



St. Nicholas Newsletter

August 2011

## Teen Group Annual Mission Trip

By Tyler Klaus

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### Sneak Peek at Our Next Issue:

We will be taking an in-depth look at the upcoming changes in the Mass as we prepare for the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, to be published.

Visit <http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal/> for more information.

"I truly am blessed to have what I have", Sophomore Andrea Lucas said when asked how her life changed because of this year's mission trip. Along with Andrea, 39 other teens and adults went to help those less fortunate than us in Ducktown Tennessee. Senior Alyssa Soehlke said, "It continues to make me a better person every year by teaching me to appreciate every blessing in my life, most of which I take for granted." All the teens and adults blend so well together; you would think we are a huge family, which we are in fact. Many sen-

iors and juniors say they look forward to this week more than their family vacations, being surrounded by people that care about them and being able to change the people's lives around them. This year we



More than 30 teens from St. Nicholas went to Copperhill, TN, for their annual Mission Trip this summer.



finished an addition to an elderly man's house, who just had a total hip replacement, painted an exterior of a house, and spent time at a factory for the mentally challenged. On Friday

night, at dinner, we all went around the room telling each other our favorite moment from the week, the majority of the teens said working with the mentally challenged. "They really show you how simple life can be, and how happy they are to be themselves, we all can learn a lesson from them," said Junior Tyler Klaus. We concluded the week with white water rafting down the Ocoee River, where the 1996 Olympics were held. Everyone had a blast, and cannot wait until next year to spread the joy of St. Nicholas Parish.



## Meet the New Editor

Cathleen Klusek has been assigned as our new parish newsletter editor. A special thank you goes out to Liz Querin for all her duties as the past editor. Cathleen designed and maintains the website for our St. Nicholas Parish Community. She has also successfully integrated the use of the popular social media tool, Facebook, as a means to keep parishion-



ers informed of the daily events and news. As the editor of the newsletter, her goals are to include all

the latest parish ministries, newcomer welcomes, special interest stories, and much more. She invites all parishioners to participate in building the newsletter each issue!

Cathleen is an Air Force Veteran, her husband Todd is still active duty, and they have two sons, Bryce and Noah. They have been parishioners since August 2008.

## Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

By Martie Rheaume



Child sized Baptismal font and Paschal candle help create an environment of awe and wonder.

Now that we have moved into the Atrium in the Good Shepherd Center, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd religious education experience has room to grow. We are excited to offer Level II for children ages 6-9 in addition to the already existing Level I (ages 3-5). We will offer two sessions, a choice of Wednesday afternoon at 4:30 p.m. or Sunday at 8:30 a.m. You will be hearing about the reli-

gious education opportunities at Saint Nicholas the weekend of August 20<sup>th</sup>. We invite parents and guardians to visit the Atrium after each of the masses on the 20<sup>th</sup> to learn more about the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd option.



Catechists will be available to help parents experience this method of catechesis and to answer your questions.

## Calling for Catechists

By Mary Anne Caponegro

**“We are His sheep because Jesus loves us so much.”**

**—Mary Elizabeth, age 4**



Catechist works with children in the new Atrium located in the St. Nicholas Good Shepherd Center.

“We are His sheep because Jesus loves us so much,” concluded 4-year old Mary Elizabeth when she was asked to ponder who are the members of Jesus’ flock in John 10. St. Nicholas is so blessed to have a beautiful space for our new atria of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, where we can offer children an opportunity to hear and ponder the mysteries of our faith as revealed in the Bible and in the liturgy. Yet the children are not the only ones transformed as they spend time in this quiet space. The adults who are privileged to sit with the children also find that their own appreciation of both scripture and liturgy are deepened by this shared experience. Many times, they discover that the children offer new insights in

their reflections.

Starting on September 29 and continuing through May, St. Nicholas will offer a formation course for adults interested in working with children in Level I (3-to-6 year olds) atria. The class will meet weekly on Thursday mornings from 9 AM to noon in the Good Shepherd Center. The class format will include presentations, reflections, and album page points, as well as opportunities to practice lessons and to make materials for the Atrium. Participants will have time to explore developmental and religious characteristics of the child, ponder the biblical and liturgical themes in the Catechesis, and become acquainted with the lessons presented to the children. Those

who complete the course will receive certification from the National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd so that they can lead atrium groups in the future. The class will be taught by trained formation leaders: Therese Noecker from St. Margaret of Scotland Church in St. Louis and Mary Anne Caponegro from St. Nicholas. Tuition is \$500.

We are looking for new catechists in our parish, not only so that we can offer our program to more children, but also so that more adults can enjoy the beauty of sharing this time with little ones. If you think you might be interested in this ministry, please call Mary Anne Caponegro at 632-2852 for more information.

## Dialogue with the Word

Every week something wonderful takes place in the St. Nicholas Good Shepherd Center between Sunday Masses. ***“Dialogue with the Word”*** is one of the first new programs to be offered to St. Nicholas parishioners of all ages. It began January of this year, and has continued to grow each week.

Each Sunday the scripture readings for that

day (heard in Mass) are explored in depth.

Even hearing the same readings every three years, it is amazing how differently we can interpret God’s Word over time. Dialogue with the Word encourages us to ask the question, “What is the Living Word saying to me in my life at this very moment?”

Facilitated with a rotation of five who repre-

sent the Church, the program welcomes all to come with an openness of heart and mind to share thoughts and hear what others have to say about the Scripture. Those who attend have a thirst for an open conversation—a dialogue—with others about their faith.

All are welcome to join the conversation every Sunday from 9:15 until 10 a.m.



God’s Word is discussed each Sunday morning at the St. Nicholas Good Shepherd Center.

## Theology on Tap

Young adults are directly and indirectly challenged on a daily basis about their faith. In a world full of doubts and growing numbers of agnostics, this program gives a relaxed, upbeat environment for our younger adults to have a frank conversation about how to live their

faith without embarrassment or fear of repercussion. It’s a chance to talk about their struggles with their Catholic identity and how to move on from the old “don’t question your faith” mentality.

Theology on Tap is geared towards the 21-

30 year old age group and meets every other Sunday in the Good Shepherd Center at 7 p.m. The meetings this month will be on August 7 and 24. Check the St. Nicholas website calendar for upcoming meetings. Meeting agenda is determined by the group itself. Bring a friend!

All of our programs invite each person to experience, understand, and grow in the love & knowledge of God.

## PSR Back in Session Next Month!

The Saint Nicholas Catholic Church’s **Parish School of Religion, PSR**, is about to begin another school year. Classes start September 11, 9 a.m., at St. Clare School.

The purpose of our religious education program is to assist parents in their responsibility to hand on the

faith. Our program invites each student to experience, understand, and grow in the knowledge and love of God. The PSR offers religious instruction consistent with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Our catechists are people of faith who volunteer their time and talent. They prepare lessons

with care and use a curriculum approved by the Diocese of Belleville. We hope to create a positive experience of church in the process of passing on the faith.

The handbook and registration form can be found online at [stnicholasofallon.org](http://stnicholasofallon.org).



Parish School of Religion resumes with classes starting Sunday, September 11, from 9—10 a.m. in the St. Clare School.

## HOPE FOR A BALANCED LIFE: ASSIMILATION By Tom Smith

Our faith, our trust in Jesus and his death and resurrection, and our parish, the place and the community where we nourish and share that faith and trust, are valuable allies on our way from pain to peace through assimilation.



**Like adding cream to your coffee, assimilation is everywhere but not the primary taste.**

Members of the Ministry to the Sick and Homebound Committee are always willing to offer assistance to individuals and/or families in the parish who are ill, recently hospitalized, suffering from chronic illness, homebound, etc. If you know of anyone in our parish who could use their help, please call Maureen Edwards at 624-8310 .

To be human means to suffer. It clearly and fortunately means more than that, but it does include pain, whether it is physical, emotional, social, or any combination of the above. Humans hurt. While it is more enjoyable to focus on positive, happy experiences, it is more productive and helpful to learn how to work through the painful times. Joyful times don't teach us much – they're great, I promote them and wish them on everyone. But we don't learn much from them. The tough parts of life, on the other hand, can lead us to great growth. We don't have to seek suffering; it will come to us and when it does, if we learn from it, we can reduce the pain and gradually become wise.

Some people try to ignore the hard times, get passed them as quickly as possible, in order to "get on with life". That approach usually doesn't work.

Sometimes we short-circuit the difficult times because we don't want to be too negative. We look for the positive side of life; we smile before the hurt is gone. That is a wonderful attitude and the people who genuinely achieve that quick recovery from a painful experience are inspirations to all of us. But be careful!

When there is pain, there is always pain work to be done. When we do the pain work well, we smile more quickly and thoroughly.

The most painful experience in my life is the suicide of our 26 year old daughter, Karla, in 2003. While I will never be "over it" (so-called "closure" is ridiculous – who coined that phrase?), my grief today is different than it was in the first few years after her death. The term that reflects that difference the best is, in my opinion, assimilation.

Assimilation, in this context, means to integrate a past painful experience into a person's current life, acknowledging the pain but not letting it interfere with other parts of life. It is not compartmentalizing, walling off the negative happening to keep it from penetrating other aspects of life. It is more like adding cream to your coffee, it is everywhere but it is not the primary taste. The cream is assimilated into the dominate flavor of the coffee. The hurtful times remain but they are diffused, and therefore weakened, throughout all aspects of present experiences. That's assimilation. Assimilation is a better term and a more realistic concept than acceptance. In some ways, I will never accept Karla's bipolar disorder and suicide. Acceptance implies approval – at least, it connotes some level of saying that it was okay for her bipolar disorder to take her life. That simply doesn't feel right. And it doesn't accurately express what I experience.

I am more comfortable with thinking and saying that I have assimilated her suicide into my life, along with other painful and joyful life experiences. The actual differ-

ences between acceptance and assimilation may be small but they are significant.

I invite you to compare acceptance and assimilation as you remember the painful times in your life. Give yourself a few minutes, mull over those two concepts, see which one sounds like a better description of your situation, or which one is a better goal. Which one feels more genuine, more real? I am not opposed to acceptance but assimilation feels better to me, feels more basic since assimilation also assimilates acceptance. And it brings more peace to my grieving soul.

The journey from pain to peace by way of acceptance and assimilation can be a long one. Whatever your pain, a death of a loved one, a physical or mental illness, a break-up of a relationship, a loss of a job, a major disappointment with a child or parent, a loss of your reputation, the path to peace includes assimilation.

Our faith, our trust in Jesus and his death and resurrection, and our parish, the place and the community where we nourish and share that faith and trust, are valuable allies on our way from pain to peace through assimilation.

May you find your way and walk your path quietly, quickly and successfully.

## VBS: God is WILD About Us!

The week of June 20th was pretty wild, or so the grade school aged youth of St. Nicholas would tell you. The yearly Vacation Bible School was a big hit with a wild jungle theme to get your heart pumping. Amid shouts of "God is wild about us" and singing upbeat, rhythmic songs about God's love, there was a real sense of excitement you didn't need

to be in the jungle for...just the St. Nicholas Center gymnasium!

The children gathered and started each day with Kathy Green and her Panda friend. A few songs later, they were off in their various age groups to participate in crafts, games, story time, and snack time. Teens from the older youth group lead the younger classes, and seemed to have as

much fun as the younger ones did, maybe more.

Each year the St. Nicholas VBS program is a huge success thanks to Mrs. Terri Terhaar and many other adult leaders. Their inventive, entertaining ways of teaching the children lead to this thought from a child, "I really can't pick a favorite activity, I liked it all!"



VBS this summer showed the children God is wild about us!

## St. Clare: Back to School



It's that time of year again! Back packs, lunch boxes, sharpened pencils, and freshly

pressed uniforms mark the beginning of a brand new school year at St. Clare Catholic School, shared by the St. Nicholas and St.

Clare parish communities.

There will be Parent Teacher Conferences held August 10 and 11. New Student Reception is from 9:30—11:30 a.m. on the 11th as well. The first day of school is August 12 with an early dismissal at noon.

To view the school calendar, please visit the St. Clare School website:

[saintclareschool.org](http://saintclareschool.org).

For questions about St. Clare Catholic School or how to enroll your child, please call the school office at (618) 632-6327.

The first day of school at St. Clare will be August 12 with dismissal at 12:00 p.m.

## Youth Choir Ministry

There is something angelic about young voices lifting up in songs of prayer. It's a sound we are blessed to hear throughout the year at St. Nicholas when our Youth Choir sings, lead by Sr. Judy McKenna, Karen Scherrer, and Darlene Johnson. During the

school year, the children minister through music every other Sunday 10:30 AM Mass. They practice each Wednesday after school to ready themselves not just for Masses, but special events such as St. Cecelia Sing, Christmas programs, and entertaining Yesterday's

Kids.

This summer the Music Directors are holding the annual Choir Camp the first week of August and invite all boys and girls from grades 2 through 8 to come see what it's all about.

When you sing, you pray twice!



Youth Choir Camp takes place August 1-5 this year.

## Health Ministry: Are Sports Drinks Appropriate? By Khai Ngo, M.D.

The goal of fluid intake during sport activities is to replenish water depletion from sweating.

There are a lot of advertised drinks aimed at sport enthusiasts touting their positive effects on performance: from regular soft drinks which do not have much electrolytes to Sports Drinks which have electrolytes, and Energy Drinks which have a very imbalanced electrolyte content, a lot of caffeine, and some have protein for "muscle recovery". Some even contain Garana, a plant extract with a high content of caffeine.

The goal of fluid intake during sport activities is to replenish water

depletion from sweating; so for young children participating in normal sports activities, water in adequate amounts should be enough to do the job. Caffeine containing soft drinks have no place as rehydrating solution in children.

For older adolescents participating in prolonged and vigorous activities in hot and humid conditions, sports drinks with carbohydrate and electrolytes may have a role. A good source of protein intake right after sports is the best source of muscle recovery nutrient. The adolescent should never confuse Sport drinks and Energy

drinks as they are not equivalent or interchangeable.

In conclusion:

1. Water is the best rehydrating agent.
2. Sport Drinks may be used in moderation only in older adolescents during prolonged, vigorous activities for rapid repletion of water and carbohydrate.
3. Sport Drinks and Energy Drinks are not indicated as regular drinks in school for daily use. The acidic pH of these drinks can cause dental enamel erosion.
4. Energy drinks are never appropriate for children and adolescents.

*The Parish Health Ministry is a health promotion ministry. We offer health screenings, health counseling, and health information. While we don't provide home care nursing services, we can refer you to an appropriate health agency. For more information, contact Judy Tulis, RN at 632-4111.*



Yesterday's Kids President  
Nancy Kohrig

## Up-coming Events for Yesterday's Kids

- The next Yesterday's Kids meeting is August 8. Dinner will be a salad potluck with cakes for dessert. No cost! Entertainment will be provided by Bob Tyler Big Band Sound.
- Our trip to the Belleville News-Democrat Plant and lunch at Eckerts will be on August 17. We carpool from church at 9 a.m.
- The trip to see the Gateway Grizzlies is on September 2. We carpool from the church.
- The Newsletter mailing is now on the last Wednesday of every other month. Check the website, Facebook, and bulletin for reminders. Please help out by providing any articles of interest or photos to our editor. This is a Yesterday's Kids ministry and your help is always needed and appreciated!

## Don't Miss Out!

There's something for everyone!

- Dialogue with the Word- every Sunday at 9:15 in the Good Shepherd Center
- Theology on Tap- for the young adult crowd, ages 21-30. Meets every other Sunday at 7 p.m. in the Good Shepherd Center.
- Choir Camp- for grades 2—8. Aug. 1-5, 9 a.m.-noon in the Parish Hall.
- TEEN Night, every Wednesday night at 7 p.m. in the St. Nicholas Center.
- Men's Gathering- First Monday of each month.
- Yesterday's Kids- Second Monday of each month.

## Sign Up Sunday!

St. Nicholas offers many different ministries that serve so many people inside and outside its Parish. Sign Up Sunday is an opportunity for all ages to get involved! Sunday, **September 11**, there will be sign up tables in the Parish Hall after all Masses. We invite you to come in, visit each table, and decide where you might be able to donate your time and talent to our parish community. This also gives you a chance to see the vast array of programs we offer for all ages. We have something for **YOU!**



## Good Times with Yesterday's Kids!

By Nancy Kohrig

June was a hot dog month for the Yesterday's Kids. The fun began with the usual opening prayer followed by the round of table numbers that decides which table eats first. Meanwhile a group of chefs were burning up hot dogs over at Father Bills. Soon the hot dogs arrived, hot and ready, accompanied by plenty of slaw, potato salad, beans and cookies baked by some of the Kids. Our compliments to our grillers, bakers and all who helped get things ready for the meeting and clean-up afterwards!

After everyone was sufficiently stuffed and the business meeting was held, the Kids had to rev



Celtica entertained Yesterday's Kids during their July meeting.

up their weary brains for several rounds of Trivia prepared by Bob and Sandy Graham. Each table was given several sheets of Trivia questions and were they tough! Of course there always has to be a table of smarties who manage to have taken their memory meds and could answer most of the questions. That group each won a whopping \$5.00,

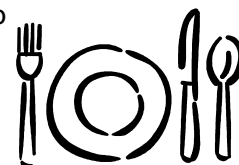
but hey, the losing table each got a chocolate Ding-Dong. All-in-all, it was a fun evening for the Kids.

In July, the Kids again did what they do best-- EAT. Fried chicken, mash potatoes and gravy was catered by Schroeders. The Kids prepared green beans, pies and cobblers. After the business meeting, which includes reports from our secretary, treasurer, health reporter, membership and entertainment, the whole meeting went Irish.

The group Celtica entertained the group with various kinds of Celtic music. There was lots of toe-tapping around the room and for a second

some thought they saw Satch doing an Irish jig. It turned out to be just a wishful thought! It was enjoyed by all and so we all went home being a little Irish in July.

Yesterday's Kids is the Senior group at St. Nicholas, but note their name. The Kids have lots of fun, so if you are 55 or older -either you or your spouse- you too can be a member. Come join us on the second Monday of each month at 6pm. We always EAT, give HUGS and have a good time. We have both single and married members, so don't be shy.



ST. NICHOLAS CATHOLIC CHURCH  
625 St. Nicholas Drive  
O'Fallon, IL 62269  
632-1797  
Rev. William J. Hitpas, Pastor  
  
Address Service Requested

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## We're on the Web!

**Our website address:**  
<http://www.stnicholasofallon.org>

**Find us on Facebook:**  
<http://www.facebook.com/St.Nicholas.OFallon>

You can find daily announcements, event calendar, ministry schedules, forms, contact information, photos, and much, much more on our website and Facebook pages! Be sure to visit and "like" us today!

### Mass Times

**Sundays:**  
· 8 AM  
· 10:30 AM  
  
**Saturdays:**  
· 5 PM

### Daily Mass

**(M, W, F):**  
· 8:30 AM  
In the Day Chapel, no Mass on  
Thursdays.  
  
**Tuesdays :**  
· 8:30 AM at St. Clare School during the school year

### Reconciliation:

**Saturdays:**  
· 3:30 PM

Newsletter articles and photos may be submitted by anyone to [webmaster@stnicholasofallon.org](mailto:webmaster@stnicholasofallon.org) or dropped off at the Parish Office. The October issue articles are due Thursday, September 15.