



*St. Clare School*

Issue No. 2  
Spring 2022

# Connection



*Dear Families and Friends  
of St. Clare Catholic School,*

As I reflect on the end of my first year as Principal, I am proud of the direction St. Clare Catholic School is moving. The St. Clare School community has remained steadfast in its dedication to academic excellence, but more importantly, it has stayed focused on our Catholic Identity. The commitment from our parishes is our foundation and we were so blessed to have school Masses at two of our three parishes for the first time in school history.



We once again persevered and pushed through the ups and downs of the pandemic. Rather than dwell on what our school year would or would not include, the St. Clare School community looked to what was possible: we would bring back as many traditions and celebrations that are near and dear to our hearts. While some of these activities might have looked different, we were thrilled to regain the spirit of our school community and bring back some normalcy.

This school year, we prioritized communication and professional development for our Faculty and Staff. I am inspired everyday by the dedication of our Faculty and Staff. They demonstrate the importance of lifelong learning to our students as they attend continuing

education classes, including faith education. 90% of our Faculty and Staff attended at least one professional development day that supported an area of needed growth. Additionally, we chose to start our January with a Faculty and Staff retreat, where we focused on our “why” and how we can better serve our students by ensuring we weave our Catholic faith into all areas of our day.

Equally important is the dedication of our family, friends, and alumni that provide time, energy, and financial support to St. Clare School. Our annual dinner and school auction grossed over \$100,000 and we were fortunate enough to have over thirty sponsors. With this momentum, we were able to add a third section of Kindergarten for the 2022-2023 school year, make updates to the school cafeteria, and updates to our technology lab, giving students more hands-on opportunities for STEM. Additionally, Mrs. Sarah Ayran, new Director of Campus Ministry, will be joining our St. Clare Catholic School team in the fall.

All of our students are positioned to achieve because of the dedication of our families, friends, alumni, and parishes. Thank you for your continued generosity and bringing out the best of our school community where we find so many ways to learn, love others, and live for Jesus.

*With gratitude,  
Mrs. Monica Ybarra*



(Above) Eighth Grade Graduates

# Knights Give Back



**(Above)** Knights give back to their St. Clare community by cleaning the school and chapel.

**(Below)** Students delivering thank-you cards to local businesses and services throughout downtown O'Fallon.



**(Above)** Seventh and eighth graders helping at the Empty Bowl Luncheon.

**(Below)** Students packing "blessing bags" for the needy in our community.



## Focus on Faith

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The Easter Season is a joyful time when we witness our 2nd graders receiving their First Holy Communion and our 8th graders entering a more mature level of participation in their Catholic life through the sacrament of Confirmation.

As our 2nd graders prepared to receive the Eucharist for the first time, they worked with their parents and teachers to learn how “CommUNION” brings them into a true UNION with Jesus and what that gift means. Most of our students celebrated their First Holy Communion in their respective parishes the weekend of April 24th. When they returned to school the following week, they celebrated their “Second Communion” together as a class with Mass in the school chapel.

With graduation rapidly approaching, the sacrament of Confirmation prepared our 8th graders to navigate the years ahead with a deeper faith kindled and strengthened by the Holy Spirit. They learned about the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit—wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, fear of the Lord, and piety—and the 12 traditional fruits of the Holy Spirit—charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, long-suffering, humility or gentleness, fidelity or faithfulness, modesty, continence or self-control, and chastity. All three parishes were honored to host Bishop Michael McGovern for these important celebrations.

May the gifts of grace and the Holy Spirit be rooted deeply in the hearts of our 2nd and 8th graders and carry them throughout their lives.



(Above) Students from St. Clare and St. Nicholas parishes celebrating their Confirmation.



(Below) Second graders celebrating their “Second Communion” with Fr. Bill and their teachers at the school chapel.



Hello Saint Clare families! I am so excited to begin getting to know you all and joining you on your faith journeys. Before the school year starts, I wanted to give you a bit of an idea of what my goals and ideas are for the upcoming school year.

One of my favorite things about the Catholic Church is the liturgical year and the liturgical life of the Church. The liturgical year is one of the best teaching tools that we have about our faith. Each month of the year is dedicated to one if not multiple special aspects of our faith. For example, October is the month of the Rosary. This provides us with an excellent opportunity to not only pray the Rosary but to also learn about the history of the Rosary, the saints who had a special devotion to the Rosary, as well as looking at the stories associated with each of the mysteries of the Rosary.

I love how the liturgical seasons follow the natural ebb and flow of the year. For example, Advent calls us to embrace waiting for Christmas and not to just “skip to the good part.” It gives meaning to our anticipation and makes it a useful time of

preparation and not simply a time of anxious, stress-induced waiting. Lent calls us to new growth just as the world around us is waking up from winter and the new growth of spring is beginning to show, so that our souls, and not just the Easter lilies, are in full bloom when we celebrate Easter.

The liturgical life of the Church provides a framework for our faith, a constant that we look forward to every year. A school also has special things that happen in every grade and every year that provide a framework for the school. I look forward to learning about the traditions that Saint Clare School already has in place and spending time in the classrooms to see what our amazing teachers are already doing. A Catholic school is a beautiful blend of the life of the Church with the lives of students and their families. I see my role as Director of Campus Ministry as working to integrate the lives of the students into the life of the Church and vice versa, so that the Church benefits from the vibrant energy of the students and the students benefit from the rich tradition of the Church and they work together to move the mission of the Church of Christ forward into the next generation.

- Sarah Aryan  
Director of Campus Ministry

# Auction Recap

## The 2022 auction was truly One Shining Night!

This past March, 300 distinguished guests arrived at O’Fallon’s Regency Conference Center in their most festive attire, adorned in smiles and ready to celebrate. St. Clare School’s 2022 auction kicked off with cocktails at the open bar and mingling among the guests. An opening prayer preceded a decadent dinner, presentations featuring staff and students, and speeches honoring sponsors, donors, and guests. The live auction featured 11 items that brought in more than \$45,000. Of particular interest were special events with Father Jim and Father Bill, in-home fine dining experiences, and the always popular VIP parking spots. Next up, Felix and Fingers Dueling Pianos rocked some favorite tunes and got guests grooving on the dance floor. Meanwhile, the silent auction carried on, generating nearly \$42,000 for more than 150 items, including highly coveted autographed sports memorabilia, classroom art projects, special time with teachers, spa treatments, wine tastings, and restaurant gift certificates. Raffle winners were drawn and basked in their prizes: free tuition, a wheelbarrow of booze, lottery tickets, and designer handbags. The festivities concluded with everyone enjoying a late-night party snack and bidding farewell to a night to remember.



(Above) Auction supporters enjoying our first live event since 2020.

(Below) St. Clare faculty and staff commemorating this year’s auction festivities.



# Thank You, Auction Sponsors!

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(Above, left to right) Mrs. Howard, Mrs. Ybarra, and the auction committee.

# Good Shepherd Preschool

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Good Shepherd Preschool closed out the school year celebrating a job well done in so many ways. First, we had special visitors from Cowboy Critters. This was a wonderful way to wrap up our lessons on farm animals. Our young learners were able to go right up to the animals and pet them while our friend Marta told us all kinds of fun facts about how she takes care of the animals and how important they are to us.

Ms. Lynn's preschool-level classes shared their lesson on growing and caring for the many stages of the butterfly cycle. When the butterflies were ready to be sent out into the world, we all gathered with a prayer service before releasing them. The children really enjoyed this time caring for the butterflies and watching their life cycle in action. We even invited our very own Mr. Terry to come join us. When we were finished releasing the butterflies, we also blessed Mr. Terry for all of his hard work and kindness as he cared for our building and grounds throughout the school year.

We also celebrated our PreK friends moving on to Kindergarten with an end-of-year ceremony held at St. Nicholas. The night was filled with many songs and a slideshow presentation that documented the joy of our school year. These bright young learners are ready to spread their wings and do many good things in the world! God Bless!

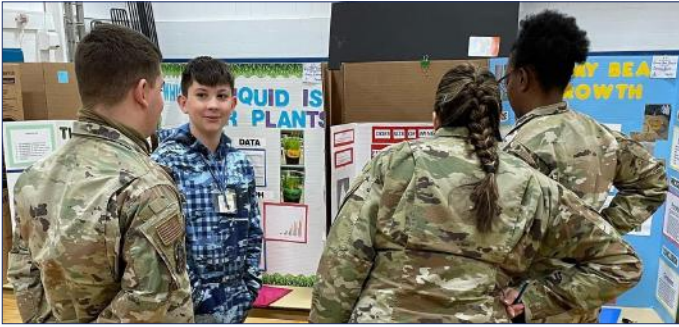
Finally, Ms. Sherri attended the 8th grade graduation ceremony of her very first preschool class. On behalf of all the staff at Good Shepherd Preschool, we wish these amazing new St. Clare graduates the best of luck in their upcoming adventures in high school. May God continue to bless them on their journey through life.

*Many Blessings,*

Ms. Sherri and the GSP staff and students



# Bringing Back Normal



We held our first in-person Science Fair since 2019. Once again, guest judges from Scott Air Force Base reviewed students' displays and conducted interviews to choose the Fair's top winners.



Students shopped for family members during the school day, then returned at night to pick up their gifts and enjoy a beautiful winter festival. Crafts were made, carriage rides were taken, and fun was had by all!



(Above) St. Clare Graduates, Class of 2022.

# Bringing Back Normal



Even an unexpected snow day couldn't stop the return of Karl Zimmerman. St. Clare students look forward to his concert every year, typically during Catholic Schools Week.



The Christmas program featured singing, music, and the Nativity play that brought holiday cheer to all.



The Lip Sync Contest and Talent Show was fun for all. Special thanks to our judges and contestants alike.

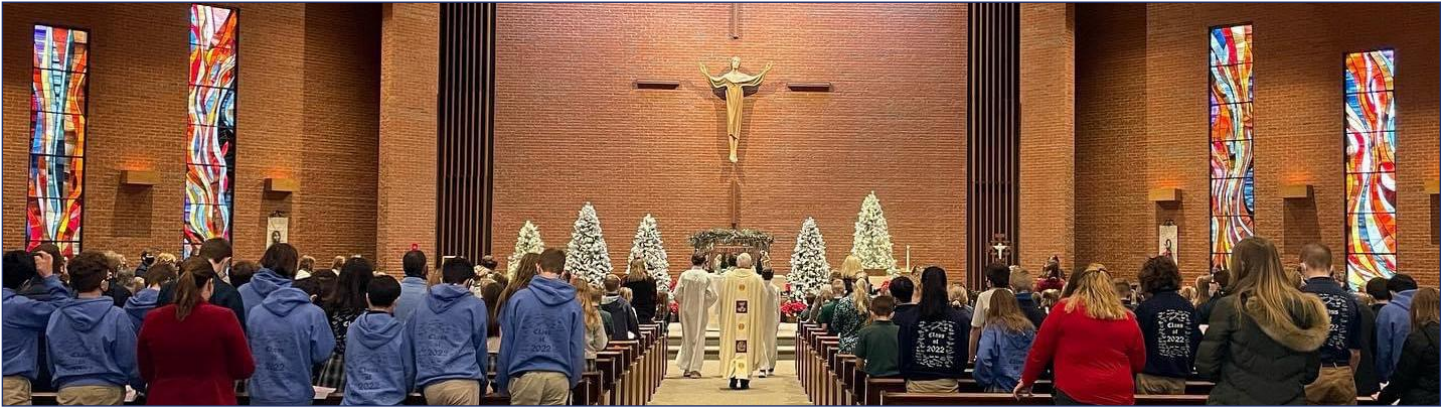


Students enjoyed an end-of-the-year, all-school ice cream day outside.



# *New Traditions*

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For the first time in school history, we loaded up buses and drove to St. Nicholas and St. Clare to celebrate all-school Mass at two of our parishes.





# Honor Society

The St. Clare Honor Society is an organization of St. Clare students that provides opportunities for recognition and service to the school. Membership is limited to students in Grades 6, 7, and 8 who exhibit high scholastic achievement and qualities of leadership, service, character, and citizenship. To be eligible for induction, a student needs a cumulative grade average of 93% in each subject and no grade below 86%.

## Congratulations to all of these students on their outstanding achievement!

We were pleased to induct 20 new members for the 2021-2022 school year! New members were inducted during a short ceremony after Mass on Tuesday, May 10, 2022. The following students were inducted:

Grant Howard  
Abigail Joost  
Adelynn Klitzing  
Lauren Price  
Eric Rybak  
Ava Triplett  
Kieran Wade  
Caleb White  
Josephine Hertzler  
John Pierre  
Tristan Plaisted  
Colin Smith  
Braden Buck  
Robert DeVine  
Amanda Fischer  
Evan Fleming  
Evdoxia Mandis  
Patricia Martin  
Cecilia McCarthy  
Claire Riepe

The following current members of the Honor Society participated in the ceremony:

Reece Distler  
Maya Freiburg  
Baron Hackney  
Logan McNamara  
Sean Mullins  
Delaney Nieroda  
Olivia Ponciroli  
Michael Rottschalk  
Madeline Yost  
Jackson Florek  
Jiana Fuentes  
Andrew Hopkins  
Jacob Hug  
Kayla Kalmer  
John Kampwerth  
Lucy Kulp  
Evelyn Meyer  
Colin Shea

Loving what you see? Donate today to help future St. Clare students share the same wonderful experiences. Please visit <https://givebutter.com/stclaregiftgiving> or mail your contribution to:

**St. Clare Catholic School**  
214 W. 3rd Street  
O'Fallon, IL 62269



*(Below)* Honor Society



# Specials

Thank you to all who supported our Drama program's production of Disney's *The Little Mermaid Jr.* It was St. Clare's first fully student-run musical, with 120 young Knights responsible for acting, set design, costumes, hair, makeup, props, stage management, lights, and sound. Our on-stage leads were primarily from our 8th grade class and were thrilled to be in their first school musical in three years due to COVID. We wish them all the best in their future endeavors. We're also excited for next year, because we'll be adding a fall play as well as performing a spring musical!



St. Clare's Band program has been directed by Vicky Smolik for more than 40 years. In that time it has grown in numbers and quality, providing concerts for St. Clare families and students, as well as solo contests and community events. Our Band program feeds O'Fallon Township High School, Mater Dei High School, Althoff Catholic High School, and several St. Louis high schools. Many of our band students are at the top of those programs because of the quality of what they learned in grade school, where we teach the fundamentals of reading music and playing instruments, as well as performing in concerts and at music competitions. Concert Band

students meet three mornings a week for full band sessions and have one sectional a week. We also have a Beginner Band, where students first learn to play their instruments so they can join Concert Band. During band rehearsals, students have fun interacting with each other while they learn. They take pride in their performances, which makes the whole program fun and worthwhile. We thank Ms. Debrah Haferkamp, a close colleague of Ms. Smolik's, for teaching our band students this year and continuing the high quality of our program.



## Athletics



**(Above)** Parochial Boys basketball team earned first place in the Diocesan championship.

**(Below)** Parochial Girls basketball team earned first place in Diocesan championship.



**(Above)** St. Clare athletes won the Diocesan Track and Field Title. Junior Boys, Parochial Girls, and Parochial Boys all won their divisions while the Junior Girls finished a close second.

**(Right)** St. Clare student athletes at the State Golf Championship in Rend Lake. All 3 received a medal for finishing in the top 15 at State.



## Alumni Spotlight



Sabrina Hardy, Class of 2018, was this year's Althoff Catholic High School recipient of the Bishop's Discipleship Award. This award is presented to one senior from each of the Diocesan high schools who exhibits a strong Catholic identity, both in school and in their community. Sabrina was recognized by Bishop Michael McGovern during the Baccalaureate Mass.



Elena Rybak, Class of 2021, medaled three times as the Freshman Father McGivney runner at Eastern Illinois University. She placed first for the program's first individual state championship in the Class 1A 1,600-meter run.

"This is something I've been working towards for so long," Rybak said. "To have my dream come true is amazing. Keeping that thought of mind to keep working towards this day has been so much fun. I'm super proud of myself."



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214 W. Third Street

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St. Clare students were excited to spend this Field Day for the first time at the O'Fallon Community Park. Among the many games and activities offered, tug-of-war was a big hit and all students cheered on their classmates. Despite the heat, students had a ton of fun!

