges my assumptions, and helps me appreciate the beauty and diversity of God's creation."*

Another area of interest is his passion for music. Music has always been a significant part of his life. *"As a teenager, I would often sing in our parish choir, and as I grew older, I began to learn how to play some musical instruments like pot, drum, gong. Today, music remains a source of comfort, inspiration, and joy. I enjoy listening to various genres, from classical to contemporary."*

Father John shared his impressions and thoughts of the Basilica: *"The Basilica itself is a place of breathtaking beauty and inspiration. The stunning architecture, the beautiful artwork, and the serene atmosphere all combine to create a sense of awe and wonder. I've lost count of the number of times I've walked into the Basilica and felt my heart lift with joy and my spirit soar with inspiration. Whether I'm celebrating Mass, praying in the chapel, or simply sitting in silence, the Basilica has a way of nourishing my soul and uplifting my spirit."*

"From the moment I arrived, I was warmly welcomed by the Pastor, Father Ian Duffy, the pastoral team and parishioners. The Basilica has a way of making everyone feel at home, regardless of their background or circumstances. I've been impressed by the way people look out for one another, support each other in times of need, and come together to celebrate the joys of life."

Welcome Father John!

Knights of Columbus Update

Submitted by: *Alex Petric*

This Fall, Knights of Columbus Council 1507 have made several key contributions to the Basilica and the wider community. The Knights helped with ensuring that the parish's Annual Fall Picnic ran smoothly in early September, and they are grateful to Alex Magyar (pictured right) who was instrumental in repairing a recently acquired used barbecue in time for the picnic.



Alongside the CWL, the Knights also hosted a well-received breakfast on Oct. 27th. The Knights are always grateful collaborating with the CWL in serving the parish, and thank parishioners for their generous support.



As in previous years, the Knights carried the Marian statue in Rosary Processions on Marian Shrine Days over the summer. The Council thanks the Parish for this opportunity to serve, and for the parishioners' faithful and reverent witness at each Marian Shrine Day.



The Knights have been blessed this year to work with the Onward Willow and Brant Avenue Neighbourhood Groups to provide coats to families in need and new Canadians through the **Knights of Columbus' Coats for Kids program**. At their October meeting, the Knights welcomed Nicki Hammond from the Brant Avenue Neighbourhood Group, who shared about the coats' impact for recipients. St. Ignatius of Loyola School is also collecting coats and snow pants to help those in need, and the Knights commend the school community for their efforts.



To honour our Military Servicemen and Servicewomen, the Council had the privilege of presenting a wreath at Guelph's November 11th Remembrance Day Service. Multiple councils from across Guelph participated, with several members of Council 1507 present.



With Christmas approaching, Council 1507 have begun its annual Advent fundraising by selling Christmas cakes, cookies, and honey, as well as "Keep Christ in Christmas" lawn signs and magnets. The Knights are grateful for parishioners' support, as the funds support the Council's operations and charitable endeavours in the community.



In 2025, Council 1507 plans to begin offering the Knights of Columbus' Cor program, which offers small-group gatherings for men to share their faith and grow in their relationship with Christ. Our Council will look forward to sharing more for those interested as details develop.

Looking for a way to give back to the parish and grow in your faith? We invite Catholic men over the age of 18 to consider becoming a Knight and joining us in serving the Parish and community. Learn more at <https://www.kofc1507.org>. Interested parishioners can also contact Grand Knight Craig Chamberlain by e-mail at gk1507@ontariokofc.ca.

BASILICA OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE

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Gratitude News is brought to you by the Stewardship Committee of our Parish, and is intended to keep you informed and connected, and to celebrate our active and vibrant Parish Community.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Jan 5** – Coffee Sunday in Parish Hall (after both Sunday masses)
- **Feb 2** – Basilica Tours
- **Feb 16** – Family Day Bowling and Dinner
- **Mar 2** – Basilica Tours
- **Mar 2** – Knights' Pancake Breakfast in Parish Hall (after both Sunday masses)
- **Mar 16** – St. Patrick Heritage Tea
- **April 6** – Basilica Tours
- **April 6** – Monsignor Dennis Noon's 50th Ordination Anniversary
- **April 19** – Easter Vigil Reception
- **April 30** – Volunteer Appreciation Night
- **May 3** – Ordination for Deacon Moices Cabellero
- **May 4** – Celebration of Mass by newly ordained Father Moices Cabellero
- **May** – May Crowning
- **May 25** – Knights' Pancake Breakfast in Parish Hall (after both Sunday masses)
- **June 1** – Basilica Tours
- **June 7** – Marian Day
- **June 8** – Parish Golf Tournament
- **June 14** – CWL Spring Market
- **June 19** – Feast of Corpus Christi

For more information and details about upcoming events in our Parish, visit our website at www.basilicaofourlady.com.

Did you know...

You can follow the Basilica through social media on Instagram and Facebook:



Instagram: @shrinebool (Basilica Shrine Guelph)



Facebook: @shrinebool (Basilica—Shrine of Our Lady Immaculate)

Facebook: @boolchoir (Music at the Basilica of Our Lady)

Are you on the Parish's Email List?

To receive the weekly Parish Bulletin and other news about events once a week directly in your inbox, visit our website at www.basilicaofourlady.com and on the bottom of the homepage, enter your email to "Join our Mailing List".