The Cathedral Parish Hall, which once served as the cafeteria for Cathedral Day School, is in the process of receiving a much needed update thanks largely to the financial generosity and commitment to service of the members of the Knights of Columbus, Council 631.

The old, dingy ceiling tiles were replaced and sleek overhead lighting was installed over the first weekend of February. The walls also received a fresh coat of paint in early April. The finishing touches will include window treatments as well as a new stage curtain.

Many thanks to Bart Traywick, a Cathedral parishioner, and Dwight Sheley from the Knights of Columbus for coordinating this effort, as well as the other Knights and parishioners who labored many hours to bring this project to fruition.

This 65 year old building has played an important part in the foundation of elementary parochial education in the Diocese of Savannah. Prior to 1919, Catholic elementary aged children attended St. Vincent’s Grammar School under the tutelage of the Sisters of Mercy. In 1919, the Marist Brothers religious order came to Savannah from New York and opened a boys-only Catholic grammar school located on the southwest corner of Abercorn and Charlton Streets.

That same year, Bishop Keiley wanted to establish a separate all girls parochial grammar school, but there was no building readily available. Because of this, the girls continued to be educated at St. Vincent’s and some of their classes were held in the basement of the Cathedral.

In 1939, the Marist Brothers pulled out of Savannah.

The closing of the Marist School necessitated the establishment of a new co-ed grammar school. Located in the vacated Marist building and again staffed by the Sisters of Mercy, it was called Cathedral Grammar School. The new Cathedral Day School was built in 1954 at the request of Msgr. T. James McNamara, Rector of the Cathedral. Situated across Harris Street from the Cathedral, it now houses our Parish Hall.

In April of 1968, due to a decline in vocations to the religious sisterhood, the Sisters of Mercy were forced to withdraw from their involvement in the Cathedral Day School and turned the school’s administration over to the Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

A number of local Catholic schools closed in the 1970s and their student populations came to Cathedral Day School. In June of 1990, Sacred Heart School merged with Cathedral Day School and the new grammar school, named Notre Dame Academy, was housed in the school building on Harris Street.

In February 1998, it was formally adopted by the inner-city parish of St. Benedict the Moor. It operated in the Cathedral School building until 2000 when it moved to the old BC building on Bull Street adjacent to Sacred Heart Church. Notre Dame closed at the end of the 2014-2015 school year, due to a steep decline in enrollment over the years.

Today the Cathedral Day School building is used as a gathering place for parish events plus our Religious Education Program and the second floor classrooms are again alive with the buzz of learning by St. Vincent’s students.
“Amen I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, my least brethren, you did it for me.” Mt 25:40

By Latacia Avila
Photos by Deborah Wade and Kate Wallington

Amazing! Astounding! Awesome! There are a dozen other adjectives we could use to describe the outcome of the March Food Drive at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, but none of them truly describes the heartwarming feeling we have when numerous trunk-loads of groceries are delivered every week of the month from the Cathedral.

In March, an amazing 3,710 pounds, almost 2 tons of assorted groceries, were donated for the pantry at the Social Apostolate of Savannah by Cathedral parishioners. The food did not stay on our shelves for long! The items collected helped provide nutritious meals for 140 families (229 individuals).

Thanks to your generosity, the working poor, the elderly on a fixed income and other “at-risk” individuals and families in our community had the pantry essentials needed to put a well-balanced meal on the table.

Sometimes a can of tuna, a box of pasta and a canned vegetable, which we can provide, simple as it seems, can be a hearty meal. A box of cereal ensures a child does not go to school hungry. A can of hearty soup and boiled rice ensures an elderly person does not go to bed hungry. A can of corn and a can of sweet peas provides a family of five with a side dish. Peanut butter and jelly on a slice of bread is a tasty and nourishing snack. A little goes a long way and is very much appreciated.

Our clients who receive the groceries are always so grateful and we hear “God Bless You for giving us these things” from just about everyone.

What they really mean is “God Bless You, Cathedral parish members and community for caring enough to give us what we need right now”. Our Lord says “Feed the hungry and you feed Me” – you have given an abundance of food and we are so thankful to you.

To say ‘thank you’ is hardly enough. We bless you all for your love of your fellow man and your kindness and generosity to them, through us. We are grateful every day for your donations and prayers and sincerely appreciate all you do to help us fulfill our mission.

The Mission of the Social Apostolate of Savannah is to care for and empower the poor, homeless, disabled and “at risk” people in the Savannah area in witness to the biblical values of charity and justice.”
The veneration of two first-class relics of St. Anthony of Padua at the Cathedral earlier this year prompted the reappearance of the marble statue of St. Anthony which had graced the altar dedicated to him in the south transept for almost 100 years. During the renovation of 1999-2000 the statue was relocated to the lower church. The tabernacle on the altar was removed and incorporated into the ambry on the former St. Joseph's Altar. The crucifix was installed in its place. The statue has been reunited with the nearby lancet window that depicts the saint and the mural which features St. Anthony is above it on the upper transept wall. According to Fr. Schreck it will remain in the upper Church, where it stood for 100 years.

This prompted Mary Clark Rechtiene to wonder why there was an altar dedicated to St. Anthony, which originally included his statue, as well as two other images of him in the southeast transept of the Cathedral. Did someone have a special devotion to him?

Looking back it was not possible to find a definitive answer to her question. We were unable to find a clear motive, like Bishop Gross’ devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, which prompted him to dedicate the Cathedral to her in 1876. So we began looking for other clues.

An early photo of the Cathedral shows a statue of St. Anthony was on display next to the pulpit. The old square top pews with doors in this photo confirms the image was from before the fire. The presence of a statue suggests that there was probably not also an altar dedicated to St. Anthony. We did subsequently find confirmation of this in a document entitled History of the Cathedral which stated “The principal side altars, dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph were beautiful in their design and decorations.”

And in his note to the parishioners dated April 10, 1900 describing the various furnishings for the rebuilt Cathedral, Bishop Keiley outlined that three of the side altars will retain their dedication to the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Lady and St. Joseph, however the fourth altar, formerly the Blessed Sacrament Altar, will henceforth be dedicated to St. Anthony.

“The four side altars will require four
statues; Sacred Heart, Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph and St. Anthony. These statues, about 5 feet high, can be imported from Munich and with duty will cost $90.00.

“The Sisters and children of St. Mary’s Home desired to express their gratitude to one known and loved by all of us, and have given the Altar of St. Anthony in honor of Father Cafferty.

“And the Altar of Our Blessed Lady is a memorial to the late Archbishop Gross, whose tender piety to the Mother of the Lord was known to all.”

Inexplicably, when the altars were installed, they were dedicated the other way. In the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist 1799-1902, the dedication of these altars is described this way:

“The Blessed Lady’s Altar was given by the children and Sisters of St. Mary’s Home, Savannah, as a memorial to their devoted friend, and zealous and beloved Father Cafferty, who was rector of the Cathedral and Vicar-General of the Diocese and who died on Ascension Thursday, May 14, 1896. The inscription is: In memory of Father Cafferty.” The children of St. Mary’s Home for Female Orphans raised the entire sum for this altar by making and selling fancy work.

And “The St. Anthony Altar was placed by the Cathedral as a memorial to one of whom we owe the former building and is inscribed ‘In Memory of Archbishop Gross.’”

These are both from official documents as so we can only concluded that they changed their mind along the way and reversed the altar dedications.

So far we have not found any evidence that someone had a special devotion to St. Anthony which prompted the fourth altar to be dedicated to him.

It is more likely that St. Anthony of Padua was selected because he was an especially beloved saint as evidenced by the fact that there was a statue of him in the Cathedral before the fire. Apart from the Holy Family, he is often depicted holding the Christ Child in a particularly tender way, commemorating the apparition of the Infant Jesus he received. And of course, as the Patron Saint of lost articles, he has helped many of us locate misplaced items. Once it was decided that the 4th altar would be dedicated to St. Anthony, the other decorative elements probably naturally fell into place. Who else logically belonged in the lancet window next to the St. Anthony Altar but St. Anthony? When Christopher Murphy was looking for subject matter to fill the 32 murals that would adorn the upper reaches of the Cathedral, The Vision of St. Anthony of Padua, by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo was a natural. The mural features the kneeling figure of St. Anthony tenderly holding the Child Jesus while plump cherubs look on from the clouds is essentially a replication by Paul Gutsche of the Murillo original. It occupies the the panel above the former St. Anthony Altar.
The Low Country Catholics, Savannah’s Young Adult Group, has held its Theology on Tap series on Tuesday evenings during Lent at Moon River Brewing Company on West Bay Street in Savannah. They have heard from a number of different speakers on various topics such as the dignity of work, discipleship and more. On March 19, Cathedral parishioner Marybeth Hicks, offered the group a unique look on discipleship.

UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLESHIP WITH CHIP AND JO
By Marybeth Hicks

I confess, I’m a big fan of Fixer Upper. It started several years ago when I discovered the home-renovation series on HGTV. Like most viewers, I was captivated by the charm and authenticity of the hosts, Chip and Joanna Gaines. Wanting to know more about them, I read their People magazine profiles. I followed them on Facebook and Twitter. Watched their debut on The Today Show. Kept track of the publication dates of their books. Learned what shiplap was and why you’d use it in your house.

Over time, I noted with interest the news of their growing family, their entrepreneurial efforts in their hometown of Waco, Texas, and their expanding online empire, magnolia.com. I read Jo’s magazine, Magnolia Journal.

I can tell you the names and ages of the Gaines children. I know the backstory on how they met and began rehabbing homes and launched their first store.

Naturally, I was at Target on the very first day the retailer launched the couple’s home goods brand. What genuine fan wasn’t there?

And of course, I’m not alone. As you read this, you may be nodding your head and thinking about the white marble cake stand you bought on their website, or maybe the wall art that says, “Only those who risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go” —t.s. eliot.

If you know anything about Chip and Jo, you know that they represent much more than a real estate empire or a home renovation and lifestyle brand.

Chip and Jo have inspired missionary discipleship in believers all around the world.

Think about it! You can communicate with them on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter (though you probably won’t get a personal reply). By watching their show, reading their books and magazines, and following them on social media, you can learn their philosophy and personal beliefs, and can emulate their personal styles.

You can even make a pilgrimage to Waco, Texas, to visit their retail and restaurant “cathedral,” The Silos. You probably won’t see Chip and Jo during your visit, but you can walk where they walk and if you’re lucky, you might stay in one of their bed and breakfast properties. That’s practically like being a houseguest, right?

Of course, all this inspires you to buy Magnolia products and decorate your home the way they do. You’ll hang inspirational sayings in your bathroom and kitchen, install cool light fixtures in your dining room, and paint your rooms in the custom paint colors created by Joanna. You might even find shiplap at your local home improvement store and hang it in your family room!

When you do all this, you’re likely to post before and after pictures on social media to let everyone see how your relationship with Chip and Jo is changing your life. Before you know it, you will have learned the skills and gained the wisdom to help your family and friends through their redecorating projects.

Thanks to Chip and Jo, it’s easy to see the steps we must take to grow as disciples of Jesus:

Pray: Communicate daily. Jesus doesn’t use social media, but fortunately he checks his direct messages!

Study: Spend time with Scripture and other religious writing. The more we know, the more we understand and can apply the Word to our lives.

Engage: Hang that shiplap in the spiritual family room of your soul. When you’re a disciple of Jesus, you live it in tangible, physical and noticeable ways.

Serve: When the message of the Gospel fills you up, you’ll be drawn to service, just for the fun of it. (Kind of like helping a neighbor hang their shiplap!)

Evangelize: If you’re a disciple, you can’t keep your joy to yourself; you simply must tell others how your relationship with Jesus has changed your life. You might even post about him on Facebook!

Chip and Jo gave up their HGTV show, so it’s only reruns now. They’ve moved on, and I have too. But they helped me understand what it must look like to be a missionary disciple of Jesus, and that’s a renovation we all need from time to time.
All year long, Amy Schuler has been preparing eleven 7th and 8th graders who will be confirmed in May at the Cathedral. When they receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, these young people will be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, strengthening them in their Christian life. As part of their preparation, we held a Confirmation Retreat, to allow these candidates to become more familiar with the church. They should have an appreciation of how the various features in the Cathedral are involved in the celebration of the Mass as well as other holy liturgies. Regardless of where they attend Mass, they are going to see many of these same appointments in other churches and this exercise is designed to make the students more familiar with them.

The day began with a short orientation tour conducted by one of our docents. The discussion focused on the history of the Cathedral as well as the beautiful stained glass windows, Stations of the Cross and the murals. In the early days of the church, people could not read so these various images were a way to teach them about their faith and the “Salvation Story.” The highlight of this tour was a trip into the Blessed Virgin Mary Chapel to view the reliquary and learn what saints are enclosed in this altar.

Afterwards the children were given a quiz sheet which contained 21 questions about the various appointments and features in the Cathedral and turned loose for an hour to find them. They were not allowed to use their phones but if they needed help with certain Latin phrases, they could seek guidance from their catchiest.

When they were first given the sheets on a clipboard, some of the children were visibly frustrated since it felt like they were taking a test. But those frowns quickly turn to smiles as they began to have fun finding the various items and images on the list.

Since the Sacrament of Confirmation involves receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, there were numerous questions about finding images of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity in the Cathedral. And the various new features installed during the renovations that took place in 1999-2000: the altar, baptismal font, pulpit, confessional and the ambry, containing the Holy Oils were certainly on the list.

One of the more interesting aspects of the quiz was question #3 which asked the children to figure out how many people the Cathedral could seat? By using the pointed arch symbols on the front of various pews, they calculated that the Cathedral was designed to seat 1032 people back in 1900. It is doubtful that the seating capacity per pew, envisioned back then, would be possible today.

At the end of the hunt, Amy observed, “This is one of the most worthwhile exercises of the entire year. The children learned a lot about the various features of the church and had fun doing it too.”
As members of the parish you may not have taken the opportunity to visit the Cathedral web site. The site is full of good information and now includes some newer features that are quite interesting. When you enter the site you are greeted with the message:

**Welcome to the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist**

We are dedicated to enriching the spiritual lives of our parishioners as well as giving back to Savannah.

We are a diverse Roman Catholic Cathedral parish committed to the Gospel of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. In fidelity to the vision of the Second Vatican Council, we strive to be a vibrant center of Catholic faith, service, and culture. With gratitude to those whose sacrifice has made this a place of holiness and beauty, we commit ourselves to be good stewards of what we have received and we warmly welcome all who enter.

Clicking on the **About** tab, you can see a description of the history of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist from the founding of the Congrégation de Saint Jean-Baptiste by French Catholic émigrés in the late 1700s through building of the Cathedral in the late 1800s and its magnificent restoration in the late 1900s as well as a timeline of the rectors who have served the parish.

And when you click on the **Visit** tab you can see a description of the many **Special Features** in the Cathedral including beautiful images of these magnificent appointments.

Information about the various Parish Ministries including the Cathedral Choir can also be found on the site.

**Weekly Bulletins** are also available going back several years. All current and past issues of **Twin Spires** are available on the site so you can revisit a favorite article if you wish.

You can **Shop** on the site too. All of the ornaments going back to 2007 are available for sale as well as the Arts and Symbols and Sistine of the South booklets which can be purchased too.

Tourists always want to know when does the organ play. When we tell them at all the Masses on Sunday, they are disappointed as most of them are just passing through and won’t be in town that long. We suggest they access the **Live Stream** feature on the Cathedral web site which allows them to hear the organ play and choir sing at the 10 AM Sunday Mass every week. Sometimes special events like Midnight Mass, St. Patrick’s Day Mass and other services are also broadcast. And last weekend’s Mass is usually archived all week until the next Sunday.

We have just added a new feature which you might find interesting. Recently a visitor to the Cathedral, videotaped John Pryor giving his tour to a group of tourists. Jim Simik was quite an accomplished videographer and he added numerous images of the features John was describing. The final video was so good that with Jim’s permission we have added it to the Cathedral web site.

Just click on the **Visit** link on the home page, you will see in a new side bar a link for **Docent Lead Tour** which will allow you to access the video.

We’ve had over one million visitors to the website in the past 3 years so take a look. https://savannahcathedral.org/
In 2006 Dick and I traveled through Canada and much of the Northwest. When in Ottawa, as all tourists do, we visited the Neo-Gothic Parliament Buildings which stand majestically on a hill overlooking the city. We wanted very much to sit in on a session of parliament. Also as most tourists do we visited the gift shop where I purchased a pewter ornament, a replica of the building. The thought crossed my mind that this would make a good fundraiser for the Cathedral.

When we returned to Savannah I met with Msgr. O’Neill and told him about my idea. He said that Bishop Boland had had something like this in mind for some time. Msgr. then showed me an ornament of a window in Belmont Abbey that the Bishop had given to him. I looked on the back of the box and saw the name ChemArt, Lincoln, Rhode Island. I contacted the company and the rest is history.

For each of the past 13 years, we have featured a different window ornament. The first one was John the Baptist, the center window above the High Altar. The current ornament features the Holy Trinity window located to the right of the Sacred Heart Altar where the tabernacle is located.

From a quick glance it might seem that they are all basically the same except for the subject matter. A closer inspection reveals that for most of the ornaments the framing reflects some aspect of the window itself. For example the geometric pattern in the frame of the St. George and the Dragon window is derived from the design on St. George’s belt; the frame on the St. Elizabeth’s is a reminder of the roses she carries.

By far the most popular ornament is the one from 2012, The Rose Window. This window features St. Cecelia, the Patron Saint of Music, surrounded by angels playing various instruments.

In the beginning to familiarize the people with the project, the first Sunday of Advent was designated Ornament Sunday. People would pre-order and pick up their ornament after Mass on that day. They were also available for purchase that morning. Now with the tourist traffic and repeat buyers this is not necessary. We have many people who will buy a complete set or in large quantities of 10 or more of the same ornament.

I’m happy to say it has been a most profitable endeavor. By the end of this year there should be a cumulative profit of at least $400,000. The monies help defray the expense of maintaining our beautiful and historic Cathedral of St. John the Baptist.

We have been contacted by churches from all over the country on how to start the same fund raiser. People know a good idea when they see it!

Ornaments are available for purchase in the rear of the church Monday — Saturday from 9:00AM—5:00PM and Sunday after the 1:00PM (Latin) Mass for $20.00 each. They also available online at savannahcathedral.org.
On November 19, 1873, Bishop William Hickley Gross, C.Ss.R., the fifth Bishop of Savannah, laid the cornerstone for the new Cathedral. Since the old Cathedral on Drayton Street bore the name of the original parish established in the late 1700’s, Saint Jean-Baptiste, one could assume that the new building would also be named the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. However, three years later on April 30, 1876, the Most Reverend James Roosevelt Bayley, Archbishop of Baltimore, solemnly dedicated the new brick Cathedral to “Our Lady of Perpetual Help.”

Bishop Gross, a priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, known as the Redemptorists, had a special devotion to the Mother of God. As a result, he had the Cathedral dedicated to honor Mary under her title of “Our Lady of Perpetual Help.” His devotion is evident from his episcopal coat of arms which contained the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

The invitations to attend the formal ceremony stated plainly that the Cathedral was to be dedicated to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

After more than 75 years, the principal church in the Diocese of Savannah, would no longer be dedicated to our original patron saint, whose protection and intercession were instrumental in the establishment of the original parish which ultimately became the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist.

Before the fire in 1898, the center apse window in the Cathedral was a depiction of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, as shown in the original cartoon provided by the Tyrolese Art Glass Company of Innsbruck, Austria. For more than 20 years, it was the central focus above the main altar, flanked by St. John the Baptist on one side and St. Patrick on the other.

Ten years after the dedication, the Right Reverend Thomas Andrew Becker, the sixth Bishop of Savannah, discovered during a pilgrimage to Rome that the Vatican had never officially approved the name change to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The Holy See mandated that it should resume its original title of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, with Our Lady of Perpetual Help as secondary patron.

This fact that she is our secondary patron is not well known. Therefore it seems worthwhile to explore who is Our Lady of Perpetual Help?

Who is Our Lady of Perpetual Help?

By Peter Paolucci
Our Lady of Perpetual Help is a title given to the Blessed Virgin Mary as depicted in a celebrated thirteenth century Byzantine icon, which originated from the Keras Kardiotissas Monastery in Crete, Greece. The icon had been in Rome since 1499 and in 1866 Pope Pius IX entrusted the icon to the Redemptorists. On 23 June 1867, he granted the image its Canonical Coronation along with its present title. The Redemptorists were urged to “make her known throughout the world.” Since then it has been enshrined in the Church of Saint Alphonsus Liguori. The Order has since spread devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary under the icon and title of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

*The image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help is an icon, measuring 17” × 21” inches, painted on hard nut wood with a gold leaf background. The icon depicts our Blessed Mother Mary, under the title “Mother of God,” holding the Child Jesus.

The Archangels Michael and Gabriel, hovering in the upper corners, hold the instruments of the Passion — St. Michael (in the left corner) holds the spear, the wine-soaked sponge, and the crown of thorns, while St. Gabriel (in the right corner) holds the cross and the nails. — The intent of the artist was to portray the Child Jesus contemplating the vision of His future Passion. The anguish He feels is shown by the loss of one of His sandals.

Nevertheless, the icon also conveys the triumph of Christ over sin and death, symbolized by the golden background (a sign of the glory of the resurrection) and the manner in which the angels hold the instruments, i.e. like trophies gathered up from Calvary on Easter morning.

*Source; Catholic Straight Answers

The Feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help is celebrated on June 27, three days after the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist which is held on June 24. So they have been closely associated on the liturgical calendar for some time.

In his letter to the parishioners of the Cathedral, dated April 10, 1900, to update them on the furnishings of the church, Bishop Benjamin Keiley wrote, “The 3 windows over the High Altar formerly had figures of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. John the Baptist and St. Patrick. It is proposed to have these windows represent scenes in the life of St. John the Baptist”. He does not explain this change any further.

Bishop Gross’ dedication of the new Cathedral to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in 1876, displacing St. John the Baptist as the primary patron, reflected his personal partiality to her. The only vestige of his devotion is the dedication of the St. Cecelia and St. Agnes window in the Blessed Virgin Mary Chapel that survived the fire which reads:

*Mother of Perpetual Help pray for the donor.*

Perhaps the donor was Bishop Gross.
On May 12, 2019, we celebrate the 56th Anniversary of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. On this day, also known as “Good Shepherd Sunday”, the Church publicly celebrates vocations to ordained ministry and religious life in all its forms and publicly fulfills the Lord’s instruction to, “Pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest” (Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2).

Here at the Cathedral we say the Diocesan Prayer for Vocations at every mass. During our travels we have all attended mass at numerous different churches over the years. Most of you would probably agree that it is quite unusual to hear an intention for vocations included in the prayers of the faithful, let alone a specific prayer for more vocations being said at all the masses every day. Over the next few months our prayers will be answered as four new priests and two transitional deacons will be ordained to serve the Lord and the faithful in the Diocese of Savannah.