

FAITH MATTERS



Our parish Luau was held on Saturday, July 12, at the pavilion. Thank you to the Knights of Columbus for donating the pig for the pig roast! Thank you to the Stewardship Commission, Family Life, and Welcome Ministries for organizing. It was a hot day, but everyone had fun!

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Called to Serve

An Interview With Father Andrew Templeton

"My first serious thought about becoming a priest, I think, was around the age of 14," Father Andrew Templeton recalls. He was in Alabama on a youth retreat with his pastor, Father Matthew Buettner, who asked the teens to consider what the Lord wanted them to do with their lives. "I began to realize that the priesthood was something He was drawing me towards. And it was through Adoration, constant prayer, and silence that I found peace in the priesthood and that life," states Father Templeton.

The Early Years

Raised two blocks from St. Michael Church in Gastonia, Father Templeton attended their elementary and middle school. During his time at St. Michael, he participated in basketball, baseball, and cross country. He then attended Hunter Huss High School, and at the age of 16, entered the dual enrollment program through Gaston College (community college).

In speaking about his family, you could sense the admiration he has for his parents, Lonikay and Jeffrey Templeton. Father Templeton mentions that his mother also attended St. Michael's Elementary and Hunter Huss High School.

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His parents are first-generation college graduates, so education has always been important in his family. His older brother, Zachary, holds dual bachelor's degrees in physics and mathematics. Father Templeton himself holds dual bachelor's degrees in philosophy and Latin, with a minor in historical studies, from St. Joseph's Seminary/Belmont Abbey College, and a master's in theology from Mount St. Mary's Seminary and School of Theology in Cincinnati.

Journey to the Priesthood

Throughout his school years, he served as an altar boy at St. Michael under Monsignor Roger Arnsperger. After Mass, Father Templeton would linger in the sacristy and have meaningful conversations with the Monsignor about topics such as natural law. Father Templeton counts Monsignor Arnsperger among his foundational mentors.

Naturally, he also counts Father Buettner as a significant influence in his seminarian life. "After Alabama, I began speaking with Father Buettner every month or every two months, talking about the priesthood and discernment. That went on until I was about 16-17, and then I asked him, 'When can I join the seminary?' Father Templeton smiled.

Seminary Life

Once enrolled in seminary, he felt he had made the right choice. "You begin, and things just feel right. And then there are other times where things are difficult. But at the end of the school year, you reflect and know this is where I need to be. I describe it in the sense of discernment. There are three different entities that are discerning. There's the seminarian, there is the Church, represented by your formators, the priests, and then there's the Holy Spirit. And all three have a say."

Seminary Curriculum

His preferred courses were Canon Law and Moral Theology. He found Epistemology, the study of how we know things, and Metaphysics, which looks at the fundamental nature of reality, to be more challenging. "Philosophical studies are the foundation of theology," says Father Templeton.



Father Andrew Templeton

Fast Facts

Favorite Psalm: Psalm 51

Scripture Reading: Mark 14:34-36

Hobbies: Cooking & Traveling

Book: *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* by G. K. Chesterton

Inspired by Saints

When asked about a favorite saint, he mentions his Confirmation saint, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, who Pope Leo will canonize on September 7, 2025. He feels "...connected to Pier Giorgio Frassati because he was so young." Frassati was deeply spiritual and challenged others to follow Jesus in a fun way. For example, he would invite his friends along on a hike but also invite a priest. Or he would challenge his friends to a game of pool, and if he won the bet, they would have to attend Mass with him.

Another saint who inspires Father Templeton is Saint Charbel Makhlouf. He says, "Saint Charbel is an interesting saint. He is a Lebanese monk, and he just has this unshakable faith when it comes to divine providence that is really inspiring, and that's what I love about him."

Preparing for Homilies

He begins preparing for his homily on Mondays by reading the scripture so that he can reflect on it throughout the week.

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"I have a few commentaries and things that I read in conjunction with the scripture to give me ideas as to what I want to talk about. Sometimes it'll give me historical context; sometimes it'll give me more spiritual context of where it fits with the rest of scripture." Sometimes, Father Templeton will look up the Greek version of a word and its etymology, as this can reveal what the author is trying to convey.

Final Reflections

Father Templeton observes, "I've noticed there is such a strong communal dynamic at this parish and that people are very generous with their service - all the different ways that they help the parish. I'm just excited to be part of that."

He adds, "There's a document on the priesthood called *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, which discusses how the priest is sanctified through his work. I'm looking forward to learning how to serve as a priest from Father Paul."

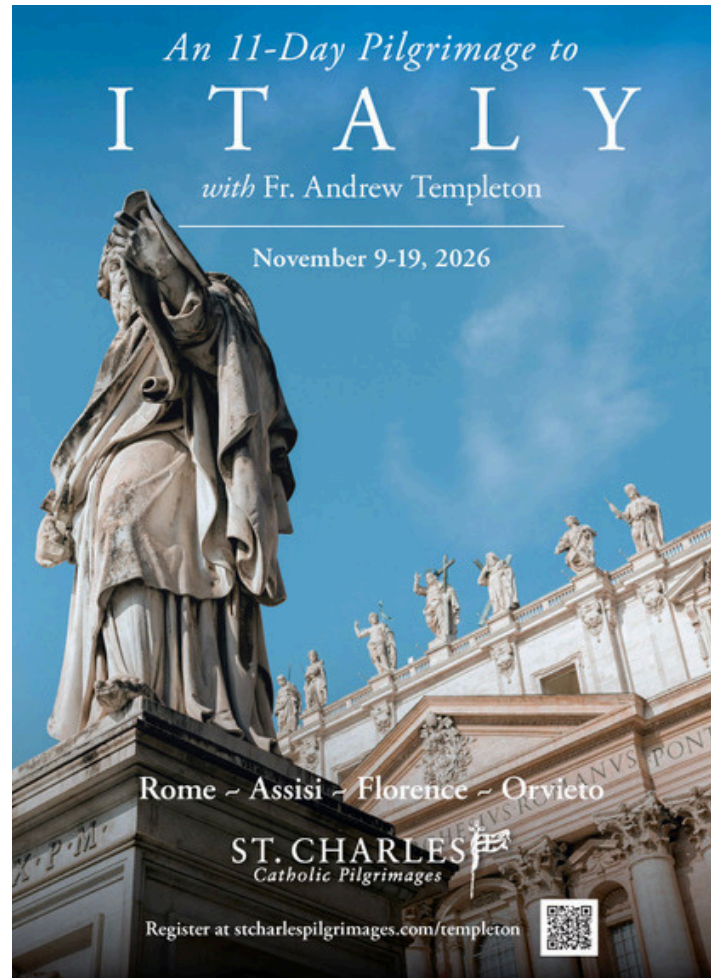
Sources:

Templeton, Andrew Fr., personal interview 8/25/2025

Templeton, Andrew, St. Joseph Seminary 11/8/2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCw9kDoWYWw>

Photo courtesy of Fr. Templeton



Join Father Templeton on an 11-day pilgrimage to Italy November 9-19, 2026.

If you missed the pilgrimage this year with Deacon Larry, you have a second chance!

For details and to register, go to stcharlespilgrimages.com/templeton.



Thomasboro Academy

by Kathy Capps

For the past 23 years, St. Luke has been committed to supporting the students and staff of Thomasboro Academy, a title one school located in an area deeply impacted by both crime and poverty. Our dedicated volunteers visit every Friday to offer snacks to both students and staff, encouragement, and a consistent, caring presence.

Beyond these visits, we provide grocery gift cards to families facing food insecurity and offer emergency assistance with rent or utilities in order to stable home lives for students. St. Luke also supplies uniforms, shoes, funding for field trips, and help with school events.

St. Luke is a trusted faith partner that offers hope, stability, and opportunities one student at a time. It is a privilege to be the hands, feet and heart of Jesus to Thomasboro. Thank you for your continued support.

FALL FESTIVAL NEEDS

Donate

Gift Card Tree: We need new & unused gift cards in any amount for our Gift Card Tree. Place in the collection baskets at Mass or bring to the office.

Silent Auction: Donate new & unused items or services worth at least \$50 and bring to the office on Lawyers Road.

Bake Sale

Our Homemade Bake Sale is a HUGE hit with festival-goers! Please bring homemade baked goods to the kitchen on Lawyers Road **on Friday, Oct. 10 from 9:00 am - 7:00 pm, or by noon on Oct. 11.**

NOTE: No cream or refrigerated items and mark if it contains allergens such as nuts, milk, soy, wheat, etc.

Crafters Unite!

Donate one of your handmade masterpieces to our Projects for Christ table! Contact Cass Stark to make arrangements at (321) 759-2335 or email

ProjectsforChrist@stlukecatholicminthill.org

Used Book Sale

Donate your used books to our popular book sale! Bring them to the white trailer parked outside of the Narthex before or after Masses beginning **September 20**. We also need bags to put the books in at the festival (paper preferred).

Volunteer

It's all hand on deck! Our Fall Festival is open to the entire community! We need volunteers to set up and man our festival booths. Pick your time and job at **<https://tinyurl.com/festival-help>**

Pathways to Healing

by Ellie Stefanik



Pathways to Healing recently hosted a parish retreat on Saturday, June 21, 2025. The Pathways Ministry provide a means of support for victims and those affected by domestic violence and abuse.

However, THIS retreat was for anyone who wished to reach out to the Lord for healing. Pain, suffering, grief, fear, anxiety, and confusion is something that we all can experience in our life. Coming together in prayer and seeking comfort in the Gospel message of Jesus can provide comfort, peace and hope in the promises of Christ. Here is what some of the attendees had to say about their experience:

- *"I loved the music, I loved the videos."*
- *"Calming presence; I realized we all have a burden or cross to bear and none is easy. Sharing with other attendees was helpful, as well."*
- *"I learned how to better surrender from the inspiration of the speaker and Deacon Larry."*
- *"Small group discussions, music, church bells, beautiful décor, delicious lunch, individual blessing."*
- *"Time to contemplate and pray, receiving a blessing and time to give knots to Mary; a place to be open about wounds, suffering, brokenness; but also to bring in Jesus."*
- *"I loved the beautiful atmosphere where I could meet new people and let go of our pain as a community."*
- *"The feeling of the Lord all around you."*

Isn't this what a retreat is all about? Perhaps you might consider joining one of the retreats being offered in the coming year. Whether it be to prepare for the season of Advent, Lent, or another opportunity to come together as community with our deep desire for healing, peace and hope, consider the next invitation to be for you.

If you would like more information about Pathways to Healing, reach out by emailing PathwaystoHealing@stlukecatholicminthill.org or call/text 980-354-1113 and leave a message. You can also visit our table at the next Ministry Fair on the weekend of **September 20 and 21**. As St. Paul tells us: "Hope does not disappoint." (Romans 5:5)



Hispanic Music Ministry

by Cynthia Leugers



Every Sunday at 1:00 p.m., the Spanish Mass at St. Luke is enlivened by the music of Coro Alabaré, the parish's Spanish music ministry. Founded by the Leugers family in 2006, the ministry has evolved from a family affair to a multinational group featuring a variety of musical styles. Musicians from Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Venezuela, Mexico, and the United States have accompanied a group of singers from Mexico, El Salvador, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Colombia, and the United States. The group has included children as young as 8 and seniors over 80.

Our Spanish speaking congregants come from many different countries with different musical traditions. The Spanish music ministry performs in a variety of styles, choosing familiar songs from the parishioners' countries of origin as well as new compositions that are popular across Latin America.

In addition to the 1:00 p.m. Mass, the group provides music for weddings, funerals, quinceañeras (15th birthday celebrations). They performed for several years at the St. Luke festival, featuring traditional Mexican rancheras in one year and popular songs from Puerto Rico in another. The annual Feast of our Lady of Guadalupe, around December 12, has been a special occasion for many years, featuring bilingual music and involving the entire St. Luke community.

Led by Asunción Aguilar and Cynthia Leugers, the Spanish music ministry is open to parishioners of all ages and backgrounds. Youth who have taken some Spanish in school can learn to sing the songs. Instrumentalists don't need to understand Spanish at all. They also have great parties with incredible food!





Get to know YOUR Parish Council!

The St. Luke Parish Council is comprised of elected parishioner volunteers who serve three-year terms. Our purpose is to promote the Pastor's Mission & Vision (Fiscal Year 2025-26) and includes:

- Complete and submit the diocese-required Pastoral Plan - a 360 degree view/5-year plan of the status and needs of the St. Luke Parish
- Forward with Christ Debt Relief Campaign
- Pay off Fairview church loan (balance approximately \$2,368,881)
- Sustain funding and to build a new Family Life & Administration Building (projected cost \$9 Million)
- Adhere to diocesan guidelines
- Work with the Pastor, Finance Council, Building & Planning Committee, and all commissions and ministries to promote fiscal accountability
- Ensure commission, ministry and parishioner interests are addressed and represented
- Work to integrate initiatives and communication across pastoral, administrative staff, and ministry teams.

Parish Council Members and Their Liaison Commission Assignments:

Vince Avalos – Current Chair

Vince Avalos – Hispanic Ministry/Salt & Light

Pat Backe – Fall Festival/Leadership Workshops/Pastoral Plan

Susan Bryan – Liturgy

Tony Martinez – Outreach

Dr. Lawrence McCrank – Education, Faith Formation

Felix Miclat – Forward with Christ

Scott Roosa – Building & Planning

Roni Sackevich – Stewardship and Faith Engagement/Safety & Security

Jose Santos – Hispanic Ministry/Knights of Columbus/Fall Festival

Thomas Foster – Finance Council liaison to Parish Council

Lola Podolski – Hispanic Ministry liaison to Parish Council

Pat Backe – Past Chair

Fr. Paul Gary - Pastor

St. Luke Commission Structure:

- Fr. Paul Gary, as Pastor of St. Luke oversees all aspects of the administrative, financial, pastoral, and secular operations of our parish.
- Representatives from the Finance Council, Parish Council, Building and Planning Council, and Knights of Columbus report directly to him. All aspects of St. Luke parishioner involvement are consolidated under commissions and ministries that report back through commission chairs to the Parish Council and vice-versa.
- There are six commissions: Liturgy & Worship, Outreach, Education and Formation, Stewardship and Faith Engagement, Facilities, and Hispanic Ministries.
- There are three additional entities – Capital Campaigns & Fundraising, Fall Festival, and Special Events.
- Each Commission is comprised of individual ministries relevant to that commission. Please click [Commissions & Their Ministries](#) for the organizational chart, scan the QR code, or go to our website under "Our Ministries."



and the Survey says...

Results of the Disciple Maker Index Survey completed by parishioners in May 2025

Parish Strengths

93%

93% of respondents strongly agree/ agree that the Eucharist is the body and blood of Christ

94%

94% of respondents strongly agree/ agree that Scripture is the word of God

83%

83% of respondents strongly agree/ agree that church is critical to their relationship with God

Opportunities for Growth

34%

34% of respondents have attended a retreat

10%

10% of respondents have invited a man to consider a vocation to the priesthood

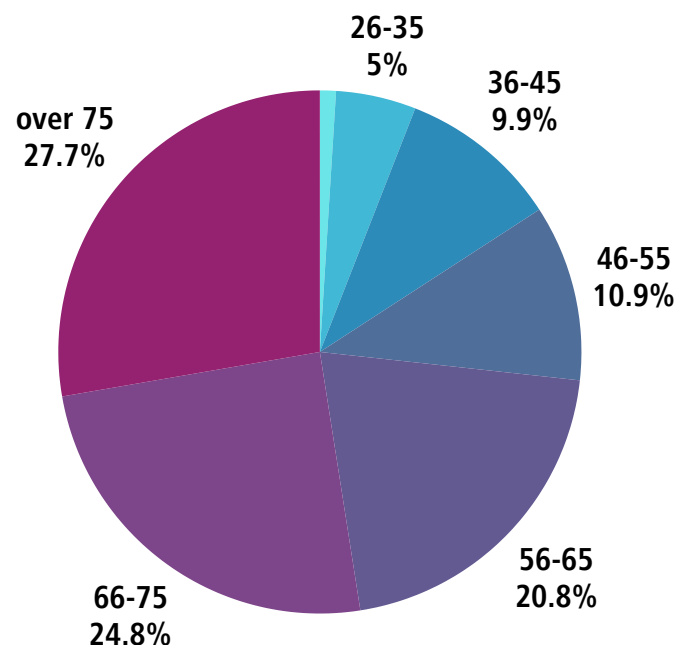
Survey Demographics

27% of parishioners completed the Disciple Maker Index from the Catholic Leadership Institute.

Did you know...

Did you know that in 2025, St. Luke will have offered a total of six retreats to parishioners? This is in addition to our many faith-based education programs such as Foundations of Faith which begins on September 8, the Discover Series throughout the year which has morning and evening sessions, our Children's Faith Formation Program, Small Faith Groups, Teens for Christ, and many more. We invite you to join us and grow deeper in your faith!

Age of Respondents



SEPTEMBER

To see a full list of Mass times, ministry meetings, Faith Formation classes, please go to our website calendar at <https://www.stlukechurch.net/full-calendar>. For current volunteer opportunities, please go to <https://www.stlukechurch.net/volunteer>.

- Fri., Sept. 5** First Friday Adoration, 9:00 - 10:00 am, in the church
- Sat., Sept. 6** No Mass at St. Luke today; Bishop Martin invites you to attend Mass during the Eucharistic Congress at 5:30 pm at the Charlotte Convention Center
- Sun., Sept. 7** Kairos Prison Ministry Meal Ticket Sale after all Masses in the narthex
Family Game & Movie Night, 6:00 - 8:00 pm at the pavilion on Fairview Rd.
- Mon., Sept. 8** Catholic Foundations, 7:30 - 9:00 pm, Family Life Center on Lawyers Rd., open to all
- Fri., Sept. 12** Altar Server Training & pizza party, 4:00 - 7:00 pm, in the church for new & current servers
- Sat., Sept. 13** Hispanic Ministry Family Retreat, 8:00 am - 3:00 pm in the church
Kairos Meal Ticket sales after the Saturday Mass
- Sun., Sept. 14** Kairos Meal Ticket Sale after all Masses in the Narthex
Teens for Christ, 6:00 - 8:00 pm, in the Narthex
- Mon., Sept. 15** Catholic Foundations, 7:30 - 9:00 pm, Family Life Center on Lawyers Rd., open to all
- Sat., Sept. 20** Ministry Fair after Mass in the Narthex; refreshments served
- Sun., Sept. 21** Ministry Fair after all Masses in the Narthex; refreshments served
Teens for Christ, 6:00 - 8:00 pm, in the Narthex
- Mon., Sept. 22** Catholic Foundations, 7:30 - 9:00 pm, Family Life Center on Lawyers Rd., open to all
- Sun., Sept. 28** Hispanic Holy Hour, 2:00 - 3:00 pm, in the church
Teens for Christ, 6:00 - 8:00 pm, in the Narthex
- Mon., Sept. 29** Catholic Foundations, 7:30 - 9:00 pm, Family Life Center on Lawyers Rd., open to all

“Children won’t do what you say, they’ll do what you do.
In prayer, they’ll look to you - not whether you tell them to go to Mass,
but whether you go to Mass.
Not whether you tell them to pray the Rosary,
but whether they see you praying it.
Faith isn’t taught; it’s caught by example.”

-Ambassador Eduard Habsburg