

St. Christopher Parish
Nashua, New Hampshire



Fall 2015

Volunteer Testimonial Handbook

St. Christopher's Parish Vision

“St. Christopher Church serves as a spiritual home where all are welcome to share in its ongoing commitment to providing opportunities for Worship through the Celebration of the Sacraments, Service through active and compassionate participation in the community, Education in God's Word and the Catholic faith, and Fellowship through parish events that nurture and support family life.”

Volunteer Opportunities (Worship Ministries):

Altar Servers: Anthony Skowron & Elizabeth Knapp

After my wife, Faith, passed away in 2011 I felt a need to become more active in the church. I became interested in Altar Serving that Fall as a way that I could become closer to the LORD. As a young Altar Server attending St. Joseph's School in Willimantic, Connecticut I found it was something that I could do to help Father and make Mass more meaningful to myself and the congregation. Altar Serving gives me a feeling of being one of the LORD's disciples. I encourage anyone, young or old, to experience "The Mass" as an Altar Server." God Bless.



I enjoy altar serving and I encourage other young people to participate in it. The reason I enjoy altar serving is because I feel much closer to God when I am altar serving, and I am more focused on Mass rather than what other people are doing around me. The reason I started to altar serve was because I thought it would be cool to help the priest, and as I was growing up I always saw my older sister altar serve and it was fascinating to me. If you are an altar server you actually get to participate in Mass, and see how it blesses everyone. I really do enjoy being an altar server, and I hope other young people consider trying it.

Eucharistic Adoration: Jane Cadwell

1pm-4pm First Fridays, September thru June. Also recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 3:00pm.

I have about 10 people who volunteer to spend 1 hour, but would like more. Especially in the 1-3 hours. Have placed in bulletin, had displays at the Back to Church Back to School event, sent emails thru Constant Contact, and have my own private email list for monthly members. I do feel that it is important that we as a parish make Adoration available. I personally look forward to the time spent at Adoration, as the peace and quiet of His presence gives me comfort.

Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion: Sue & Berny Prindiville

Our Journey as Eucharistic Ministers: About 30 years ago, when Sister Leon was developing a Eucharistic team, Berny was able to join then, but I waited until our

newborn was able to stay in the pew alone. We feel that in performing this ministry we are able to more fully participate in the mass, rather than just observe. Sister Leon trained us in yearly meetings as the ministry developed. After Sister Leon's retirement, Michael Richards assumed responsibility for the program. At mass, we distribute either the Body of Christ or the Precious Blood to the assembly. We share the exhilaration, comfort and healing with all who receive. The ministry can also include taking the Eucharist to the sick and the house-bound and to the dying.

- **Outreach:** Sue & Berny Prindiville

As an addition to our ministry at mass, we visit St. Joseph Hospital one day a week to take Communion to patients who are able to receive. We end with the prayer "May this Eucharistic bring you healing and peace." Members of the hospital staff often witness the comfort that the patients receive from the Eucharist and many patients say that it helps them and their families deal with a difficult situation

Divine Mercy Chaplet: Nancy Pelletier

The Divine Mercy Chaplet is prayed every Wednesday afternoon at 2:45 in the church. We are open to adjusting the time to 2:30 or 3:15 if Moms and Dads who are picking up their children from school are interested in joining us. It only takes 15 minutes to pray the chaplet. The Chaplet was given by Jesus to Saint Faustina with the intention of helping to know and to trust in Jesus' Mercy for us. We receive many graces in reciting this Chaplet. Jesus said, "anyone who recites this Chaplet and trusts in His mercy will receive great mercy at the hour of death." I believe that it is only through His Merciful Heart that I will get into Heaven, so I began praying the Chaplet.

Holy Rosary: Nancy Pelletier

St. Christopher's Rosary Group meets every Tuesday evening from 7:00-7:30 in the church. You don't need to sign up and a weekly commitment is not necessary. Our goal is to fill our church with Moms, Dads and Children every week. Currently we have six regular members. We start with prayer petitions, then the Holy Rosary is prayed and we end with the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I have prayed the rosary for many years, but it wasn't until after my first visit to Medugorje that I began faithfully praying the Rosary every day. The graces that I have received have been many, and I depend on her to get me through each day. I have learned that the closer you get to Mary the closer you are to Jesus.



Lectors: John Knapp

I became a lector in 2006 after visiting the parish ministry/volunteer fair. Lector training focused on “proclaiming” the readings. Being a lector is a great way to self-study scripture, I truly enjoy the ministry and I have grown deeper in faith with each reading. I also notice the impact it has on my family.

After the readings in Mass – I say: “The Word of the Lord” prompting the response: “Thanks be to God!” As I glance to my family and hear that response, I realize the amazing amount I have received just by giving a little. Join a ministry – you’ll only wish you did it sooner.

Music Ministry: The St. Christopher Parish Volunteer Handbook

If interested in participating in the adult or youth choirs please contact Carol Ann Skabo at the rectory.

- **Adult Choir:** Andrea Richards & Kersten Mecurio

Saint Christopher Church has both an Adult and a Youth Choir, directed by Carol Ann Skabo. I am a Soprano in our Adult Choir. We meet once a week, usually Wednesday evenings, from 7:00- 8:30 in the Church, for practice. Our Choral year begins in September and runs through June. We sing at the 10:00 Mass each Sunday. I’ve been a member of the Choir for about 12 years, and it is an integral part of enriching my worship and prayer experience at Church. St Augustine wrote, “He who sings prays twice”; these words hold true to my heart. Singing is a communal means to raise our voices in prayer, prayer of praise, exultation, joy, mercy, salvation, adoration. When we sing as one we pray as a community. As a Choir our function is to support the congregation in hymn singing, and enhance the liturgy with sacred music. Participation in a Choir does involve giving of more time than other volunteer activities, but it is the time spent learning sacred music that we can appreciate how powerfully music can support liturgy. One does not need to know how to read music, under the guidance of our director, as a group we support and learn from each other. Music is a great source of joy and of prayer!

I have been a member of the St. Christopher’s Choir for many years, and I can truly say that choir is family. We practice together every Wednesday night, learning new songs and mass parts, some more challenging than others. We prepare for upcoming masses, feast days, holidays, and special parish events. As a choir we sing together, laugh together, pray together, and work together. The members are all close, and although we differ in age, we come together as one to make music, hoping to help others find more meaning in the Mass. I love singing. I sing all the time at home and in chorus and plays at school, but singing at Mass is something unique. It’s not just about whether we hit every note, but that we help draw people closer to God and the Mass through our music. Singing at Mass is my personal way of getting a closer, more personal interaction with

God, tying together what I love to do with words of Scripture, hope, and love. Each time we sign, we have to remember not only to sing the words, but to reflect on the words, and mean them when we sing. Oftentimes, when I'm singing a song, I take a deeper understanding of the lyrics, and I find a personal connection. To me, a Mass with music is not the same. I find that when I'm singing at Mass, I am more focused. Having to know when we stand up to sign or when to go down to Communion helps me concentrate on the Mass and the specific parts of it. Choir is a way to get closer to God, your community, the Mass, and yourself, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

- **Youth Choir:** The St. Christopher Parish Volunteer Handbook

If your child is looking for an opportunity to minister through music this is the group to join. How to participate: The Youth Choir rehearses September through April typically on Sundays after the 10am Mass, and sing twice a month during the 10am Mass.

Ushers: Rene Joyal

I try to get to church 15-20 minutes before Mass to put out the collection baskets at the end of the aisle. I then check with the sacristy with Fr. Kelley to determine if a second collection is needed since some weeks have two envelopes in our home packets. Second collections are generally made for retired religious and other occasions. If a second collection is required a big is required to keep the collection separate in the money basket.

Also a duty of the ushers is to greet and pass out the church bulletin to the parishioners as they arrive for Mass. On feast days such as Christmas and Easter we assist people to find seats since there is a larger turnout on feast days.

After the Nicene Creed the collection(s) are taken up. After the collection 3 ushers (representing the congregation) will bring up the gifts for the offertory and present them to the priest. At times some parishioners may offer to bring the gifts. This is told to use before Mass begins. After Mass is ended 2 ushers are required to go to the altar and collect the money basket and transfer the collection envelope which is sealed and placed in the safe. We then sign the collection sheet to verify who made the collection, in case some question comes up with the day's activities.



St. Christopher School: Marta Nissen

Our parish school, St. Christopher School, offers a superior Catholic elementary education with high academic and moral standards for students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through six. In addition to English, science, social studies, mathematics and religion, students receive weekly instruction in Spanish, music, art, computer skills, physical education, and library science. The traditional curriculum is enhanced by interactive whiteboards, a playground and outdoor classroom, and many extracurricular activities like band, drama, math and science clubs, and sports. Founded in 1952 by

Pastor Fr. Lancelot Quinn, the school enjoys a close working relationship with the parish and welcomes volunteers in a variety of capacities including participating in special projects or presentations, assisting in the classroom, fundraising, or working programs like Hot Lunch or library assistants. Parishioners must complete the Diocesan child safety programs and background checks before taking part in school programs. More information is available by contacting Director of Advancement Marta Nissen at mnissen@stchrischoolnh.org.

Volunteer Opportunities (Service Ministries):

(The) Catholic Daughters of the Americas: Anne Carruth - Regent

Since its inception in 1903, Catholic Daughters of the Americas has grown and developed into one of the largest organizations for Catholic women in the Americas. Under the patronage of the Blessed Mother, its members are united by their faith in Jesus Christ and their devotion to the Church and Holy See.

Court Bishop Molloy #1441 was established in 1947 and continues to serve the Greater Nashua area. Our members are from the various Parish communities in Nashua, Hudson, Pelham, Derry and Merrimack. Some of the yearly charitable activities in our Court conducts include, NH Pastoral Care "Penny Picker's" drive, donations to several local agencies such as St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic Relief Services, the Open Door Agency and the Veterans Hospital in Manchester, NH. On a National level, our Court supports Habitat for Humanity, Smile Train, Right to Life, SOAR (Support Our Aging Religious) and the National Center on Sexual Exploitation to name a few!

All our meetings begin in prayer and at some of our meetings we may pray the rosary or on various occasions, we celebrate Mass together. Court meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month here at St. Christopher's Hall at 6:30pm unless otherwise specified.

If you asked our members why they joined Catholic Daughters, I'm sure you would hear a variety of answers. I myself joined not only through the encouragement of my mother, but also because joining gave me the opportunity to serve others in the community with women who enjoyed each other's company and are able to accomplish wonderful things together in Faith, Love of God and Spiritual enhancement. For more information contact myself (Anne Carruth at 603-888-6459 or at apcarruth@comcast.net) or Lillian Anderson at (603) 882-7004

Corpus Christi Food Pantry: Joan Bonnette

Corpus Christi Food Pantry was established to help the disadvantaged in Nashua. It is part of an outreach arm of the Roman Catholic parishes in the city. The Pantry offers food and financial assistance to people in need who live in the city. The Pantry is open four days a week. There is always a need for more volunteers. Anyone interested can contact the Pantry Director, Susan Dignan, at 882-6372.

Each parish is represented on the Board of Directors. I was appointed by Fr. Kelley to serve as the representative from St. Chris. On a weekly basis I pick up the food that parishioners donate and leave in the baskets in the church. I receive monthly totals of the food collected and write a little paragraph for the church bulletin. I also write updates for the Corpus Christi webpage at the beginning of each month. Board of Director meetings are once a month. Once a year, I organize a Brown Bag Appeal at the church and the school for donations of non-perishable food.

Creating for our Community: Andrea Richards

Creating For Our Community is a group that makes knit and crochet Prayer Shawls. The shawls are available for anyone in the parish to give where they see a need. Each shawl is sent with a cross bearing the Psalm Verse: “My Help Comes From the Lord” Ps.121:2, and a card bearing a prayer the women of the group wrote. We meet monthly to work on our shawls, to help each other with current shawl projects, to share new patterns/ideas, and to pray for those who will be receiving the shawls. This is a wonderful way to share the gift of hand crafting with those in need. Shawls go to those who are ill, who may be feeling isolated or lonely, to new mothers/fathers, to anyone who could be comforted by the physical presence of prayer. I started this group because I heard women in the parish talking about knitting and crocheting and thought this would be a wonderful way to share this gift. These shawls are a visible sign of God’s care and comfort, wrapping the recipient in Prayer.



Finance Council: Tom Nardone

The Finance Council plays an important role within the parish. We are responsible for providing guidance and recommendations to the Pastor and Parish Council regarding financial decisions that need to be made in the parish.

The Council typically meets once a month at the rectory. I got involved with the Finance Council as a way of “giving back.” God blessed me with an education in business. I have also been blessed with over 15 years of work experience as an Accountant in various roles. Helping my parish make similar decisions that I help my clients make on a daily basis seemed not only natural, but the right thing to do. Anyone interested in joining this ministry can contact either Father Kelley or Tom Nardone. Tom can be reached by cell at 781.710.2107 or by email, tnardone.work@gmail.com.

Garden Club: Helen Blais

We are a group of parishioners who love to garden. Our goal is to beautify the grounds around our church. Our annual plant sale pays for all the projects we have done. If you would like to join us you would be most welcome! Happy Gardening! If you would like to join the Garden Club please contact St. Christopher Rectory at 603.882.0632



Knights of Columbus: Don Sherwood (Donald.j.sherwood@gmail.com)

The Knights of Columbus St. Patrick Council 11907 is a fraternal organization of Catholic men from St. Patrick and St. Christopher parishes. Individual councils from each parish officially merged in 2014 after many years of closely collaborating on mutual programs. The merger solidified the synergy of combining efforts to better serve both parishes. The council meets twice a month, with the officers' meeting on the first Tuesday at St. Chris and the business meeting on the third Tuesday at St. Pats.

The Council's goals and activities are based on the three KofC principles of Charity, Unity, and Fraternity. Programs are selected to support a variety of needs at the individual, parish, community and the state levels. Examples of ongoing programs include: Student Scholarship Fund, Sunday After Mass Coffee & Donut Social, Lenten Fish Dinners and Red Cross Blood drive. These are just a few of the many activities throughout the year. The council also donates funds to support requests from local charities and religious organization. This variety of activities give Brother Knights an opportunity to actively participate in worthy endeavors and enjoy the camaraderie of working with like-minded men. Suggestions for new programs are always welcomed and respectively considered.

I was somewhat hesitant to join the Knights when asked many years ago. Work obligations and growing family responsibilities left little free time. I also associated the organization with hall bars and smoky bingo games that were the norm in my father's generation. Fortunately St. Chris' council has always been parish oriented with no "hall" aspirations. I was also assured my time concerns would be accommodated, so cautiously agreed to join. Looking back after 35 years, I can clearly identify concrete benefits associated with membership. I'll mention just a few. First, the activities and programs the council undertakes often serve less fortunate individuals, supporting organizations and worthwhile causes. Participating in these activities provides a unique perspective that over time reinforces the spiritual principle that actions are a positive means to strengthen faith. Second, my involvement in programs started as an individual contributor, eventually expanding to council leadership roles and program management responsibilities. These experiences had practical benefits of building confidence and honing skills that are applicable to many personal and professional situations. Third, membership in the KofC provides a unique social outlet. Over the years I have enjoyed

associating with outstanding groups of men, discussing common interests, deliberating at times diverse outlooks and camaraderie of working together on a wide and expanding range of projects. In hindsight I made the right decision.

Membership needs to be a win-win situation for long term success. It works best in a partnering relationship that benefits both individual and organization. I encourage men to think about what they wish to get out of being a Knight. Please consider this an invitation to talk about mutual interests.

- Don Sherwood
Donald.j.sherwood@gmail.com

Lay Carmelites (Third Order): The St. Christopher Parish Volunteer Handbook

A third order of lay men and women with Carmelite spirituality focusing on prayer.

How to participate: The Lay Carmelites meet the second Sunday of every month from 12-3:30pm. For more information please call Simone Corrigan.

Parish Nurse: Anne Moran

The Parish Nurse Program is a service provided to the parishioners through St. Joseph Hospital and its Wellness Center. It is a spiritual based program through which the nurse is available to provide holistic care on the first and third Tuesday of each month (weather permitting). The nurse monitors blood pressure, discusses any health related issues one might have, and can refer the individual to community resources which may be helpful in solving them. Individuals of ALL ages may avail themselves of this service. This service is FREE of CHARGE.

Parish Prayer Line: Michael Richards & Maureen Brown

The parish is starting a Prayer-Line to support the needs of our family. We are looking for members. By joining our prayer-line, you promise to pray for those in need and those who request your prayers. As a member, you choose whether you will receive the requests via an email message or a phone call. If you wish to be an on-line member, go to <http://www.stchrisparishnh.org> and fill out the form. If you wish to be a phone-line member, call our coordinator Maureen Brown at 882-8634 to register. For our tradition phone line members, we also need some captains who would be willing to call other members with the prayer requests. When we receive a prayer request, you will receive an email or a phone call with the request. We encourage all to submit any type of prayer request that you would like prayed for (death of a family member/friend, sickness, surgery, any crisis or distressing situation or concern). Intercessory prayer is a special and powerful gift that we all can give to one another. You can submit your request in one of

three ways: 1.) Call our prayer-line coordinator, Maureen Brown at 882-8634; 2.) On-line at <http://www.stchrisparishnh.org>; 3.) Via an email to prayer-hotline@stchrisparishnh.org

Pastoral Council: Kevin McHugh & John Knapp

The Parish Council assists the pastor in his leadership role of planning, organizing, and promoting the activities of the parish. Members are sought out by the pastor through recommendations of the Council with efforts made to represent the entire parish community. It meets approximately every 6-8 weeks covering the activities of all parish life and the school.

I became involved after a discussion with Father Kelley, and feeling led by the Spirit to respond to the calling. This feeling was based on an appreciation for the lifelong opportunity I've had as a member of the Catholic Church, and the gift of faith that I received at an early age. The work of the Council is rewarding because its members recognize the importance of the decisions made, and the direction provided for the parish. As such, the spirit of the Council is one of service to all St. Christopher's members and to the pastor who leads us.

I am new to the Parish Council. I joined for a simple reason – I was invited. I've always enjoyed being a part of the process, being behind the scenes, and serving. The Parish Council does all of that and more. Our meetings are chock full of conversations on how to best serve the entire St. Christopher community. If you ever wonder what it's all about or want to take a step closer to any facet of our parish – consider stepping into one of our meetings.

Saint Vincent de Paul Society: Connie McNulty

St. Vincent de Paul's mission is to help the poor and needy. We serve all residents of Nashua. Our meetings are held on the third Sunday of the month at 7:00pm. St. Vincent helps those in need, on a one-time basis, with food, electric bills, rent payments, car repairs, medical bills, etc. We also distribute about 55-60 food baskets at Thanksgiving and Easter. The foods for these baskets are donated by the parishioners. "Help the needy" boxes are located at the doors of the church whereby people can place monetary donations to help our cause. We rely on donations to support our work. I joined this organization several years ago as a way to "give back" for all the blessings I have been given.

Yoga for Seniors: Elizabeth Cote & Two Anonymous Participants

If you are interested in becoming a little more active to improve your overall health, consider joining the St. Christopher Yoga for Seniors class. The class meets on

Wednesday mornings at 8:00am in the Church Hall. Yoga for Seniors is a class that moves the whole body through a series of seated and standing yoga poses to increase flexibility and range of motion, improve balance and core strength, and help promote stress reduction and mental clarity. Classes are provided free of charge to St. Christopher's seniors. All are welcome to stop by and give it a try.

"I joined senior Yoga because I was familiar with yoga from years ago and wanted to get back into it on a 'senior' level. I knew it was a wonderful way to stretch and relax. The group who regularly attend Senior Yoga are very warm and friendly. The instructor is very experienced and a lovely person."

"I look forward to our Wednesday morning Yoga class. It's a fun group and a wonderful instructor!"

Volunteer Opportunities (Faith Formation): Alana Kocsis

The Parish Faith Formation program is designed to be a support and resource to the parents in the forming of our Catholic faith to the children. The basic understanding that the parents are the first educators of the faith to their children, our parish offers faith formation opportunities in the classroom setting, home study, Vacation Bible School, and sacrament preparation.

Religious Education: Alana Kocsis, Fran Grady & Kevin McHugh

Volunteers make up the teaching staff and behind-the-scenes for all programs: Sunday Morning – Grades Pre-K to 5; Monday Evening – Grades 6, 7, 8 (Junior High); and Home Study – This program is offered to families as an alternative to the classroom model. Families are required to attend four meetings during the year.

Sacrament Preparation is available to children grades 2 and older. The Diocesan directive is that the sacrament program be a parish program. This means that children from Catholic, Home and Public schools come together to prepare as a parish family. First Penance – meets in the fall to prepare for First Confession in December. Preparation consists of 5 classes that include a student text, vocabulary words, final interview and rehearsal. First Penance is celebrated with a short prayer service and individual confessions. Father Kelley invites three priests to hear confession. First Communion – meets in winter and spring to prepare for First Communion in May. Preparation consists of 6 classes that include a student text, vocabulary words, final interview and rehearsal. Children celebrate First Communion at a parish Mass.

When I first moved back to Nashua with my family, I chose St. Christopher Church as my parish. My husband grew up with this parish and loved that it was close to home. My girls are now 15 and 17 and I have many special memories watching my girls grow up spiritually. I was able to volunteer and teach 4th and 5th grades while my girls were attending and have made caring friends. I enjoyed being connected to my church family and giving back while also saving money on tuition. I also really grew spiritually as a teacher and substitute teacher because children help us remember how important our religion is to every aspect of our lives. Children need our mentoring to be inspired, learn about how God is important in our lives every day. They need to be reminded how they are loved unconditionally. I am a better parishioner because I have volunteered and provided a needed service to my church. Ultimately, we service our wonderful God who gives us so much!

The Religious Education or “CCD” program provides education in the faith to the youth of the parish. Classes are available for grades K to 8 and meet weekly from September to April. Signups to enroll occur in August and September, but kids can join at any time.

I became a Religious Education Teacher at St. Chris six years ago after a discussion with Alana Kocsis, the Religious Education Director of our parish. The opportunity to share my personal faith with young people was one that I could not turn down. Looking back at my time as a youth, the role that my faith played in getting through difficult times and finding direction in life was crucial. I see the role of “teacher” as one of sharing those experiences to help young people receive the same gift of faith, so that their lives have direction and a clear purpose.

Vacation Bible School: Alana Kocsis



The program is open to children from Pre-K on up. A one-day session is held in February during school break. A week session is held the last week of June.

Safe Environment Requirements: All adult volunteers working with minors are required to be documented with the parish and the diocese and complete an on-line training, as well as a criminal background check.

Confirmation Program: Deacon Jim Daly

The greatest joy is to share the Good News about Jesus Christ with High School students, and in helping them to know, love and live our Catholic Faith. It's a privilege to journey with young adults who choose to follow Jesus the Christ; and to see them commit themselves to Gospel living in word and deed in their adult lives. The program is a two

year commitment with meetings held on Sunday evening in conjunction with the school year. Students participate in an annual retreat each year, and to provide three hours of neighborly service annually as well. The Rite of Confirmation takes place in the spring, which includes the parishes of St. Christopher, St. Aloysius of Gonzaga (St. Louis), and St. Patrick's.

Volunteer Opportunities (Faith and Fellowship):

Book Club: The St. Christopher Parish Volunteer Handbook

Meet monthly at a local coffee shop to discuss a book that has been selected by the group to read. How to participate: Please call Kaye Heffernan 882-8736 to join and find out the current book selection.

Scouts: The St. Christopher Parish Volunteer Handbook

Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, and Girl Scouts meet at the parish during the school year. How to participate: If you or your child is interested in joining one of the scout groups, please contact the rectory at 882-0632.

