

GRATITUDE NEWS



Volunteer Appreciation Event

Submitted by: Mark Sammut

On April 22nd, our parish hosted a Volunteer Appreciation evening, to take time to recognize the many individuals that serve our parish and extended community each day. Volunteers are the unsung heroes behind so much of what happens at the Basilica and beyond. Our amazing volunteers share their time, talent and treasure and extend the mission of our parish in tangible, powerful ways.



At the Basilica, we have 17 unique Ministries with a total of 284 volunteers supporting the Ministries' work – which is awesome! A great number of our volunteers are involved in more than one ministry. More hands make for light work, and we have so much fun working together! If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to the Parish Office to get more information.

To all our volunteers, thank you for being living witnesses to Christ's love – your contributions are so necessary and appreciated!



200th Anniversary of the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate Parish

Submitted by: Laurie Vescio

In the Fall of 2027, the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate Parish will celebrate 200 years since being established. In preparation for this upcoming anniversary, we have formed a 200th Anniversary Steering Committee that is working actively to prepare for celebrations and recognition throughout the year.

A milestone anniversary this important needed a logo - and so, we launched a 200th Anniversary Logo Contest in late April to our parishioners that was open to anyone who wanted to submit a design. The contest was a great success – 18 individuals submitted a total of 32 unique designs! A design has been selected by the 200th Anniversary Steering Committee, and we will be unveiling it on the day of our Parish Picnic, Sunday, September 13th, at the end of 11:00 Mass.

The 200th Anniversary celebrations will officially begin on December 8, 2026 - *the Feast of the Immaculate Conception* - and will end on December 8, 2027.

Stay tuned for more exciting news and information in the coming months about our Bicentennial celebrations.

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Blessing of the Shamrocks

Submitted by: Cathie Evans

A lovely and moving tradition has been established at the Basilica on the feast day of our beloved St Patrick.

Following the celebration of Holy Mass, parishioners were asked to attend the St Patrick's altar where Father Ian blessed potted shamrocks and presented one to each person while invoking a special blessing upon them and their family. It is a fitting springtime memento that then flourishes in parishioners' homes and gardens all summer long.



Society of St Vincent DePaul Update Submitted by: Cathie Evans

This year, the Society's Lenten alms giving was a repeat of the **Walk In My Shoes Drive** from a couple of years ago. The incredible generosity of our parishioners as well as our feeder schools shone through once more during 40 days of collecting new or gently-used sneakers intended for those living in encampments, the emergency shelter, family shelters, or transitional housing. Our final count was an outstanding 347 pairs of shoes and sneakers of every size, style and colour - and mostly brand spanking new!



So much more than we could have hoped for! We are very grateful to all who contributed, and all who prayed for our success.

In a related effort, we were able to rally the help of our Catholic high school friends from St James and Our Lady of Lourdes who have been attending the Basilica as part of their social justice retreats. We were glad to have their help with sorting the shoes and sneakers to get them ready for delivery to the various shelter locations. More importantly, they were able to witness the giving hearts of people of faith and participate in a practical way. We thank God for His providence, and we thank each of the students and their teachers for their joyful assistance.

Easter Vigil

Submitted by: **Father Ian Duffy/Angie Hunt**

The **Easter Vigil** is the most significant liturgy of the liturgical year. It takes place on Holy Saturday, after nightfall, anticipating the celebration of Easter Sunday.

The Easter Vigil generally includes four distinct parts:

The Service of Light: The liturgy begins in darkness outside or at the back of the church. The priest blesses the new fire and lights the Paschal Candle. The flame is then shared with the individual candles held by the congregation, and the joyful *Exsultet* (Easter Proclamation) is sung.

The Liturgy of the Word: A series of readings from the Old and New Testaments trace the history of salvation, culminating in the Gospel and homily.

The Liturgy of Baptism: The highlight of the evening, where the faithful renew their baptismal promises. Catechumens and candidates who have completed the RCIA program are officially baptized, confirmed, and receive their first Holy Communion.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist: The Mass proceeds as the newly initiated and the whole congregation share in the first Eucharist of Easter.

Between the 2026 Easter Vigil and the Solemn Mass of Easter Sunday, we were blessed to welcome 20 new Catholics into our Parish Family through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist. A big thanks to the RCIA team for their work in preparing our new Catholics, and to their sponsors for supporting them on this journey. Let us pray that God, who has begun this good work in them, will bring it to completion in His grace.

Grade Two Students - First Communion Retreats Submitted by: Suzanna Majer

In April, Father Ian and Father Paul held First Communion Retreats for the Grade two students of our parish schools.

Students from St. Ignatius, St. Michael and St. Paul Schools enjoyed touring our beautiful Basilica, and also learned about St. Carlo Acutis and his devotion to the Eucharist. St. Carlo Acutis, the First Millennial Saint, provided an example of how all of us can live a life of faith even in these modern times. A visit to his relic and time in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament helped the children deepen their understanding of the gift that they were going to receive on the day of their First Holy Eucharist. The grade two students also enjoyed a pizza lunch provided to them by the Basilica.



Family Fun Day Bowling and Dinner Event

Submitted by: Laurie Vescio

On Sunday, March 22nd, the Stewardship Committee hosted its 2nd Annual Family Fun Day Bowling and Dinner Event where close to 100 people attended.

The afternoon started with two hours of bowling at Splitsville Guelph, followed by refreshments, games, and a casual dinner – featuring Tacos and all the fixings – in the Monsignor Noon Parish Hall. Our aim with this event was to make it an affordable, fun, family event suitable for all ages – and we achieved it! We charged only \$25 a person (maximum of \$100 per family) for bowling, shoe rentals and a dinner. The day was a great success, and fun was had by all!

A very big THANKS to all the volunteers who helped with bowling check-in, food preparation, decorating, games, donation of door prizes and clean-up! In particular, a special thanks to our organizing team members – Patrick MacCarthy, Morgan MacCarthy, and Agnese Nagy and her kitchen team, as well as Christine Schnurr. Mark your calendar for next year's event – March 7, 2027!



Catholic Women's League Update

Submitted by: Mary Muller

On February 24th, most of our clergy attended our annual Clergy Appreciation Lunch along with several of our CWL executive members. We were especially happy that Bishop Ustrzycki was able to attend too! It is wonderful to take this time to get to know our clergy better and to show our appreciation for all that they do.



Our Regional meeting in Hespeler was spiritually uplifting, informative and lots of fun too – a great Basilica Tea Party turnout. (see photo below)

We've hosted excellent guest speakers from Hospice Wellington, St. Vincent dePaul and our own Dr. Jane Hosdill on the effects of M.A.i.D. at our General meetings every second Tuesday of the month. All are invited to attend. For the first time, our council presented a resolution opposing the expansion of physician-assisted death at our recent Diocesan Convention. It was passed and will now be forwarded to Provincial and hopefully then the National Convention in Halifax this summer.



Canada Learning Bond

Submitted by: Betty Rowsell

Interested in starting an Educational Fund for your children to fund post-secondary opportunities? If your answer is "yes" and your net income is \$55,867.00 or less, and you have children born since 2004, you can qualify for free government money to set up a fund for your child(ren).

For more details, please email: socialjusticeclbquelfh@gmail.com or leave your contact information with the Parish Office, and a volunteer from St. Vincent de Paul Particular Council Social Justice Committee will contact you, explain the details and assist you with your application. We have assisted eighteen children so far and look forward to helping many more precious children with access to post secondary education.

Children's Liturgy Update

Submitted by: Mary Muller

Our Children's Liturgy program during Sunday masses has gained popularity! The program takes place during the first half of Sunday morning Masses, where we teach the same readings to the children in a fun and interactive way. Children (ages 4 to 10) leave with a Children's Bulletin to continue the conversation/lesson at home.

We are always looking for more volunteers, so please consider and contact the Parish Office for more information. Please note that the program takes a break for the summer months of July and August, and resumes in September.

Catholic Hill – Canada Geese Family
Submitted by: Agnese Nagy

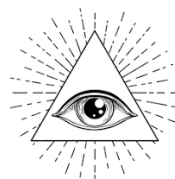
Join us in congratulating Basil and Ilica, Catholic Hill's resident Canada Geese on their lovely new family. This year, they welcomed Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter and Paul to the fold.

Please be attentive when driving through the Basilica parking lot so as to give this beautiful family a wide berth.



Basilica Architecture Feature - The Eye of Providence
Submitted by: Agnese Nagy

God is present everywhere, all the time, and, nowhere, is His presence more felt, than when you are in the Basilica. He has His eye on us! Can you find a symbol similar to this drawing below in a Sanctuary window?



This is the EYE OF PROVIDENCE, or "ALL-SEEING EYE". This symbol depicts an eye, within a triangle and surrounded by rays of light.

It represents divine providence - the benevolent, watchful eye of God over humanity. The triangle is the Christian Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and the rays of light represent God's radiance.

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you." Psalm 32:8



Hold the Date – Sept. 13th for the 18th Annual Parish Picnic
Submitted by: Laurie Vescio

One of the longer-standing parish events here at the Basilica is our Annual Parish Picnic. Over the years, the venue has changed, with the most recent location being St. Michael School; however, this year the committee has decided to change the picnic location to our Parish grounds.

The picnic will begin right after 11:00 Mass with great food, fun games, a raffle with great prizes, live entertainment and Karaoke. The price will remain the same at \$5 per person!

A "Shout Out" to all the talented members of our Parish Community. If you are interested in being part of our Talent Showcase / live entertainment, please email us at: Ourlady@Churchofourlady.com

by July 24th, so we can plan our lineup! Watch the bulletin for more details on getting your tickets!

Knights of Columbus Update
Submitted by: Brandon Cox

Members of the Knights of Columbus have been busy over the past several months supporting various events including:

- Pre-Lenten pancake breakfast
- BBQ at the CWL Spring Market in April
- May 2nd First Communion Breakfast at Holy Rosary
- May 24th Breakfast (see picture below)
- Assisting with the Eucharistic Procession as Flag/Canopy bearers and safety marshals



BASILICA OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE
28 Norfolk Street
Guelph, ON N1H 4H8
519.824.3951
www.basilicaofourlady.com

Gratitude News is brought to you by the Stewardship Committee of our Parish, and is intended to keep you informed and connected, and to celebrate our active and vibrant Parish Community.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **June 21** – Coffee Sunday, Farewell Father Paul Niesiobędzki
- **June 28** – Coffee Sunday, Welcome Father Jonathan Reitzel
- **July 4** – Marian Day
- **July 5** – Basilica Tours
- **Aug 1** – Marian Day
- **Aug 2** – Basilica Tours
- **Aug 9** – Knights/CWL BBQ
- **Sept 5** – Marian Day
- **Sept 6** – Basilica Tours
- **Sept 13** – 18th Annual Parish Picnic
- **Oct 3** – Marian Day / Regina Caeli Tea
- **Oct 4** – Basilica Tours
- **Oct 23** – Wine Tasting Event
- **Oct 25** – Knights' Breakfast
- **Nov 1** – Basilica Tours
- **Nov 14** – CWL Christmas Bazaar
- **Nov 29** – Lessons & Carols at St. George's
- **Nov 29** – Parish Pasta Supper
- **Dec 6** – Basilica Tours
- **Dec 8** – Feast of Immaculate Conception and Official Kick-off for 200th Anniversary
- **Dec 13** – Bambinelli / Coffee Sunday

For more information and details about upcoming events in our Parish, visit our website at www.basilicaofourlady.com.

Did you know...

You can follow the Basilica through social media on Instagram and Facebook:



Instagram: @shrinebool (Basilica Shrine Guelph)



Facebook: @shrinebool (Basilica—Shrine of Our Lady Immaculate)

Facebook: @boolchoir (Music at the Basilica of Our Lady)

Are you on the Parish's Email List?

To receive the weekly Parish Bulletin and other news about events once a week directly in your inbox, visit our website at www.basilicaofourlady.com and on the bottom of the homepage, enter your email to "Join our Mailing List".