All parishioners may not be aware that we have been livestreaming the 10 AM Mass at the Cathedral since 2015. WTOC had televised the St. Patrick’s Day Parade including the Mass for many years. Every year a team of people spent 3 days setting up multiple cameras, scaffolding and running thousands of feet of cable through the Cathedral to produce the broadcast.

In 2015, we explored installing the cabling permanently so we could just hook up the cameras into outlets that were already there. While researching various options we discovered that for almost the same investment the Cathedral could install a complete system of automated cameras and video equipment. Instead of just doing a handful of special Masses throughout the year, we would have the ability to livestream the Sunday Mass each week. The system was installed that December and the 2015 Midnight Mass was the first official livestreamed liturgy.

This enabled us to film and promote the Mass to an audience of people looking for this kind of spiritual content. And since the Cathedral is the Bishop’s church, livestreaming services like Ordinations and the Chrism Mass allows people from all over the Diocese to view these special liturgies. Craig Harney at WTOC was very instrumental in coordinating everything and he’s still involved in livestreaming the Mass every Sunday. Fr. Schreck and Barbara King were incredibly supportive, seeing what a great resource this could become.

A normal Sunday Mass will have about 150 views, both live and recorded. For special Masses like large funerals, Ordinations, Christmas and Easter, we can have several thousand views. A special thing for me is that of those 150 views for a normal Sunday Mass, the average duration is around 30 minutes. That’s people who were able to pull out their phones, or open their computers, no matter where they were and watch the Mass. When I look out at the congregation every Sunday, I try to imagine those 150 extra people mixed into the crowd, because they’re there.

And some of our viewers are from far away. When we livestreamed Monsignor O’Neil’s Jubilee Mass, I could see the counties in Ireland where people were viewing the service. And during our first Midnight Mass livestream in 2015, we had 1 viewer from Vatican City. It was most likely one of our seminarians at the Pontifical North American College, but we don’t know that it wasn’t Pope Francis. Not for sure!

The control room is up in the choir loft, which is nice because we’re able to look over our shoulder and get a feel for where we are in the Mass. The system normally uses 3 cameras, and while we can cover most parts of the Cathedral, we can’t look everywhere at once, but being in the choir loft really helps with our situational awareness.

We are able to get different views during the Mass including close-ups of the speakers in the pulpit, the celebrant and even the choir.

Live streaming is not very common so we are really on the cutting edge. Very few churches or even cathedrals are livestreaming, and those that do, don’t livestream every Sunday. We’ve received a fair number of calls in the past two years from other dioceses looking at investing in similar systems.

I’m proud and honored to have the opportunity to work on this project. Recently we livestreamed a wedding for a couple who’s grandmother was recently diagnosed with cancer and couldn’t travel to Savannah, but she called them after the wedding to let them know she watched the entire Mass online. Beyond those special big moments, there’s the pride of knowing we’re really blazing a trail that other churches and dioceses in the US are looking to follow.

The Mass livestreams are available both at <savannahcathedral.org> and at <diosav.org/livestream>. The Cathedral web site just has the current week’s Mass but diosav has an archive of every special Mass we do throughout the year.
Rain Doesn’t Dampen Christmas Spirit

It was a cold and rainy night on Wednesday, December 6th, when the Cathedral Parish along with the Knights of Columbus, Post 631, held the annual “Light Up For Christ” Prayer Service/Sing-a-Long/ Blessing of the Crèche Ceremony in the front window of the Cathedral Parish Center.

The weather drove the ceremony into the cramped lobby of the Parish Center but the the joy of the occasion generated enough warmth to make it a very special event.

Father Schreck officiated at the service which included a special reading and blessing of the Crèche and members of the Barber Shop Quartet led the singing of traditional Christmas Carols by parishioners, young and old alike. It is always special when we sing Silent Night as the words somehow make Christmas come alive:

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!

A covered dish supper followed in the Parish Hall at 6:30 PM. The Cathedral provided the chicken, the Knights the ham plus the macaroni and cheese, while parishioners brought their best side dishes for all to enjoy. Many delicious desserts were also available including Sister John Moravec’s strawberry cheesecake, my personal favorite. We had a very large turnout and the ladies of the CCW did an outstanding job decorating the hall for the the holiday season.

Parishioners brought canned food for the Social Apostolate which would help to make a brighter Christmas for those in need. This was a great way to begin the Advent Season!
The Spirit of Giving
By Mary Johnson and Alizon McLaughlin

The Spirit of Giving was very much alive at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist during the 2017 Advent season.

The Christian Service Committee (CSC) and the Cathedral Council of Catholic Women (CCW) partnered on the Annual Giving Tree project benefiting the clients served by the Savannah Social Apostolate. The CSC set up the Christmas Dinner Giving tree requesting donations of food to provide a healthy and happy Christmas Dinner for the families and clients receiving food assistance from the Social Apostolate. The CCW set up another tree with gifts and fast food gift card to be distributed to the clients who would eat at the Christmas meal in the soup kitchen.

These trees were set up the weekend after Thanksgiving, but the preparations by both ministries started much earlier as the gift tags, Christmas stockings, and the bulletin announcements were done weeks in advance. By the end of the first weekend, both giving trees were bare and had to be restocked with gift tags and stockings, only to be restocked again before the second weekend.

Our Cathedral parish always responds so quickly to this service project. Within a week the CSC Tree was overflowing with donations of canned goods, boxes of stuffing, mashed potatoes, canned hams and Christmas desserts. CSC members picked up carloads after each Mass and stocked the Social Apostolate food pantry early in December. The same was true for the donations of gift cards. The grocery store gift cards supplement the Christmas dinner donations for families, and were delivered to the Social Apostolate as quickly as they were received, to immediately benefit those in need.

The Council of Catholic Women prepared Christmas gift stockings with the donations of candy and fast food gift cards, which were to be given to the homeless attending the Social Apostolate Christmas lunch. Every year our goal is to prepare 200 stockings, and provide one or more fast food gift cards. Due to the generosity of the Cathedral parish we exceeded that goal. Along with the countless donations of food for the pantry, we received and donated over $5,000.00 in gift cards. As we look back and reflect on what makes this Advent project so special, it is the generosity of the Cathedral parish along with the support and gratitude from Fr. Schreck and Sister Julie.

Mary Johnson reported that she, Glenda Sanders and Patty Mizelle helped out on the day of the lunch. “The people started lining up very early so the doors were opened and lunch began 15 minutes before the scheduled time. The Social Apostolate staff served a delicious Christmas dinner to 269 people. We gave out 226 stockings to men and women plus 14 stockings to children. St. Peter the Apostle Church dropped off bags of socks, underwear, stockings, sweatshirts and pants that we also distributed. Tom Fregeau of the Social Apostolate staff dressed up as Santa to give out the gifts. The attendees were very appreciative of all that they were given.”

It clearly feels better to give than to receive!

L to R: Mary Johnson, Santa (Tom Fregeau), Glenda Sanders and Patty Mizelle. (Photo Courtesy of Sr. Julie Franchi)
A Busy Christmas Season for the Cathedral Council of Catholic Women
By Alizon McLaughlin

Celebrating Christmas at the Cathedral is a joyous time, and one of the busiest periods for the Cathedral Council of Catholic Women. From Thanksgiving to the weekend of the Cathedral Christmas Concert, the CCW celebrated the season together and in service to our parish.

We started the Advent Season in partnership with the Christian Service Committee doing the Giving Tree Advent project, which benefits the Savannah Social Apostolate. The Christian Service Committee gathered food donations for a Christmas dinner while the CCW solicited donations of grocery store and fast food gift cards. (See Giving tree Article.) The donations made are so important to the clients served by the Social Apostolate. We are always overwhelmed by the generosity of our parishioners who give so much every year.

The Winter Parish Dinner and “Light up for Christ” is a parish tradition organized by Carol Herb, the Parish Life Ministry and the Knights of Columbus. The CCW lent a hand in any way we could to set up, serve and clean up. It was a joy filled evening of fellowship and celebration with the Cathedral parish and a wonderful start to the Advent season for all of us.

We held our annual Christmas dinner with the Cathedral clergy and parish staff as our special guests. During such a busy season, we took a little time to slow down and celebrate with each other and say thank you to our priests, deacon, and the parish staff for supporting the CCW ministry. Many of us also joined the Savannah Deanery CCW for the Christmas party organized by President, Gayle Valbuena and hosted by the St. James CCW. The program included special guests, musical entertainment, and a wonderful guest speaker from Cross Catholic Outreach.

The last weekend prior to Christmas, when everything comes together, was very busy for the CCW. It started on Friday morning when 450 poinsettias were delivered to the Cathedral. The CCW and many other volunteers happily filled the church with flowers and greenery as well as lent a hand with final set up of the Crèche.

After a busy day of decorating, the CCW gathered again on Saturday to prepare for our Annual Christmas Bake Sale. With our aprons, mixers, mixing bowls, Bundt pans and utensils, we baked 30 Rum Cakes and several batches of fudge. Many members and volunteers prepared baked goods at home and delivered them on Saturday. Some Council members wrapped and decorated the baked goods in Christmas ribbons and bows, ready for parishioners to take home or give as a gift. The Bake Sale was held on Sunday, December 17 and we were thankful for a bright sunny day. The sale is always fun as we connect with many fellow parishioners and share the joy of the holiday. We also met numerous visitors and tourists, and this year some of our baked goods travelled home to Houston TX, Canada, and Columbia, South America.

As Council President, during these Christmas celebrations, I reflected on the generous spirit of the CCW members who always give so freely of their time, talent and treasure. We are especially grateful to our parishioners who share of their generous spirit and support all the CCW service and fund raising projects. I wish all of our CCW members and parishioners a Happy New Year, and look forward to a 2018 filled with more CCW activities in service to the Cathedral and our community.
It is amazing to see how quickly the Cathedral is beautifully decorated for Christmas every year, but behind the scenes it took over 50 people to do the job.

Erecting the platforms for the Crèche is a major undertaking as they are heavy and have to be brought up from the Cathedral basement where they are stored and then erected to provide the underlying support for the display. They were installed by a group of 20+ volunteers who gave up their Saturday to make this possible. These volunteers included members of the K of C, parishioners, several first year members plus others. Ronnie Hall even brought a couple of his employees to help. This really was a tremendous turnout. John Pryor provided pizza for lunch. It was a great day!

Orlando had many folks assist him setting up the Crèche. Dick Anderson and John Atwell (first year folks) worked several days. Wim Salien was there almost every afternoon, and a couple, (David and Dottie Kennedy) who are completing RCIA, also helped. And Mark Girardeau, was there too.

After the poinsettias were put in place a group of about 10 ladies began the task of bringing out and assisting in placing the figures. Volunteers would drop by whenever they had time and work for a few hours, or whatever time they had available. This is the best overall participation by our parishioners and we would like to keep that going every year.

In addition to the magnificent and inspirational Crèche, our poinsettia tree is one of the hallmark ornaments of the
Cathedral Christmas decorations every year and it doesn’t happen without many hands. At least 20 volunteers, mostly the CCW members, brought in the plants and staged them. The poinsettia tree frame was brought over from the Parish Center and erected by Jimmie Sheehan, Dick Anderson and John Atwell. Paul Kaluzne and Alex Hunt did the high altitude work of placing most of the estimated 350 poinsettia plants on the 12 foot tree.

The 42 inch wreaths with red bows were hung on the center aisle columns by Jimmie Sheehan, Omar El-Khalidi, and several volunteers including Creighton Capel, new to the Cathedral and Catholicism as of last Easter.

About 25 members of the Cathedral Flower Guild, the CCW and other volunteers helped bring in the 450 poinsettia plants, prepare them for the tree and to set them up on the altars and elsewhere throughout the church. Jane Pruitt, Jan Curran and Kate Haase led the Flower Guild in decorating the reredos (old high altar) and the arch over its center. The Ambry, St. Joseph’s statue and Sacred Heart altar were decorated by the CCW ladies while Pat Cook led a group of volunteers attached the evergreen boughs under the aisle and transept windows.

Deacon Smith noted in his homily the following Sunday, that the group of volunteers who decorated the Cathedral were joyful in giving of their time and talent, bringing a sense of calmness that these arduous tasks could be done with the help of so many!
I visited with Orlando Cuadra while he was setting up the Crèche and interviewed him about this year’s theme. He has been coming here for 11 years to set up the Cathedral Christmas display and according to him, it gets better every year.

Orlando was here in Savannah in his senior year at SCAD, when he first met Brother Robert and came in to help take down the crib. He was fascinated to see how the display was constructed, set up and taken down.

Orlando maintains a binder that documents past years’ displays; however he tries to change the scene every year by adding new features and emphasizing a different color. This year he used the vibrant colors of fall in the display.

He begins thinking about how to make next year’s display better as soon as the current scene comes down in January. What dominant color to use, where to place the figures so it is a powerful display, what else to add. This year an additional platform, which was not in his original plan, was brought in to accommodate a third fountain. It actually provided more space for the figures and gave a greater sense of continuity to the display.

Orlando has focussed the display this year mainly on the birth of Christ. He added a painting of God the Father, Creator and Ruler of the Universe, to the display. He is coming out of the clouds and is in the center behind the Crèche witnessing the human birth of his Son. It creates a mystical atmosphere for the entire display.

The number of visitors each year requires us to have the
Crèche scene concentrated in the Marian Chapel. Over the past few years, the Wise Men have been coming from the rear of the display and this year they are prominently located right at the Crèche. One of my favorite memories of past scenes involved the Wise Men journeying to see the Christ Child. They used to initially begin their journey near the Bishop’s chair on Christmas Eve, progressed to the center of the sanctuary in front of the altar on New Year’s Day and would then make it to the Crèche by January 6, the Epiphany. This always prompted Monsignor O’Neill to announce at Mass on Christmas Day, “People will ask me after Mass how come the Wise Men are coming from the north, didn’t they come from the east? Ahh, but Brother Robert stores them in the back, behind the altar, so they do come from the east and then make a left turn to head to Jerusalem.”

Orlando said that the more recent displays show the progression of man’s relationship with God, from Adam’s creation and fall, thru Moses receiving the Ten Commandments, Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem for Jesus’ birth, the shepherds
who were the first to see the Lord and then the Wise Men, at the manger worshipping the Christ Child. Orlando Incorporated the Flight into Egypt again this year with a set of figures in a window in the right rear of the Crèche leading to the city of Jerusalem, which is located under the crucified Christ, the culmination of the Lord’s mission here on Earth.

During the holiday season, an estimated 20,000 people visit the Cathedral to view our Crèche display and are exposed to the miracle of Christmas, that “God so loved the world that He gave His Son (Jn 3:16).

The Carpenter Shop
Pat McCarthy built and helped install the carpenter shop, which is a new addition this year to our Jerusalem display.

The Water Girl
Chris Salien loved the Cathedral Crèche and spent many hours helping put it together. During one of her conversations with Orlando she asked why there weren’t more women figures present. Although historically there may not have been women mentioned at the Birth of Christ, women have played major roles throughout the Old and New Testaments. We lost Chris in 2016 but her question has remained. Inspired by her comments, a new figure has been added this year to the Crèche. After much deliberation, it was decided that “The Water Girl” would make a beautiful addition to the display.

It is dedicated to all the ladies of the Cathedral who put so much time and effort into making it so beautiful. We think Chris would be proud.

— Bart Traywick
During Lent, the Cathedral parish will be participating in *Living the Eucharist*, a parish-based renewal experience that fosters spiritual growth and discipleship by promoting full, conscious, and active participation in the Eucharist. This Lenten spiritual renewal program provides us with opportunities to grow in our faith through learning more about the Eucharist, participating more actively in Sunday Mass, and *Living the Eucharist* each day as disciples of Jesus.

According to Father Schreck, “Bishop Hartmayer has asked every parish, mission and school in the Diocese of Savannah to participate in this important program for the next three Lenten seasons. *Living the Eucharist* is a wonderful program of renewal that is focused upon what is most central to our Catholic faith, the Sunday Eucharist. It will promote a deeper understanding and greater appreciation of the gift of the Eucharist for everyone. Even if a person has been faithfully attending Mass for 80 years, there is always something more to perceive in the great mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection which is celebrated in the Eucharist. I am happy that the Cathedral parish will be a part of this renewal and I encourage everyone to participate in some way. It is a very flexible program and there will be a comfortable way for everyone to experience it.”

The program consists of six (6) 90-minute sessions over the six weeks of Lent. Two Sign-Up Sundays will take place during January 2018. There will be announcements at all Masses describing the program and sign-up events. Please consider becoming a small group leader, joining a small group, or participating with your family. Also, please support this ministry by praying for our fellow parishioners as we experience this Lenten Journey. For more information about the Living Eucharist, go to [http://www.livingtheeucharist.org/](http://www.livingtheeucharist.org/).

— Catherine Kostilnik
January 2018

Address Service Requested

The 12th ornament in the series depicting windows of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist went on sale January 1. The ornament is of St. Elizabeth of Hungary/Thuringia. It is the 2nd lancet window from the left in the south transept.

Elizabeth, was a member of the royal family of Thuringia. She and her husband, Ludwig, though politically powerful, lived with remarkable generosity to the poor and underprivileged. She dressed simply and set time aside everyday to deliver bread to the poor.

She is the patron saint of bakers, beggars, brides, charities, death of children, the homeless, hospitals, widows and the Sisters of Mercy. Her feast day is November 17.

They are available — for a donation of $20 — from the receptionist in the rear of the church or online at savannahcathedral.org