



SAINT TIMOTHY
CATHOLIC CHURCH



PARISHIONER PROFILE:

CHUCK LEONARD

Using His Talents and Expertise to Serve Our Parish

You don't have to be around our parish for long before you become familiar with the idea that we all have gifts and talents we can use to serve our Catholic community. For some people, it's a matter of taking a leap of faith and learning how to give back in a way that's new to them, such as being an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion or an usher. But for others, stewardship is an opportunity to use a particular skill set or area of expertise for the glory of God and the good of our parish family.

Parishioner Chuck Leonard is the CFO of his alma mater, Jesuit High School of Tampa, and, with the exception of college, he has spent his whole life in the bay area. Although he and his family officially came back to St. Timothy five years ago, both Chuck and his wife, Marci, grew up in the parish, and were married here.

Today, Chuck uses his gifts to serve as part of our Finance Council. Because of his professional experience — working for a non-profit, mission-driven organization — Chuck has a unique appreciation for the value of bringing together a variety of perspectives as part of a committee or council. He became Chairman of the Finance Council on July 1.

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Chuck Leonard serves our parish as Chairman of the Finance Council. He and his family appreciate the sense of community they've found at St. Timothy.

July 2020

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Some Traits of the **CHRISTIAN STEWARD**

Each day, we strive to live stewardship in our lives, recognizing our roles as “God’s co-workers” in His creative, redemptive and sanctifying work. But in our quest to live as disciples of Christ, many obstacles often arise.

One of the most prevalent roadblocks in living stewardship is understanding the traits that make up a good Christian steward. Surely, it would be much more convenient if we had some sort of “stewardship list” that could lay out the necessary steps to becoming a good steward. Unfortunately, it more often feels like living stewardship is a lifelong journey that we will never fully comprehend.

Fortunately, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, gives some insight into some of the characteristics that make up a good Christian steward.

The Christian steward should display some of the following traits:

Insight — Before the disciples could live what we know as the stewardship way of life, they needed a flash of insight, or a certain way of viewing the world and their relationship to it in a fresh light. This “divine grandeur,” more than anything else, is often what sets people on the path to Christian stewardship (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, 39).

Conscientiousness — Stewards are fully conscious of their accountability in sharing of their time, talent and treasure. As caretakers of the gifts that God has given them, they recognize they have the opportunity and responsibility to use them to their fullest potential to spread God’s Kingdom on Earth (40).

Generosity — Christian stewards are generous out of love, gratitude and duty. They display a desire to share with and care for others based on the sacramental graces they have received. And they are also cognizant of the many warnings

that the New Testament presents to those who fail in charity and authentic love (40).

Joy — Christian stewards are often presented with difficult obstacles, but they remain joyful in the face of challenges to their lives of stewardship. Like Paul, the good steward is able to say, “I am filled with encouragement, I am overflowing with joy all the more because of all our afflictions” (2 Cor. 7:4). Only by serving with a joyful spirit will stewards fully reap the rewards of their service, both in this life and the next.

Indeed, living as a Christian steward is a lifelong journey with many ups and downs along the way. But if we strive to consciously incorporate each of these traits into our giving of time, talent and treasure, we will find that the responsibilities of a good Christian steward will become much clearer with each experience of service.



Welcome Back... Welcome Home!

To those of you who have been actively participating in the life of our parish but have been forced to stay away due to the COVID-19 pandemic, welcome home!

To those of you who haven't been to church in years and decided to renew your faith, welcome back, and welcome home!

During these past few months, we have experienced some of the most challenging and unnerving times in the history of our nation and Church. As we start to emerge from the darkness of this crisis and return to Mass and parish activities and ministries, we feel blessed and excited.

- Excited to see familiar faces.
- Excited to see new faces.
- Excited to see faces of those we haven't seen in a while!

In times like these, when nothing seems to make sense, we are so very glad you are here. The timing of your return is perfect, because the truth is we need Christ now more than ever.

Whether you have simply been forced to stay away while public Masses were canceled, or if you have been away from the Church for many years, this crisis has changed all of us.

We have had some extra time lately for introspection. For personal reflection. And for prayer. And perhaps during this era of isolation and social distancing, you have found yourself yearning for Christ more than ever before in the hopes of finding some meaning to all of this.

You have come to the right place.

As you walk through our doors for the first time in months — or perhaps even years — we hope you see the face of Christ in all those around you. We hope you find a welcoming parish family there to greet you, overjoyed by your return.

As Christ tells us, from Matthew's Gospel, "For I was a stranger, you welcomed me" (Mt. 25:35).

The truth is, there really are no strangers at our parish. So as you come back home to our parish, we hope

and pray you experience that same spirit of kindness and hospitality from all your fellow parishioners.

Whether you're a longtime parishioner, or someone who fell away from the Catholic Church and are now ready to become renewed in the faith, let us all remember to welcome all who enter our parish doors with open arms, smiling faces and a servant's heart.

By living out our calling as Christian stewards, we will all emerge from this dark time as a community of faith that is stronger than ever — together.

Welcome back. And welcome home.





MEET PARISHIONERS

“All That We Are and Everything We Do”



Parishioner Burnita Wilder with Bishop Gregory Parkes and our former Pastor, Fr. Kenneth Malley.

Before her move to Tampa in 1994, parishioner Burnita Wilder says her faith was much more internal than external. She attended Mass on Sundays and had faith in God, but that was the extent of her involvement. This all changed, however, when she and her husband Don began attending St. Timothy where she was soon hooked by the welcoming and familial atmosphere.

“Prior to our move, my husband and I would attend Sunday Mass but never participated in any other parish events,” Burnita says, “One evening, I attended a Women’s Club meeting at St. Timothy’s previous Ragg Road location. During the meeting, I was invited to help out and attended a meeting at the then-president Margie Massa’s house. The next day I was called, welcomed, and thanked for joining the Women’s Club Board as Vice President! I was totally surprised, but hooked from that day on.”

Since then, Burnita has gone on to become involved in numerous other parish ministries. She’s served on the Pastoral Council, assisted with the Multicultural Celebration, continues to usher and serve as a hospitality minister, is part of S.O.S. against human trafficking, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Card Ministry, and much more. And through each of these ministries and opportunities — bit by bit — she’s come to view stewardship as an essential way of living out her faith.

“Just as Jesus calls us to be His disciples, stewardship, for me, is a way of living that combines both my faith and love for God,” Burnita says. “All that we are and everything we’ve learned in life are gifts from God. It is an honor and our responsibility to share our talents and blessings with others. There have been times when I’ve been a bit slow hearing God, but He’s always been patient and forgiving.”

Burnita says that the adjective that best describes her experience with stewardship is joy. Stewardship has allowed her to see and appreciate the blessings in her life more fully, and it has blessed her with an entirely new family through her fellow St. Timothy parishioners. And it fills her days with purpose and has helped her become more comfortable with ministry and living out the Gospel.

“Stewardship is truly an enjoyable activity,” Burnita says. “I think a lot of people do not realize that it’s fun.

R BURNITA WILDER

“We’ve Learned Are Gifts from God”

You receive so much more joy than you’re giving. It can be any little thing, too, even as simple as saying ‘hello’ to someone or welcoming them.”

Burnita says that to receive this great joy, all that one must do is openly seek the Lord’s guidance. He always shows us the way — if we are paying attention.

“As an example, I recall a day when I was praying to God in the main sanctuary, asking for guidance and direction,” Burnita says. “Upon leaving the sanctuary, our Pastor approached me and asked me to join the Pastoral Council. Knowing it would be a three-year commitment, my initial response was, ‘Let me pray on it.’ It wasn’t until I got home that it occurred to me that God had immediately answered my prayers, but I wasn’t listening.

My husband just shook his head in amazement when I shared my error. This was another opportunity being offered to me to become a good steward.”

Thanks largely to her 26 years of involvement here at St. Timothy, Burnita says she is now truly comfortable in her own skin. Her faith has become an integral part of her life, and she’s learning daily to see God’s hand in everything and everyone.

“Through stewardship I’ve realized that every action, every person that I meet is a part of God,” Burnita says. “It also gives me a great sense of peace. I’m comfortable within my own skin now — I’m more outgoing. It’s just enhanced my entire life and I’m so grateful for my St. Timothy parish family.”

Chuck Leonard *continued from front cover*

“I know from my role how much I rely on my committees, the volunteers, that help us out,” Chuck says. “They’re just integral to everything we do. You can never have all the knowledge, so you really need to bend your ear to those people who have that expertise.

“So, knowing how needed those volunteer roles are to Jesuit, it was natural to see if I could lend myself to an organization that’s very important to me, my parish. You obviously need your donors — they’re extremely important — but you also need people who can give their time. That’s a different type of donation and it is also extremely valuable.”

As someone who is used to working “behind the scenes” in an organization, Chuck realizes the significance of roles that work to enable an organization — whether a school or parish — to fulfill their mission.

“The Jesuits have a saying — ‘Find God in all things,’” Chuck says. “In my role, being the CFO at Jesuit, I’m like, ‘How do I find God in all things, being the money guy?’ I’m not a teacher, who gets to actually work with the kids. But then you realize the frontline stuff can’t happen without the support side.”

Chuck and Marci hope to pass their faith on to their three children in a variety of ways, from religious education classes and having discussions about faith at home, to, perhaps most importantly, leading by example.

“I can talk to my kids all the time about what they should be doing, but if I’m not doing it, I’m not being a really good example,” Chuck says. “When my youngest son was baptized, the priest told us, ‘Your responsibility is to be the ultimate role model of the faith for your child.’ And that really resonated with my wife and me, like, ‘We really need to step up to the plate and do this!’”

Chuck encourages his fellow parishioners to find ways to use their strengths to serve the parish, or to try something new as a way of becoming involved in stewardship.

“There are a lot of different ministries at St. Tim’s,” Chuck says. “I would just encourage people to take a step forward — just try something. Take that step and you’re going to find a host of welcoming people on the other side, people who want you to be there.”

Thank you, Chuck, for your service to our parish community on the Finance Council!



FEAST OF ST. JAMES: JULY 25

Calling Us to Holiness

The beauty of St. James the Great's character lies in his undivided heart — a heart that treasured its Lord from its very depths.

The Gospel story (Luke 5:1-11) recounts that, after laborious fishing efforts, James and his brother, John, had caught nothing. Jesus joined them and they then caught an astonishing bundle of fish. At the sight of this miraculous catch of fish, they began to understand that Jesus was not someone to merely pass by — that He must be divine. He called them to “leave all and follow me.”

From this moment forward, St. James had a relentless resolve to follow his newfound Messiah and Christ made James one of the Twelve Apostles.

Jesus also allowed him some special privileges. For instance, when Jairus' daughter was raised, James, along with John and Peter, were the only ones Jesus allowed to accompany Him. Likewise, when Christ sought God's presence in an intimate way through prayer from a mountaintop, He brought along with Him only James, John and Peter. There, they witnessed the glorious transfiguration of Jesus. He also chose these three to be at His side during His excruciating Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Clearly, James was one of Christ's most beloved followers.

This brave saint was also one of the first martyrs of the Church. King Herod Agrippa killed him with a sword in an early Church persecution. “Confidence in God arms us... with that supernatural courage which causes us to dread nothing in our struggle for the kingdom of God: that conquering intrepidity which has animated the martyrs,” wrote Dietrich von Hildebrand in *Transformation in Christ*. St. James certainly had this “conquering intrepidity.”

St. James is the patron saint of laborers and rheumatoid sufferers.

Let us not allow St. James' feast day to pass by unnoticed. Let us emulate his dedication to God in our daily lives. We are called to be as holy as we can be — just as holy as St. James — today, not tomorrow.

Alleluia, truly, He is coming soon!



Sharing the Joy of the Arts with All Parishioner Lisa Ferlita Brings Talents to Those with Special Needs

Living in New York, dancing, singing and acting — these are all dreams that parishioner Lisa Ferlita had the opportunity to live out. Growing up in New Jersey, Lisa always knew the arts were her passion. She graduated with a degree in drama and dance from Hofstra University on Long Island. Lisa spent eight years in New York, and even toured nationally with Reading Rainbow. Through all of this, Lisa's Catholic faith was an important part of her life.

Lisa met her husband, Russell, in New York and he wanted to move back to Tampa, his hometown, for engineering school.

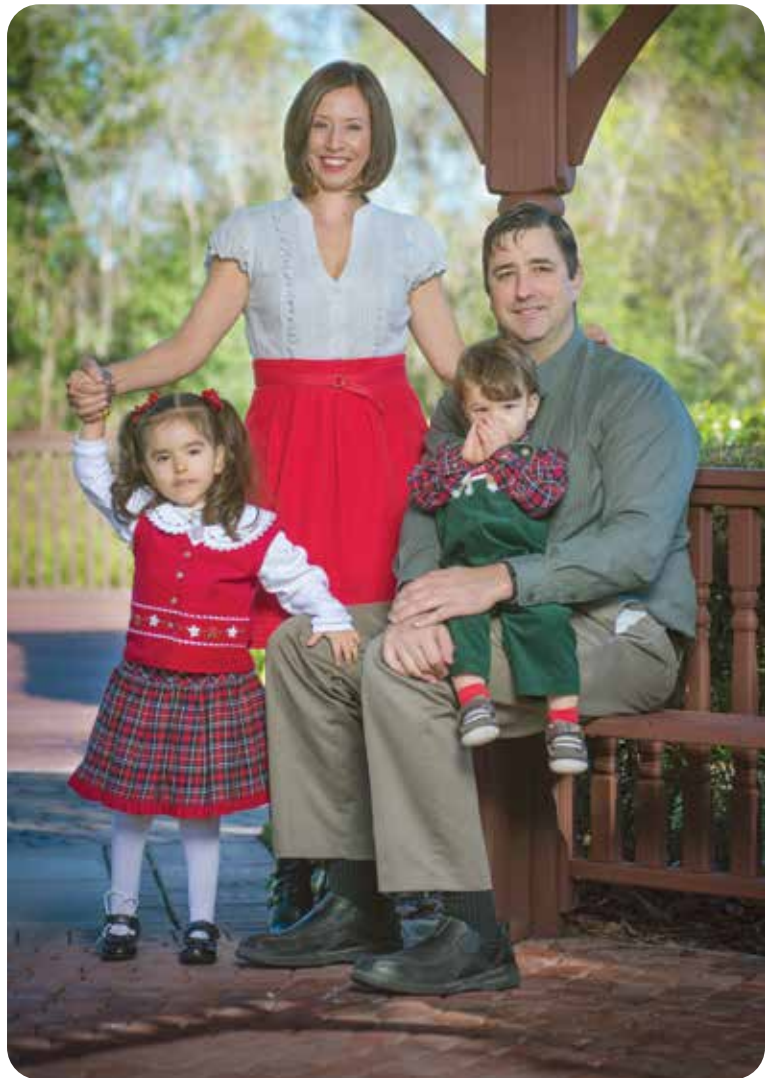
"My dream was to open my own school for the arts and with the high rent in New York, I thought maybe I'd have better luck here in Florida," Lisa says.

Lisa has worked at the Patel Conservatory, and she also started a dance program for third to eighth-grade students at the Corbett Preparatory School. She has also taught dance at several studios.

But, when Lisa and Russell started having children, Lisa shifted her focus. The couple's first child, Vincent, passed away from a rare genetic disorder when he was just six months old. Their 7-year-old daughter, Lucy, has the same disorder. Cognitively she is very smart, but she has severe physical disabilities. The couple also has a 4-year-old son named Anthony.

"I'm a planner and it seems that every time I have a plan, something happens," Lisa says. "It just goes to show we are not in control."

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Lisa Ferlita with her husband, Russell, and their children, Lucy and Anthony. Lisa hopes to start a ministry that will bring the love of the arts to children at St. Timothy.

"The special needs community is a club you don't join purposely, but when you are in it you realize the value. These kids are amazing. They have so much resilience and love for life." — LISA FERLITA



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Sharing the Joy of the Arts *continued from page 7*

Last August, Lisa's dream came true when she opened Stagelights Performing Arts Center in Northdale. The center offers classes in dance, voice and acting from ages 3 to adult. Lisa would love to also start offering classes to those with special needs. Since having her children, bringing the arts to those with special needs has become her passion.

"When you give kids with special needs the opportunity to be impacted by the arts, it's a whole new appreciation," Lisa says. "Just to see them be interested in something and the joy — it's magnified through them."

Lisa and Russell have found a great community in the Special Needs Ministry at St. Timothy.

"This is a phenomenal group and we all look forward to going," Lisa says. "It really has been a godsend."

At the monthly meeting, there is Mass, and volunteers provide dinner and care for the children. This gives parents the opportunity to discuss topics that are unique to children with special needs. They can share ideas and experiences.

Lisa says that she and Russell have been introduced to the special needs community through Lucy. Lisa wants to bring her love for the arts and talents to more children through a future ministry at St. Timothy. One day, she would love to have children of all abilities perform a musical at St. Timothy.

"The special needs community is a club you don't join purposely, but when you are in it you realize the value," Lisa says. "These kids are amazing. They have so much resilience and love for life."

Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 5:30 p.m. • Sunday: 7:30, 9, 11 a.m. & 5:30 p.m. • Daily: Mon-Sat 9 a.m., Wed 6:15 p.m. • Holy Days: 9 a.m. & 7 p.m. Vigil: 7 p.m.