

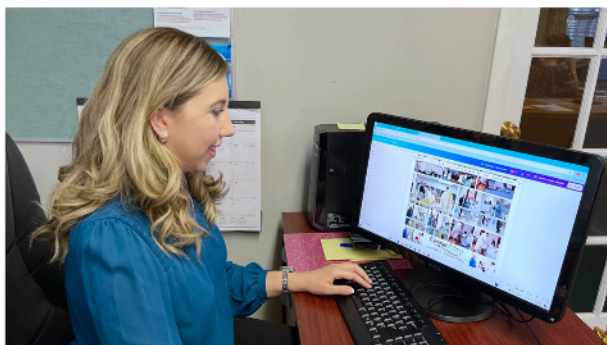


Branches on the Vine

JUNE 7- 13, 2025

PARISH BULLETINS REMAIN RELEVANT IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Story by Shelley Wolf



Kristyn Figbie, communications coordinator for St. Francis of Assisi Parish in New Britain, designs a Sunday bulletin that takes a more graphic approach to information with browsable tables and photos that capture the vitality of the parish community.

PHOTO BY SHELLEY WOLF

Parishes within the archdiocese are always looking for better ways to engage parishioners. To meet parishioners' information needs and grab their attention, two parishes recently overhauled their Sunday bulletins with fresh new designs, more graphics and photos, and enhanced content.

Blessed Michael McGivney Parish, which serves all Catholics in New Haven, unveiled its newly redesigned 20-page, four-color bulletin, printed by LPI, during Lent.

The front page includes a large parish logo with the letters "NH" and a golden cross. The interior, which sports colorful graphics and new fonts throughout, also provides information in three languages – English, Polish and Spanish – to reflect the languages spoken in its communities.

"New Haven is also unique in that we have many visitors from week to week, and many new parishioners who are moving to the city. And providing them with information in the bulletin is the fastest and easiest way to reach them," the parish wrote in its bulletin survey results, published earlier this year.

Before rethinking the bulletin, the New Haven parish conducted a print and online survey to gauge its readers' wants and needs. Survey respondents said the bulletin was

"even more important" as a resource for parish information than the parish website, emails and social media.

Survey results also showed that 58% of respondents read only the printed version, 33% read both the printed and digital versions, and 10% read only the online version.

The top five types of information parishioners wanted included a weekly calendar of events, a list of ministries and descriptions, adult faith formation content, a list of staff and contact info, and a "get to know each other" section.

Now the newly redesigned bulletin opens with a list of clergy members and the names and addresses of its eight churches, followed by pages with contact information and Mass times.

To more broadly publicize activities, subsequent pages combine information from all of its worship sites, neatly organizing items under the subheadings of "Parish News & Upcoming Events," "Parish Ministries," "Parish Outreach," "Parish Prayer, Study & Devotion," "Faith Formation" and "Other Events."

Likewise, St. Francis Parish in New Britain revamped its Sunday bulletin starting in January, taking an even more visual approach. The parish switched to publishing a longer 16-page, four-color bulletin every two weeks.

The publication is now more photo-driven and is printed on glossy paper by LPI.

Each issue opens with a full-page of religious art or a local photo on the cover and the St. Francis Catholic logo, a white crucifix in a blue circle. The second page includes a table of contents for easy use, Mass schedule, church locations and mission statement.

In the later pages, parish leaders are identified with photos and contact information. The parish office location is demystified under a large heading, "Where to find our parish office."

Also included are a reflection, upcoming parish events designed like ads, fun photos of past parish activities, QR codes that take readers to videos on the website, a table of ongoing ministry meetings, a checklist of items needed for the parish pantry, and puzzles for children.

The parish produced its first "A Year in Pictures" in January too, illustrating the major activities of the past year in a colorful, month-by-month photo layout.

To view the latest bulletin at Blessed Michael McGivney Parish, visit newhavencatholic.org/weekly-bulletin. To see the latest bulletin at St. Francis Parish, visit stfranciscatholic.org/bulletin.



Upcoming Events



06/09 MONDAY 7PM
**DISCOVER YOUR CALLING:
EXPLORING CATHOLIC VOCATIONS**
St. Dunstan Parish, Fr. Bannon Hall
1345 Manchester Rd, Glastonbury

This evening offers presentations and discussions about discerning God's call to priesthood, religious life, marriage, diaconate, and lay ministry. Refreshments will be served. Registration is required. To register, please visit www.isidoreandmaria.org/vocationsjun2025.



06/12 THURSDAY 5:30PM
FRIED DOUGH FEST & GAME PARTY
Holy Rosary Church Hall, 10 Father Salemi Dr,
Ansonia

Let's celebrate the Feast of St. Anthony! Beginning in the Church Hall after the 5:30PM Mass, your ticket entitles you to fried dough (with a toppings bar) coffee, and dessert. Fried dough will be cooked fresh. After dinner, everyone is invited to join for a fun series of games, hosted by our Festa 2025 committee, that will send winners home with various exciting prizes!



06/14 SATURDAY 5PM - 7:30PM
PASTA DINNER FUNDRAISER
St. George Church Hall, 33 Whitfield St,
Guilford

Join us for a delicious evening and help support a great cause at the St. George Men's Group Pasta Dinner Fundraiser! For just \$15 per person, you'll enjoy a full meal that includes spaghetti with sauce, salad, bread, drinks, and dessert. All proceeds from the dinner will go directly toward building a new storage facility. It's a simple and enjoyable way to make a meaningful impact. For more information, please visit www.stgeorgemensgroup.org or contact Jim Mancini at (203) 410-4682. We hope to see you there!



06/14 SATURDAY 10AM - 6PM
**IN MY LOVE ABIDE:
RETREAT FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF**
Holy Family Retreat Center, 303 Tunxis Rd,
West Hartford

We know that Jesus prayed often and taught his disciples to do the same. Since prayer is a means of holding that connection between humanity and God, we invite you to come and explore the depths of a life of prayer and learn ways to maintain the sacred connection to God through Christ, the true vine. Conferences and workshops will be offered along with the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Celebration of the Eucharist.

Offering: Through generous sponsorship's from our constituents, we are able to offer this retreat at no cost to you. Lunch is included as part of the day. To register, head to www.holyfamilyretreat.org/calendar/deaf-community#Register



06/18 WEDNESDAY 10AM - 12:30PM
FILM STUDY "MAN FOR ALL SEASONS"
Sacred Heart on the Lake Retreat Center,
194 Candlewood Hill Rd, Higganum

Academy Award winning film "Man For All Seasons" depicts the conflict between St. Thomas More and King Henry VIII. When the King could not get a Papal annulment for his legitimate marriage, his next move was to separate from the Catholic Church and declare himself the head of the Church of England. This brought him into conflict with his Chancellor, Thomas More, a staunch Catholic. The film dramatizes the conflict and the high stakes that Thomas faces to remain true to his conscience. Jim Pepitone is the discussion leader. A free will donation will be welcomed. To register email or call Sr. Patricia Cigrand. Email: cigrandpatricia@gmail.com or 203-606-4830.

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Total Goal: \$10M

77.82% as of 5/27/25
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www.archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal

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