

IT'S FALL ALL YEAR 'ROUND AT ST. LEO'S

Each autumn we are awed anew when trees turn from green to a glorious gold or orange- streaked-red. It's as if God's delight in creation knows no bounds and is reflected in all the shades of a heavenly palate. The whole landscape is ablaze with color and people are so amazed by it that there are special tours to find leaves at their peak color. For a brief period of time our surroundings are magical.

The brilliant colors of fall let us know that God is playful and looks at things differently from the way we often do. God seems to revel in spontaneity, creativity, and diversity.

At St. Leo's we daily see God delighting in the diversity reflected in the faces and cultures of our parishioners, each one more beautiful than the other.

There're the time-etched faces of our elders— the Italian war bride, who left her country for a new land more than 60 years ago and carried her deep faith with her; the Burundian woman who fled the horrors of genocide yet is able to forgive because that is what Christ asks. There are those who grew up in the neighborhood and quietly continue to participate in and support our ministries of presence and service. There are the colorful memories of elders who have left us, but whose spirits still are alive in our ministries today. There's our "St. Joseph," the parish handyman who also started our food pantry which now serves close to 1000 people each month. There's the man who was a youth leader in Millvale and South Cumminsville who quietly ran a food pantry out of his garage. There's the man who not only loved St. Leo's but had a contagious love for the children and made sure his wife got Easter candy for them after he died. And of course, there is our eldest parishioner who died earlier this year, whose spirit continues to be with us encouraging and urging us forward.



In recent years, we've been blessed by immigrants from Guatemala whose deep faith, prayer and devotion to the Eucharist inspire all of us. And their joyful music not only praises God, but has all of us tapping our toes. The neighborhood community joined in celebration when they had a recent outdoor concert. Even the seniors were dancing.

Newer to our faith community are the Burundians who spent years in refugee camps after fleeing genocide in their homeland. Their courage, deep faith in God, and welcoming spirits add depth to our prayer as a community.

We also have a new group of young adults, many of whom came here initially to do internships and have stayed long after their school requirements were completed. They fell in love with the diversity they found here and have become involved in the ESL, religious education, and gardening projects.

Then there're our children whose innocence, trust, and sense of belonging to the whole community show us what it means to be a family of faith. They truly feel at home here.

God must be grinning with delight when all of us come together around the Eucharistic table, each of us bringing our unique gifts of language, song, and prayer. It's like the most spectacular fall day ever with our diversity setting the leaves of our faith community ablaze with color.

It's fall all year long at St. Leo's.

-Angela Anno, Pastoral Associate