



## ST. ANNE-ST. PATRICK: A COMMUNITY OF FAITH AND SERVICE

### DEAR FRIENDS:

Liturgical celebrations. Faith formation. Music ministry. Outreach to the infirm. Youth Ministry. A shrine. And a ton of history.

That's a small sampling of what's available at St. Anne-St. Patrick parish in Fiskdale, which, following the merger of the then-separate St. Anne and St. Patrick parishes, was formed in 1887.

The Assumptionists began staffing it in 1953, not long after a massive tornado struck the original Assumption College site in the Greendale section of Worcester.

We're focusing this issue of the newsletter on St. Anne-St. Patrick, because we wanted you to know more about this fine parish. Inside you'll find information on the parish's history, its various ministries, and what the parish means to some of its parishoners and the Assumptionists.

Because here's the truth of it all: if you pull back the parish's proverbial curtains and take a look around, you'll see life happening. And yet there's still more we—religious and lay Assumptionists, parishoners, friends of the congregation—can do to make the parish grow.

Take a moment to explore. And let us know if you have any suggestions.

We're listening.

In Christ,



Jon Bishop  
Editor



Think of God's Spirit at work in the sacramental life of a parish and in healings, both the everyday and the extraordinary kind, at a shrine dedicated to good St. Anne: there you have more than sixty years of fruitful ministry for the Assumptionists at St. Anne's and St. Patrick's in Fiskdale. Handed over to the community by Bishop John Wright after the devastating tornado that struck Worcester County in 1953, the revenues from the shrine were intended to provide financial support for the recovery effort. To say that it has outlived that original intention and provided a spiritual home for Catholics in the Sturbridge area as well as pilgrims from far and wide is simply to acknowledge the varied forms of evangelization that continue in this place. Generations of Catholic families mark the dates of baptisms, marriages, funerals at St. Anne's, while summer visitors are drawn to the outdoor pavilion where Mass is celebrated in a peaceful setting.

"Peaceful" and "serene" are the words most often used to describe the shrine, which includes a Way of the Cross, grottos to Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of Fatima, an Angel of Hope statue where parents who have lost children may seek solace, a statue of St. Augustine, and an icon museum. The annual novena is a highlight on the shrine's calendar, bringing together hundreds of pilgrims for nine days of prayer seeking graces bestowed through the intercession of St. Anne. In recent years, each night of the novena has been animated by a different ethnic group, drawing out the rich diversity of the Church's life and worship. Besides the parish staff, a cohort of lay Assumptionists are instrumental in carrying on the work of extending God's kingdom at the parish and shrine.

For this good work of nourishing souls and bringing the Gospel to life for God's people, we Assumptionists are most grateful. May St. Anne's be a continued blessing for the Church of Worcester and beyond.

Rev. Dennis Gallagher, A.A.  
Provincial



**HISTORY OF ST. ANNE-ST. PATRICK**

In the Fiskdale region of Sturbridge, atop one of the town's many hills, is the church of St. Anne, beautiful in its simplicity.

The church as built in 1883 century to provide for the spiritual needs of the many Irish and French Canadian immigrants who came to work in the Fiskale mills. Initially, the church was one of two: St. Anne Church for the French speaking families and St. Patrick, of course, for the Irish. They operated separately until 1887, when they were combined into one parish.

St. Patrick Church no longer exists. After it was declared unsafe for public gatherings, it was moved to the hillside above St. Anne's. Before it was demolished, it housed a collection of Russian icons.

A small building on the grounds has been transformed into the St. Patrick Memorial Chapel, and it contains some of the original pews and artifacts from the now-defunct church.

St. Anne Church has quite a different history. In 1879, Monsignor Elzear Brochu, a Southbridge pastor in failing health, pledged to St. Anne that if he were to regain his strength, he would propagate her devotion by building a shrine in her honor. He recovered, and so he purchased the land and had the present St. Anne Church constructed in 1883. He predicted that great wonders would be worked there. The first claim of a cure in 1887 started an influx of pilgrims that has continued to this day.

Thousands of visitors still make their way to St. Anne Shrine. There is a feeling of peace and tranquility along the cool, shaded paths of the wooded hillside grounds. You can find the shrine to St. Anne inside St. Anne Church. Crutches, braces and other memorabilia bear witness to the many who have experienced healing from God through the intercession of "Good St. Anne."

St. Anne/St. Patrick Parish is unique in that it combines an active parish community with the beauty and legacy of a treasured shrine.

The above material is from the parish website.



**FAITH FORMATION AND THE PARISH FAMILY**

By Terry Johnson

St. Anne and St. Patrick Parish plays an important role in the passing on the faith to the next generation and supporting the life-long faith journeys of adults as well, through its faith formation programs.

There are several programs throughout the year that contribute to the life of the parish such as our Advent family gathering and Easter Egg hunt. Both enhance our liturgical celebrations and allow us to share a meal together as parish family. The Senior Breakfast allows youth to appreciate those parishioners who have supported their youth activities and service trips. Contributions donated by our faith formation families help to provide plentiful Thanksgiving baskets for those who have limited resources. Cards and small gift baskets made for those in elderly housing and unable to get out often, remind them that they are not forgotten. These programs help build a stronger sense of community within the parish.



**MUSIC MINISTRY**

The music ministry is an essential part of any parish. It is like a virtual palette that supports what is going on in the church. One of the fun aspects of our ministry is helping the children in Faith Formation at their monthly Mass. There is a special monthly Mass for the children in grades 1-6. They sing songs that are appropriate for them, and the celebrant explains things as the Mass progresses. It is a unique experience for all! There is even an occasional tambourine, set of maracas, rhythm sticks and triangles. It is a joyous event made even more joyous by the music ministers.



**MINISTRY TO THE SHUT-INS**

Several years ago, some parishioners along with one of our priests, established the Life Care Ministry. This ministry seeks to address the needs of those shut-ins in our parish who might need the assistance of an extra-ordinary minister of Communion. Due to illness, aging, special circumstances, not everyone can attend Mass and receive the Eucharist. The Life Care Ministry oversees this need.

We bring the Eucharist to people in their homes, in hospitals, in rehabilitation facilities, and wherever they are! There is a fairly large group of individuals in a housing facility near the parish who receive Communion from a Life Care minister on a weekly basis.

Being a part of the Life Care Ministry is not only rewarding, but it is also very humbling. One sees Christ in those we serve.

Pat Haggerty



**LAY ASSUMPTIONIST LIFE**

By Sylvia Desautels

As Lay Assumptionists at St. Anne & St. Patrick Parish, we are men and women of prayer, each member being involved in the various ministries of the parish. Like Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, the founder of the Assumptionists, Christ is the center of our lives and through our ministries and work, we strive to be witnesses of Christ's love to everyone we meet.

We are an integral part of the parish and are always open to new possibilities of service to the parish beyond our ministries, always rallying together whenever we are called upon to serve.

**"We choose, within the possibilities of our resources, those commitments that effectively respond to the needs of today and to the spirit of Assumption." (Rule #15)**



For more information on Lay Assumptionists call: 617-783-0400 & for Vocation information: <http://assumption.us/vocations/>

REMINDER - ANNUAL APPEAL COMING SOON!



## CHARITY

Members of St. Anne-St. Patrick Parish, through the charitable works of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, are encouraged to support the suffering and the poor through donations of cash and food. Together we positively impact the community through acts of love of neighbor.

Ruth Hamilton



## OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

As a parent, attending Mass regularly allows for the family to become more involved in their parish. There are many opportunities, such as becoming altar servers, lectors, joining the youth group with service trips in the summer, Cardboard City and many, many others that allow us to worship with our parish. A strong parish community is an important key in our life long faith journey.

Chris Ellithorpe



## IN MEMORIAM

Bro. Armand  
Lemaire, A.A.

1924-2018

May He Rest In Peace.



**THE ASSUMPTIONISTS**  
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**"ST. ANNE -ST.PATRICK :**



**YOUR PARISH. YOUR HOME."**