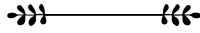


Branches on the Vine

News from the Archdiocese of Hartford · December 7 - 13, 2024



WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR?

Toni Ann LaMattina, principal at St. Mary-St. Michael School in Derby, is most grateful for her new position, leading the educators and students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade at the Catholic school.

Founded in 1885, the school has a long and proud history of providing an exceptional education to all who enter through its doors. It prepares students for a lifetime of learning centered on Catholic Social Teaching.

And it all begins with gratitude to God, with students learning to thank their heavenly Father for all that they are, have been given, and may become. And what better time to reflect on their appreciation than during this time of Thanksgiving?

Recently, students in Tara Petrino's fourth-grade class answered the question "What are you grateful for?" They crafted paper pumpkins with key phrases such as "my life," "a loving family" and "a home to keep me safe."

Brianna Sawicki's third-grade class created handprint art and penciled in key words such as "Jesus" and "Easter," along with "cousins" and "dogs." LaMattina even coached an eighth-grade class on how to roast a turkey.

But the essays from the fourth graders were the most revealing exercise because students went beyond the "what" to the "why."

Iyanna Zebrowski wrote, "I am grateful for my family because they make me feel loved all day," and "I am grateful for my home because it's warm and quiet."

In addition to citing her family, Hanna Tran wrote, "I am also grateful to God because he gave me the things that I love." And she is grateful for school "because I can be goofy and learn there."

Brielle Louis Jacques recognized her peers. "I am grateful for my best friend Laila. She makes me laugh every day at school and outside school," she wrote. And "I am grateful for my brother. He is caring and loving to me."

Morgan Millard shared her feelings, writing, "God makes me feel safe and happy. My mom and dad can make me feel happy when I feel sad."

Scott Weller was alternatively serious and whimsical, writing, "I am grateful for God because he's amazing. I am also grateful for my good family and my two guinea pigs because they cheer me up and are funny. Last but not least, I am grateful for this free country and its strong military."

Olivier Bercy revealed his appreciation and humility. "I am grateful for my first father, God. He is the reason why I am here every day," Olivier wrote. "I am grateful for free will because free will is the freedom to decide when and how to act. I am grateful for my school because without it, I would not be smart."



The paper pumpkins listing what students are grateful for were created by Tara Petrino's fourth-grade class at St. Mary-St. Michael School in Derby. Photo courtesy St. Mary-St. Michael School.

Story by Shelley Wolf



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, December 14 at 8:40 AM

*Blessed Michael McGivney Parish Rosary Walk ·
St. Joseph Church Hall, New Haven*

Blessed Michael McGivney Parish in New Haven will stand in support of life during its next Rosary Walk on Sat., Dec. 14. Participants should meet at 8:40 a.m. at St. Joseph Church Hall.

Sunday, December 15 at 4:00 PM

*Office of Culture and Social Mission Presents:
Multicultural Christmas Choir Concert · Our Lady
of Fatima, Hartford*

The Archdiocesan Office of Culture and Social Mission and Our Lady of Fatima Parish present this year's multicultural Christmas concert on December 15 at 4 PM. After the concert, there will be hot chocolate and cookies served in the church hall. All are welcome to attend!

Friday, December 20 at 7:00 PM

*St. Junipero Serra Christmas Choir Concert · St.
Margaret Mary Church, South Windsor*

We invite everyone to our annual free Christmas Choir Concert to be held on Friday, December 20, 2024 at 7pm at St. Margaret Mary Church, 80 Hayes Rd., South Windsor, CT. The adult choir is accompanied by a 23-piece chamber orchestra and organ. New this year is a selection sung by our Youth Choir. We will be performing beautiful arrangements of many beloved Christmas carols and songs. Don't miss it!

For more events, please visit:
archdioceseofhartford.org/events

To submit an event for consideration, please
email: communications@aohct.org

ADVENT
MISSION

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

DECEMBER 15, 16, & 17

WITH RENOWNED

ACTOR:

**Frank
RUNYEON**

*You may remember him from AS THE WORLD TURNS,
SANTA BARBARA, FALCON CREST, GENERAL HOSPITAL & more.*

*Saint Bridget of Sweden Parish
Presents: Scripture brought to life
through a spellbinding
performance.*

ALL SHOWS BEGIN AT **6:30 PM** IN THE CHURCH



Saturday, February 1 at 9:30 AM

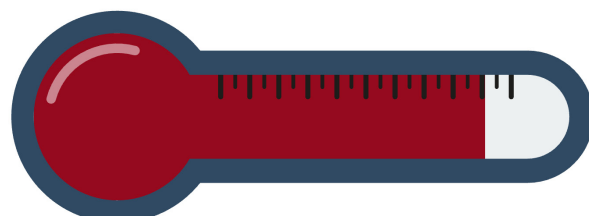
*St. Ambrose Parish Men's Retreat · Sacred Heart
on the Lake Retreat Center, Higganum*

Topic: Eucharistic Revival, Reflection on the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, with retreat leader Sr. Lany Jo Smith, ASCJ.

Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Carpooling will be available. Cost: \$35 per person.

You can register through Flocknote or by contacting the Saint Ambrose parish office. Space is limited to 30 retreatants, so please sign-up early. Registration and payment are due by December 15.

2024 Archbishop's Annual Appeal



90.79% as of 11/21/24
\$9,079,458.36 of \$10M goal

