



# Branches on the Vine

JUNE 28 - JULY 4, 2025

## WOODBIDGE PARISHIONERS RESPOND TO GOD'S CALL TO HELP OTHERS

- Story by Joe Pisani



Members of Our Lady of the Assumption's Faith, Hope & Charity Committee gather to discuss their initiatives. SUBMITTED PHOTO

When Margaret Hamilton and parishioners from Our Lady of the Assumption Roman Catholic Parish in Woodbridge and Bethany went into New Haven with fresh produce from their community garden, they were met by a group of excited people at Amistad Catholic Worker.

Hamilton, who is the chair of the Faith, Hope & Charity Committee, says, "I'm not a gardener. I'm just impressed that things grow in the ground so when we bring them produce, I'm happy that they get so excited about what they plan to do with it."

The committee, which has been active for more than 25 years, oversees programs that "help all those who need help," she adds. "The purpose of the committee is to be the charitable arm of the parish," says Father Glen Dmytryszyn, pastor. "We take to heart Our Lord's teaching in the Gospel, where he says that we should extend his heart and hands to those who are in need. We do that through charitable works and through our witness and prayer."

Hamilton said that the initiatives the committee supports are:

\*Midnight Run, where parishioners prepare 200 lunches a month that are distributed to the homeless. Since the fall of 2022, some 5,000 lunches have been made.

\*Good Samaritan Bags, which contain basic necessities, such as socks, water and toothbrushes, are given to homeless people.

\*The parish Community Garden, where the members grow vegetables in 13 raised beds, which last year harvested more than 700 pounds of produce distributed to different organizations twice a week during the summer.

\*Food drives, which benefit five groups, are held on a regular basis.

\*The annual Christmas Angel Tree program which collects toys and gifts for children and families, who might not otherwise receive any.

\*Support for St. Gianna Pregnancy Resource Center in New Haven which benefits newborns, babies, single mothers and families.

\*Semiannual fundraising breakfasts to raise money to support the various ministries.

"This is the impulse of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, to do good in his name, not in our name," Father Dmytryszyn says. "Ultimately, that's what the Faith, Hope and Charity Committee seeks to do: to inspire faith, give hope and increase charity."

Hamilton, who has been involved with the committee for 15 years, says there are

some 25 people who participate, in addition to others who oversee the different ministries.

The entire parish provides support and resources, particularly in initiatives like the Midnight Run, where parishioners stock up on food items for distribution, and the Angel Tree, which collects Christmas gifts each year.

"I like to serve," Hamilton says. "Since I've been involved, I've gotten very close to some of the people we work with, and no matter what we do, they're always grateful." Father Dmytryszyn praised the parish for its generosity and said the work of the committee is fundamental to the Church's mission.

"It allows us to witness to the words and actions of Christ," he says. "As a Catholic faith community, responding to what the Lord asks us to do is pivotal. It's never an option to extend the love of Christ. The parish is more than just a fellowship of our common faith; it's an active participant in the faith, proclaiming Jesus Christ instilling that faith in everyone and giving hope to everyone, and sharing the charity of Christ with everyone."

For more information about the activities of the Faith, Hope & Charity Committee of Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Woodbridge and Bethany, contact the rectory at 203.387.7119.



# Upcoming Events



07/12 SATURDAY 9:30AM - 3PM  
**HOLY SPIRIT RETREAT DAY**  
Sacred Heart on the Lake Retreat Center,  
94 Candlewood Hill Rd, Higganum

We will spend time in prayer like the 12 Apostles, Mary and the other Disciples awaiting the Coming of the Holy Spirit before Pentecost. We will pray with the 7 Gifts and the 12 Fruits of the Holy Spirit that they might penetrate us so deeply, that the Holy Spirit, once again, might set us & the world on Fire with Jesus' Spirit of Love, Power and Might.

Presenter- Sr. Lany Jo Smith, ASCJ- Donation asked \$35.  
Includes a Continental Breakfast and a Full Lunch.

To register online go to [sacredheartonthelake.org](http://sacredheartonthelake.org) or call Sr. Lany Jo at 203-606-9102.



07/7-11 WEEKDAYS  
**MUSIC & ART CAMP FOR CHILDREN**  
Holy Family Retreat Center, 303 Tunxis Rd,  
West Hartford

Students entering grades 3 through 8 are invited to participate in an exciting week of various activities related to music & art.

The music camp will be led by Fr. David Cinquegrani and Kevin Hadyka and take place in the mornings on Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Singing in small groups and all together, playing instruments and listening are all part of this enjoyable and educational week. A selection will be performed at the end of each session and a short concert on the final day will bring the week to an inspiring end. Snacks will be provided.

The art camp will be led by Cheryl Gosselin and Lori Little and will take place in the afternoons on Monday through Thursday from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. We will study different artists, forms of art and create masterpieces of our own during our time together. Snacks will be provided. Cost includes supplies.

Offering: \$200 for both Music and Art Camp (includes morning and afternoon snacks)

\$125 for Music Camp only (includes snacks)

\$100 for Art Camp only (includes snacks)

If you register for the full day option, please bring a bagged lunch with you to eat during the break. Depending on the weather, we will also spend some time outdoors during this hour-long break.

Register at [www.holyfamilyretreat.org/calendar/music-art-camp](http://www.holyfamilyretreat.org/calendar/music-art-camp)



07/10-12 THURSDAY - SATURDAY 5-10PM  
**SUMMER FOOD FESTIVAL**  
St. Mary's Church Grounds, 212 Elizabeth  
St, Derby

Join us in Derby for OLQA/St. Mary's Summer Food Festival—a weekend packed with incredible food and family fun! Savor favorites like, fried calamari, pierogis, rice with chicken stew, corned beef sandwiches, Philly steak sandwiches, sausage & peppers, porchetta, beef or cheese empanadas, pasta with meat sauce, cavatelli & broccoli, and even liver with bacon and onions. We've got American cookout classics too—as well as kielbasa dogs, fried dough, Italian ice, cake, and a wide selection of beer, wine, vodka seltzers, and sodas.

Fiesta Friday features a live mariachi band and authentic tacos, and Saturday is all about the kids with arts, crafts, games, and contests.

Try your luck in our raffle—\$5 a ticket for a chance at up to \$1,000!  
\*\*Cash only event\*\*.

Find us on facebook: @StMarysChurchDerbyCt or on our website:  
[www.OLQADERBY.ORG](http://www.OLQADERBY.ORG)

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