

St. Irene Church NEWS



Lent 2019

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Guiding principles for St. Irene's e-newsletters include:

- We respect your time -- Only one hit to your inbox every three months.
- We respect your attention -- Only information provided that is important to your family and your choices within the parish. You can skim to find what you need.
- We want your input. Email feedback@stirenes.org with your suggestions.
- We respect your choices. You can unsubscribe at any point, but we hope you'll keep subscribing.

Parish Collaborative

St. Irene has not yet been informed who will take over June 1st as Pastor of the Collaborative formed of both St. Irene and Holy Family parishes. We expect to find out reasonably soon and will keep you informed.



Fr. Tom was featured in the *Carlisle Mosquito* with this photo on his 67th (!) anniversary of ordination.

2019 Catholic Appeal

Cardinal Sean's 2019 [Catholic Appeal](http://bostoncatholicappeal.org/) to parishioners within the Archdiocese of Boston is underway. The Catholic Appeal supports more than 50 important ministries from schools to elder care. We ask that all parishioners prayerfully consider what they can contribute. St. Irene has been assigned a goal of \$43,435 and will be assessed no less than \$37,253, should we raise less than that. Special envelopes are available in each pew, and you can mark checks '2019 Catholic Appeal'. Another option is to donate online at <http://bostoncatholicappeal.org/>.

Goals for every parish and donations to date (as of 2/19) can be found [here](#).



Boston Catholic Appeal 2019

Respect Life

St. Irene is pleased to announce the formation of our Respect Life Ministry! In his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, St. Pope John Paul II writes that in our present culture, where the very meaning and value of human life is under grave threat, there is "a pressing appeal addressed to each and every person, in the name of God: respect, protect, love, and serve life, every human life!" Keeping in mind the need to foster a "culture of life," and using a format created by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the St. Irene Respect Life Ministry mission is to promote the sanctity of human life from conception until natural death through prayer, education, petition to lawmakers, and supportive care.

Our short term goals for this new Ministry include Prayer, Education, Petitions to Lawmakers, and Supportive Care. Please read more on the [Respect Life page](#) of St Irene's website. Do these activities appeal to you? Do you have suggestions on how we can promote life at St. Irene? Will you join us in our efforts? We have two upcoming events:

- A. Our kickoff event is on **Sunday, March 10** following the 11am Mass. Our guest speaker is Marianne Luthin, the Director of the Archdiocese of Boston Pro-Life Office. We will discuss the pro-life works of the diocese (which are supported by donations to the Catholic Appeal), discuss our plans for the Ministry and enjoy light refreshments. All are welcome to come, listen and find out how you can make a difference in promoting life.
- B. Our second event is on **Sunday, March 24** (the vigil of the Annunciation of the Lord). Following the 5pm Mass, we will hold a Holy Hour for Life. We remember on this day how Mary was visited by the Archangel Gabriel and said "Yes" to life and the coming of the Lord. Our hour of prayer will include Eucharistic Adoration, rosary recitation of the Joyful Mysteries, and the Litany to the Unborn Christ Child. This will be a peaceful time well spent in the presence of the Lord. Please join us!

Please contact us via respectlife@stirenes.org

Peer Leaders

Peer leadership has had a great last few months since the Christmas Newsletter. Along with our regular monthly meeting, we recently attended a concert for the group Unspoken. We also served lunch at the Transitional Living Center in Lowell, a shelter for the homeless. We would like to thank the parish for your generosity in supporting our cookbook. We donated \$850 to Merrimack Valley Catholic Charities and had enough profits leftover to purchase toiletries for the Transitional Living Center and fund this year's St. Irene's Easter egg hunt! We are looking forward to the last events of the year and are happy to have had another great year!



St. Irene Peer Leaders at Lowell Transitional Center

Adult Faith Formation

The [Adult Faith Formation program at St. Irene's](#) presents two events in March, both on weekday mornings, and one Saturday evening event in April:

“THE BIBLE IN THE CHURCH’S LITURGY”—Monday, March 11th, 2019

9:30-11:30 a.m., Church Hall, Light Breakfast Served

We start Lent with Ash Wednesday on March 6, 2019. Lent is the perfect season to look at how the readings we hear at Mass are chosen and how they belong together. Many of the Vatican II reforms focused on including different readings in the Mass. Instead of just one annual cycle of readings, different readings are now spread over three years. Fr. Ronald D. Witherup, P.S.S., is the Superior General of the Sulpician Fathers. In a video from the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, Fr. Witherup will share with us a down-to-earth discussion of how the Word and the Eucharist together contribute to an encounter with Christ at each Mass. We hope that this presentation will give us an opportunity to make each Mass we attend more meaningful. There will be time for discussion and a light breakfast will be served.

“IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY”—Monday, March 25th, 2019

9:30-11:30 a.m., Church Hall, Light Breakfast Served

Cabrini Pak is a member of St. Irene Parish, and our Technology & Communications Committee. She is also a Research Consultant for the Oblates of the Virgin Mary in Boston. The community of the OVM has as its special calling the formation of the laity with emphasis on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius. Ignatian Spirituality focuses on discerning God’s presence in our everyday lives, including seeking God’s help in decision making. St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, introduced this spirituality nearly 500 years ago.

We hope that this presentation will give you an opportunity to grow closer to God during Lent. There will be time for discussion and a light breakfast will be served.

THEOLOGY ON TAP: "Why I am still Catholic" – Saturday, April 6th, 2019
7:00-9:00 p.m., Church Hall



Speaker: Ernest Collomati, Assoc Prof, Regis College

Come and share your questions and ideas with fellow Catholics in a casual setting. Discuss current questions of faith, morals, and ethics. Open your heart and your brain on how to follow Christ in the modern world. Make it a date night!! Light refreshments, craft beers, and interesting wines will be served by the Craft Beer Cellar of Westford.

We hope to see you at many of these events!

Knights of Columbus

[St Irene's Knights of Columbus](#) along with Fr. Tom are hosting a corned beef and cabbage dinner at 6:00 pm on Saturday March 16th in the Parish Hall. To attend, please sign up after Mass in the Church lobby this weekend (March 9-10). If there is not a Knight present, there will be a clipboard with a form on which you can RSVP. \$15 per person will be collected the night of the dinner. We hope to see you there.

The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic men's charitable organization operating worldwide in alignment with the Church's teachings, see Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson's recent article "[We Do Not Stand Alone](#)" outlining our history of charity and opposition to religious prejudice. To join the Knights, reach out to kofc@stirenes.org for more information.

St. Irene Financial Council Report

The Finance Council is pleased to publish the 2018 final results and the budget for 2019, see the downloadable financial reports on [St Irene's Financial Reports page](#). *Thank you very much to parishioners who increased their giving in 2018.* Please ensure that contributions are made throughout the year, which is made much easier by using [online giving](#) through St. Irene's web link or via scheduled payments through a bank, see the [Electronic Giving page](#) on St. Irene's website.

Fr. Tom's letter to Parishioners:

2018 was a good year for St. Irene's Parish. The Finance Council had estimated a shortfall to meet expenses of over \$14,000. The actual shortfall was a little more than \$11,000. St. Irene experienced a 5.2% decrease in income over 2017 which was driven largely by a 25% decrease in income from Religious Education. Monthly and Grand Annual Collections were better than 2017. We also had income from a film crew for rental of the parking lot, and we received a large gift.

Expenses for 2018 were held to a 3.4% increase driven largely by Employee Benefits for health insurance. There were no major expenses for the church or rectory in 2018.

As has been reported previously, attendance is down at Mass and in Religious Education enrollment. As a result, the Finance Council is projecting a deficit of over \$34,000 for calendar year 2019. St. Irene will continue to depend on the Grand Annual Collection to balance our budget and minimize dipping into savings. If you have not contributed to the 2018 Grand Annual Collection, it is not too late to do so. The financial report showing results for 2016, 2017 and 2018 as well as the projection for 2019 is on the reverse side of this letter.

As we enter into collaboration with Holy Family later this year there will most likely be some changes to how expenses are allocated. The Finance Council has prepared this summary for you based on our standard 12-

month fiscal calendar. We are not able to anticipate how expenses will look after the collaborative is in place. Expenses may go down as we start to share resources with Holy Family Parish. We ask you all to continue your support for St. Irene and to consider increasing your weekly and monthly donations.

We encourage parishioners to make their donations monthly by pre-scheduled Electronic Bill Payments (EBP) through their bank at no additional cost to the donor or to the parish. We here at the parish prefer EBP because monthly donations reduce the cost and amount of work for the parish to process the donations and it is easier for you. In addition, the parish can count on a steady income stream even when parishioners are away from the parish. Parishioners can also do 'E-Giving' through Parish Soft. For more information on making contributions through EBP or Parish Soft please contact the parish office.

We are very grateful to the St. Irene family for your continued generosity and support. We ask you to continue your support for St. Irene and thank you.

Calendar of Events

You can always find upcoming Masses and events in [St Irene's online calendar](#). Special events coming up soon include:

- Mar 8th, 5:30-7:00 pm, Soup & Bread followed by Stations of the Cross
- Mar 10th, 12:00 noon, Respect Life Meeting
- Mar 11th, 9:30-11:30 am, Adult Faith Formation, The Bible in the Church's Liturgy
- Mar 15th, 7:00-8:00 pm, Stations of the Cross (Confirmation program) - All are welcome
- Mar 16th, 6:00-8:30 pm. Corned Beef & Cabbage dinner hosted by Fr Tom & Knights of Columbus
- Mar 21st, 6:30-8:00 pm, Women's Club General Meeting
- Mar 24th, 6:00 pm, Holy Hour for Life
- Mar 25th, 9:30-11:30 am, Adult Faith Formation, Ignatian Spirituality
- Mar 31st, 9:00-10:00 am, Living Stations of the Cross
- Apr 6th, 7:00-9:00 pm, Theology on Tap: "Why I am still Catholic," Adult Faith Formation
- Apr 12th, 5:30-7:00 pm, Soup & Bread followed by Stations of the Cross
- Apr 18th, 9:00-10:00 am, Liturgy of the Hours
- Apr 18th, 7:30-8:30 pm, Holy Thursday; Mass of the Lord's Supper
- Apr 19th, 9:00-10:00 am, Liturgy of the Hours
- Apr 19th, 3:00-4:00 pm, Good Friday Service
- Apr 20th, 9:00-10:00 am, Liturgy of the Hours
- Apr 20th, 8:30-10:30 pm, Easter Vigil Mass
- Apr 21st, 7, 9, 11 am Easter Mass (no 5 pm Mass Apr 21st)
- Apr 25th, 6:30-8:30 pm, Women's Club Calendar meeting
- Apr 27th, 6:00-9:00 pm, Mystery Dinner (postponed from November)
- Apr 28th, 2:00-3:00 pm, Divine Mercy Service
- May 4th, 11:00-12:00 am, Confirmation Mass
- May 5th, 9:00-10:00 am, May Crowning
- May 5th, 2:00-4:00 pm, Women's Club Fashion Show and Tea
- May 18th, 10:00-11:00 am, First Eucharist Mass (no 9:00 am Mass May 18)
- May 30th, 9 am & 7:30 pm, Ascension Day Mass

- Every Tuesday 7:30 pm, Adoration and Evening Prayer
- First Sundays, 3:30-4:30 pm, Peer Leaders
- Second Tuesdays of the month, 7:30 pm, St. Irene's Knight of Columbus business meeting



Saint Irene

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