

St. Irene Church NEWS



Lent 2018

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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 instead.

Parish Collaborative, Questions & Answers

As we approach the Archdiocesan date for [St Irene Parish](#) to become a collaborative with [Holy Family Parish](#) in Concord, our Pastor Fr Tom and the Parish Council want to communicate with transparency what to expect and how we prepare. We will use the quarterly newsletters to regularly keep you informed.



St Irene & Holy Family

What is a collaborative?

A collaborative is two (or more) parishes sharing clergy. That's it. The parishes remain separate in terms of facilities and finances. The collaborative is not a merge of parishes; only sharing of clergy. A collaborative will have one Pastor and technically might have additional members of the Pastoral team, but keep in mind the driving force behind the plan for collaboratives is a shortage of priests, so additional Pastoral team members will not be easy to come by. The Pastoral team will serve both parishes.

When will St Irene become a collaborative with Holy Family?

The collaborative between St Irene and Holy Family will become a reality on June 1st 2019. This date has been set by the Archdiocese as part of the Pastoral plan entitled [Disciples in Mission](#). Fr Tom will have more than deserved his retirement by then.

Who will lead the new collaborative?

We expect to be informed early in the year (2019) who the new Pastor of the collaborative will be, so there will be a few months for both his old and new parishes to prepare for the transition. It is Archdiocesan policy not to let either of the pre-collaborative Pastors continue as Pastor for the collaborative. So we can be relatively sure that neither Fr Tom, nor Fr Austin, will be named Pastor of the collaborative. That is all we know, and all we expect to know, about the identity of our future Pastor until early 2019.

What will change beyond clergy?

Probably very little. St Irene and Holy Family are both financially stable parishes, not under fiscal pressure, but still facing declining attendance, which will eventually impact finances, if we can't turn around and start growing the parish again. We value the flexibility of offering four Masses each weekend and will work to continue that. A single Pastor cannot say all the Holy Family and St Irene Masses in a weekend. We have been successful in the past bringing in additional priests, e.g. through collaboration with Boston College School of Theology & Ministry, and we plan to continue to find ways to provide as many options as we can.

What are the parishes doing to prepare?

The two Parish Councils met in 2017 to get to know each other better, and again in February 2018. The latest meeting was the first time we knew of the collaborative start date, so the conversation focused more intently on next steps. However, there aren't any concrete issues that must be decided at this point, nor would we want to decide on collaborative specific topics without the new Pastor. We discussed areas of collaboration based on opportunity rather than need. We started thinking of social justice, digital communications, new evangelization, and adult education. Our youth education programs already have direct contact between parishes as well.

What happens next?

As a next step, we are asking St Irene's Ministry Leaders to engage directly with their Holy Family peers, where they see opportunity for synergy, and to keep the Council apprised of ideas. We want to engage more people but doing so should also result in a greater outcome. We don't want to dilute good works, we want to amplify them! That is the mind set with which we will approach preparations in 2018 for collaboration in 2019.

If you have questions about the future collaborative, please send them to feedback@stirenes.org. Future newsletters will then address questions that are found to be of interest to many parishioners. Suggestions are also welcome. We are actively discussing ways to stabilize and increase mass attendance and parish involvement. A vibrant St-Irene's remains our goal. We welcome any ideas for how we can change, grow, and meet your pastoral needs.

2018 Catholic Appeal

Cardinal Sean's 2018 Catholic Appeal to parishioners within the Archdiocese of Boston is underway. We ask that all parishioners prayerfully consider what they can contribute. St Irene has been assigned a goal of \$42,788 and will be assessed no less than \$37,577, should we raise less than that. Special envelopes are available in each pew, and you can mark checks '2018 Catholic Appeal'. Another option is to donate online at <http://bostoncatholicappeal.org/>.



Cardinal Sean O'Malley of the Archdiocese of Boston

You can follow our results shared by the Archdiocese in '[2018 Catholic Appeal Results](#)'. So far St Irene is behind most parishes in percent goal completion, so please consider an Easter time pledge to catch us up.

Right to Life

The Knights of Columbus worldwide is committed to supporting life at all stages. The original goal of the founder of the Knights of Columbus was to provide support for widows and orphans in the late 1800's. The Knights support charitable causes worldwide today as well as continuing support for families through a top-rated life insurance program.

The Knights both affirm the right of the unborn child and pledge support for expectant mothers. The [St Irene Knights of Columbus Council](#) supports the Right to Life goal by holding a yearly drive to collect needed items for expectant Mothers. This year, as we did last year, we will be collecting needed items for the [Archdiocesan Pro-Life office in Natick, MA](#). The Archdiocesan Pro-Life effort also has offices in Brockton and Brighton where they provide needed items to expectant mothers as well as crisis counselling and newborn nursing care. This year they have a critical need for Newborn sizes. They need Newborn outfits for boys and girls and Newborn Onesies for boys and girls. They also would like Dr. Brown bottles (4 oz and 8 oz) and Dr. Brown pacifiers. They request the same brand (Dr. Brown) bottles and pacifiers as premature babies especially need the same nipples. Lastly they could use Sleep n' Plays (small sizes). By state law all items must be new with original sales tags attached.

The collection will be taken up during a weekend in March or April. Please watch for the announcement of the date for this worthwhile appeal in upcoming bulletins.

Adult Faith Formation

The [Adult Faith Formation program at St. Irene's](#) presents a number of programs throughout the year, which we hope you will find fulfilling and informative. Gatherings are scheduled at various times - some on mornings after the 9 o'clock Mass; others on Friday evenings - with the aim of reaching many parishioners at times available to them. All sessions take place in the Parish Hall.

The final installment of the 2017-2018 Adult Education program is the Friday April 6th 7 pm presentation by [Dr. Richard R. Gaillardetz](#), who holds the Joseph Chair of Catholic Systematic Theology at [Boston College](#). He has published numerous articles and has authored or edited eleven books. Dr. Gaillardetz served as president of the Catholic Theological Society of America between 2013 and 2014 and has been a delegate on the US Catholic-Methodist Ecumenical Dialogue. He is a vibrant and engaging speaker, whom you won't want to miss!

We give time for and encourage discussion among attendees. Refreshments will be served at each session. All are welcome, young and old, parishioners and non-parishioners, with the hope that we can learn more about our faith, and learn more about how our faith "works" in our busy lives.

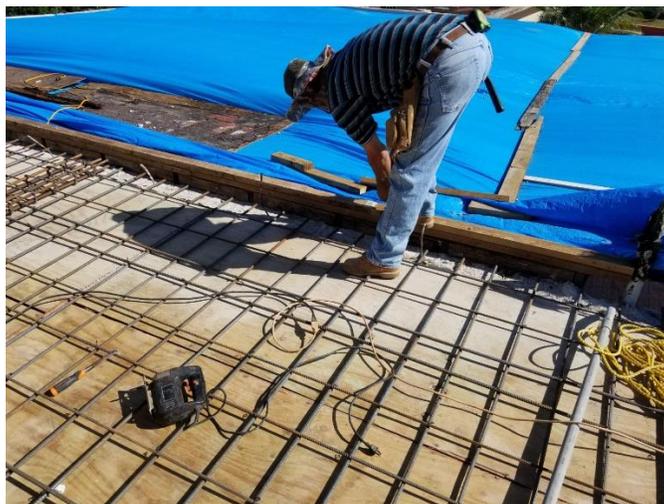
Thank You from Puerto Rico

Last October, the Saint Irene community raised money to help the hurricane victims in two parishes on the island of Puerto Rico. The fundraising was organized by parishioner Karen M. González-Valentín Gettings, who was born there. Karen recently received emails from the two churches thanking us. The Parroquia San

Pedro y San Pablo parish from Utuado, Puerto Rico sent a thank you card and said they have started reconstruction of the parish. The other parish, Parroquia Inmaculado Corazón de María, in Las Marías, reports that they have used the funds to buy food, personal hygiene products, beds, and construction materials. Thank you to all, who contributed! Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico and help them rebuild in any way you can.



Fundraiser for Puerto Rico at St Irene's



Construction work underway at the parish in Puerto Rico

Malawi Project

Thank you for opening your hearts to the new classroom building project for the Thunga Primary School in Malawi. Because of your generosity and heeding the call to help those in need, whether local, national or international, we have exceeded our all-parish goal of \$30K and have raised more than \$32K for this project in just 5 short weeks during Lent 2018 (despite school vacation, storms and power outages!) It is truly miraculous and a testament to the faith and good works of this parish. Because of this, 3 classrooms will be built at the school, which will ease overcrowding (currently there are about 200 students per classroom!) and remove barriers to education. If you would still like to contribute, money will go toward Kelsey's "wish list" at the site, including improvements to the latrines. Please follow the project on [St Irene's Thunga Primary School project page](#) and on [Design Cause Inc's web site](#). Design Cause is the non-profit organization building the class rooms. The Social Justice Committee plans to provide updates and photos via web pages and these newsletters as the project progresses.



Pat Barry, Amy Regan, Kelsey Bradley, Ken Mostello
St Irene Social Justice fundraising committee

New Finance Chair

St Irene's Finance Committee Chair for the past few years, Greg Phillips is relocating with a new job. St Irene wishes Greg & Lorna and their family well. We owe them gratitude for Greg's sincere effort helping the parish. Rich Boule has graciously stepped up to replace Greg.



Rich Boule
(Finance Committee Chair)

St Irene Financial Council Report

The Finance Council is pleased to publish the 2017 final results and the budget for 2018, see the downloadable financial reports on [St Irene's Financial Reports page](#). *Thank you very much to parishioners who increased giving in 2017.* The increased giving and a large bequest made 2017 a very successful year. For 2018 you can see that operating expenses are anticipated to rise in several areas. Nearly all these increases are beyond our control. Also remember that our beautiful Church is now 20 years old and will need updates to systems in the near future. Without increased collections and large gifts, we will have a significant deficit in 2018. St Irene is experiencing decreased participation due to parishioners leaving for various reasons, and there are very few new parishioners joining St Irene. As we cannot count on large gifts and bequests, it is important that those parishioners who haven't increased their contribution to St Irene please consider doing so in 2018. The suggested augmentation is to increase your giving by 20%. It is also imperative that all parishioners ensure that contributions are made throughout the year, and that 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 web site.

Calendar of Events

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

- Mar 23rd 5:30 pm, Soup & Bread by the Women's Club followed by Stations of the Cross
- Mar 29th 9:00 am, Liturgy of the Hours
- Mar 29th 7:30 pm, Holy Thursday; Mass of the Lord's Supper
- Mar 30th 9:00 am, Liturgy of the Hours
- Mar 30th 3:00 pm, Good Friday Service
- Mar 31st 9:00 am, Liturgy of the Hours
- Mar 31st 8:00 pm, Easter Vigil Mass
- Apr 1st 7, 9, 11 am Easter Mass (no 5 pm Mass Apr 1st)
- Apr 8th 8, 11 am Divine Mercy Sunday Masses
- May 5th 11 am, Confirmation Mass
- May 10th 9 am & 7:30 pm, Ascension Day Mass
- May 12th 10 am, First Eucharist Mass
- May 17th 6:30 pm, Women's Club banquet
- Every Tuesday 7:30 pm, Adoration and Evening Prayer
- Second Tuesdays of the month, St Irene's Knight of Columbus meet at the Parish Hall 8 pm



Saint Irene