



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

1220 N. 11th Street • St. Louis, Missouri 63106-4614 • Rectory Phone (314) 231-9407  
e-mail: info@shrineofstjoseph.org

**SUMMER - FALL ISSUE 2023**

## A Flurry of Winter-Spring Activity

*a potpourri of highlights that have occurred this winter and spring at the Shrine*

- In January, new aisle carpeting was installed replacing the 30 yr. old carpeting.
- Several hundred college students who were part of the Fellowship of Catholic Univ. Students (FOCUS) conference walked to the Shrine from America's Center first week in January to visit, pray, and experience the beauty of the Shrine which was stunningly decorated for Christmas.
- The Shrine was one of the featured churches in a new book written by Patrick Murphy entitled *Places To Pray—Holy Sites in Catholic Missouri.*
- Once again, the EWTN Global Catholic Television Network broadcasted the Shrine's award-winning video throughout all of North, Central, and South America.
- Dete Reh, a knowledgeable art museum volunteer, gave a special lecture during a "Pilgrimage of Beauty" at the Shrine emphasizing its art, statues, windows, and altars that lead us to the eucharistic sacrifice at the main altar—the Altar of Answered Prayers—which reinforces the Church's emphasis on the "Eucharistic Revival."
- A liturgical Shrine highlight—the Feast of St. Joseph—was held on Mar. 20.
- Bishop Revituso celebrated the Shrine's annual Labor Mass on May 7 and a week earlier, Labor volunteers gave the entire area around the Shrine a sprucing up and planted new spring flowers.
- The 8<sup>th</sup> annual Joseph Challenge Pilgrimage walkers totaling over 40 men completed their two-day walk in honor of St. Joseph by holding Mass at the Shrine after walking the last 10-mile trek from St. Joseph's in Clayton to the Shrine also on May 7.
- Maribeth McMahon, Shrine cantor and soloist, held a wedding music workshop for all interested brides and families. Weddings, of course, are a very important part of our spring schedule with a large number on nearly every Saturday.
- A very impressive long line of women of all generations in honoring the Blessed Mother, processed to the altar and presented a carnation at Her statue at the annual May Crowning before Mass on May 14.
- On June 4<sup>th</sup>, was the Shrine's annual "Appreciation Day" outdoor barbecue marking the official end of the spring raffle with the drawing of the winners.



**St. Joseph with child Jesus,  
on the Altar of Answered Prayers**

## Father Wunderlich in his 15<sup>th</sup> year as Shrine's Rector:

*Our Dedicated Servant of the Lord is given approval to extend his retirement age.*

We have received some truly great news: Archbishop Rozanski has permitted Father Wunderlich to extend his retirement age beyond 75. We abundantly thank the Archbishop and Father Dale. What a great gift of himself he is giving to all of us here at the Shrine.

Father's first Mass at the Shrine was on June 21, 2009. We knew before he arrived that he had a great reputation as a homilist and speaker because he had just been named as a recipient of the Great Preacher Award given out by the Aquinas Institute of Theology. He was chosen out of 65 nominees to be given this award as "one who transforms and inspires lives through their words and homilies."

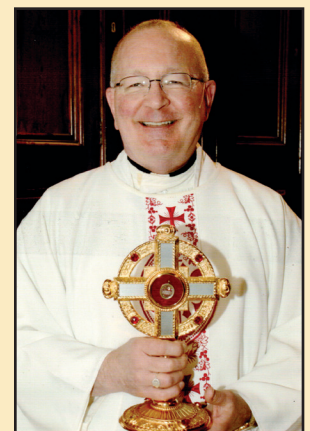
It certainly didn't take very long for us in the congregation to actually experience why he rightfully received this Aquinas Institute award. Even those who attend the Shrine the very first time can immediately sense not only the extraordinary and sacred manner in which he celebrates the liturgy of the Mass but also his humility and kindness.

Early in his priestly life, Father Dale said he was drawn to the importance of liturgy well done in an authentic, unpretentious manner, and in the value of good preaching. As anyone can tell, Father Dale is an extremely well-educated theologian with a vast wealth of knowledge at his disposal. However, he said that "we as preachers are not here to impress people with our knowledge but, instead, to bring people into a deeper relationship with God and to try to make their relationship with Him more simple and enriching."

As one who nominated him for the Aquinas award said, "Father Dale is truly an agent of Christ, of Christ's love, in all that Father does and all that he preaches."

From the Shrine's Board of Directors to everyone in our congregation, let us all be thankful and blessed that we will be able to continue to have Father Dale as the Shrine's rector as a result of the Archbishop's extension agreement.

What a remarkable and dedicated priest we have been extremely blessed to have had as our rector for the last 15 years. We are also looking forward to celebrating with Father Dale the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his priesthood next year on August 3 in 2024.



**Father Dale Wunderlich**

# Returning to Church: *We Love and Embrace New Worshipers*

During the epidemic years, like most churches, the Shrine was on a road we learned to navigate by live-streaming, social distancing, and wearing masks. But today in St. Louis, sports stadiums are full, restaurants are full, the downtown is event-filled. So now is the time to return to Mass if you haven't done so. We invite you to the Shrine to experience not only our great liturgy, inspiring beauty, the Shrine's religious and historic significance, but also our welcoming hospitality. Father Dale Wunderlich, the Shrine's rector, has an extraordinary reputation with a highly personable and humble style. Tours after every Mass are conducted by our very knowledgeable veteran docent, Jim Allen—it is worth staying for. Group tours during the week need to be pre-arranged, which is easy to do. Just call Mary Ann Wetzel on Tuesdays and she will help you set up a tour or contact us at [info@shrineofstjoseph.org](mailto:info@shrineofstjoseph.org). Whether you are here for a tour, a pilgrimage, or visitation, you are always welcome at the Shrine but please call ahead first for a day and a time.

## Strecker Descendants Gather to Remember Ancestor's Miracle

After every Mass, Father Wunderlich, the Shrine's rector, announces: "On March 16, 1864, a healing miracle took place in the church which led to the canonization of St. Peter Claver..." And he invites the congregation to venerate a relic of St. Peter Claver. For a cure to be considered as a miracle, generally the Catholic Church requires three criteria, among others, to have been present:

- there cannot be any medical or scientific explanation for it.
- there can be no relapses of the same illness in the person's lifetime.
- the cure has to occur quickly.

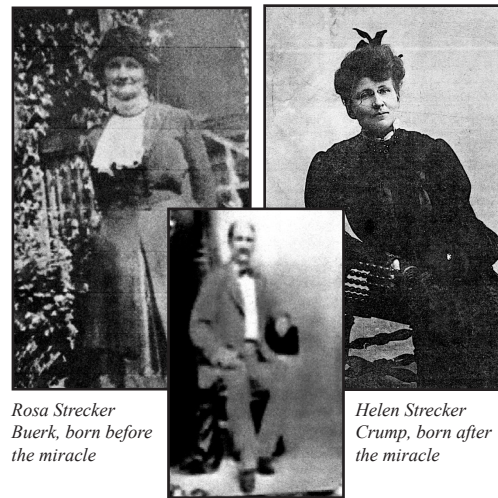
The Strecker miracle easily satisfied these three conditions. We believe this miracle is the only church related cure to have taken place in this part of America to have been authenticated by the Vatican. Every year in early March we honor and remember this miraculous cure by inviting the descendants of Ignatius Strecker. This year, on March 12<sup>th</sup>, fifteen descendants were on hand for this annual Mass.

What makes this story special is that Ignatius and his wife, Anne, had two daughters: the oldest daughter, Rosa (1856-1939) was about 8 years old when her father was involved in a factory accident which led to his infirmities. The second daughter, Helen, (1866-1948) however, was born two years after her father was miraculously cured.

The first girl, Rosa, eventually married Karl Buerk and they had 14 children. The second girl, Helen, married William Crump and had 2 children. For the descendants on Helen's side of the family, the miracle bears special meaning because, had the miracle not occurred, as they say "we would not have been born."

Ignatius' wife, Anne, died some time after Helen, the second daughter was born. Ignatius lived another 16 years after the miracle occurred and married a widower with 6 children until the end of his life and died at age 60 of complications from typhoid fever.

In 1953 descendants from both the Buerk and the Crump side went together and dedicated the life-size St. Peter Claver statue to the Shrine in honor of their maternal ancestors: Rosa Buerk and Helen Crump. The Shrine attempts to keep an on-going genealogical chart of Ignatius Strecker's two daughters and their descendants, now into their sixth generation, which is always a continual work in progress.



Rosa Strecker Buerk, born before the miracle

Helen Strecker Crump, born after the miracle

Ignatius Strecker



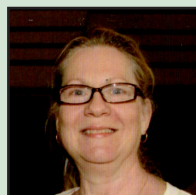
Gathering of Strecker descendants on Mar. 12

### Board Annual Elections

The annual general meeting of the Shrine of St. Joseph's Friends, Inc., was held on Sunday March 26<sup>th</sup>. All active members are allowed to vote and any interested person can attend the meeting. About one third of the Board of Directors comes up for re-election each year—any active member who has been active for a minimum of one full year can also run for the Board. Following are the incumbent candidates for the Board of Directors who were re-elected to another 3-year term.: Kathleen Weltzin, Maribeth McMahon, Joe Finazzo, and Jim Fuller. There were no other candidates who ran for the Board this past year.



Jim Fuller



Maribeth McMahon



Kathleen Weltzin



Joe Finazzo

### We Are Grateful

On June 4<sup>th</sup> we held our annual "Appreciation Sunday" because we have total GRATITUDE not only for our volunteers but also for hundreds of folks in the greater St. Louis area and across the country who took part in making our spring fund raiser a financial success. And, once again, it proves the point that a very large number of generous small donations can make a big difference toward maintaining the Shrine.

It takes a number of volunteers to hold our outdoor events every year—from those who set up tables, chairs, and canopies to those who cook and bring dishes along with the servers. We thank all those who helped in some way. A big thanks to our president, Jim Blum, for barbecuing to perfection the best brats and gourmet hot dogs in St. Louis.

Winners in this Spring's drawing read by Fr. Wunderlich, our rector, were 1<sup>st</sup> place: The Mayes Family, Evansville, Indiana; 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Marian Riechers, Maplewood, MO; 3<sup>rd</sup> place, P. Faul, Ferguson, MO; and 4<sup>th</sup> place, Mr. & Mrs. Robert O'Blennis, Kirkwood, MO. Let it be said, however, that we regard all of you who contributed in some way— are all winners! St. Joseph and the Friends of the Shrine abundantly thank you.



Appreciation Day BBQ & Spring Fund Raiser Finale

Photos by Arteaga



## Looking Back 35 Years Ago:

### Shrine Received Award From the American Institute of Architects

One of the biggest initial accomplishments 35 years ago was the restoration of the Jesuit Altar and the 14 historic ceiling bays above the side aisles of the Shrine. The interior restoration actually began with these two projects in 1985 that required a herculean effort and took three years to finish. The cost was \$25K for the Jesuit Altar and about \$6K for each ceiling bay. After finally being able to finance this, upon completion in 1988, a great and significant highlight was the recognition given by the American Institute of Architects of this completed work at their organization's annual awards for excellence dinner.

To know just why this award was given, requires an understanding of the sheer amount of detailed work and skill that was required in restoring these areas. Ted Wofford, the Shrine's long time architect, said "very in-depth research preceded all of the projects at the Shrine, but especially these two projects."

The Jesuit Altar had to be painstakingly scraped with razor blades requiring intense labor, patience, and skill because all of the altars had been spray painted in 1954 with a virtually indestructible and ugly zonalite type paint. Using a process of controlled paint removal involving several strengths of acetone, artisans slowly removed seven layers of paint in order to reveal the original colors from 1866. But once the original paint color was found, this color had to be documented quickly because this fragile, original paint would literally change colors quickly (in seconds) once exposed to the outside air. All of these original colors that were uncovered were used in the restoration process except where gold color was located—it was replaced with 22 carat gold leaf for it lasts forever and has a stunning, luminescent beauty.

The circular ceiling bays required 42 custom colors. Wofford said that "the artisans had very special skills with keen eyes in order to apply all these different colors. When gazing up at one of these bays, the viewer today is seeing a truly masterful work of art."

The American Institute of Architects sent a jury to inspect all of this completed work. The jury was so impressed with the sheer quality of this restoration work that they awarded Ted Wofford and the Friends organization a special award of merit, the first of its kind.

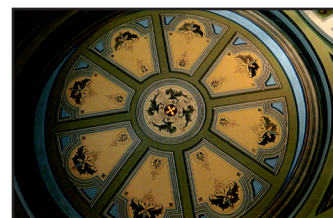
This award of merit read in part, "this restoration work that has taken place at the Shrine of St. Joseph demonstrates a team effort which is very rare. It became obvious to our jury during our visit, that such a monumental task was driven by a group who are dedicated to a cause. The result has been to give St. Louis a historic and religiously significant piece of architecture to add to its rich heritage."

Accepting the award were Ted Wofford, Ted Schafers, Gene Boll, and Tom Sater who represented other artisans including Buford Heberer, Gary Heberer, John Walsh, John Picco, Ed Benson, Michelle Bowman, and Diane Pappas. At the meeting, Ted Wofford said, "our goal was always to restore the Shrine as accurately as possible based on historic documentational and existing evidence."

In a similar fashion preceded by research, the Main altar was completed in 1990 followed by the entire center barrel vaulted ceiling in 1992. At about this time, many volunteers and donors came on board—none of this could have happened without their contributions. By the end of 1994, all the interior was completed at which time an article in the *St. Louis Review* read: "to say that the Shrine is beautifully restored does not do it justice. Rather, to say that the Shrine is magnificently, lovingly, painstakingly, and even eye-poppingly restored comes much closer"



Jesuit Altar



One of the 14 ceiling bays



L-R Tom Sater, Ted Wofford, accepting award from Don Hussman, awards chairman of the Amer. Inst. of Architects, Nov. 1988

### Jim and Karen Fesler

Our Friends organization has been blessed with and benefited from many wonderful husbands and wives volunteering together.

One newer energetic couple is Jim and Karen Fesler—Jim has been around awhile and when Karen came along, she started helping out in the Shrine's wedding office as a third wedding co-ordinator along with Kathie Schmid and Jo Ann Geisz. She has become an excellent addition to our busy wedding office.

Jim some time ago completed a number of important and significant painting projects-- formidable jobs which were a terrific savings for us and our donors. He has recently completed cataloging all the Shrine's artifacts in preparation for the eventual museum space.

Jim has had a special connection to the Shrine when his cancer went away after being blessed at the Shrine—Said Jim, "I knew in an instant I was cured."—indeed, it is another remarkable miraculous story which will be described in greater detail in a future newsletter article.



Jim and Karen Fesler

### Are You Looking for a Great, Memorable Church for a Catholic Wedding?

**Check out these comments made on the internet by couples who held their wedding at the Shrine:**

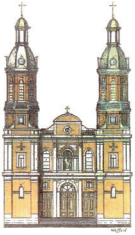
- "this church will blow you away with its beauty...we are so thankful for everyone at the Shrine."
- "Insanely stunning church. Would pick it all over again. Had so many compliments on how beautiful it was.."
- "Not only is it a beautiful location, but they make everything so easy....they KNOW weddings."
- "If you are wanting a beautiful church for your Catholic wedding, this is the place...its absolutely stunning.."
- "the Shrine was the perfect venue for our out of town wedding. It is a beautiful space...it was stunning to both Catholics and non-Catholics.."

### In memory of Gloria Brostoski

We should never forget to honor the early members of our organization who worked tirelessly against all odds and succeeded at rescuing and saving this historic church. One early member was Gloria Brostoski who passed on Feb. 8 at age 95. She was the Board's secretary for a number of years. Her husband, Gene, known to his friends as "Whitey" who predeceased her--was an early founder of the Men's Club going all the back to the late 1950's. Gloria was one of the few volunteers to have actually grown up in the old neighborhood. Her family lived less than 2 blocks north of the Shrine; she attended St Joseph's parish school as a young girl. In fact, she and her eventual husband, Gene, met at the age of 12 and both remember saying, "one of these days we're going to marry each other." And, in 1952, sure enough, they were wed at the Shrine. They both continued to faithfully serve the Shrine during their lifetime.



Gloria Brostoski



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



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**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:**

[www.shrineofstjoseph.org](http://www.shrineofstjoseph.org)



[facebook.com/shrineofstjoseph](https://facebook.com/shrineofstjoseph)



**YouTube** StJoseph Shrine

**Supporting the Shrine with Your Membership**

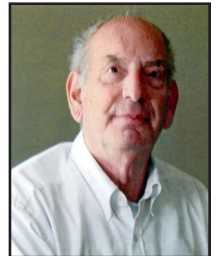


Sherry Chibnall

The restoration and on-going maintenance of the Shrine is accomplished strictly through private contributions. Annual membership dues are only \$10 per individual. 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.

**Air & Steam Club**

Members of the Air & Steam Club have, for many years, helped to cover utility costs. Your donations have contributed greatly toward the Shrine's heating and AC bills. If you aren't currently a Member, please consider joining now. Your help is needed! There are monthly drawings for prizes totaling \$200. Tickets are \$12 each, and 1 ticket gives you 1 chance to win each month and there's no limit on the number of tickets John Colao you can purchase.



John Colao

Simply complete the form below and mail it together with your check payable to:

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

For more information, please contact **John Colao**, Chairperson at (314) 231-9407.

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

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

Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

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