

Malachi Matters

The ministries at St. Malachi that matter
to the faithful and to our neighbors



Spring 2023

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Generous Benefactor Boosts Two Missions

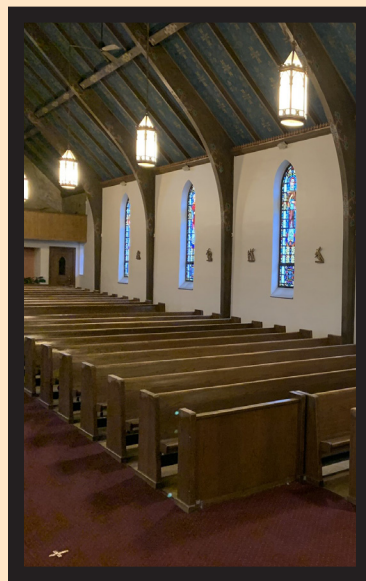
Jeanette Shemo

One in Outreach, the other in Worship.

In November a couple, who donated funds for the Back Door Ministry several years ago, came to the rectory asking what the parish needed to continue to serve our homeless and less fortunate neighbors. It didn't take any time to let them know that one of the dreams of the Back Door Ministry was to purchase hot and cold buffet servers. They were open to the suggestion and within a few days they gave the OK to purchase the servers of our choice. AND requested a meeting with Fr. Gurnick to find out what were some of the other needs of the parish.



Fr. Gurnick met with our benefactors in early January to discuss the parish needs, which resulted in their offer to complete the painting of the lower worship area of the church. After an updated quote, the painting was underway and completed in mid-February – giving the Church a warm and welcoming feeling.



St. Malachi is truly blessed. May God bless them abundantly for their generosity and love of St. Malachi's missions of serving the poor and homeless and supporting the worship of parishioners and visitors.

All Are Welcome!

From the Pews: John Paul Stephens

Denise Dufala O'Malley, Choir Member

Students at Case Western Reserve University know John Paul Stephens as a dynamic psychology professor and researcher whose resume reads like an encyclopedia. But on the weekends, the humble educator can be found singing God's praises in the choir loft at St. Malachi. "My faith has always been a big part of my life," said Stephens, who is a native of Trinidad and Tobago. "The people I've been able to connect with have always been very affirming and welcoming, and it keeps me coming back."

In addition to cantoring for the Saturday Mass, Stephens has served on task forces to evaluate organizational structures for the parish. He served on parish council for three years and more recently serves on an options team for the strategic planning initiative. "For me St. Malachi is a place where I can give back, and be part of a community," said Stephens. "But also, it's a community that's creating impact beyond its own walls."



St. Malachi Looks to a Hopeful Future

Rev. Michael K. Gurnick, Parish Administrator

In March 2022 St. Malachi began a profound journey of faith as a Strategic Planning Initiative took shape. I invited Rosie Dolan-Baker, an expert in planning and also a Catholic who understands the culture and many dynamics involved in parish life, to lead us in a process that has taken nearly a year and 1000+ hours of parishioner involvement.

Why was a strategic planning initiative so important at this point in our parish's history? Several issues were beginning to intersect and I believe it was time to carefully – and prayerfully – assess where the parish is presently and how we plan to go forward. The first critical issue is the reality of an aging congregation and decreasing attendance. The second issue is a severe decrease in Sunday offertory collections, the primary source for any parish to remain viable. The third important issue is the increasing number of offers to purchase or lease the underutilized buildings on the Old Angle campus. This intersection became too crowded – and to attempt simply moving forward would not serve our needs or the needs of future generations.

The process is essentially comprised of four key phases. Phase I involved the formation and leadership of a Strategic Planning Steering Committee, appointed by the Parish Administrator. Members in the group are noted for their skill sets and proven leadership abilities within the parish and throughout the larger community. It was important that we started with a group who could listen to our parishioners and then process, under Rosie's direction, the concrete steps in order to make this a success. Their work began in May, 2022.

Phase II involved the eventual shaping of four Options Teams and a Resource Team. After listening to parishioners and other partners within the wider community, these groups identified four possible options for St. Malachi to consider: remain a parish and seek radical transformation, collaborate with two or three other parishes, become a mission or oratory, or invite a community of religious order priests who have a common charism and priority to serve the poor and underserved. The responsibility of the

Monday Night Meal Returns to Serve Neighbors

Jeanette Shemo

In the summer of 2020, Monday Night Meal was suspended due to the COVID pandemic, which prevented guests from enjoying a sit-down meal inside the hall, served by our volunteers.

In January 2021, the Back Door Ministry began serving supper to our guests at the doors of the hall. And continued until February 13th when Monday Night Meal reopened and guests were invited inside to again relax at table and enjoy their meal with friends and family. Everyone is grateful to Racquel and her volunteers for providing supper to our guests during Monday Night Meal's downtime.

We are thankful to Parishioner Jeff Walters who stepped up to serve as Monday Night Meal Coordinator when Pat Dowd decided to retire. Jeff and the parish are grateful to Pat and Frank Herceg for generously giving of their time to help Jeff get familiar with the program. While many Monday Night Meal volunteers returned, due to several factors we lost some volunteers and are looking for replacements.

In the past we served 250-300 meals. Currently we serve approximately 80 sit-down meals and 60 take-out. This count will grow as people become comfortable coming inside for dinner. Thanks to Jeff and the volunteers for bringing back Monday Night Meal, which is so important to our homeless and low-income neighbors.



Resource Team was to gather pertinent information about the facilities, statistics, demographics, and a number of other useful pieces of information. These four Options Teams refined their work from August through December 2022.

After the Options Teams presented their findings to the parish, listening continued and everyone in the parish had several opportunities to be heard. What did they like? What was challenging? What could, or could not, work for them? More important information was collected from this experience.

Phase III involved the leadership of Parish Council membership who was charged with the ultimate task of making recommendations to the Bishop of Cleveland for consideration. Their work culminated in a day-long discernment retreat on February 25. The day began with Mass, fellowship, and more prayer before we even began deliberations. The stage was set and the Holy Spirit was leading our experience.

While I am not prepared to fully disclose the results of that day at the time of this article's printing, I can tell you that the decisions being formed are not cut and dry, which would leave us with strictly one option as opposed to the others. Through prayer, reflection, and practical considerations, the recommendations taking shape are creative and hopeful. They may not reflect the preferences of every parishioner, but they are honorable for two reasons. First, the decisions are respectful of every participant's involvement – as nothing was ignored or dismissed. Second, any option – or combination of options – is realistic and helpful as we consider the rich history and the cherished values of St. Malachi Parish.

So, stay tuned! Official news is coming as we prepare our proposal to Bishop Malesic. Please keep us in your prayers and be assured of our sincere thanks for your charity and support as we continue looking forward with an abundance of hope!

From the Pews: Noranne Flanagan

Denise Dufala O'Malley, Choir Member

Volunteers are the lifeblood of St. Malachi outreach programs. And one lady who rolls up her sleeves again and again is Noranne Flanagan. Flanagan has been giving of time, talent, and treasure for 40+ years! The retired banker has served on the church finance committee, the clothing ministry, and the Back Door Ministry.

Flanagan and her husband Eugene first came to St. Malachi at the invitation of their good friend, the late Donna Kelly Rego. Like the Regos and many other suburbanites, they came and never left. What makes St. Malachi so special to Flanagan? "It's the people who have stuck it out there," she said. "We've watched people with their children, and now their children's children are there. It just gets in your blood."



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Learn much more about the Ministries at StMalachi.org



#weGiveCatholic 2022

Members and Friends Far Exceeded Expectations

And thank goodness!

Jeanette Shemo

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\$2,000 Prize
for "Small but
Mighty Parish"

thankful and grateful

On November 30, 2022 St. Malachi Parish participated in #weGiveCatholic. Our goal was \$60,000 to support our Back Door Ministries – Monday-Friday takeout lunches, Monday Evening Supper, and Saturday Morning Breakfast. To our delighted surprise, people who believe in the Mission contributed \$90,770 to support our continuing work in these ministries!

Our donors heard the message – “St. Malachi’s Back Door Ministry continues to meet the needs of the poor by providing them with meals including nutrition and other hungers, such as the need for human care and concern.”

We are so appreciative to our supporters as well as our “Matching Donors” – three Anonymous Donors, Pete & Kathy Burke, Capuchin Franciscan Friars Province of St. Augustine, Fred & Karen Kappus, Lou Keim, Carolyn Meyer, Tim & Diane Needles, Speed Exterminating Inc., St. Malachi Parish Book Club, St. Malachi Parish Council, and Steve Switaj – who combined to make the event even more exciting by matching donations up to \$23,875.

With the addition of our newly instituted Saturday Morning Breakfast, we anticipate this year’s Food Fund expenses to far exceed \$100,000. St. Malachi Parish is grateful to our generous donors who make possible this ministry to poor and homeless people.



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From the Pews: Brian Marshall

Denise Dufala O'Malley, Choir Member

Church shopping is how Brian Marshall landed at St. Malachi 15 years ago. When he moved back to Cleveland after 23 years in the Big Apple, Marshall and his partner started looking for a new spiritual home. Their quest brought them to St. Malachi one weekend, where everyone made them feel welcomed. "It feels like home. I don't feel like I have to put on any other personality than just me when I walk in the door," said Marshall. He witnessed Music Director Charlene McElwee performing solo, and enjoyed the music and Mass so much that he introduced himself to Charlene after Mass and offered to sing. McElwee jumped at the opportunity when she learned of Marshall's extensive performing arts background. The Sandusky native grew up singing in church since elementary school and went on to earn a degree in musical theater from Baldwin Wallace. He also sang in New York City at the Actor's Chapel. "Charlene makes you feel valued, makes you feel good that the music you are creating is making a difference at Mass," he said. "Maybe we made one person smile today." Marshall currently serves as the Director of Education at The Sandusky State Theatre.



Malachi Matters Spring 2023

In the past three years, 349 different individuals, organizations, and foundations believed enough in the Malachi Ministries to donate

Did You Know?

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St. Malachi
Parish

Celebrating More
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