



# State of the Parish and School Address

## Christ Our Light Parish and St. Benedict School



August 29 and 30, 2026

### Knights of Columbus

- The Knights of Columbus Council Chambers were moved from the gym to the Conference Room next to the Social Hall.
- Knights are selling football tickets as an autumn fundraiser. Tickets are sold by Knights after Mass or at the Parish Office.

### Saint Vincent de Paul Society

- The St. Vincent de Paul Society has 22 active members and 14 associate members.
  - The primary mission of Associate Members is to pray for the Society and for all those in need in Guernsey County.
- The SVdP Society has begun two new projects: visiting residents at the Berwick Hotel in downtown Cambridge and visiting residents in local nursing homes.
- The SVdP Society is looking for more volunteers. They will teach you and accompany you at your own pace to help serve the needy of our area.
- If you are interested in joining, please contact the president, Peggy Hayden at (740) 260-9515.

### Women's Book Club

- All women of the parish are invited to a book club. It will meet on the 3rd Monday of each month at the Sts. Peter and Paul Social Hall at 6pm.
- The book will be *The World's First Love: Mary, Mother of God*, by Bishop Fulton Sheen (who will be beatified on September 24th in St. Louis!)
  - The book is available in print form as well as a PDF and an Audio Book online.

### Children's Rosary and Playgroup

- Families with children of all ages are invited to gather to pray the rosary and enjoy the playground at St. Benedict Church at 3:00pm on the First Friday of each month beginning September 4th.

### "The Forge" Men's Group

- A parish men's group focused on supporting one another through conversation and fraternity.
- Meets in the Johanna Room at 7:30pm on the first Wednesday of the month.
- "Come join us to become the men Christ calls us to be."
- Contact Chris Sweeney at (717) 758-3577 to get connected.

### Hallow

- The Hallow App has been made available for free for all parishioners thanks to a very generous donation.
- The Hallow App has tremendous resources to assist with prayer, meditation, and learning about the faith.
- Hallow is sponsoring a one-day parish mission on Sunday, September 27th in the St. Benedict Social Hall.

## **Cemetery Committee**

- We are looking to hire someone to help input data from the cemeteries into our new software program, Plot Box. It is a necessary job that must be accomplished for our cemeteries to function.
- The job requires the skill to use a tablet to upload photos and basic information from headstones to the software program so that we have accurate digital records.
- Caleb Baker is available to answer any questions and provide training for this position.

## **Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA)**

- OCIA classes will be every Wednesday at 6:30pm in the St. Benedict Social Hall starting September 2nd .
- These classes are open to all parishioners and everyone who is interested in becoming Catholic or simply learning more about the Faith. Consider inviting a friend, neighbor, or coworker to check it out.

## **Parish School of Religion (PSR)**

- First Communion classes for children in 2nd grade will start on September 27th in the St. Joseph Room every Sunday from 9:00 to 9:45 am.
- Confirmation classes for 5th and 6th graders will also start on September 27th in the St. Francis Room every Sunday from 9:00 to 9:45 am.

## **Sacraments from January through August 2026**

- Baptisms: 41
- First Communions: 40
- Confirmations: 28
- Weddings: 6
- Funerals: 23

## **Renovations**

### **Sts. Peter and Paul Oratory**

- The Catholic Women of Faith (CWF) purchased new tables for the social hall.
- The social hall roof was damaged in a windstorm and has been repaired.
- A metal cap was installed on the rectory chimney to stop water from leaking through cracks in the bricks.
- New gutters and downspouts were installed on the rectory.
- A new air conditioning unit was installed in the rectory to replace the old one which was from 1989.
- New LED lights were installed in the rectory to replace burned out fluorescent lights.
- The crucifix and monument in the cemetery were professionally power-washed and sealed.

### **Christ Our Light Parish Office**

- A new air conditioning unit with a heat pump was installed to replace the old one which broke down.
- A used Chevy Silverado was purchased as a maintenance truck for the parish.
- The sidewalk in front of the parish office was replaced. The dirt along the foundation was dug up and replaced with gravel to help stop water from seeping into the basement.

### **St. Benedict Church**

- The front entrance of the church has a new rug on the exterior top step to replace the old one.
- A new curb and ramp have been constructed along the Gomber Ave. entrance.

### **St. Benedict Social Hall Renovation**

- The women's restroom in the social hall has been renovated and turned into a men's restroom.
- A new handicapped accessible women's restroom has been built across from the St. Francis Room.

## St. Benedict Rectory

- The back sidewalk and patio of Fr. Borer's rectory were replaced to eliminate puddles from causing a slipping hazard. The dirt along the foundation was dug up and replaced with gravel to help prevent water from seeping into the basement.
- The ceiling in one of the guest bedrooms had been damaged by water before the new roof was installed.
  - The ceiling has been repaired and repainted.
- A new furnace was installed in the St. Benedict Rectory to replace the one from 1994 that broke down.

## St. Benedict Choir Room

- The choir room has been completely renovated:
  - The tin ceiling was repainted to repair peeling paint
  - All the electric was updated so it now is up to code
  - New insulated drywall interior walls
  - New heating and cooling units
  - New ceiling lights and fans
  - New windows and curtains
  - New floor
- The school will now also use this room for weekday music classes.

**Before:**



**After:**



## **St. Benedict School**

- Enrollment for this year is 90 students.
  - This is up from 65 students at the start of last year.
- Over the summer, workers replaced the broken block windows on the north side of the gym facing the church.
- All asbestos tiles were professionally removed from the elementary school.
- New wood laminate floors were installed throughout the elementary school.
- New LED lights replaced all the old fluorescent lights.
- The school walls and trim were freshly painted.
- New student desks and chairs were purchased for all the elementary classrooms.
- New desks and office chairs were purchased for the teachers.
- New student uniforms: All students now wear green, black, or light blue polos and tan or black pants.
- New window curtains and hall decorations.
- The school hosted a week Summer STEM Program from the National Inventors Hall of Fame during July.
- The school now has a full STEAM program (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math).
- The old Knights of Columbus Council Chambers has been turned into a new Science Lab.

## **School Playground**

- A large pine tree was removed from the school playground to prevent it from falling and causing damage to the equipment, fence, or nearby buildings.
- It has been replaced by a new pavilion, which was paid for by the special project of the School Auction.
- A new gate will be installed in the fence in order to facilitate new mulch being delivered.

## **School Funding**

- The State of Ohio tax credit known as Christ the Good Teacher Scholarship was a huge success.
  - This year, St. Benedict School received nearly \$100,000 through this program.
  - When you file taxes in the spring, please see the bulletin for instructions on how to participate in this amazing opportunity to tell the State to send your tax dollars to our school.
- Ed Choice Expansion is another state law which brings up to \$6,200 for student's tuition.
- Legacy Giving
  - Many of the large projects we accomplished this year were made possible by people who remembered St. Benedict School in their final will.
  - These large gifts help continue the legacy of Catholic Education in Guernsey County. Please consider this as a possibility when making plans for the future.

## **Upcoming Projects**

- The Diocese of Steubenville is still waiting for a decision from Rome to determine if we will merge with the Diocese of Columbus or receive a new bishop of Steubenville.
- In October, a new roof will be installed on the school gym.
- Plaster in St. Benedict Church is cracking and will need to be repaired.
  - We will look into options for repainting the interior of the church when the plaster is repaired.
- The fire escape on the Gomber Ave. side of St. Benedict's will be sanded and painted.
- Marble statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of St. Benedict have been commissioned by a generous parishioner.
  - These will be set up outside the front doors of the church by the 7th Street Entrance.
- We will eventually work on a new photo directory for the parish.
- The parish is partnering with Our Sunday Visitor (OSV) to set up Online Giving as an option for making donations to the church and school. We hope to have this set up by October on our new website: [colcatholic.org](http://colcatholic.org)