

# ST. JOHN'S JOURNAL

REFLECTING STEWARDSHIP AS A WAY OF LIFE

## EDITOR'S LETTER

I was working in my garden in early November on one of those rare Northwest, sunny, autumn days. I went in the house to put in more laundry and grabbed a diet coke and sat down in a chair on the porch. I looked at my Japanese maple and realized it had turned yellow, orange and red. The last time I looked at it, it was just green. I'm sure it turned slowly and didn't suddenly become those brilliant colors when I went in to put in more laundry, but I hadn't noticed its changes until I stopped and looked at it. I was also struck by how big it had become; a change that had taken years.

The tree was a stick when I planted it 15 years ago. Someone had given it to my sister as a gift, and as she was a "sister" with the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon, she had no where to plant a tree, so she brought it to me. My father told me the tree would not survive, so I haphazardly stuck it in the ground, a bit askew.

The tree is now about 12 feet tall and spiders out at about the same width. It is the foundation for my front

yard garden. The main trunk is probably 8 inches thick and is still slightly askew, just as I planted it, yet it has thrived in a garden that has changed as much as the tree has grown.

Now the maple has lost all its leaves and it is beginning its winter slumber. In a sense, I always feel I slumber in the winter. The daylight hours are shorter and I close the front drapes by 4:00 pm to keep the outside world from viewing our family activities. It's a cozy time of hibernation and often, for me, contemplation. Even though we seem asleep, we are merely rejuvenating, as is my maple tree, which will become a splendor once again come spring.

This issue of the newsletter is early; it usually comes out in January. It is an anniversary issue to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the St. John the Baptist community. The first masses of the St. John's community were held on January 10 and 11<sup>th</sup> in 1991. Like my maple tree, our community has grown slowly into a strong, vibrant community of over

1100 families after its start in 1991 with around 100 families. Like my maple tree's growth and color change, St. John's didn't suddenly become the vibrant community it is today, it took time and commitment from its parishioners.

When the parish was new, people use to joke that 20% of the community was less than five years old. Now those "less than five year-old" children are grown ups with lives of their own. Some of them have come back to St. John's to give back to the community who helped raise them. The demographics of the community are one of the bigger changes in our community; not only is our young generation grown up, but the parishioners of our older generation are now often receivers of our assistance rather than the prime givers.

Our ministries have evolved with our parish growth. Some ministries formed in the infancy of our parish are now gone. The Prime Timers is a good example. The

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DECEMBER 2010—MARCH 2011

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**Celebrating 20 years!**

**Please join us  
on January 9th**

**After the 9:00 am and 11:30 am Masses**

**To celebrate St. John's 20 Years as a Parish Community!**

**Coffee, Donuts, Cake, Fruit and Punch will be served**

...EDITOR'S LETTER CONTINUED

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retirees who started the Prime Timers are now older and unable to continue the activities and events the Prime Timers held. But those who are now around the average age of our original "Prime Timers" (mid-50's – early 60's) feel too young to be considered in their "prime," as the average retirement age has been raised; no one stepped forward to continue the group.

Many ministries have adjusted to the changing needs of our youth population, such as Tot Time, which has come and gone and come back again in a new way. We have added our successful Life Teen program to help engage our teenage population, as well as our Fil-Am Group to engage our ever diversifying ethnic community. Some ministries

have been reworked to adapt to the changing needs of our parish, such as the Welcome Gathering which has recently changed from an adults-only spiritual, faith-sharing event into a family meet and greet with a fellowship meal and a tour of the parish. Our Women Growing in Faith ministry went from one large meeting one Saturday a month to several small faith communities.

As my maple tree sheds its leaves to start anew, we at St. John's have had to shed some of the old ways to make way for the new. There are times in our growth when we have been asleep, not dead, rather in a winter slumber until spring brings the sunshine that will wake us up once again. We have adapted and evolved with the needs of our parishioners just as my maple tree has adapted to its ever

changing environment of the garden surrounding it.

Those of us who have been members of the parish since nearly the beginning, have not always noticed how much we have grown. Like anything which evolves slowly, it's often difficult to detect change until years after the change has occurred. Then one day, when we stop and look around, we are surprised by how much has changed, how much has grown, how much we have evolved. We may realize it is our time to step aside and let new leaves grow; it is time to let the stick we planted askew, become the tall, vibrant, ever-changing tree it is. Sometimes we decide to move on, sometimes we decide to find another stick and another space in our garden in which to plant it. Whatever we decide, it is still our tree.

For this anniversary issue, we have many offerings: Our Night of Inspiration for 2011, a reflection on what may have been in the sacred space we call St. John's and a new and exciting upcoming program for living our strengths and becoming more fully engaged in our parish. You will hear from three of our former youth who grew up at St. John's and how by growing up in a stewardship parish, they have paid it forward by ministering at St. John's and in other faith communities. Lastly, see the announcement above about our January 9<sup>th</sup> celebration for our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I have enjoyed putting it together.

*"Yesterday's the past, tomorrow's the future, but today is a gift. That's why it's called the present."* Bill Keane

## GROWING UP ST. JOHN'S PART I

BY REECE KOLBRICK

[When we sat down to plan this anniversary edition of the newsletter, I was struck by how in 20 years, we have grown up a generation of children who were infants and toddlers when St. John's began. I began to observe that many of these "children" are now ministering to my teen in our Life Teen program as well as ministering in other stewardship capacities in our communities.

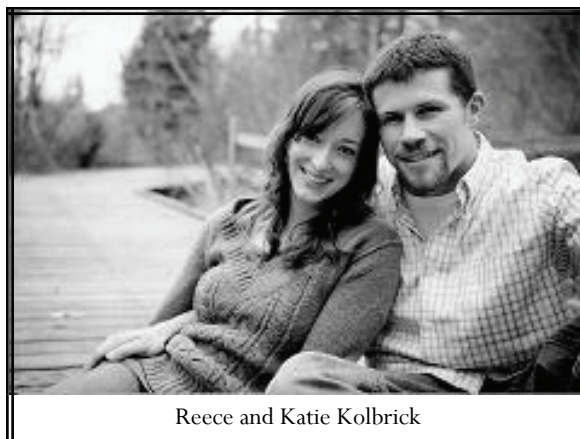
In "Growing up St. John's," I have asked three of these former children of St. John's for a reflection on how their lives have been influenced by growing up in our parish community.— Editor]

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church has changed my life.

I was recently married to the love of my life, Katie, at St. John's and we are happy to call this our home. We are both graduates of Gonzaga University and we, along with our families, have a strong Catholic faith. Our primary commitment to St. John's right now is in the Life Teen program. We are a couple who are called to serve and grow together as we share our blessings with as many as possible. We are given the opportunity to reciprocate our love for God and each other through service in a community that does just the same. It is so easy to spread love when it is received, and this community constantly loves in God's name.

My family has been at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church for almost 20 years. It is difficult to remember a time in my life before St. John's. This community has always been here and will continue to welcome others in as family; as children of Christ.

A lot has been taught to me over the years and the St. John's family has helped me



Reece and Katie Kolbrick

through it all. I will never forget witnessing my father become Catholic in the Horizon\* gymnasium and watching the RCIA baptisms in the kiddie pool. My mother helped with Sunday school and in home schooling us in the St. John's Home Schoolers Co-op. I remember going to Vacation Bible School, making friends and soap sculptures. My sister and brother were born into this parish, baptized and continue to carry the faith that has been shown to us throughout the years. My father died in 1996 and the family of St. John's was there for us during that drastic change in our lives.

Our family has been shown care and love which we could never could have imagined. Through the light of Christ, my mom and us kids grew closer and stronger, along with those who continually show us support. The love never stops. We are all part of a big family and I am reminded of that daily. Meals were brought to us, friends comforted my mom in her grief, and also watched over

us kids as their own. We were cared for when we needed it most.

Life Teen played a major role in developing me through high school. Retreats pumped me up and Life Nights taught me something new every week. I could invite friends I already had and make new ones, as well as become friends with the adults who were my mentors. The CORE Team who were involved and my friends shaped an excitement for my faith. We had so much fun, learned more about the traditions of our Catholic faith, and took many opportunities to serve others. Life Teen challenged all of us to be strong, love God and make connections with peers and adults alike in the pilgrimage of our Catholic lives. The

excitement spilled out to all surrounding us and we were able to show our other communities, schools, workplaces, and beyond, something to be happy about. My mom encouraged me to attend and soon I was able to see how great Life Teen was.

Being a member of St. John the Baptist really is special. It is a place where family values are strong within the community. Members of this family realize that there is much beyond just going to mass. There are many avenues to be involved in, many faces to meet, many blessings to experience. But even deeper, there is love rooted in Christ that inspires all. We are called to give and to be in communion with one another and with God. When we are excited about our Church and willing to give, we find ourselves gravitating toward the sacraments. I love this community because we form bonds in service and always keep the sacraments at our core.

My wife and I share this faith as both of us continue our involvement in Life Teen as ministers and in St. John's as members. After nearly 20 years of witnessing the growth of a parish, I too, have grown so much in this time. I cannot imagine my life without the St. John the Baptist community.

*\* Horizon elementary gymnasium is where the St. John's community first held services.]*

## JOURNEYING TOGETHER... WHAT IF?

BY SUE RAY

. **What if** we had so many people at Masses that we needed to add another Mass?

**What if** we had so many volunteers we needed to add more ministries?

**What if** the communities **always** came to St. John the Baptist because they knew how involved we are?

And the **What ifs**, continue. We are already an engaged parish, but we always can do more.

What is engagement and why is it important? Engagement and commitment are important in our lives of faith as individuals, and for the life of our parish community. Parishioner engagement is an emotional connection to the parish community. Research by the Gallup Organization tells us that people who are engaged in their faith community are vastly more likely to be spiritually committed individuals. When we are spiritually committed, we are more likely to be happy with our lives, we are more likely to invite others to worship or to an event, we are more likely to give selflessly of our time and our resources, and we are more likely to serve in even more wonderful ways than we already do. In other words, we become living disciples!

Engagement and spiritual commitment are about our relationship with Jesus Christ,

and the way our faith is lived out in all of the aspects of our lives. In short, for many... belonging leads to believing. Therefore, helping to draw others into the life of the community, leading them to engagement, could in fact change their lives, by helping them to experience Christ through us. Can you imagine a greater gift to give or receive?

I want to share how you made me feel I belonged when I came to St. John the Baptist.

The more connected I felt, the more I felt like I belonged, the deeper my relationship with the church community became. I felt closer to Jesus than ever before, and I saw Jesus in each of you. In contrast, the last two parishes where I attended Mass, I did not feel like I belonged, I didn't think the parish was engaged. We are so engaged already, but there is even so much more we can do in the name of Christ.

strengths. ***Living Your Strengths*** is both a book and a process. It will help you discover the person God created you to be and together, it will help us continue to grow as a parish community.

You will be hearing more about **Engagement and Strengths** in the coming weeks and months. Starting the first of the year, we will be offering a five week group process, of Strengths Exploration and Development called ***Growing Stronger in Faith and Action***. We will have sign-up sheets in the Narthex. If you are interested in picking up a book, or getting more information regarding this process, please feel free to call me at (253-630-0701 Ext. 112) or e-mail me at [suer@sjtbcc.org](mailto:suer@sjtbcc.org)

So, what is your **What if?**

**Discover Your Talents**

**Enrich Your Life**

**Inspire Our Community**

**Live Your Strengths**



Growing as an Engaged Community

Arriving at Mass, people introduced themselves to me and they personally invited me to breakfast. Then, they shared their ministries with me and asked me about my interests. I was invited to join various ministries and I felt

One thing we can do is to gain a clearer understanding of ourselves and of others and how uniquely we are created by God and how we can become stronger as individuals and as a community by learning to live our God-given

## GROWING UP ST. JOHN'S PART II

St. Augustine once pondered the meaning of love. Rhetorically he asked, *'What does love look like?'* The first time I came across this quote, it struck a chord within me. What does love look like?

As much as Hollywood plays up the idea that love is an emotion - the truth is much more beautiful. Love - real, authentic, everlasting love - does not depend so much on what you feel, but on what you do. Love is a choice. It is a decision that you choose to make every moment of every day.

St. Augustine, to answer his question, goes on to say that *'[love] has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.'*

I feel terribly blessed to have had the privilege to grow up in a community like St. John the Baptist where love is seen on a daily basis. From the time I was a young child, I remember seeing the outpouring of generosity from the congregation, no matter what the cause may have been. When I got to high school, I had no idea that over the next four years my life would be revolutionized by this community.

When I began high school, I was a fairly shy individual. While I went through the Sacraments as a young girl, I had never taken any CCD

classes and unfortunately, there were hardly any of my peers involved in this new program St. John's was beginning, known as Life Teen. I was more than hesitant at first, and I must honestly admit that after my first year, I was not sure this program was for me. Then I switched schools moving from junior high (when Kent schools were still 7-9) to Kentlake.

A part of me likes to think there was a bit of divine providence involved when I ended up in an English class with two of the more active



Andrea in Guatemala with a Guatemalan girl

individuals involved in Life Teen. They welcomed me in with open arms and told me that I absolutely had to attend the upcoming fall retreat. I agreed and have never regretted the decision.

My first retreat in the fall of 2001 opened up a new world for me. While I always believed in God growing up and I made sure to say my prayers before I went to bed, I cannot truly say I ever understood

what it meant to let Him in my life before that weekend. Over the course of the next three years my faith became the most important piece of who I was.

These years brought some of the most amazing, selfless, Godly individuals into my life. Adults and peers alike constantly inspired me with the ways they lived their lives. My high school experience was one of many belly-aching laughter moments in the form of water fights, skits, retreats, and movie nights. It was also one where

my lovely friends discovered my ridiculously easy tendency to blush and proceeded to come up with every way imaginable to produce a scarlet hue to my

skin.

However, high school was also an incredibly difficult time for me as well. It was during this time that I began witnessing firsthand the power of love. I had so many individuals pray with me, hug me as I wept, and offer me words of support. St. John's quickly became my safe haven where I could let everything go. God became my rock and those who brought me com-

BY ANDREA MENDOZA

fort and solace my angels in disguise.

I learned what it meant to give and to love in the way Christ calls us to in the Gospels through these years. This time inspired to do the same with my life. How do I give back in appreciation all that was given to me?

My time growing up in St. John's planted a seed of service that has since exploded. When I graduated from college and joined the ranks of crimson and gray at Washington State University, I could not fathom *not* getting involved in campus ministry. Whether it was in traveling to a Native American Reservation for a week, doing yard work for the elderly, serving lunch at a soup kitchen, or decorating a local community center for Christmas, my inspiration and desire to see social justice in the community fueled my motivation for life.

After college, I took a year to volunteer in the Bronx. While I was definitely taken out of my comfort zone on many, many occasions, the people I met made me ache with their stories of brokenness and pain. I saw loneliness and loss, but more than that I saw God's children. This year made me realize that poverty exists in many forms and much of it occurs in our

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## THE POWER OF PLACE—THE DANCE

BY JOAN WILLIAMSON

I have a sense that history is unfolding right before my very eyes with each step I take as I journey across the terrain of a square third-mile in Covington, WA near St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. At the lower end of the landscape is the raw (undeveloped by the hands of humans) beauty of a rugged hillside. The gradual climb up-hill to the church and beyond shows the change that human inhabitation will bring; first trails carved by 'foot' traffic of animal or human, then paved roads/sidewalks, then buildings of worship and living, etc. With this journey comes imagination and question for me.

The rugged green pastures with alpacas sitting, heads rotating on their long necks, looking to see who is journeying past? There is a connection as we look at each other, and I notice that I am brought back to that very basic truth that I am part of creation with my brother/sister alpacas and

the world around me. Boulders appear to be planted here and there in the hillside. It makes me wonder what stories the earth below could tell of the time it hibernated as it lie under the ice that crawled over it so long ago...leaving behind bits of earlier creation? It took time for this soil to become filled with enough nourishment to birth and sustain growth thousands of years later. I ponder the great amount of life that must have lived and will live here, throughout all of time. I can feel it, the ghosts of yesterday and the spirits of tomorrow in the presence of today...the communion of saints right here, right now. There were warriors who danced here around their fires with the sound of crackling that spit forth coals causing them to be silhouetted. At that time there were no traces of European man or woman around them as they danced, the beat of the drum and their chants heard in the distance. Today men/women, girls/boys of

many different colors with ancestors from many different lands on the face of this planet continue the dance of the fire. I believe the dance will never die here; it will continue on and with it will come continued change to the landscape. The alpacas will move on; making way for the school that is coming with time.

As I journey up the hill to the place where pavement is laid, I stand looking back at the landscape that is inviting to me, the rugged hillside filled with lush green grass, woods here and there, leaves blanketing the ground. I can almost hear this part of the planet calling for my bare feet to caress it, if only it wasn't so cold. It is the kind of space that I could see a great game of 'Capture the Flag' being played by a group of teens, or where a young couple of lovers would saunter to a tree on the knoll and leave their initials

proclaiming that they together equal true love...or a place where the 'empty-nester' couple is sitting on a blanket of checker-board squares drinking wine and eating cheese...or the children of the local area would be exploring to discover a great place to act out their imaginations of pirates on the high seas or the battles of good and evil in the world of the galaxies.

I turn and look across the street from the rugged pastures to the church at which I work, St. John the Baptist. It is an amazing campus that has held, as best it could, to the original terrain. The church is of simple 'down home' architecture. The McMullen education building complements the church, and again was tastefully built. The community of St. John the Baptist has desired to hold fast to keeping life green, both through recycling and through how the campus does

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### ... ANDREA MENDOZA CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 5)*

own backyard.

Coming back home to St. John's after college and New York, I was so thankful to be a part of a community that understood so well the need to love our brothers and sisters. It is a community that is

so active and supports so many different ministries whole heartedly. Since my time returning to Covington, I have had the immense privilege of going to Guatemala to visit our brothers and sisters in Union de las Aldeas, Corpus Cristi. I have also had the honor of working for Catholic Community Services where I

have the opportunity to assist those in need on a daily basis. I feel so constantly humbled and grounded when they share their stories with me.

St. John the Baptist taught me what it means to love. I know I would not be where I am, doing what I am doing today had it not been for my

years in high school. To list every individual who touched my heart and played a role in who I have become would take too long, but suffice it to say that I carry these individuals in my heart every day. What does love look like? One need go no farther than our parish to see the answer.

## ...THE POWER OF PLACE CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 6)*

not etch into the landscape, but rather is somewhat molded to it. As I look at the campus I think, "Whoever put together and unfolded this plan desired to have the dance continue, the dance between the physical plant and the earth upon which it is placed." The community of St. John the Baptist is a great place to worship inside, as well as outside! A path of limestone draws one around the campus, over a couple of foot bridges, and through a prayer garden in the wooded area of the grounds. Inside, a beaten path laid by the feet of faith-filled people draws one to the center of this community's life, at which place sits the table we call Altar! It is peaceful here, both inside and outside the buildings. There is much life that happens on the weekends, but also during

the week! Hundreds, even thousands of people gather in these buildings and on this campus throughout a week's time. Stories are told, life is shared, wounds are expressed, healing comes, prayer happens, and the dance of life continues. The people here are ambitious and live out their Christian beliefs of stewardship in giving of their time, their talent, and their treasure to assure that the dance will go on. This place is common ground for the church community, but also for the scouting community, the home-school community, and others in Covington.

Beyond the church are neighborhoods, the higher I climb, the wealthier the neighborhood, living within upper-middle class America. The terrain has become hardened with pavement of concrete and blacktop. Houses

stand within feet of each other, and the patches of green that yearn for the caress of bare-feet are sparse, but manicured. Two teens are playing basketball on the neighborhood court, parents have their little ones across the road at the playground, and the sound of water dropping/falling draws me to the pond up the street. There is a drain that allows the natural path of the water to be diverted under the street; it is a soothing sound in the midst of what seems so un-natural. I stand and watch the water as it moves, and I remember a cool little stream that had cut its way through a field behind one of the neighborhoods, it gives me pause to smile. What is very natural here are the sounds of family: conversations, children's laughter, bantering

of competition, pitter-patter of footsteps, vehicle doors opening and closing, and igniting engines. There is joy and warmth in my heart, and a bigger smile on my face, when I see the connections that neighbors have with each other. There is wonder as I watch God dance here. There are questions that rise: "What is God's desire for each of us in this neighborhood?" "How can we become more connected with the greater dance?" The dance of creation, the dance of eternity...which is here and now, as it was yesteryear and will be in the future! This is the dance of God's Spirit throughout eternity, this is the dance that beacons for us. All of creation is welcome, and God (with arms outstretched) asks, "Can I have this dance?"

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## SACRAMENTS

### **Baptisms:**

Omalichachukwu Sylvia Chantel Oguakwa  
 Ethan Joseph Shetye  
 Grace Alynne Paepke  
 Samuel Thomas Alderton  
 Emily Jean Courtney  
 Samuel James Murphy  
 Kayla Marie Gulin  
 Kristine Lucia Sherman

### **Deaths:**

Jeanne Agnes Meziere  
 Lois Ann Kelley  
 Fredric Schlichten  
 Jean William Howell  
 Michael J. Jasura, Jr.

## NIGHT OF INSPIRATION 2011

COMPILED FROM DONNACORIGIBSON.COM



This year's Night of Inspiration, featuring singer Donna Cori Gibson, will take place on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 7:00pm after the Life Teen mass. This event is co-sponsored by the Prayer Facilitation Committee and the Knights of Columbus. There will be no charge for the event, but a free will offering will be collected to benefit Catholic Relief Services for aid to Haiti.

Ms. Gibson will be singing at all four masses the weekend of the benefit concert.

Donna Cori Gibson, often called the "Celine Dion" of Catholic contemporary music, has been sharing her music via Golden Arrow Catholic Music and Media in Catholic churches and prayer groups, on TV and is a repeating guest at many conferences and events from coast to coast. She can be heard in interview and song on Catholic radio stations across the nation and worldwide on Mother Angelica's EWTN Global Catholic Network,

and sister short-wave station WEWN.

Donna is featured in numerous television programs, including EWTN's "Life on the Rock" and "Backstage", and Familyland Network's "MariaAl & Dom's Inn", "His Love", a Divine Mercy segment and concert program.

"God does give us our heart's desire, just not in the way we often believe it to be nor at the time we think it should materialize." Donna Cori Gibson is doing exactly what she wanted to do since the time she was in grade school, but she never imagined it would be like this. She uncovers Catholic treasures hidden in the prayers of the saints, as well as important passages from Scripture, and puts them to music. It is a unique gift which is only enhanced by the power and beauty of her voice.

After years of working in New York as a professional singer, songwriter, and studio musician, she has moved to the beauty of Washington State where she lives with her husband Matthew and four children, Marie, Christopher, Grace, and Elijah.

A lay Carmelite since 1999, Donna's music is focused on prayer and explaining the truths of the Catholic Church with Scripture. Songs include word for word prayers from the Bible (as singing makes for easy memorization) and well known prayers of the Church. Setting prayers to music is

Donna's way of helping brothers and sisters in the Lord to "Pray to the Spirit on all occasions with all kind of prayers and requests" (Phil 6:18).

Donna's story begins in New York where she was born, and then raised in Florida where she started studying music and performance at a young age. A professional singer by 17, she received a "more than full" scholarship to the University of Miami School of Music, was the first freshman to be accepted into its top vocal group, and was on call as a "session" singer in many of Miami's local studios. Donna moved to New York where she did more of "the same" - i.e., bands, clubs, studios, sessions, jingles, singer/songwriter and composer of jingles for major companies, and at one point, even received major financial backing for original song production in one of New York's largest studios while working toward a major label recording contract.

After realizing the emptiness of her "dream," she no longer desired fame and fortune. She sought only God, His ordaining Will, spending much time in prayer, studying His word, reading only spiritual books, and praying for direction. This led her to take a pilgrimage to Israel, where, on the last day, she met her husband who was traveling from Seattle. They married in 1994, which brought a welcome break

from the music "scene."

Donna had no desire to ever sing again -- "professionally." Still having a great desire for prayer ("Pray without ceasing," 1Thes 5:17 and "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests," Phil 6:18), Donna was encouraged to record some music by her husband, Matthew. Her first recording, "Prayers from Heaven and to Heaven", was the natural result of the endeavor. Golden Arrow Catholic Music and Media is dedicated to setting prayers to music with the idea that "when we sing, we pray twice" (St. Augustine).

A quote from Dr. Scott Hahn, Professor of Theology, Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, sums up the reason the Prayer Formation Committee and the Knights of Columbus chose Ms. Gibson as their Night of Inspiration for 2011:

*"I find Donna's music to be prayerfully deep and inspiring. Simply and uncomplicatedly Catholic. Her message is soaked in Scripture. When I listen to her music, I hear the same thing that I discovered, and which I try to share in my teaching -- the beauty and power of the Catholic faith! God has really gifted Donna with a powerful voice and a pure heart!"*

## GROWING UP ST. JOHN'S PART III

BY HEIDI REEVES

I have always enjoyed being a member of St. John the Baptist and participating in church activities as long as I can remember. I thought that the church picnics were exciting, I had fun at youth group, and I do not think that I even complained too much about going to mass when I was young. I had a good time, I went through the motions, but I did not really understand the meaning of being Catholic until I entered the Life Teen program. During my time in Life Teen my faith came alive, and I started to understand how awesome our faith really is. I did not just enjoy seeing my friends and having fun, but also desired to come to grow in my faith and learn what it means to be Catholic. I have memories of "ah-ha" moments, times when I was humbled, instances in which I was certain of God's presence, and being hit with God's love which live with me always and that I will never forget. The Core members, Band members, Retreat staff, and friends in the program left an imprint on my heart while they grew side by side with me, helping me see the wonderers of this faith. Living a Christian lifestyle in the secular world, especially during High School, is not always an easy thing to do. Knowing that these people will always support me and be there for me, they helped make this task a little easier.

Life Teen truly did begin to

mold me into the Catholic that I am today, and I honestly do not know where I would be now if it were not for my four years in this program. When I realized all of my favorite memories had to



Heidi working on a retreat for the Newman Center

do with Life Teen, church, and my friends from church, when it came time to choose a college I did not know what I was going to do without Life Teen. I could go to a Catholic school, or I could go to a public school with an active Catholic program, one which reminded me of our Life Teen program. Knowing that I would miss this community and program tremendously when I left St. Johns, I decided to take the choice that would help me make a smooth transition; the choice that would allow me to participate in many of the same activities as I did with Life Teen. Knowing that Western is only two hours away from Covington so I can visit often, and that I will still be able to participate in the High School Youth Convention as an usher and see everyone from St. Johns there, I made the best

decision of my life and became a student at Western Washington University. Having been through such a great program at home, I wanted to continue to be a part of a program and quickly joined the

Newman Center once arriving at Western. The faith growth that I went through in High School prepared me for

my next growth spurt of faith which is presently occurring here at Western. The fire inside of me which was lit through Life Teen encouraged me to be involved and try many new activities which just sucked me in and the last two years have been a blur of experience, growth, and amazement.

This brings me to today. My involvement in High School inspired my involvement here at the Newman Center, and there is no place I would rather be right now. Ever since my first retreat in 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and definitely multiplying by about a bazillion when I experienced my first Life Teen retreat, retreats have been my favorite thing in the world. After ten years of loving the retreats I go on I have the opportunity this year to give back and provide

those retreats for others as one of the two Peer Ministers of Retreats here at the Newman Center. Just finishing Fall Retreat a couple weeks ago, my partner Grace and I are getting ready to start preparing for our biggest retreat of the year, our SEARCH retreat in February. Just being one third of the way through the year, this experience has already been amazing. I am just so glad that God has trusted me with this job, and that I am able to give back for what I have been given. It was a strange experience leading the last weekend retreat, being on the opposite side, providing a retreat for others rather than it being provided for me, but it was a fun, faith filled weekend nonetheless, and reminded me why I love being Catholic so much. It inspires me to look into a crowd of over 70 college students, not being forced to be here by their parents but choosing to come on their own, and seeing them dancing, singing, and praising our Lord Jesus Christ. Planning retreats is a lot of work, but totally worth it, especially after receiving all of the incredible experiences I have been given throughout my life. I feel like I am right where I am supposed to be in the world, and I give a lot of credit for my being here to the Life Teen program which guided me to be the person I am, and guided me towards Western.

## CALENDAR

### DECEMBER 2010—FEBRUARY 2011

#### December

- Dec. 21 Children's Christmas Program Practice, 5pm
- Dec. 24 Christmas Vigil (Children's Mass), 4 pm  
 Christmas Vigil Mass, 7 pm  
 Christmas Vigil Mass, 10 pm
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day Mass, 10 am
- Dec. 26 Feast of the Holy Family – Masses at 9 am &  
 11:30 am (No Life Teen Mass)  
 Charismatic Praise and Worship, 7:30 pm
- Dec. 31 Vigil Mass – Blessed Virgin Mary,  
 Mother of God, 7 pm

#### January

- Jan. 1/2 Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord  
 Masses at 5:30 pm, 9 am & 11:30 am (No Life  
 Teen Mass)
- Jan. 2 Coffee Connections (Bible Study) 10:15 am  
 Charismatic Praise and Worship, 7:30 pm
- Jan. 7 Tot Time, 9:30 am  
 Eucharistic Adoration, 9:30 am – 6 pm  
 Taize Prayer Service, 7 pm
- Jan. 8 Epiphany Service & Brunch (for those who  
 lost loved ones this past year), 9:30 am  
 Baptism Preparation Class, 9:30 am  
 New Member Welcome Gathering, 6:30 pm
- Jan. 9 Parish 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration,  
 receptions following 9 & 11:30 am Masses  
 Coffee Connections (Bible Study), 10:15 am  
 Charismatic Praise and Worship, 7:30
- Jan. 10 Confirmation Classes
- Jan. 11 Tot Time Lunch Bunch, 12:30 pm
- Jan. 14 Creative Kindness Sewing Group, 9 am
- Jan. 15 Blood Drive, 7 am – 1 pm
- Jan. 16 Coffee Connections (Bible Study), 10:15 am  
 Charismatic Praise & Worship, 7:30 pm
- Jan. 17 Office Closed – Martin Luther King Holiday  
 Confirmation Classes
- Jan. 21 Tot Time, 9:30 am  
 Socially Active Singles (Off Site), 7 pm

- Jan. 21-23 Confirmation Retreat (Off Site)
- Jan. 22 Craft and Hobby Group, Noon
- Jan. 23 Coffee Connections (Bible Study), 10:15 am  
 Charismatic Praise and Worship, 7:30 pm
- Jan. 27 Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, 2:30 pm
- Jan. 30 Donna Cori Gibson Concert, 7 pm  
 Charismatic Praise and Worship, 7:30 pm
- Jan. 31 Landings (Returning Catholics), 7 pm  
 Confirmation Classes, 7 pm

#### February

- Feb. 2 Fundamentals of our Faith, 7 pm
- Feb. 4 Tot Time, 9:30 am  
 Eucharistic Adoration, 9:30 am – 6 pm  
 Taize Prayer Service, 7 pm
- Feb. 5 Spaghetti Dinner hosted by our Catholic School  
 Families, 6:30 pm
- Feb. 6 Coffee Connections (Bible Study), 10:15 am  
 Charismatic Praise and Worship, 7:30 pm
- Feb. 7 Landings (Returning Catholics), 7 pm  
 World Religions, 7 pm
- Feb. 9 World Religions, 7 pm
- Feb. 11 Creative Kindness Sewing Group, 9 am
- Feb. 13 Pancake Breakfast  
 Coffee Connections (Bible Study), 10:15 am  
 Charismatic Praise and Worship, 7:30 pm
- Feb. 16 Fundamental of Our Faith, 7 pm
- Feb. 18 Tot Time, 9:30 am  
 Socially Active Singles (Off Site)
- Feb. 20 Coffee and Donuts (following 9 & 11:30 am Masses)  
 Coffee Connections (Bible Study), 10:15 am  
 Charismatic Praise and Worship, 7:30 pm
- Feb. 23 Fundamental of Our Faith, 7 pm
- Feb. 25-26 Craft and Hobby Retreat
- Feb. 27 Coffee Connections (Bible Study), 10:15 am  
 Charismatic Praise and Worship, 7:30 pm



## Continuing on our Advent Journey

We WAIT for your love Lord!

We HOPE for your love Lord!

We DREAM of your love Lord!

We EMBRACE your love Lord!



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST  
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