



# The Heartbeat

A Publication of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church  
[www.ihmparish.com](http://www.ihmparish.com)  
Fall 2023

## FALL GATHERING PLANNED FOR OCTOBER 5

by Deb Moore

In 2006, Warren Sibilla, a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary's Finance Council, was disheartened to learn of the lack of a "sinking fund" to pay for upkeep and upgrades to our parish campus, such as replacing aging boilers and repairing leaky roofs. He conceived a plan for an annual fundraiser similar to the former "Tewksbury" cocktail party, only this time the proceeds would be earmarked for an ongoing maintenance fund.

Warren approached Dick Knappe and Phyllis Rosenbach to join him in the effort and soon others were added to the committee. The result was the first annual Fall Gathering, held at Cascade Hills Country Club that October.

Now, eighteen years later, the Fall Gathering is still going strong. Parishioners—long-time and new alike—come together for an evening of socialization while enjoying great food and beverages in a welcoming, comfortable setting. This year's theme is "Romancing the Stone," a nod to next year's 75th parish anniversary. Liz Owen and our choir will present a musical program and an 8th grade IHM School student will read his/her winning essay.

Through the Fall Gathering, parishioners have generously contributed more than \$300,000 to the Parish Maintenance Fund. Those gifts have helped fund many projects that keep our aging parish facilities in good working order. The good stewardship of our IHM campus not only supports our home for worship, education, ministries, faith formation, evangelization and social activities, it also honors the gifts and sacrifices of those who came before us and made possible the facilities we enjoy today.

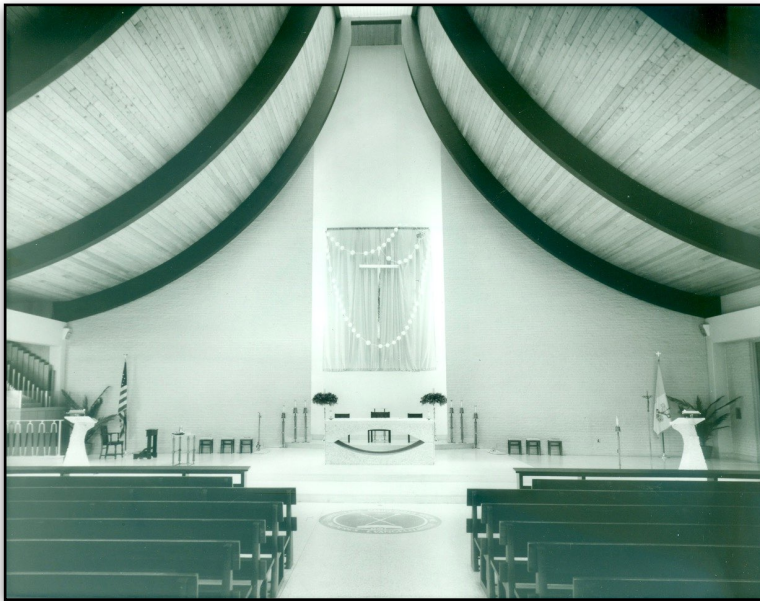
All are invited to this event. **Please respond promptly to your invitation, which will arrive via USPS mail shortly.** We look forward to seeing YOU at this year's Fall Gathering!

*Join your fellow parishioners on  
Thursday, October 5 at 6:30 pm,  
Cascade Hills Country Club for the  
18th Annual Fall Gathering.*

2023 Co-Chairs  
Paul & Christy Brown  
Charlie & Kristin Ferro



*Anne Brown, Terry MacLachlan, Lee Brown and Mark MacLachlan enjoyed themselves at the 2022 Fall Gathering.*



*The rear wall of the sanctuary was bare until 1974. Also notice the original dark stain on the pews, stripped in 1998.*

# ART & SYMBOLISM IN OUR CHURCH: FORM AND THE ASCENDING CHRIST

by Deb Moore, Parish Historian

The architecture of our church contains many unique and striking features; there's not another like it around. In fact, Immaculate Heart of Mary was the first new church built in the Diocese of Grand Rapids following the Second Vatican Council. Our pastor, Fr. Charles Killgoar, was determined to build a structure "that would accommodate the new changes in the liturgy described by Vatican II."

If you mention to someone in the city that you attend "IHM, the church on Burton by Plymouth," a common reaction is "Oh yeah! The church that looks like a ship." And, indeed, that was the intent. The main body of the church is called the *nave* from the Latin word meaning *ship*. This reflects both Noah's Ark which housed God's people, and the barque of St. Peter which housed the church. In a *Grand Rapids Press* article on October 30, 1966 describing the opening of our new church, it was noted that "standing in the nave of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church is like standing inside an overturned ship."

Yet, once inside the nave, you may be more focused on the giant depiction of The Ascending Christ. It was not always there, however. When the church was completed, the wall behind the altar was purposely left unadorned. One parishioner remembers Fr. Killgoar explaining that the median seam where the top slab and the bottom slab meet represents the division between the old Testament and the New Testament. Another remembers it described as "a wall rising to heaven." Many parishioners thought the wall behind the altar was too stark, that it didn't lend itself to reverence and focus on God. (This wall was painted stark white from 1966 until 2019 when church renovations softened the look by using a color wash faux paint technique.)

Parishioners began hanging temporary adornments on the white wall, such as fabrics, crosses, and even a huge set of rosary beads. The "problem" was resolved in 1974 when, at the direction of Pastor Fr. Bill Lawless, The Ascending Christ was purchased and installed. Documentation is lacking, but it arrived in pieces in wooden crates and was possibly made in Europe.

One goal of the church architect, Charles Hannan, was to "shelter 1,000 worshippers as close to the altar as possible with the minimum of visual obstructions." That, certainly, was achieved. Credit him with the slope of the marble floor which makes it possible for us all to see the altar, no matter one's seat in the congregation.

Fr. Killgoar, the driving force behind IHM's church, was inspired by English art critic and social thinker John Ruskin's words. "Let it be such a work as our descendants will thank us for, and let us think..that such a time is to come when these stones will be held sacred because our hands touched them, and that people will say as they look upon the labor and the wrought substance of them: 'See! This our ancestors did for us.' "

May we always be thankful for the sacred stones which surround us.

# PARISHIONER PROFILE: PAUL & MARIANNE BERKMEIER

by Ann Williams



In September 2020 Paul and Marianne Berkmeier moved from Jackson to a home on Annchester Dr. in Grand Rapids to be closer to their four children and 17 grandchildren. Previously they had spent many hours and miles traveling to and from Grand Rapids for family gatherings and to attend their grandchildren's many programs and activities. It just made sense to move here.

Two of their children, Mike and Kellie and their children Brady, Patrick, Mara and Audrey, and Danielle and Andy Walsh and their children Ava, Lucy, Margaret, Peter and Catherine Jean, are members of IHM Parish and actively participate in parish, school and diocesan activities. Dave and Ellie Berkmeier and their children Caroline, Georgia, Brooke, Hailey and Samuel belong to St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, as do their brother and sister-in-law Paul and Tina and their three children Madelyn, Noah and Noelle.

Marianne says their family life has changed significantly since moving to Grand Rapids. She noted they see the kids and grandkids weekly if not daily. One of Mike's sons mows their lawn and other family members help the couple as needed. Paul and Marianne reciprocate as they are able. They all take turns hosting holiday and family celebrations. Said Marianne, "It feels like a little bit of heaven to live so close to family and the wonderful IHM community."

Having all the family close by has afforded some new opportunities for family activities. Recently Marianne hosted a sleepover for 11 of their granddaughters. What began as tea parties when the girls were younger has evolved into sleepovers, which Marianne says the girls, ranging in age from five to 15, really enjoy. Activities vary from time to time with the most recent involving swimming at MVP, dinner, then Lauren David coming over to engage the girls in a conversation about virtue. Then they did each other's nails, enjoyed popcorn and said the rosary together (a staple of sleepovers).

Marianne said the highlight of the sleepovers happens after lights out. The girls line up their sleeping bags next to each other and "chat," often for hours. Sometimes Marianne will "call uncle" and go to bed. The next morning Paul makes waffles for the gang and they go to Mass if feasible.

Paul and Marianne have found a new spiritual home at IHM. They had been very involved in their Jackson area parish, St. Mary Star of the Sea Parish, as well as Queen of the Miraculous Medal Parish in Jackson. They have "jumped in" at IHM, ushering, lectoring, as Eucharistic ministers and spending time in the Adoration Chapel. Marianne taught fourth grade one year in our school, something she had not planned to do but did when she was asked. Paul also participates in the *This Man Is You Ministry* and has high praise for it.

Marianne commented that the way to get to know people and the parish is to get involved. She and Paul have found IHM to be wonderfully warm and welcoming, as well as open and giving. They epitomize what well known parishioner Joe Tierney has always said about IHM: "IHM members are doers!"

Paul and Marianne truly appreciate what IHM offers and the warm welcome they have received. At the same time, our parish is blessed to have them and their faithful commitment and service to our parish and to the greater church.



# SPOTLIGHT ON LECTORS

by Sue Jakubowski

While IHM lectors demonstrate good public speaking abilities, they are more than public speakers. Instead, they proclaim God's Word from Sacred Scripture to the assembled faith community. They do not merely read, but are messengers who retell the story of salvation.

Each of the four lectors interviewed below spoke of the Holy Spirit who helps open their hearts to that which they proclaim. This same Holy Spirit helps them study the Scripture and prepare the reading so their delivery might inspire those in the congregation as it does them. It is a ministry they take seriously.



**Heidi Frye** has been lectoring at the Saturday 5:15 Mass since 2010. She describes her preparation as one which then helps her remain very engaged in the Mass—not just an observer. For Heidi, it's not a job, it's a calling. It's an opportunity to help the parish hear God's Word in a new way. It's both her responsibility and joy to participate. Prior to Mass, she kneels and prays that the Holy Spirit will work through her and allow her to use her gifts to serve the Lord.



**David Kahn** is also a Saturday lector. His first experience in this role was as a student in Portland, Michigan. Later, he and his wife Silvia decided, after prayer, to get more involved in IHM: he volunteered to lector, while she joined the Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist team. David finds it extremely satisfying to be a part of the Mass because it has led him to more time reading and researching the Bible to make sure he is able to comprehend the message he is proclaiming.



**Matthew Kirk** originally lectored at IHM during his First Communion Mass way back in second grade. Since then, he has lectored at other parishes during his time away from Grand Rapids. Like the others, Matt feels that this ministry keeps him more focused at Mass and it promotes a greater understanding of the readings. He would encourage anyone who is thinking about it to consider how rewarding it could be and not hesitate to join the lector roster. Kudos to Colleen Lowe who recognized Matt's experience and encouraged him to sign up, and to Matt who willingly did so.



**Stacy Fellows** has been lectoring at the Sunday 11am Mass for more than 10 years. As a convert with a fear of being in front of people, Stacy felt called to do it. She understands how powerful the Word of God is and she tries to convey this in her speaking. As a mother of six children, she invites others to get involved and let your children see your example of how serving God can fit into family life. (Her willingness to face her fears to answer God's call is another powerful message to her family and our parish!)

If you would like to consider joining this important ministry, please contact Katie Hudson at 616-915-4470 or [HUDSONJK@gmail.com](mailto:HUDSONJK@gmail.com). Katie would be happy to answer any questions you have and provide all the necessary training. The Holy Spirit will do the rest!



# Transformation and Progression

By Claire Kaufman

*Last spring, Mrs. Savillo's 8th grade English class studied Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Each student studied the speech in a more in-depth way and wrote short commentaries relating Dr. King's speech to many different themes. The following are excerpts from that assignment.*

In the bold and well-written "I Have a Dream" speech, written and given by Martin Luther King Jr., two themes are very much present. These themes are transformation and progression. Throughout his speech, Dr. King made strong references to the ways things are and the way they should be. He inspired the hearts of each American to want a change.

Dr. King began his speech by setting the stage. Before speaking of any transformation or progression that needed to take place, he spoke of the terrors that created a need for transformation. Dr. King referenced the "segregation and chains of discrimination" that African Americans were facing. He used deep phrases such as "lonely island of poverty" to describe where the African Americans lived. Unfortunately, he was not wrong. African Americans were segregated and treated in terrible ways. His description of an African American being "in exile in his own land" spoke to the truth of how they were looked down upon and hated among their own communities. The terrible realities of the United States of America that were profoundly described in Dr. King's speech truly reminded every citizen that the way the country was, could not be the way the country stayed.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called for action. He didn't want the land he called home to be one of segregation and false promises. He wanted every man, black and white, to have the "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" promised in the Declaration of Independence. As his speech continued, Dr. King called for a "rise from the dark." He wanted a transformation to take place in which the United States was lifted "from the quicksands of racial injustice." Dr. King believed that our country could come into a new era. He even stated that this "is not the end, but a beginning." With this attitude, he demanded attention and action.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech is one of artistic writing and bold preaching. Through his work, he included the themes of transformation and progression. First, he spoke of the way America was struggling against racial injustice. Then, he spoke about how America must rise above and change. Finally, Dr. King looked forward and talked about the day when "little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers." He spoke and inspired others with the hope of what would come as he said, "I have a dream."

# THE 10TH NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

by Karen Weber

*“The Eucharist is the sacrament of love:  
It signifies love, it produces love.  
The Eucharist is the consummation  
of the whole spiritual life.”*

— Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274)

The 10<sup>th</sup> National Eucharistic Congress ([eucharisticcongress.org](http://eucharisticcongress.org)) will take place July 17-21, 2024, in Indianapolis, Indiana, the first in 83 years. One can safely bet that in 1941 the vast majority of American Catholics believed in the Real Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist. Not anymore! The 2019 Pew Research poll found that 69% of self-identified Catholics believe the bread and wine used at Mass **do not** become the body and blood of Jesus Christ, but are mere symbols. Most of those who say the Eucharist is symbolic have no idea that the Real Presence is a basic tenet of the Catholic Church, which went largely unchallenged until the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Our bishops have taken notice. In 2021, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) began an initiative to lead Catholics back to a proper understanding of Church teaching on the Eucharist. The centerpiece is the three-year National Eucharistic Revival ([eucharisticrevival.org](http://eucharisticrevival.org)) to restore devotion to the great mystery of the Eucharist. The Revival was launched at the diocesan level on the feast of Corpus Christi, June 19, 2022. On June 10, 2023, Bishop Walkowiak led hundreds from around the diocese *“Into the Mystery: A Day of Eucharistic Renewal, Unity, and Adventure,”* at Aquinas College to kick-off the year of Parish Revival.

The 2024 National Eucharistic Congress (NEC) will begin the missionary phase of the Revival. The anticipated gathering of 80,000 Catholics from around the country will hear inspiring speakers, share in beautiful music, and participate in glorious liturgies in the Presence of the Lord. This is an opportunity you do not want to miss! Jump start your own spiritual journey by joining Bishop Walkowiak and fellow IHM pilgrims next summer. Discounted tickets (\$200) are available. Hotel rooms are available on a first come, first serve basis. Contact Karen Weber, [kmw6@mac.com](mailto:kmw6@mac.com), for sign-up information.

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*Did you know? ....* The *Heart of the Revival* is choosing a Eucharistic Witness every month to highlight how “holy men and women have lived, loved, and served on the very soil upon which we stand ... testifying to what it means to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist and go on mission with Him for the life of the world.” The first witness chosen was Francis Cardinal George, an Oblate of Mary Immaculate. This is the same order that founded our parish 75 years ago. Cardinal George was Bishop of the Archdiocese of Chicago and visited his sister, parishioner Marge Cain, and IHM every summer. Cardinal George was a prophetic and pastoral leader who saw the needs of the Church through the eyes of the Suffering Servant. You may read the *Revival* article about him on the IHM parish website ([ihmparish.com](http://ihmparish.com)).

***Do Something Beautiful for God (Mother Teresa)***  
***Visit the Chapel of the Holy Eucharist***



NATIONAL  
**Eucharistic  
Congress**



# THE PARISH BULLETIN BOARD

## CALLING KIDS! TEENS! ADULTS! ALL ARTISTS & GRAPHIC DESIGNERS LOGO DESIGN

The 75th Anniversary of IHM Parish will be celebrated in 2024. We'd like one design that can be used throughout the year in the weekly bulletins and The Heartbeat, on prayer cards, stationary, banners, posters, etc. If you're a parishioner (although not a requirement) and would like to submit a design(s), we'd love to see it!

Guidelines include the use of "IHM" or "Immaculate Heart of Mary," and "75/75th Anniversary." Deadline is October 31.

Please submit electronically to Jane Eggleston, at [stewardship@ihmparish.com](mailto:stewardship@ihmparish.com), drop off at the Parish Office in an envelope marked "Logo contest," or snail mail to Jane c/o Parish Office, 1935 Plymouth SE, 49506.

We're excited to see your creativity.

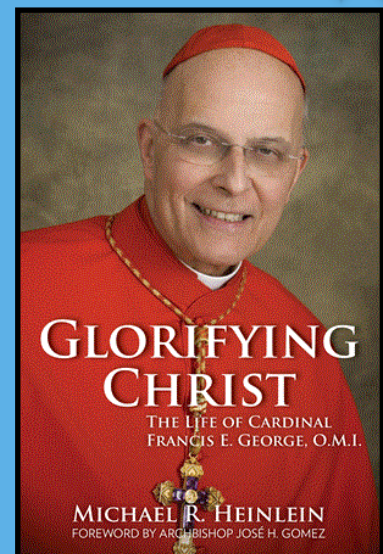


## *THE POWER OF PRAYER*

The annual 40 Days for Life Fall Prayer Vigil runs September 27 - November 5. IHM will have an assigned day (TBD) to provide prayer warriors on the public sidewalk in front of Planned Parenthood, 425 Cherry SE (note new location). We peacefully pray during this vigil for the life of the unborn, for the baby's parents to have courage, and for the conversion of the abortion clinic workers. Since 40 Days began in 2007, over one million volunteers have helped save over 23,000 babies while 142 abortion clinics have closed around the country. Join us! Look for our assigned day in weekly bulletins.

## NEW BIOGRAPHY OF CARDINAL GEORGE

A new biography, *Glorifying Christ*, has been written about the life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I. by Michael R. Heinlein. George was a model pastor and a heroic disciple of Christ. A native Chicagoan, he was told as a young man that he would never be a priest in Chicago because of a physical disability resulting from polio. He went on to be ordained a priest with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Cardinal George was the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Chicago and visited his sister, Marge Cain, is a longtime IHM parishioner.





1935 Plymouth Ave SE  
Grand Rapids MI 49506

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER

- 14 Stewardship National Eucharistic Congress (NEC)  
Informational Open House, 6-7pm, Hearts & Hands Room  
26 Women's Guild Fall Social, Hearts & Hands Room  
27 - Nov. 5 40 Days for Life Fall Campaign

### OCTOBER

- 7 Fall Gathering @ Cascade Country Club  
25 Eighth Grade Confirmation at the Cathedral of St. Andrew, 7pm

### NOVEMBER

- 1 All Saints Masses at 9am & 6pm  
6-17 Holy Land Pilgrimage, No daily Masses  
22-24 Thanksgiving Break, No School  
26 Blood Drive

### DECEMBER

- 3 Santa Breakfast  
8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception; Holy Day Masses @ 9am & 6pm  
22-Jan. 5 Christmas Break, No School

### JULY 2024

- 17-21 National Eucharistic Congress (NEC) in Indianapolis, IN

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Joey Malewitz (left) is grandson of IHM Men's Golf League founder Bernie Malewitz. On July 20, Joey and his father Joe Malewitz faced off against long-time members Joe Tierney and Vince Williams. The second and third generation Malewitzes lost to the older guys, perhaps because it was Vince's birthday.



**IF YOU ENJOY READING THE HEARTBEAT,** your help would be appreciated. We are in serious need of writers (ages 16 and up) as well as story ideas. For example, perhaps your group or project could use some advanced notice of an activity or is looking to increase its participation. For either, contact Deb Moore at [dibmoore@comcast.net](mailto:dibmoore@comcast.net).



[ihmparish.com](http://ihmparish.com)



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