



ASSUMPTION

Blessed Virgin Mary

PARISH

“We Recognize God’s Grace at Work in Our Lives”

Assumption’s Gibbs Family

Janell was finishing school at Mizzou, and Shawn had just graduated from Missouri State. They met by chance in January 2000 at a party in Columbia, while Shawn was visiting friends.

“We were at the right place at the right time,” says Janell Gibbs. “Going to church was not a priority for either of us, but we knew we wanted faith to be a core part of our life together. It just wasn’t there quite yet.”

It was preparing for marriage that led Janell and Shawn to consider finding a church. Shawn was raised Catholic, and Janell was a Methodist and open to the Catholic faith, but not yet committed to attending RCIA.

“At Assumption, Fr. Joe Kempf probably captivated us at first, but we soon saw what a vibrant church Assumption really is,” says Shawn Gibbs. “There are hundreds of people who make Assumption the beautiful parish it is. It’s inspiring.”

For several years, Janell and Shawn attended Assumption on occasion and weren’t involved beyond that. They rarely recognized anyone at Mass.

Then Janell felt nudged to enroll in the RCIA program from 2004 to 2005. She was randomly assigned a sponsor, and Sue Aderhold became a blessing and inspiration for both Janell and Shawn.

“There were some extremely powerful experiences I had through RCIA, only explained by the Holy Spirit’s presence,” Janell says.

A couple years after RCIA, Shawn and Janell became parents to Faith Marie and, a few years later, to Wyatt Lee.

“I joined the MOPS group – Mothers of Preschoolers – and found love and Christian fellowship and support for six years,” Janell says. “Both of our children attend

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Shawn and Janell Gibbs with their children, Faith Marie and Wyatt Lee

FEBRUARY 2017

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Got Talent? *Bring It to the Spotlight!*

The word “talent” often conjures up images of stage performers in the spotlight, captivating awestruck audiences with their impeccable musical or acting skills.

While these talented performers are certainly deserving of applause, the majority of the population sits hidden in the shadows, staring on in amazement while feeling overlooked — and perhaps wishing to possess such talents themselves. But even when we feel overlooked and untalented, God knows better. As Christians, we are all called to dig deep and trust that we are specially blessed with valuable talents and abilities, even if our talents aren’t so obvious or don’t garner applause and accolades.

Along with “time” and “treasure,” “talent” is one of the “three Ts” of stewardship. Exploring our natural inclinations and preferences, especially when guided by the intricacies of our unique personalities, can unearth God-given talents.

In our Membership and Ministry Directory, beginning on page 10, there is an assessment to help us discover our own personal talents. Learning about our own unique gifts and talents enables people to understand and appreciate themselves more, to improve all of the interpersonal relationships, to be better spouses, parents, relatives, or friends, and to contribute more to life.

We never know when, how or what the Holy Spirit is going to stir in us. One thing is certain: there are MANY ways your life can be of service to our community here at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary! You are part of an unbroken story of God’s love that has been building the Church since

time began. “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same spirit,” writes St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians. “There are different forms of service, but the same Lord.”

Some people have the gift of working peacefully with children. Equipped with patience and gentleness, they are able to guide young souls to the Lord. Yet, others shudder at the thought of a classroom full of 5-year-olds, and instead seek the quiet solace of behind-the-scenes tasks — cleaning the church, sewing altar cloths or stuffing envelopes.

Our interests and abilities are varied, and our volunteer options are endless, as we are called to give our talents back to God in loving service. Examine your heart and prayerfully discern your gifts, then direct those gifts towards serving the people of God.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr., author of *Life’s Little Instruction Book*, once said, “Talent without discipline is like an octopus on roller skates. There’s plenty of movement, but you never know if it is going to be forwards, backwards, or sideways.”

If our gifts of talent are not guided by the discipline of prayer, just like an octopus on roller skates, we will get nowhere fast! Yet, if we keep our eyes on the goal of heaven and serve the Lord with joyfulness, our efforts will produce a bountiful harvest. In the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully.”

The next time you sit quietly in the shadows behind a glaring stage spotlight, rest assured that your talents are no less impressive in the eyes of God, and will always be “applauded” when directed to the service of His people.

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A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

The Word Became Flesh; And Made His Dwelling Among Us

Dear Parishioners,

Our celebration of Christmas was truly a revelation of Emmanuel, God with us. The liturgies were glimpses of God's glory. And behind the scenes, you were all bringing Christ to those in need – hundreds of families were able to see Christmas this year because of the love that poured out from your hearts into theirs. As we were celebrating the gift of God becoming human, you were witnessing to Christ's spirit at work in your lives.

The Church gives us a few weeks of "Ordinary Time" before we will turn our attention to the Lenten Journey and the beautiful celebration of Jesus' Death and Resurrection. These weeks between Christmas and Ash Wednesday are for us to reflect on the rhythm of our life, perhaps including one or two New Year's resolutions, which are already in the rearview mirror. I want to encourage us to make a few simple commitments to prayer which will help us embrace the true meaning of the Word made flesh and to prepare to walk with Jesus on Calvary.

At Christmas, God has made His love for us known; through Mary, God's desire to be just like



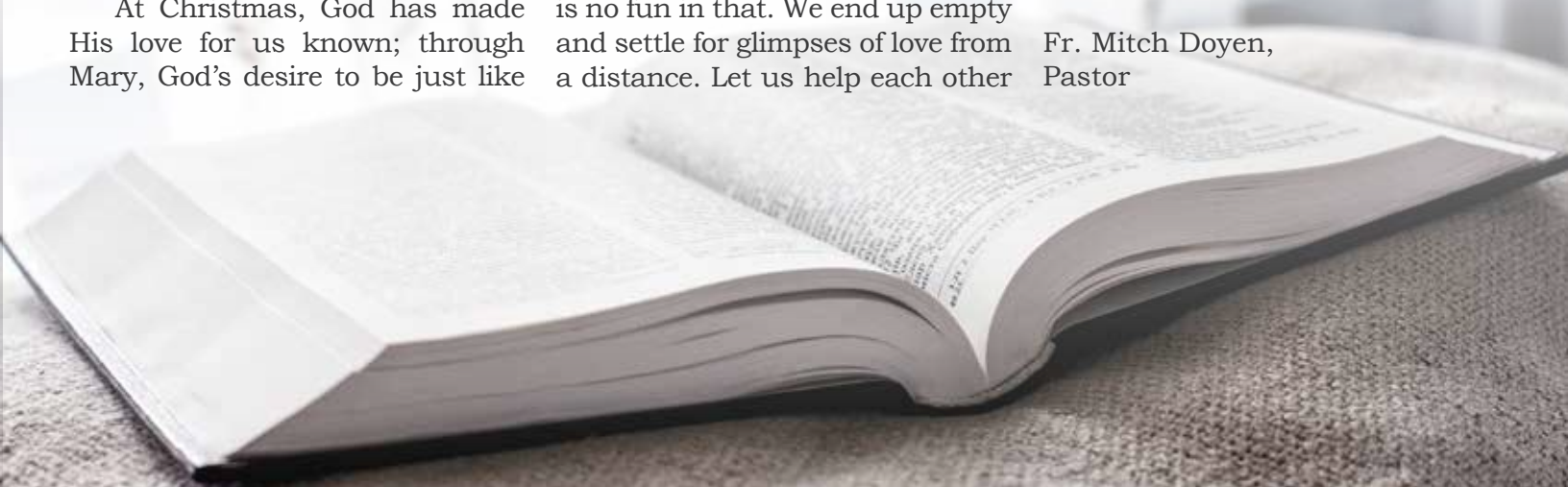
you has been fulfilled. God really loves us; God is deeply in love with you. God sees exactly who you are and loves every bit of you. What will we say in response to such love? Prayer is a response to God's abiding love. For some of us, just like when we were 14, the idea of being in love is scary; the first words are yet hidden in our heart; we are sure we will trip and fall and be embarrassed; so we pretend the love is not real. There is no fun in that. We end up empty and settle for glimpses of love from a distance. Let us help each other

step out on to the dance floor and enjoy God's love together.

I challenge us all to make a simple commitment, for our own spiritual journey and for the mission of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. Let's pray every day. This is not like a New Year's resolution; we do not have to train for a marathon. We just need to work up the courage to say a word in response to God's love. Set aside 10 minutes for yourself each day, to be quiet and pray. Help your family to honor the same commitment. Then, as a family, set aside five minutes to pray together. Once this becomes a habit, God will work wonders in your heart and in your family. This is how we can echo Mary's "yes" and follow her in her mission of bringing Christ to the world.

Per Matrem Ad Filium,
(Through the Mother to the Son)

Fr. Mitch Doyen,
Pastor



Assumption Parish Wants

Our mission as Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish is: “May you find Christ here... May you bring Christ to the world.” One of the ways we bring Christ to the world is through our Transitional Housing Ministry. Working in a partnership with our St. Vincent de Paul Council, Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Services, our Knights of Columbus Council 2269 and the Transitional Housing Team, headed by Tammy Arado, we provide housing for families in need. Currently, we have two houses dedicated to this purpose. Even as we celebrate the beautiful progress that families have made through their connection with our mission, we are continually saddened by the number of families who are unable to get the services they need.

We have identified the most significant need as the lack of available housing for working families. There are many families whose resources are too plentiful to qualify for assistance, yet not sufficient to afford market-rate housing. We have been searching for a way to meet this need of working families, many of whom are our own parishioners seeking just a bit of help on their journey to support their families. We are determined to find a room for the Holy Family in this Bethlehem.

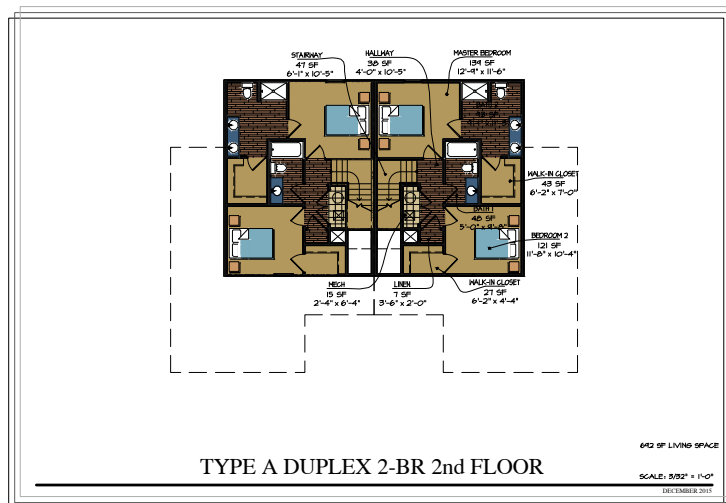
Over the last 14 months, our Parish Council, Finance Committee, Stewardship Committee,

and School Board have been exploring whether and how Assumption may be able to lead the O’Fallon community in a response to this need for families. Many parishioners may not be aware of the portion of our land which is “beyond the creek,” a 9.8-acre parcel on the north end of our property. We believe several acres of this land can be developed for affordable, workforce, housing; meeting a significant need in our community and expressing our mission which flows from the heart of Christ, from the heart of Mary and from the ministries of our Patron Saints, Vincent de Paul, Francis of Assisi and Monica. We want to move forward with a proposal to partner with private investors, the Missouri Housing Development Commission and the O’Fallon community to construct 30-40, two to three-bedroom townhomes, together with a 2,500-square-foot Community Center, which can be a local headquarters for Catholic Charities. The beauty of this partnership is that the equity for construction is provided by our partners; then we lead the ministry of constructing, managing and blessing the homes for our families. Of course, we cannot move forward without the support of our parish.

Fr. Mitch is hosting a meeting, for all who wish to learn more about this proposal, on Tues-



O'FALLON TOWNHOMES
O'Fallon, Missouri



TYPE A DUPLEX 2-BR 2nd FLOOR

640 SF LIVING SPACE
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"
DECEMBER 2011



Renderings and plans for the affordable housing project.

TO BETHLEHEM

to Build a Home for Jesus

day evening, Feb. 21, in the Fr. Joe Kempf Parish Center. Please join us to pray where God is leading us in this ministry and to learn more about this exciting opportunity for everyone in our community. May we find Christ here...may we bring Christ to the world.

If you would like more information, please look out for announcements – date and time – regarding the February meeting, or call the parish office at 636-240-3721.



TYPE C ACCESSIBLE 3-BR DUPLEX FRONT ELEVATION

SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"
DECEMBER 2013

Assumption's Gibbs Family continued from front cover

Assumption School, and we value those virtues that are emphasized both at school and at home."

Janell and Shawn found that there are opportunities for everyone to be involved at Assumption, as evident on the stewardship cards shared with parishioners.

Shawn decided to attend a men's Christ Renews His Parish – CRHP – Retreat in the summer of 2013. He remained involved with CRHP for a year and a half, and continues to meet with some of these men for Bible study. Janell was inspired to attend a women's CRHP retreat in January 2016.

"CRHP was significant," Shawn says. "Janell observed a truly remarkable fire ignite in my faith. CRHP has been a blessing to our faith and family, and would be an ideal 'first step' to anyone wanting to find involvement in parish life."

For the Gibbs family, true stewardship means time, talent, and treasure – and not any of those three in isolation.

"Stewardship is recognizing the talents and gifts you possess through God and deciding how you can give the best of yourself," Janell says. "It's definitely something to discern through prayer, and to always be open to and recognize opportunities that knock on your door."

Janell and Shawn model stewardship for their children by volunteering and spending time at church. They got their children involved in adopting families for Christmas and choosing toys at the store to give.

"We talk about the importance of giving and how it would make Jesus happy," Shawn says. "We also frequently listen to Christian music. It's so awesome to hear our children's sweet voices singing out powerful lyrics!"

Janell and Shawn would encourage everyone to attend a CRHP retreat or to get involved with a Bible study. However you feel the Holy Spirit is nudging you, they suggest being bold and saying "yes."

"We recognize God's grace at work in our lives and know that there is no greater gift than this," Shawn says. "The mission of Assumption truly resonates with us: 'May you find Christ here, and may you bring Christ to the world.'"

Shawn also notes that he looks to the messages found in Scripture, which help him focus on his role as a faithful steward. In particular, he appreciates Timothy 1:15 – "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst" – and the direction provided by Philippians 4:6, "Worry about nothing, pray about everything."

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Valentine's Day

The Feast of a Christian Martyr

Candy, flowers, romantic dinners, and excuses for wooing are the common traditions we associate with the once-pagan holiday known as Valentine's Day.

Dangling cupids, candy "message" hearts, and faux long-stemmed roses clutter every card store, waiting for that last-minute purchase.

The question is – how did this over-commercialized holiday really begin?

There are a few stories surrounding the history of Feb. 14 and St. Valentine himself, all dating back to the Roman Empire. The 14th day of February was a day set aside to honor the goddess Juno, queen of the Roman gods and goddesses. The following day, Feb. 15, began the feast of Lupercalia – a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

As part of the festival traditions, there was a name drawing among the young people. The names of young Roman women were written on slips of paper and placed into a jar. Each young man would draw a young woman's name from the jar, and the two would be partners for the duration of the festival. Sometimes the pairing lasted an entire year, and often, the couple would fall in love and later marry.

At the time, Emperor Claudius II was involved in many bloody and unpopular campaigns, and he was having a difficult time recruiting soldiers to join his military leagues. Claudius believed that soldiers were reluctant to join because they did not want to leave their loves or families.

With this in mind, Claudius decreed all marriages and engagements cancelled in Rome. During this time, St. Valentine was a priest in Rome, and he and St. Marius secretly married young couples. For this, St. Valentine was apprehended and dragged before the Prefect of Rome, who sentenced him to be beaten and then executed by beheading. He suffered this martyrdom on Feb. 14, around the year 270 AD.

Before his death, it is said that St. Valentine left

a note for the jailer's daughter, who had become his friend, and signed it "From Your Valentine." Although the truth behind the St. Valentine's legend is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and, most importantly, romantic figure. It is no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

Over time, Feb. 14 became a time for lovers to exchange sweet messages, making St. Valentine the patron saint of lovers. The date was often commemorated with the sending of poems and simple gifts. During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that Feb. 14 was the beginning of the avian mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of February – Valentine's Day – should be a day for romance.



Bringing It All Together, Behind the Scenes

The Ministry of Sacristans

Vicki Briggs is a firm believer that serving others is just what God put us on this earth to do.

"I know that God has a marvelous plan for me," Vicki says. "And it's serving others in some way."

Vicki and her husband, Terry, have served Assumption as lead sacristans for the past five years, and Vicki also serves as the contact for the ministry. Not only has she found the role of sacristan to be a great fit for her gifts and personality, but it has also fulfilled her desire to be of service to the people of the parish.

"Serving impacts my heart and my faith, and I feel like I'm giving back to others in my parish through what I'm doing," she says.

Although there are many details to which sacristans tend, the heart of their ministry is preparing for the Mass, so that their fellow parishioners can fully enter into the liturgy.

"We prepare the wine and the hosts and the altar table and the sacristy for the Mass," Vicki says. "We unlock the church, turn the lights and heat on, and prepare for Mass for our parish."

"But the most rewarding part is [preparing for] people coming to Mass to experience the Body and Blood of Christ," she adds.

Sacristans also help to coordinate the lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, altar servers, and other liturgical ministries.

"All of our liturgical ministries are important, and they all have to fall into place for the Mass," Vicki says. "That's the key to parishioners' whole week – the Sunday liturgy. And it all has to come together for them to be able to experience at the fullest. It's all of the ministries coming together for our parishioners to really experience the Eucharist."

Vicki and the other sacristans arrive an hour before Mass to set up, and stay about 30 minutes after Mass to make sure everything is ready for the following Mass.

"Behind the scenes, people don't realize all the



things that have to be done," Vicki says. "But it's so beautiful when it all happens."

Vicki hopes that their efforts allow not only for the priest to be able to focus on the Mass without worrying about coordinating details, but also that everything coming together smoothly helps the other parishioners to enter more fully into prayer.

"I want to make it as easy for the priests as possible, so they can focus on preparing for Mass and being the presider at that Mass," Vicki says. "I pray that our parishioners really experience Christ and Mass is not just a routine, but it's meaningful and special."

"Our parish mission statement, 'May you experience Christ here and bring Christ to the world' – I pray that our parish does experience that, that you walk out those doors and you are pumped up and ready to bring Christ to the world," she adds.

Vicki encourages those who are interested in this ministry to become involved.

"This is a very important ministry for serving others," Vicki says. "We have two sacristans at every single Mass – if you don't want to be the lead and you just want to be a helper, that's important too!"

If you would like more information on the Sacristans Ministry, or to become involved, please contact Vicki Briggs at victoria.j.briggs@charter.net or 314-518-4048.

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Blessed Virgin Mary
PARISH

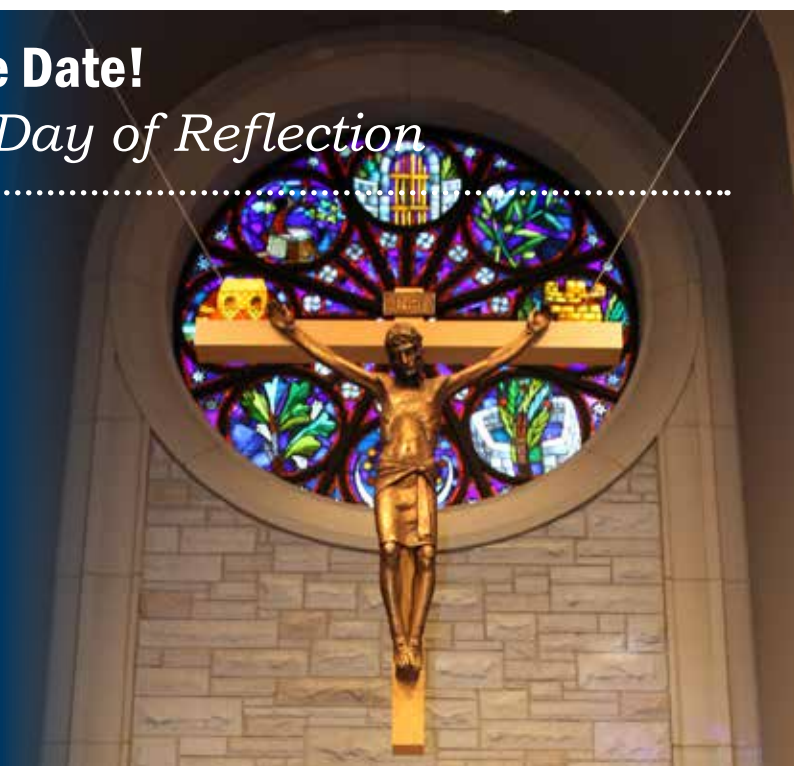
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Save the Date!

Our Fifth Annual Day of Reflection

The Fifth Annual Day of Reflection will be held here at Assumption on Saturday, March 4, in the Fr. Joe Kempf Parish Center. This popular "mini retreat" grows each year and is sure to give your faith a powerful boost! Whether you seek community or communion, you will find it here. Mark your calendar!



LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. (MH), Vigil Mass 5:00 p.m. | **Sunday:** 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., Noon

Daily Mass: Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m., MH at 6:30 a.m.

Perpetual Adoration: Sunday at 1:00 p.m. until Thursday at 6:00 p.m. in the Chapel

Reconciliation: Thursday 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Chapel, Saturday 4:00-4:45 p.m. in the Church