The Cathedral Parish Council completed the 2016-2017 year in June with a combined meeting of both outgoing and incoming council members. Many thanks were offered to Anna Kaluzne who did an outstanding job chairing the council for the past two years.

Your Parish Council seeks to assess the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish and encourage participation of all members in the spiritual and apostolic life of the church. Membership consists of six lay members elected to serve two-year terms plus two additional lay members appointed by the Rector to serve two-year terms. In addition, there are two ex-officio non-voting Council members, representing the Council of Catholic Women, and a representative for Pro-Life. The Rector, and Deacon are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Council.

Each year, three members are elected and one member is appointed. The members of the Parish Council elected this year are as follows: Bart Traywick and Ann Hall were re-elected for two year terms, Christian DeMere was elected for his first term and John Pryor was appointed.

Parish Council Officers for 2017-2018
Bart Traywick - Chairman
Tom Haase - Vice-chairman
John Pryor - Secretary

Committee Chairs include:
Bart Traywick - Property
Ann Hall - Christian Service
Christian Demere - Development
John Pryor - Stewardship
Tom Haase - Adult Faith Enrichment
Eddie Mizelle - Finance Council
Carol Herb - Parish Activities
Joe Mullin - Member at large

Members of the Finance Council are appointed by Father Schreck. Parish Council member, Eddie Mizelle, represents the Parish Council at Finance Council meetings and keeps the Parish Council up-to-date on actions taken and decisions made by the Finance Council.

Gretchen Reese serves as the Pro Life representative and Alizon McLaughlin, President of the Cathedral Council of Catholic Women, represents the CCW on the Council.

Father Schreck and Deacon Smith are also members of the group. Father Schreck’s monthly report on the parish provides guidance to the Council.
A story is told of two brothers, who shared a family farm, one of whom had a wife and many children, and the other who was single. They shared the work and the profits of the farm equally. The farm was successful and they stored the fruits of an abundant harvest in their barns. One day, the married brother began to reflect upon how blessed his life was and what a wonderful family he had.

“Here I am,” he said, “with so much, but my brother is alone to work the farm and has no one to share in its abundance.” He decided that he would take some of the grain from his barn and secretly take it to his brother’s barn at night.

At the same time, the single brother was reflecting on his harvest. “Here I am,” he thought, “with no wife or children to provide for and more than enough for me, while my brother has so many more responsibilities.” He decided that he would take some of his grain and quietly put it in his brother’s barn at night.

Each day, the two brothers would awaken to discover that although they had taken out some of the grain, mysteriously they seemed to have more than ever. On one particular night, as each was going to the other’s barn, they met along the way, carrying sacks of grain. At once, each knew what had been happening, and they embraced each other.

God looked down from heaven upon the two brothers and he declared: “This is a holy place. This is where I will build my temple, for where brothers meet in love I will reveal my presence.”

Our Cathedral of St. John the Baptist is indeed “a holy place.” It is our great privilege to gather here each Sunday to hear God’s word proclaimed and to receive the body and blood of Jesus our Savior. From what we receive each Sunday we are commissioned to go forth and teach and live the Gospel.

As our parish mission states, we seek to make the Cathedral “a vibrant center of Catholic faith and culture.” That happens each day in so many different ways, thanks to your generous sharing of the gifts with which God has blessed you. It is so important that we be able to celebrate the Sunday Mass with great beauty and dignity, with wonderful music, and engaging preaching.

Our efforts to provide continuing formation for adults, through Bible study, book study programs, and lectures, are essential. This year we hope to be able to fund a campus ministry program for the many college students who are in Savannah, especially in the downtown area. Our religious education program for the children and young people of our parish is critical to their faith life. We want to continue to strengthen that.

The Cathedral itself is an amazing tool for evangelization. In 2016 we had well over 250,000 visitors to the Cathedral, and that number doesn’t include attendance at Sunday Mass. Our docents do a great job of explaining the Catholic faith, as they take visitors through the Church and point out its beautiful treasures.

Our task as disciples is not only to teach, but to serve. Cathedral parishioners have done great work in providing food and clothing for those who are in need in our community. We continue to support the Social Apostolate of Savannah with donations of food and money. We have provided meals to the homeless of downtown Savannah.

These things, and many others, testify to the fact that the Cathedral is “a holy place,” where disciples meet with generous hearts, to share God’s goodness with others.

Three years ago, I asked you to take a look at what you regularly give to the Cathedral. I am doing so again now. Your support for our parish programs has been great! Perhaps you are able to increase what you regularly give. If you have not been giving regularly, I encourage you to begin now.

What you give will make a difference in the lives of many, and it will also make a difference in your life. God is pleased with the sacrifices we make, and when we share from the abundance which he has “loaned” to us, God is present in our midst, and he declares that this is truly “a holy place.”

By Fr. Gerry Schreck
Family Promise, formerly known as Interfaith Hospitality Network, began with a simple act of kindness that set into motion a national movement to end family homelessness. In 1985, Karen Olsen was rushing to a business meeting in New York City when she passed a homeless woman on the street. On impulse, she bought her a sandwich.

The woman, Millie, accepted the sandwich but asked for something more-- a chance to be heard. Ms. Olsen stayed with Millie and listened. What she heard made her understand that homelessness brought profound feelings of diminished self-worth and a disconnect from society in general. After that sobering encounter, Ms. Olsen and her children began delivering lunches to people on the streets of New York City.

In 1986, she realized that homelessness was affecting families right in her own community in New Jersey and knew she had to do something more than offering sandwiches. She brought together people in need with people who wanted to help them. She solicited the help of existing community resources that could provide shelter, meals, and housing. Other volunteers were recruited to use their skills, knowledge, and compassion to help their homeless neighbors find employment, reconnect with society, and restore their dignity.

In 1986, the religious congregations as well as the YMCA got involved and the first Interfaith Hospitality Network was opened on October 27, 1986. As word spread, a second network was formed and the concept spread to other states. In 1988 the National Interfaith Network was formed to bring the program nationwide.

Family Promise touches the lives of more than 67,000 people in need annually and engages more than 180,000 volunteers. Yet, this year in America, more than 25 million children and their parents will experience homelessness.

The Cathedral has joined forces again with Family Promise as a Host Congregation. This year the Cathedral hosted the homeless families for the week of June 4 –11, 2017. The families were transported to parish halls each evening at 5:30 p.m. for dinner and planned social activities. They retired to classrooms in the building that were decorated and set up as bedrooms. Each morning breakfast was provided, lunches were packed, and at 6:30 a.m. they were transported back to the Family Promise Day Center where the parents worked to regain employment, housing, independence, and positive feelings of self-worth.

Our guests arrived on Sunday, June 4th. After the families settled in they were served a Mexican themed dinner prepared by Dwight Sheley and his wife, Deborah and followed up with an all American apple pie and ice cream dessert donated by Kate Hasse. John Nichols, owner of Crystal Beer Parlor, catered Mon-
day night’s delicious southern style dinner. Later that evening, our guests were treated to a guided horse driven carriage tour through the historic downtown district arranged by Historic Savannah Carriage Tours owners, John Tarr, and Kelli Whitney.

We all made our way to Ruth Chris Steak House for dinner in a private room on Tuesday night and were fortunate to have Fr. Schreck join us for the evening. Parishioner Billy Robinson generously arranged this fine dining experience for our guests.

Missy Johnson, owner of Mellow Mushroom, contributed Wednesday’s meal. Because of inclement weather, we were not able to walk so we had take-out pizza back at the parish hall. Later in the evening we were able to stroll down to Savannah Coffee Roasters to enjoy an assorted array of delectable desserts prepared just for us by pastry chef Montana Kelly. Many thanks to Lori and the late John Collins for welcoming us back again this year.

Thursday evening was spent at the Savannah Bananas baseball game on Catholic Night at the Park. Marie Gentry, Director of Partner Services for the organization, arranged for Southern Eagle Distributing to host our families for the sold out game. They also gave each family member a pass for all you can eat at the concessions stands.

Friday’s meal of savory beef stroganoff was prepared for our families by Meg Hearn. After dinner, we all walked to Leopold’s Ice Cream where we were treated to desserts thanks to gift certificates arranged by Stratton Leopold.

Tara Cobella from Screamin’ Mimi graciously delivered pizzas with all kinds of assorted toppings for the group on Saturday night. The following morning the families were picked up and transported back to the Day Center and then to the next Host Congregation for the following week.

The special events of the week were possible because of the giving spirit and generosity of Cathedral’s parishioners and the local businesses within our community. All meals, events, and services were donated gifts of love. Special thanks to Charlie and Cheryl Ganem as well as Eddie and Patty Mizelle for their willingness to stay overnight in the parish hall and lend a hand throughout the week whenever needed. Much gratitude to Bob and Betty Schwartz for bringing so much love and laughter to our group with each visit. Lastly, I’d also like to thank Lori Cafiero who was instrumental in bringing Screamin’ Mimi’s on board this year and securing free VIP passes from the Old Town Trolley group for each family.

If you would be interested in making a donation or helping with Family Promise in any other way, please contact Carol or Joe Herb at ckenneyherb@gmail.com.
We all have a duty to Evangelize

By Krystyna Swierczewski; Group photo by Abbie Byron-Goslin; Game photos by Margot Miller

The dictionary tells us that Evangelization means “to preach the Gospel.” However, as a young adult Catholic, it’s difficult to know how to preach the Gospel.

Earlier this year, college-aged young adults, many of whom were from SCAD and the Cathedral Parish, attended the Diocesan Intercollegiate Retreat, at the Honey Creek Retreat Center in Waverly, GA. It was a collaboration with the national ministry, Evangelical Catholic, and featured Cody LeClaire as the speaker and worship leader.

We all had a misperception of evangelization, thinking perhaps the Jehovah’s Witnesses had it right. However, many of us feared the definition of evangelization; what it truly means is to preach the gospel. This retreat strengthened us and took that fear away, because we all forgot the foundation of evangelization…Connection with Christ!

Cody spoke on how important it is to have a strong connection with Christ before trying to evangelize. We must have an overflowing cup of the Holy Spirit in our hearts that will allow us to preach the gospel with love. There’s much more to being Catholic than attending Mass every Sunday and praying the Rosary. God needs to be our best friend and we’re lucky to have the sacraments to help us grow closer to Him. Reading and meditating on the scriptures is something that many of us fail to practice. As college students, it’s hard to find time to really meditate on the Gospels. However, this retreat taught us that it’s about making time for Christ, not finding it. How can we evangelize if we do not put Christ first, if we do not prioritize our life around Christ? We simply can’t.

After the retreat, there was an obvious change in the students who attended. More students at daily Mass, a larger attendance at faith enriching and spiritual CREED meetings, plus a desire to show our love for God. Katelyn Yoder, a student at SCAD said “I learned that we have a duty as Catholics to evangelize but we must first start with ourselves.”

Person to person ministry is the form of evangelization Cody spoke about. Many times, we try to reach people by trying to drag them to Mass. Although we mean well, that is not the way to reach their hearts. Rachel Sizemore, another student at SCAD, understood that person to person ministry is not dragging them to Jesus. The key part of this ministry is connecting with the person, similar to how we connect with Christ. Treating the person with love, respect and always looking out for them, this is how we preach the Gospel. Little by little we show them that our joy and our peace comes from our connection with Christ. Once that person sees the peace and joy that we’re filled with, they’ll want that too. Continuing the relationship with the person will help them seek God for themselves without us having to drag them to Him.

Thank you to the Cathedral Parish for sponsoring numerous students to attend the retreat.

Krystyna Swierczewski is the Past President of CREED and is currently the Savannah College Campus Ministry Minister.
All parishioners and their families are invited to the 3rd Annual Stewardship Dinner on Sunday evening, October 1, 2017 from 5:00 to 8:00 PM in beautiful Lafayette Square. Join your fellow parishioners to enjoy music, fellowship and good food while looking at our beautiful Cathedral.

"Please plan to attend so that I can personally express my thanks to each of you for your generosity to the Cathedral Parish. It will also be a wonderful opportunity to meet and spend some time with other Cathedral parishioners. In this way we will have a sense of who belongs to our church, with whom we share the mission of the Cathedral parish community."

—Fr. Schreck
Our print quality was uneven in our last issue and rather poor in the Fine Art story. The photos didn’t do justice to the talent of the artists nor the exceptional photographs taken by Paul Camp.

We revisited every photo in the issue (and especially the art photos) to make sure they looked right on our end before posting the issue on the Cathedral web page and we invite you to have a look at http://savannahcathedral.org/ Then click: Twin Spires, then: Twin Spires June 2017