



OSJ Ministries: Testimonials

Care for Creation Committee, Bill Stiglani, Chair

I have been a parishioner at Old St. Joseph's for three years, and Chair of the Care for Creation Committee for two and one half. I am an environmental scientist and I am a Catholic, and I embrace both of these "I am's" as a seamless integration. My faith informs and encourages my environmentalism, and my knowledge of the environment and earth systems informs my faith. Endeavoring to sustain the planet for the sake of our children and grandchildren allows me to express my love for people and the entirety of God's creation. And because the poor lack resources and are the most vulnerable to environmental devastation, my work allows me to express my concern for the least among us who were so much the focus of Jesus' ministry.

In Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical Laudato Si': On Care of Our Common Home, he called on all Catholics to respond to the "cry of the earth" and the "cry of the poor." The encyclical was the impetus for forming our committee in the spring of 2020. Serving on this committee has been an honor and has provided a forum for engaging the parish in conversation about a faith-filled response to sustaining our "common home."

God's pours his love and generosity into nurturing the creation at every moment. Knowing this fills me with awe and gratitude, and a prayerful intention that I may respond with love and generosity in return.

We have a genuine need to recruit more committee members to meet our goals. If you are motivated to work with us, we would love to hear from you.

Contact information to learn more or get involved: careforcreation@oldstjoseph.org Also see our webpage at: <https://oldstjoseph.org/parish-life/care-for-creation>

Extraordinary Ministry of Holy Communion, Bill Stewart, Coordinator

I have been a member of the Old St. Joseph's Parish community for 17 years. During that time I have served in several Parish ministries and committees including leadership of the Extraordinary Ministry of Holy Communion which I have been doing for the past few years.

Please consider volunteering in this Ministry. I have found that service in any liturgical ministry enhances my focus and prayerfulness during Mass. I can also tell you from my own experience that it is a profound privilege to encounter communicants in that precious moment when they receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Moreover no special talent or skill is required-just a desire to participate more deeply in the liturgy.

If you are interested, please contact me at wstewart@kaplaw.com.

Choral Music Ministry, Robert Culleton

Although a parishioner since 1985, I have only recently joined the Schola Cantorum, on March 7, 2019- one week after my retirement from government service. I practically leapt at the chance to sing with this chorus that I had heard and admired. Now, I had the time to devote to learning the delightfully challenging repertoire brought to the choir members by a wonderful Choir Master, Organist and Doctor of Music, Mark Bani. Mark is a scholar with real depth in the Church's history of Sacred Music; from chant through Bach and Mozart to Gabriel Fauré to Vaughn Williams. Mark does not waste our time. To sing for Mark is a high point in musical prayer.

Still, he is more than a scholar of music. Mark is a deeply spiritual leader, too. He has built a prayerful community of singers, whom he invites to join him in a ministry of music for the entire parish. He carefully coordinates his selections with the readings of each Sunday seamlessly expressing the Word via its soulmate, the Song. Thus, this ministry, of which I and each choir member is honored to be a part, is built to inspire the people of God, to raise up our eyes, to lift up our hearts, and to feel His Presence among us. The Schola Cantorum is an opportunity available to parishioners for whom singing is their special way to address the Lord.

Contact information to learn more or to get involved: Music@oldsaintjoseph.org (Mark Bani, Director)

Women Faith and Fellowship, Rana McNamara, Coordinator

I helped start Women Faith & Fellowship in 2017 with the encouragement of Father Florio. Our group was small, about five of us. We met monthly to read the Gospels and discuss their meaning to us.

In 2018, we hosted the first Advent by Candlelight for the women of the OSJ Parish to join together in hospitality and friendship and to enjoy an evening of spiritual reflection focused on the unique gifts that women bring to the celebration of Advent. From my membership in Women Faith & Fellowship, I have made friends, deepened my faith, and strengthened my identity as a Catholic woman. I hope others will join us in a similar journey.

Contact information to learn more or to get involved: wff@oldstjoseph.org

Children's Liturgy of the Word, Peggy Connelly, Coordinator

Soon after I joined St. Joseph's Parish in 2004, I volunteered my service to the Children's Liturgy of the Word ministry, first as a leader and after time coordinated the program.

Referred to as CLOW at Old St. Joseph's, the program was published in 1974 by the United States Catholic Conference and has been celebrated here for over 25 years.

Personally drawn to praying with Scripture and invested in the development of young children marked CLOW as a good choice for my volunteer service to the parish.

Exploring Holy Scripture, especially Gospel stories, with the little ones has brought immeasurable enlightenment to my own spiritual growth. To see a child's eyes open in understanding light as we discuss what Jesus is telling us - to hear a little one ask a puzzling question about God and have the freedom to talk it over - to pray with them in their own words - It is all grace filled.

It is a privilege to serve our young parish parents by opening the Word with their children, by assisting their children in understanding the rituals of our worship and by joining their families in prayer.

Contact information to learn more or to get involved: CLOW@oldstjoseph.org

Home Ministry (formerly known as Homebound Ministry), Dennis Faucher, Coordinator

The home ministry exists so that parishioners and other friends can receive visits and communion from extraordinary ministers who are representatives of the parish. I have been participating in the ministry for several years after having been a participant in the hospital ministry for even more years. All of us who participate find it very personally rewarding. Of course, giving Communion to people in their homes is spiritually rewarding. It is also rewarding to being able to engage in conversation with people who are limited in their ability to socialize with others. When we do our work, we are proud to be Old St. Joseph's Church to fellow parishioners and friends.

Contact information to learn more or to get involved: HomeEM@oldstjoseph.org

IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM HOME MINISTRY: We are anxious to assist parishioners and friends by visiting and bringing communion to those who are unable to attend mass. The person need not be long term disabled. We are also pleased to assist those who are only temporarily unable to attend mass. If you would like to have someone in our ministry visit you and bring you Communion, or if you know of someone else who would like for us to do so, please contact HomeEM@oldstjoseph.org, or the parish office.

Young Adult Community, Danielle Critelli, Coordinator

I found the OSJ Young Adult Community at a time of transition from graduate school into a full time professional career, and was seeking friendships and connection with other Catholics my age. The opportunities to attend Mass, discuss spirituality, and socialize with other young adults practicing the same faith helped me find a place in the city and feel more connected to the OSJ parish. It was especially supportive to have a community when the pandemic began as gathering virtually became a space for companionship, prayer, and connection in a very isolating time. The Young Adult Community is open to anyone in their 20s and 30s, and together we plan events around the interests and ideas of all. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/oldsaintjoesya>.

Contact information to learn more or to get involved: osiyac@gmail.com

Altar Server, Len Mancini

I am Len Mancini and have been a parishioner at Old Saint Joseph's for nearly 10 years. For most of that time I have been part of the altar server ministry, mainly serving at the 11:30am Masses, but occasionally 9:30am and many of the major liturgies throughout the year.

One of the aspects of OSJ which originally drew me to pray here was the rich liturgical practice and beautiful liturgical music program. After my first months here, I found myself eager to play a more active role in the liturgy. I have actually been part of altar server ministry for much of my life as it has always helped me feel closer to God. This ministry uniquely helps me to serve God with reverence and honor and to also serve my neighbor by helping to sustain the rich liturgical prayer which means so much to us all at OSJ.

Whether you have previous experience or none at all, you can participate in this ministry. In fact, I very much enjoy teaching and training about the logistics of serving, but also about the rich symbolism and meaning of our liturgical prayer. I encourage you to consider serving at the altar at our Masses at OSJ; we have a need and this is a wonderful opportunity to act for God's greater glory.

Note: Each of our masses -Saturday at 5:30, Sunday at 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 - offers a unique spiritual experience and brings its own gifts to those who are present. We invite you to be an Altar Server for any mass of your choice.

Contact information to learn more or to get involved: manciniLD@gmail.com

Hospital Ministry, Jesse LaGrossa

Who is the Patient?

You walk into the hospital room of a stranger. The individual could be young or elderly. They could be alone and recovering from a routine procedure or surrounded by family and nearing the final minutes of their earthly life. Regardless of the different paths your life and the patient's life have taken to this point, you both have come together in this moment to break bread – the Eucharistic meal.

I would argue there are two patients in this scene. The patient lying in the hospital bed being treated by medical professionals for external ailments and myself (the volunteer) who is a patient of the Church – not a hotel for saints but a “hospital” for sinners – being treated by spiritual professionals for interior ailments.

It is a mutually healing encounter for all present in the room. All are members of the body of Christ (the Church) and receiving the body of Christ (the Eucharist). As a member of Old Saint Joseph’s hospital ministry program, I have had the privilege of participating in and witnessing these encounters on numerous occasions.

Jesse LaGrossa has been a parishioner at OSJ for six years and a lay hospital ministry volunteer for almost three years.

Contact information to learn more or to get involved: jesse.lagrossa@gmail.com

Lector Ministry, Lou Anne Bulik, Coordinator

I have served as a lector at Old St. Joseph’s for about 15 years, and before that as a lector at St. Joseph’s in Greenwich Village, NY, for about 15 more.

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The lector does not read a passage from scripture; the lector proclaims the Word of God, and it’s essential for anyone who wants to serve as a lector to understand this difference. The message, this Word of God, is very important, and the lector needs to treat it as such. Think of a herald saying “Here Ye, Here Ye.” The herald has to be loud and clear, so people get the news, so they get the message and understand it. The same is true for the lector and his or her role. The lector should speak loudly and slowly and clearly, so everyone can hear and understand the Word of God.

A good lector also opens himself or herself up as a channel for the Word of God to reach people, so sometimes things come out differently at the ambo than they did when you were praying and practicing at home. That’s the Spirit of God at work. You get to recognize it and embrace it.

Contact information to learn more or to get involved: Lectors@oldstjoseph.org

Usher Ministry, Joseph Ferrara

Most days when each of us gets up to go to work, school, or another daily event, we struggle out of bed and take one of two paths: attempting to blend into the background and go unseen or trying to stand out, gain an advantage, or simply be a valuable member of a team worthy of Notice. Sunday mornings are different.

As ushers at Old St. Joe’s, we take neither path. As an usher, you neither blend in to the background nor stand out as the star event. Rather you don the face of a loving God. Like St. Joseph, you patiently welcome and guide God’s beloved children deeper into union with Him. Smile, you are most welcome. God is here and He loves you dearly.

St. Joseph,
Mirror of patience,
Diligent protector of Christ,
Lover of poverty,
Solace of the wretched,
Protector of the Holy Church,
Pray for us.
Amen

Contact information to learn more or to get involved: Niksiz@icloud.com

Adult Ed Committee, Helen Grady

My husband and I became parishioners at Old St. Joseph's while we were living in East Oak Lane and both teaching full-time. We ordinarily attended Saturday evening mass and had limited awareness of the many opportunities offered. We did always plan to retire to center city and to be more active at OSJ. When Jack died in 2008, and I had just retired, I put that plan into action in 2009.

I fully embraced the wonderful opportunities to volunteer that OSJ provided. Among them, the Adult Ed Committee became significant by offering affirmation of my priorities as well as providing challenging new ideas to explore within a community that enjoys exploring as much as I do.

This is a wonderful ministry to deepen one's faith and to connect more deeply within the OSJ community. Just a few examples of the reading and discussions that served to both deepen and enrich my faith include the exploration of Teilhard de Chardin's *The Divine Milieu*, Elizabeth Johnson's *She Who Is*, and Father Bryan Massingale's *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*. Each of these proved excellent resources to explore the larger idea of the Church's teaching on Social Justice.

Contact information to learn more or to get involved: Adulted@oldstjoseph.org

OSJ Book Club, Kathleen Mattis

I joined the Reading Group at OSJ when I first moved into the parish and have found it to be a wonderful connection to the parish community and to my faith. At first, I was a bit hesitant to sign up: the announcement came from the moderator, Dr Carol Schloss, a professor at University of Pennsylvania. Would the writing be too challenging, or only religious texts? Turns out, we read everything from short stories to novels, contemporary and classic, as chosen by the group.

The Reading Group provides the chance to enjoy conversation with a diverse group from different perspectives. Our moderator shares some insights and asks thought-provoking questions and sets us on our way. And the discussion begins. "I wouldn't have thought of that," or "Yes, I saw that too," or even "I didn't understand that either!" The books raise wide-ranging questions - from issues of faith, social justice, and the complexities of love to simply the challenges of everyday life.

And through our spirited and lively conversations each month we have become friends. What a comfort that has been, during such difficult times. Despite meeting on Zoom since the start of the pandemic, our sense of community has only deepened. I encourage anyone who enjoys reading to consider joining us -- you will find us a welcoming group of curious readers.

Contact information to learn more or to get involved: schlosscarol@gmail.com