

Catechetical Sunday Sept. 19; theme focuses on healing

By Jennifer Mauro Managing Editor

fter the uncertainty of the past 12-plus months, Mary Anne Serra believes the Catechetical Sunday theme for this year – "Say the Word and My Soul Shall Be Healed" – is more than fitting.

"There is a tremendous need for healing. People are hurting physically, and they are hurting from confusion and the unknown. The healing is spiritual, and we need it desperately," said Serra, faith formation and family life coordinator in All Saints Parish, Millville.

Catechetical Sunday, which the Church will celebrate Sept. 19, is the annual tradition of highlighting catechesis and commissioning the faithful called forth for this ministry. It is also an opportunity for every Catholic to reflect on his/her role in the mission, by virtue of Baptism, to hand on the faith.

"The past year has highlighted the

"Many of our parishioners have been hurting from loss of jobs, maybe loss of family members, and they don't always have the words to express that."

Trudy Cranston

urgent need for healing – physical, spiritual, emotional – in ourselves and in our world. As our world struggles to heal, complete healing is not possible without Jesus as the Divine Physician," the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said in speaking about this year's theme.

The image that accompanies this year's theme – by the Greek artist El Greco – depicts the Gospel account of Christ healing a blind man by anointing his eyes.

"The words we pray at Mass, 'Say the Word and My Soul Shall be Healed,' have the power to remind us of, to open our eyes to, the healing that Jesus offers us in the Eucharist, which is essential, eternal and ever open to us," the USCCB said. "We humbly ask him to say the word, and with that prayer, we have faith that, with the fantastic and improbable prospect of Jesus entering under our roof, our souls shall be healed."

Trudy Cranston, adult and family faith coordinator in Our Lady of Hope Parish, Blackwood, is hoping this year's theme will resonate with all of the faithful across the Diocese.

"Many of our parishioners have been hurting from loss of jobs, maybe loss of family members, and they don't always have the words to express that," she said. "So many of our families are in need of prayer. And hopefully they can come together and heal within the parish community."

Dolores Mozzillo, director of reli-

gious education in Christ the King Parish, Haddonfield, said she often tries to carry on the Catechetical Sunday theme in activities and lessons throughout the year.

"With the hurting that is going on, I'm hoping to highlight the Sacrament of Reconciliation this year," she said. "It's a healing sacrament, it helps those that are hurting – for adults but also, I think, for our children as well. When I see the children come out of Reconciliation, they say, 'I feel great!'

"We all want to feel great," she continued, "and when I think about the Catechetical Sunday theme this year, I think, 'Just step into the confessional, and you are healed.""

Sr. Maria Metzger, SSJ Dir. of Lifelong Formation Sr. Judith Gallen, SSJ, DRE • Michael Jenkins Barbara Van Riper • Donna Wicker

We offer our prayers and gratitude for your faithful service in supporting parents in educating our parish children in the faith.

God Bless You

The parish community of Our Lady Star of the Sea, Cape May

Special thanks to Theresa Quinn, CRE

for her many years of leadership in

Catechetical Ministry at

Our Lady Star of the Sea, Cape May, NJ

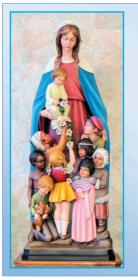
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God Bless You

The parish community of Our Lady Star of the Sea,

Cape May



OUR GRATEFUL THANKS

to the volunteer Catechists and Mentors in our Youth Faith Formation Program . . . and to our Parish Staff for their leadership and support of our Catechists.

May the Lord continue to bless our efforts in this most necessary *Ministry of Faith and Love.*

MARY, MOTHER OF MERCY PARISH The Churches of Our Lady of Lourdes, Glassboro and Our Lady Queen of Peace, Pitman

C amden R eligious E ducation D irectors/Coordinators O rganization

We, the Directors/Coordinators of religious education, in response to our call to the catechetical ministry come together as a community to serve the people of God in the Diocese of Camden.

On Catechetical Sunday 2021, we celebrate with all the catechists the strong commitment, hard work, and creativity we have demonstrated. As we continue to

pivot and adjust to our new reality, may the words of Pope Francis, "*catechists are the keepers of the memory of God*," encourage you and increase your call to catechize. To join CREDO, call 856-429-1600.



The Catholic Community of Christ the Redeemer Parish of Atco, extend our heartfelt appreciation for the ministry of Laurie Power, our *Director of Faith Formation & Discipleship*.

Laurie works tirelessly in her field of ministry, bringing the Gospel and teachings of the church to our parishioners of all ages, as she reaches out with zeal to the wider community through her evangelization efforts. We also thank all of our catechists who give of their time and talent catechizing our youth and strengthening the faith of us all!

May the Lord bless them for all their efforts in promoting the Good News!

Father Joseph D. Wallace, Pastor Deacon Al LaMonaca Deacon Joseph Janocha Deacon Nicholas Ludovich

Christ the Redeemer Catholic Parish

Phone: (856) 767-0719 Fax: (856) 753-7917 www.ChristTheRedeemer.us facebook.com/christtheredeemeratco



In thanksgiving for

Mrs. Agnes Bross, PREP Director

And the catechists of Saint Maximilian Kolbe Parish;

"We always thank God, the Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you"

~Colossians 1:3

Religious education a 'vital ministry'

By Jennifer Mauro Managing Editor

Helen Polzer distinctly remembers when she had her faith awakened. After attending public school for most of her life, she entered a Catholic High School in her native Texas.

"It opened my eyes to the beauty of the Catholic faith," she said. "I came from a Catholic background, but learning it at school and seeing my teachers engage in the faith through our campus ministry program, by having great theology teachers ... that awakened my desire to serve the Church and to teach others about what I was learning."

Polzer, who recently arrived to the Camden Diocese, will be assisting in catechesis in Christ the King Parish, Haddonfield, for the next two years. She is a parish apprentice graduate student who is earning her master's degree through the University of Notre Dame.

"I think the Church needs more people who are not just excited about their faith, but also learned in their faith," she said, explaining that she will be serving as a liaison for high school students. "Hopefully, being a young person, I can have a positive impact in



Diane Keenan, parish catechetical leader at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Absecon, interacts with students in the religious education program.

the parishes. I want to help let highschoolers know that they have a place at the parish, that they belong and that there is something for them there."

Catechists across the Diocese of Camden and beyond will be formally commissioned for ministry at Masses Sept. 19, Catechetical Sunday. Not only will they rededicate themselves to their mission of handing on the faith, all Catholics will be reminded of their call to share God's Word.

"Catechesis is a vital ministry that goes back to Saint Paul," said Sister Joelle Thren, SCC, director of religious education in Saint Damien Parish, Ocean City. "Teachers were listed in the charisms that Christians were given by God. I think if more people would consider it, you learn more than you teach."

Mary Anne Serra, faith formation and family life coordinator in All Saints Parish, Millville, agreed.

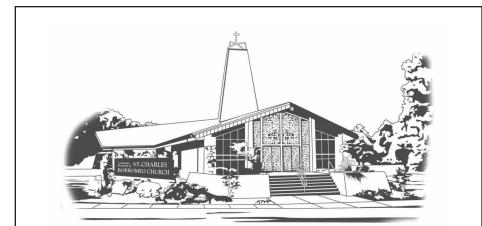
"It's so important to reinforce at home what children are learning in class," she said, adding that last year, with religious education being virtual, more families got involved. "You could see that when we Zoomed the children, parents were in the background listening, and lightbulbs were going on in their heads."

There's also the parish community's role. "Family life is not just your family in your home," she continued. "The ones who go to daily Mass are a family. The ones who go to Adoration are a family."

That is why events that include those of all ages can help with catechesis, religious education leaders said.

"We are looking forward to getting back to intergenerational events; we couldn't have any last year during COVID," said Anita D'Imperio, coordinator of religious education in Saint Joseph the Worker, Haddon Township.

(continued on page S8)



The people of **St. Charles Borromeo Church**, Sicklerville salute our outstanding

Director of Religious Education, Mrs. Mary Ann Exler, and

> RCIA Director, Mrs. Maryann Mohan,

and all of our dedicated catechists and office staff!

"Go and make disciples of all nations."

We extend a heartfelt thank you to our wonderful Coordinator of Religious Education, FRAN DEMARZIO, our excellent RCIA Coordinator, JOAN BAKER, and all the dedicated STAFF AND CATECHISTS that provide Faith Formation to our parishioners throughout the year at THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

With Gratitude, Fr. Michael Field, Fr. Joseph Pham, Deacons, CCHS Staff and Parishioners



"I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you."



THANK YOU, CATECHISTS, FOR HELPING PARENTS AND GUARDIANS PASS ON THE FAITH INTO THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF OUR CHILDREN. From Father William Kelly, Staff and Parishioners of St. Brendan the Navigator Parish

Avalon ~ Stone Harbor

Heartfelt Thanks & Appreciation for Mary Anne Serra & The Religious Education Team at All Saints, Millville



"Ite Ad Joseph!"

(Go To Joseph!)

May Our Lord and All The Saints guide, protect, and bless you as you form our children in the Faith.

In this year of St. Joseph, we ask his special blessings upon you and upon our Religious Education Families.



Parishes of Christ the Good Shepherd, Divine Mercy & St. Padre Pio

VINELAND CATHOLIC COLLABORATIVE

Life Long Faith Formation

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Say the word and my soul shall be healed

We wish to thank the faculty of our Catholic schools and the staff and volunteers of our Catechetical programs for their dedication.

We ask the Lord to bless them as they share the Word with our parishes.





Divine Mercy Parish PARROQUIA DIVINA MISERICORDIA



Religious Education is starting another year and all our catechists are looking forward to coming back to class in person. It is time for me to thank each of the catechists for the wonderful job they did last year using Zoom.

A s we embark on the coming year, we know there are challenges to face, in our new way of life, keeping everyone safe and healthy while interacting and teaching our students about God, Church and our faith. We have many catechists returning year after year hoping to spread God's word in a positive way and some new catechists wanting to take on the challenge with much enthusiasm.

A s with all our ministries at Our Lady of Peace Parish, our religious education program is filled with people willing to give their time and energy to bring our youth closer to God and our church.

O n behalf of our pastor Rev. Sanjai Devis, all our staff, parents and students, I thank all our catechists, coordinators and hall monitors for their dedication to our children, without you where would we be.

Jane D'Ambrosio, CRE Our Lady of Peace, Williamstown





Church of the Incarnation

240 Main Street Mantua, NJ 08051 Parish Office: 856-468-1314 www.incarnation-church.org

The Incarnation Parish Family thanks all our PREP Catechists for their faithful dedication to our students.

Catechetical Sunday St. Andrew the Apostle Gibbsboro/Voorhees



Master Catechist Jim Hemschoot, Director of Lifelong Faith Formation

And all our Catechists!

Kathy Alexander Angela Campbell Laura Consiglio Lauren Covaci Dominique Danielle Jackie Dougherty Denise Fanelli Barbara Gerace Tese Hemschoot Krisy Quinones Fernanda Merino Chatty Roscoe Vicky Smallwood Josie Tizon Denise Zeigler

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of our children!

Rev. Msgr. Louis A. Marucci, VF, D.Min., Pastor

Saint Andrew the Apostle

Fr. Mark Matthias, Deacon Peter Powell, and all the Parishioners of St. Joseph the Worker Parish would like to acknowledge and thank our Religious Education Team for their unwavering devotion to our children!



May our Lord strengthen and guide our Catechists in their efforts to help our children see him more clearly, love him more dearly and follow him more nearly, day by day...

> **Coordinator of Religious Education:** Anita D'Imperio

Religious Education Secretary: Donna Gadren

Catechists:

Patty Benesch • Jackie Denarie • Judy DiPasquale Suzanne Ficara • Deborah Kraponick Cathie Lombardi • Lindsey Stewart • Doris Soldati Emily Thompson • Dave Thompson

Catechetical Sunday theme should make us eager to share Good News

By Pat Lipperini

n Sept. 19, throughout the United States, those attending Mass will view a diverse group of fellow parishioners presented to them as catechists for the coming year as part of the celebration of Catechetical Sunday.

The groups will include parents and grandparents, young adults and senior citizens, high school seniors and college professors. Some will be working fulltime jobs. Others will be retired and looking for a way to contribute anew. There will be cradle Catholics and those newly received into the Church. There will be seasoned veterans of catechetical classrooms and anxious first-time volunteers. They will stand before the assembly excited and hesitant, confi-

dent and fearful. But amid this diversity will lie a common experience: these men and women have all responded to a call to step out and serve. And they have answered yes.

The annual Catechetical Sunday serves a two-fold purpose, helping both the catechists and the parish community. The commissioning dignifies the catechists' efforts, reminding everyone that the catechists are not just volun-

teers plugged into a classroom, they are co-operators in the great commission to pass on the faith, to "make disciples of all nations." (Mt 28:19)

Although this connection to the Church's evangelizing mission can sometimes seem a bit hazy to the catechists making tissue paper Advent wreaths with first-graders or rehearsing Living Stations with fifthgraders, the commissioning helps them to see that their efforts contribute to the growth of the Church. As the Second Vatican Council notes, "the role of catechists is of the highest importance." Indeed, the ministry has such great significance in the Church that Pope Francis has given it the status of an official lay ministry and has invited bishops to examine and strengthen the "biblical, theological, pastoral and pedagogical formation" necessary for the ministry. At the parish level, directors of religious education strive to provide catechists with materials, guidance and opportunities for spiritual growth to help them grow into their ministry.

But Catechetical Sunday is not for the catechist alone. Every parishioner has a responsibility, because of his or her Baptism, to pass on a lively, relevant, life-giving faith to the next generation. Parishioners do not sit in the pews on Catechetical Sunday, breathing a sigh of relief that they are off the hook for yet another year. Rather, this celebration should remind them of their responsibility to support the efforts of the catechists and to give good example to families by renewing their commitment to the life of the parish community.

The catechetical efforts of a parish extend well beyond a specific time allotted for religion class. Catechesis, the echoing and passing on of the Word of Life we all have heard, occurs in every moment and every aspect of parish life. The reverence of a parish's prayer and worship, the compassion of its outreach, the creativity of its presentations, the true community experienced in its gatherings, all edify and educate.

Each year, Catechetical Sunday offers a theme taken from Scripture. This year's theme, "Say the Word and My Soul Shall Be Healed" is part of the

These men and women have all responded to a call to step out and serve. assembly's response to the priest's invitation to Communion. The full response, "Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed," is taken from the Scripture story about the healing of the centurion's servant. In this story, Jesus praises the faith of the centurion, who understands the capacity of Jesus' power to heal through his Word

alone. This Scripture passage reminds catechists and parishioners of the depth and breadth of God's power to restore and reinvigorate our lives and the essential need we all have for God's healing. The theme should make us eager to share this Good News and foster its growth in our children, friends and families.

In the Scripture story, Jesus heals the servant from a distance, as the centurion requested. But at Mass, something different happens. Despite our protests and our expression of confidence, God enters under our roofs, leaky and patched as they are, and heals us from within. God is never remote with us. This, in essence, is the most important message for the catechists. They do not embark on the mission of catechesis as mere representatives of God's life-giving message. They enter this ministry with God's intimate presence to support, inspire and sustain their efforts. As these men and women stand before the assembly this weekend, let us pray that they are comforted and strengthened by the reality that God will be standing with them at every moment of their ministry as catechists.

Pat Lipperini is director of Faith Formation, Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish, Collingswood. She holds a doctorate in religious education from Fordham University.



Prayer for Catechists CATECHETICAL SUNDAY 2021

Prayer for Catechists

oving Father, we pray today for our catechists. We thank you for their gift of ministry in your Church.

Grant them your wisdom that they may grow in the understanding and teaching of your Word. Grant them also your love that they may be fruitful heralds of your Word and lead others to love you.

Pour forth your Holy Spirit upon them to grant them wisdom about what is important; knowledge of the truths of faith; understanding of their meaning; right judgement about how to apply them in life; courage to persevere even in the face of adversity; reverence before all that is sacred and holy; and that loving zeal which leads others to a transforming encounter with your Son.

We pray this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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Thank you and congratulations to Kathy Mattson and religion teachers at St. Vincent de Paul Parish!



New global initiative seeks to 'unlock' Catechism of the Catholic Church

By Anna Capizzi Galvez Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON – When is the last time you cracked open the Catechism of the Catholic Church? Odds are, it's sitting on your bookshelf collecting dust.

A new global project, Real + True, seeks to "unlock" the Catechism and modernize the way Church teaching is presented to a digital age.

The Catechism "is not just a technical book," said Real + True co-founder Edmund Mitchell, "but it's written to really change our relationship with Christ."

Launched Sept. 7, the initiative includes videos, social media content and a podcast organized along the four pillars of the Catechism. Each month a new unit will be released, with 12 units for each pillar, totaling 48 units.

Aimed at millennial and Generation Z audiences, the content is meant to supplement evangelization and catechesis efforts that already exist as well as be a resource to those seeking answers to questions online, said co-founder Edmundo Reyes.

The material is free and available on realtrue.org in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.

Reyes said the inspiration for Real + True came six years ago in Portland, Oregon, when he encountered BibleProject, a nonprofit organization with a library of resources to help people read and understand the Bible.

While the organization isn't Catholic, he was impressed by their work, which he'd "never seen done in a church setting." After learning about BibleProject's creative process, he came back "with the hope of one day doing something similar with the Church."

When Reyes returned home, something unexpected happened. He started watching BibleProject's videos on his phone, and three of his children joined him.

"They kept saying, 'let's watch the next one, let's watch the next one.' And at the end my son said to me: 'Dad, I feel I learned more about my faith from those videos than all my years of religious education," Reyes said.

"That moved me in two ways," Reyes said. "One is a bit of sadness of like man, I'm letting my kid down here, but also a lot of hope that the message that we proclaim, the Gospel message, it's truth and it's beauty and it's attractive in itself. We just need to be able to communicate that message in a way that is relevant to them, in a way that they can understand it."

The Church is moving in the direction of an "evangelizing catechesis," said Reyes, citing the example of Pope



CNS photo/Real + True

This is an image for the global project "Real + True," which aims to modernize the way Church teaching is presented to a digital age. The initiative includes videos, social media content and a podcast organized along the four pillars of the Catechism.

More Online

Want to learn more about the Real + True project? Visit www.realtrue.org

Francis instituting the ministry of the catechist in May and the Vatican updating the "Directory for Catechesis" June 2020. He sees Real + True as participating in that evangelizing catechesis.

Reyes quoted the Catechism, which states: "Periods of renewal in the church are also intense moments of catechesis." And with the 30th anniversary of the Catechism next year, the time seemed ripe to launch the initiative.

Reyes described Real + True as a "passion project," apart from his work as the director of the communications in the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Co-founder Emily Mentock explained that the project's goal of "unlocking the Catechism for the modern world" means bringing the "content of the text into more digital media channels to better reach the audience that we're after" – people that are not against the church but are curious and open to learning more about their faith.

Mentock, 29, said her own journey back to practicing Catholicism informed her work on Real + True. A pivotal step in her story was seeing a tweet quoting Bishop Robert E. Barron's sermons podcast.

The tweet piqued her interest, so she started listening to the podcast and eventually "became compelled to go back to Mass and from there became compelled to actually read all the Gospels," said Mentock, who works as associate director of digital strategy at the Archdiocese of Detroit.

That experience shaped "what I believe in and the ways we can use digital and social media channels as a tool to support that pathway back to Christ," she said.

Each Real + True unit contains three videos — a proclamation video, an explanation video and a connection video – as well as a podcast that is geared toward formal and informal catechists.

Mitchell, 32, who worked in parish ministry for 10 years, said his training in a methodology of catechesis called, "the ecclesial method" by Msgr. Francis Kelly, influenced the approach to developing the structure and scripts of the videos.

The first stage is preparation, he said, by "getting the attention of the heart of someone who isn't yet ready to hear the catechesis." The proclamation videos are meant to rouse "spiritual curiosity" and prep the person to have a "burning question on their heart" that connects to the section of the Catechism the unit covers. "The work of evangelization online is significant and important, especially in a world so connected."

Edmundo Reyes

Then the explanation video goes deeper into the teaching and the connection video applies the material to everyday life. For creating the video topics, Mitchell said he was influenced by podcasts like "Radiolab" and "This American Life" that aren't Christian but explore the phenomenology of the world.

Using the natural world as a vehicle for questions posed in the videos keeps the content relevant, especially for a global audience, since "the Catechism is universal," said Mitchell.

Funded by a grant from Our Sunday Visitor, the Real + True initiative is also seeking donations to translate content into more languages and produce videos at a faster pace.

"The work of evangelization online is significant and important, especially in a world so connected, which is what we saw in the pandemic," said Reyes.

Isolation is one of the challenges the church faces today and the initiative organizers hope that by having "content that leads to Jesus," young people can help "get connected spiritually," then ideally continue a "journey of discipleship toward true community and communion," he said.



Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish Collingswood – Haddon Township

With gratitude to our Director of Faith Formation, Dr. Patricia Lipperini, and our Catechists who continue to pass on our faith to the next generation.

Thank you for your dedication!



Photo by Dave Hernandez

Deacon Frank Baratta sits down with a religious education class Sept. 13 in Saint Andrew the Apostle Parish, Gibbsboro.

'Relationship is everything' when it comes to catechesis

(continued from page S3)

The parish will also be bringing back family Masses, in which young people serve as readers, hand out bulletins and help with music, while a family is asked to bring up the gifts together.

Religious education at All Saints Parish is also returning to being in-person, after coronavirus concerns prompted virtual learning last year. It's also expanding from one program, to two, and will include many outdoor activities, such as monthly processions.

Being in person, D'Imperio said, "helps reinforce what they are learning in the classroom to experience lessons as a group."

Like others around the Diocese, the religious education families in Saint Damien Parish stayed active on Zoom last year, participating virtually in feast day celebrations, Advent and Lenten observances and more. The events were well-received, said Sister Joelle, but returning in-person this year has an added benefit.

"We had a lot of new families coming into the parish when we started this [online classes]," she said. With monthly dinner and learning gatherings returning, "We encourage everyone to come and spend time socializing."

Religious education will be virtual in the fall for Christ the King Parish, and Dolores Mozzillo, director of religious education, hopes to continue the good practices developed over the past year in keeping families connected. Staying in touch, however, isn't just key for families; it's important to catechists, too. Mozzillo is the president of CREDO, a supportive organization for those in the fields of religious education. The group met again in person in September to share best practices, talk about the upcoming year and serve as mentors to one another.

As someone new to the Diocese, that's important to Polzer.

"Relationship is everything when it comes to catechesis," she said. "If someone has a connection to the Church who has played a positive role in a person's life – a grandparent, parent, teacher, leader, pastor or friend – that can open the door [to faith] in a way nothing else can."

"Say the Word and My Soul shall be Healed!"

We celebrate all of you who hand off the teachings of our faith. Thank you and be encouraged. These last two years have been challenging and we have had to really practice what we teach. Catechists equip our youth to reason and serve; to be participants not only in parish life but in the life of their local community. Catechists form future faith leaders.

Say the Word and My Soul shall be Healed!

Fr. Gerard, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish

Notre Dame de la Mer Parish THE WILDWOODS

Extends Congratulations and Gratitude to Our Parish Catechetical Leader Donnamarie Black

And a special Thank you to her Teachers Support Staff and Helpers.

St. Simon Stock Parish A ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



Our prayers and gratitude are extended to our Religious Education Leaders.

May God bless all our students and teachers during this school year.

Berlin

St. Mary Parish

Gloucester City

CATECHISTS FOR 2021-22 & YOUTH MINISTRY

- Pastor: Rev. Monsignor William A. Hodge
- Director Religious Education: Elizabeth Mariani
- Director Youth Ministry: Alaina Silber
- 1st Grade: Justina DiFeterici
- 2nd Grade, Communion Prep: Elizabeth Mariani
- 3rd Grade: Mary Pearson
- 4th Grade: Bailey Heiney
- 5th Grade: Michelle Kidd
- 6th Grade: Amy Pinardo
- 7th & 8th Grade, Confirmation Prep: Sarah Murphy, Elizabeth Mariani
- Aide: Betsy Arey
- Aide: Erin Walton
- Aide: Aubrei Niedzwiadek