

# PRIORY



Priory Volunteers  
Transforming Lives

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2025

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We ask you to prayerfully consider being part of this 24-hour online giving campaign.



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On the cover: Jack Masters '30 with Volunteer and Mothers' Club President-Elect Laura Swallow

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## FROM THE HEADMASTER

Dear Friends,

This is an unusual letter for me to write. I am sitting alone in Buenos Aires, Argentina, two days into a five-week sabbatical from my duties as Headmaster. I have left everything behind – my brothers, my family, my friends, my colleagues, and my students. Apart from my itinerary, I have no idea what I will do or what the Lord intends for me. I feel once more like a novice – eager to act but really in need of letting go.

These circumstances make it difficult for me to know what to write in this letter. By the time you receive it, Lent will be over, and I will have returned home. I have no idea who I will be or what I will have done; it is impossible to predict the future.

In this edition of *Priory Magazine*, you will encounter men and women who have dedicated themselves to service at Priory and beyond. From alumni in the military to a new vocation in the monastery, it is clear that God continues to bless our community with leaders in “cheerful giving,” who selflessly and tirelessly serve their neighbors. They are ambassadors of Christ and reminders that God loves us and seeks us always. This edition of *Priory Magazine* is our community’s expression of gratitude for all that these “cheerful givers” do and for the faith that motivates them.

No matter where you live or in what circumstances you may be, I pray that the Lord will reveal himself to you. May he share his love if you are lonely, his wisdom if you are lost, his grace if you are struggling, and his comfort if you are grieving. Most importantly, may he move you to share the love, wisdom, grace, and consolation that you receive. As the Scriptures teach us: the more you give, the more you will receive, for the Lord is the source of plenty.

In Christ,



Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02  
Headmaster



# Priory Volunteers Transform Lives

DEDICATION CULTIVATES GROWTH AND CONNECTION

**A**t Saint Louis Priory School, a dedicated group of volunteers work tirelessly behind the scenes to support the school's mission and enhance the student experience. By giving their time and talent to organize events, fundraise, and serve as a link between the school and the wider community, these volunteers foster a tight-knit group built on shared values.

From organizing events, such as Xanadu, to supporting daily operations in the library, the volunteers' dedication ensures Priory continues to provide exceptional opportunities for students to grow academically, spiritually, and socially.

Headmaster Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02 says Priory's approach to service begins within our school community. "Not because we think it shouldn't be shared outside our own community, but because it begins at home. It begins with us teaching our students God's love."

**"We begin by putting God's love into practice at home.**

Then we can begin sharing that in charitable ways. It's a two-step dance.

– Headmaster Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02

He adds, "We begin by putting God's love into practice at home. Then we can begin sharing that in charitable ways. It's a two-step dance. It starts at the school and how we live together in the monastery. When we are more mature, we can share with others and help in the building of other communities. It's our why. Everything we do has more meaning."

## Mothers' Club

Moms of current students can make an impact by joining the Mothers' Club at Priory. There are countless ways to volunteer.

"The Mothers' Club is a supportive community made up of dynamic women dedicated to promoting school spirit and fellowship," says Mothers' Club President Jennifer O'Keefe (Michael '19, Patrick '21, Wynn '25, and Danny '29). "Each event is an amazing opportunity to grow with other women who have a shared dedication to their sons and the Priory community."

One of Priory's biggest events and fundraisers is the annual Xanadu auction. This year was the 56th auction. It brings parents, alumni, alumni parents, faculty, and friends of Priory together to celebrate and support the school.

"Xanadu is comprised of three events: a trivia night in the fall, the auction preview party, and the auction itself," says Director of Advancement Natalie Covey. "Xanadu could not happen without the volunteers. We were fortunate to have our dedicated co-chairs, Laura Polcyn (Drake '25) and Eleni Zemlyak (John '25), and an army of section chairs put in enormous time and effort to pull these events off throughout the year. Additionally, all the volunteers behind the scenes made it all possible."

"I was inspired to become a part of a group of women dedicated to their sons, who promote school spirit and fellowship. It's a great way to show gratitude for the blessings in my life," Mothers' Club President-Elect Laura Swallow (David '26) says. "I've been able to connect with wonderful women, observe interactions among students, their families, staff members, and the monastic community. Being an active volunteer allows me to demonstrate my support for the mission at work with talented and motivated young men. I have the chance to learn, hands-on, how the Benedictine values are embedded into everyday life at Priory and how I can reinforce those values at home."

Swallow says experiencing the Spirit of God at Priory is very rewarding as a volunteer.

"You develop a sixth sense about the learning community that you can't get without being there," she adds. "I value the sense of belonging to the school, which is truly vested in drawing out the full potential of our amazing young men by recognizing their unique talents. The sense of belonging to something great deepens, and it becomes clear that Priory truly is becoming a lifetime community to my son and our family."

## Fathers' Club

Another way to get involved is the Priory Fathers' Club. In addition to gaining first-hand knowledge of what's happening on campus, according to Fathers' Club President Ken Bower '89, volunteering helps build camaraderie and community.

"We serve as advocates and ambassadors for the school," Bower says. "There are many opportunities: working the down markers at football games, supporting roles in other sports, serving as a Form representative, organizing events, and welcoming new students and families to our community."

Bower says it has been great to connect with his son Joe, who is a senior, before he graduates and more than likely goes to college outside of St. Louis. He suggests other dads get involved at Priory. "Talk to teachers, coaches, or administrators and ask how you can get involved. There are volunteer opportunities for everyone."



Xanadu participants raise money for Priory. Xanadu in the Lou was held at the Missouri Athletic Club Downtown.



< The school café, The Raven's Nest

## On-Campus Opportunities

Working at The Raven's Nest, the school's café, is a great way to volunteer and see students during the school day.

According to The Raven's Nest and Campus Store Manager Cara Kuehl, volunteers are an integral part of the Priory community. "The students enjoy seeing their parents volunteering at the school, and they are the heartbeat of our community. They also bring new ideas and a fresh perspective."

The café offers interaction with students and their friends. Volunteers open and close the café, operate the register, and replenish inventory.

Parents and volunteers can also assist with the Campus Store. They help with display cases, sales, and checkouts during campus special events.

The Priory library needs volunteers too. Volunteers help with shelving books, collecting books that need repair, adding protective covers to new books, and repairing books with tape and glue.

"Volunteers are truly essential for the operation of the library. Our collection is larger and older than most high school collections, so we need significant book repair," says Librarian David Kates. "It allows me to focus on cataloging, collection development, and reader's advisory."

Priory's library is a beautiful space for cultural engagement and reflection. Volunteers can check out books and DVDs and use the school's newspaper, magazine, and database subscriptions.

"The volunteers are a great group that frequently recommend books to each other and talk about life," Kates says. "They also have the opportunity to talk with students and are friendly faces in the library."

> Top: Priory alumni share their college and career path journeys during the annual Priory Network panel discussion. Bottom: The Alumni Board hosts the Priory Homecoming BBQ.

## Alumni Involvement

Priory alumni have numerous ways to volunteer, share their expertise, and contribute to their alma mater. Alumni Board President Mike Reedy '00 emphasizes the importance of giving back to both the school and the Abbey through his board service.

Alumni can engage with the community at events such as the Homecoming BBQ, Golf Scramble, or serve on the Alumni Board. They can also make a direct impact on students' lives by participating in various career-focused initiatives, including mentorship programs, internships, guest speaking engagements, and career days.

The Priory Network enables Priory students to learn from accomplished alumni across diverse industries. Alumni share insights on their career paths, providing valuable guidance for recent graduates embarking on their professional journeys. Previous speakers have shared expertise from fields such as education, entrepreneurship, finance, law, medicine, public relations, public service, and technology.

"It's very rewarding to interact with current students, assisting in highlighting the mission and values of Priory, as well as being able to work alongside and network with the leaders of Priory, and assist in the long-term visions," Reedy says.



## Alumni Mothers' Club

Alumni Mothers' Club President Janet Whalen cherishes the close friendships she's formed through Priory and the connections she's made with the monks and parish. "I want to give back to a place that gave so much to my sons," she says. Her son Brody is a 2021 graduate of Priory, and her son Brock attended Priory in 7th and 8th grades.

Alumni moms can contribute to the Priory community in various ways, including organizing and participating in the fall Mass and dinner, providing for the monks' Thanksgiving, shopping at the Christmas Boutique, and attending events like the holiday cocktail party, Mothers' Club luncheon, and Margarita Party, which offer opportunities to stay connected and provide essential support.

Whalen says being a part of such a warm community is incredibly rewarding. "Giving back to Priory and spending time with the special people who make this place unique are just some of the many benefits of being an active member of the Alumni Mothers' Club."

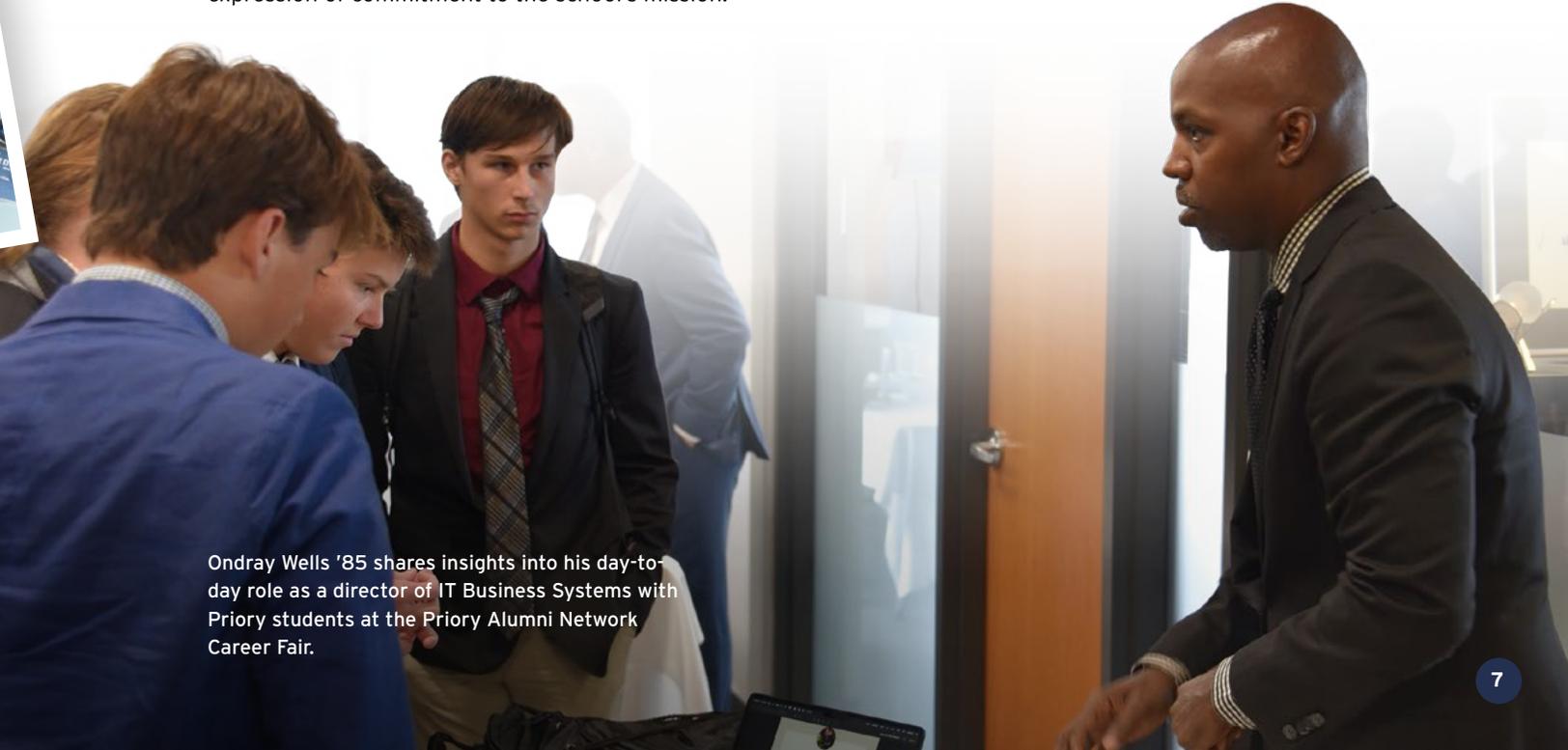
## The Value Of Giving Back

Thanks to the active involvement of parents, alumni, alumni parents, and friends of Priory and the Abbey, students are thriving and belong to a supportive, engaging community. Volunteering not only enhances the overall educational experience for students but also serves as a tangible expression of commitment to the school's mission.

**"It's very rewarding to interact with current students, assisting in highlighting the mission and values of Priory."**

**– Alumni Board President Mike Reedy '00**

"Volunteering at Priory provides the opportunity to meet new friends, share your time and talents, learn new things, and feel more connected to a spiritual place, which I like to think of as my second home," says Swallow. "There are opportunities to be charitable with our time and talents. The more we give, the happier we feel. Doing good for others gives me a sense of accomplishment, a sense of purpose, and a direction in life. The positive energy I get from volunteering seems to overflow into everything else I do."



Ondray Wells '85 shares insights into his day-to-day role as a director of IT Business Systems with Priory students at the Priory Alumni Network Career Fair.

# Priory Friendship Endures

## Kee and Wilmsen Excel as Student Athletes at Illinois Wesleyan University

The strong and enduring friendship between Myles Kee and Harrison Wilmsen, both Priory Class of 2021, serves as a testament to their solid foundation formed at Priory. As they complete their senior year at Illinois Wesleyan University, their bond showcases the lasting impact of a Priory education and the life-long community that continues to support them.

"Attending Priory was one of the best decisions I ever made, especially in developing the mind, body, and spirit," says Wilmsen. "The education at Priory, combining academic rigor, athletics, and a recognition of the soul's superiority over the body, is uniquely rewarding and special."

"Priory played a significant role in shaping me as a student-athlete," Kee says. "One of the most emphasized lessons in college athletics is the importance of effective time management, a skill Priory instilled in me early on."

He adds, "The foundation I built there made my transition to college athletics smooth and manageable. In fact, the skills and discipline I developed at Priory often gave me an advantage over some of my peers and teammates, allowing me to excel both on the field and in the classroom."

Kee was an All-State Second Team selection as a wideout for the Ravens. He earned All-Conference First Team and All-Metro Second Team honors.

"Myles always pushed himself to the limit to be the best," says Wilmsen. "He is one of the most ferocious competitors I have ever met; no challenge is too small or too large in his eyes. During our four years together, players gravitated to him not only because of his ability on the field, but because he is one of the nicest, most caring, and down-to-earth individuals. He will forever be the greatest teammate I have ever played with."

Wilmsen, meanwhile, led the Ravens at the quarterback position earning All-State First Team. He was also a three-time All-Metro League and two-time All-District First Team selection.



"Harrison was a great leader and football player," says Kee. "He had all the attributes that a great quarterback needs, but most importantly he knew how to command the huddle in a way where you felt like you could trust him to do his job and make the right play."

Wilmsen graduated Priory as the all-time leader in yards (5,693), touchdowns (67), and completions (433).

Between 2018 and 2020, Kee caught a program-record 45 touchdowns from Wilmsen. He also sits atop the record book in receptions (170) and receiving yards (2,600).

"Myles and I have always had a strong connection," reflects Wilmsen. "It didn't matter if it was on the field or not, we always seemed to understand each other. The four years I spent playing varsity football at Priory with him are to this day some of the best years of my life."

Wilmsen found plenty of success on the basketball court as well. He was a four-time All-Metro League selection, named Metro League Player of the Year, and graduated ranked second all-time at Priory in total points and rebounds.

The pair eventually decided to attend Illinois Wesleyan University for some of the same reasons that students choose Priory.

"Academics played a significant role in my choice," Kee says. "Illinois Wesleyan consistently ranks among the top schools in Illinois and the nation for job placement, emphasizing student success both during college and beyond. The university's commitment to preparing its students for future achievements strongly aligned with my goals."

Both saw immediate action at Illinois Wesleyan, with the Titans basketball team making it to the Elite Eight at the NCAA Division III men's basketball tournament.

"Freshman year was exciting; we were a deep and highly experienced team," says Wilmsen. "I came in as every freshman does: confused and inexperienced, but willing to learn. Being able to witness an Elite Eight run taught me so many valuable lessons. I came away from the season knowing my game had to improve in several facets."

"Myles always pushed himself to the limit **to be the best.**"

– Harrison Wilmsen '21

In 2022, the pair both saw more time on the field and court, but they also battled through injuries. Kee set career-high marks in receptions (42), yards (553), and touchdowns (four). However, he suffered a season-ending injury limiting his appearances to just six games.

"I tore my ACL during the sixth game of my sophomore year. It was one of the toughest challenges I've ever faced," says Kee. "The injury was devastating, not only because of the physical toll, but also the emotional impact. I had to put in countless hours of hard work and preparation leading up to the season, and not being able to finish what I started was heartbreaking."

Wilmsen, meanwhile, also had a career-season high appearing in 26 games, averaging 8.2 points and 4.1 rebounds per game. Prior to the season though, he suffered an injury.

"During the preseason, I fractured my foot, and with that came the usual emotions of doubt and fear," Wilmsen says. "It was my first year in the starting rotation, which brought with it many expectations. The peaks and valleys of sophomore year taught me so much - most importantly, reinforcing the power of mind and spirit - something that was cultivated during my years at Priory."

In 2023, both Kee and Wilmsen stayed healthy and found their rhythm. Kee appeared in all 10 games, totaling a career-high 55 catches for 716 yards and five touchdowns. He was named the Offensive Most Valuable Player and earned the Best Skill award for the Titans. He also took home his first All-College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW) First Team award.

“Harrison was a great leader and football player. **He had all the attributes that a great quarterback needs.**”

– Myles Kee '21

“The '23 season was truly special for me,” Kee says. “Coming back from offseason surgery and a grueling rehab to play at the high level I knew I was capable of was incredibly rewarding. Earning All-CCIW honors after such a challenging journey meant the world to me and served as a powerful reminder that with determination and hard work, I can achieve anything I set my mind to.”

Wilmsen took a big leap on the court, appearing in a career-high 28 games and starting 23 of them. He averaged a career-high 11.2 points per game and shot 51.2 percent from the floor.

The fall 2024 season was one to remember for Kee. He once again appeared in all 10 games, totaling a career-high 64 catches for 708 yards and a career-best seven touchdowns to earn All-CCIW First Team honors again, all the while battling through another injury.

“Not only did I have my best statistical performance and earned All-Conference again, but it also marked my second season coming off knee surgery,” Kee says. “During the offseason, I was diagnosed with osteomyelitis, a bone infection that required emergency surgery. Although the procedure was far less invasive than ACL repair, my surgeon was uncertain whether I would be able to play this year.”

He ended his Illinois Wesleyan career with 163 catches for 2,005 yards and 16 touchdowns.

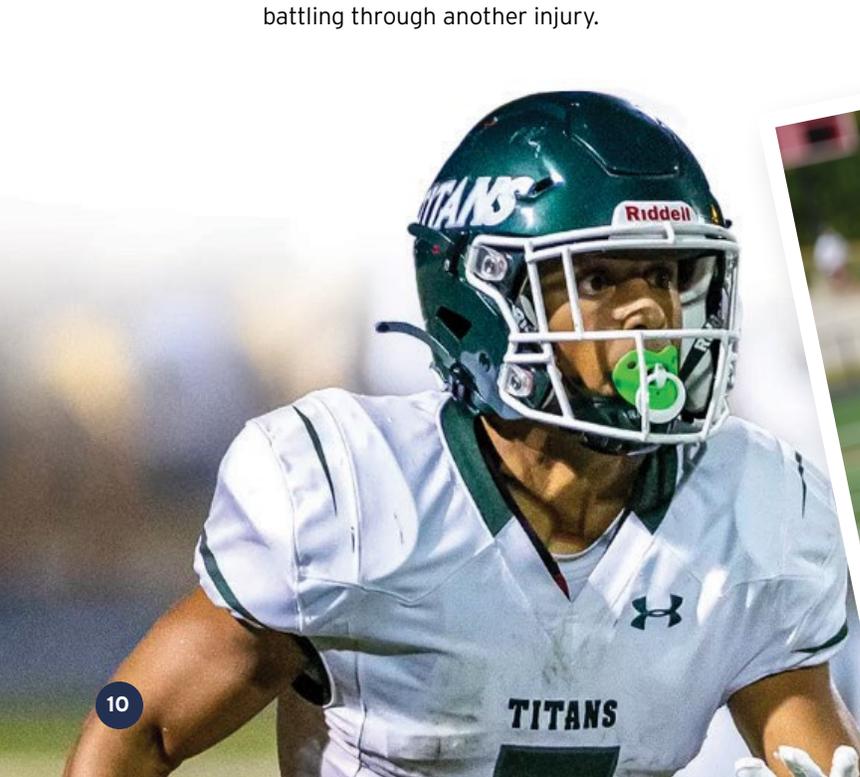
Wilmsen and the Titans were having a dominant 2024-25 campaign when we went to print. The basketball Titans went 24-5 overall as of March 10 and ranked No. 16 nationally in the NCAA Division III Top 25 Poll.

Wilmsen started all 29 games for the Titans through the first round of playoffs, averaging 9.9 points and 5.2 rebounds on a career-best 56.9 field goal percentage.

Kee is majoring in business administration, while Wilmsen, who has a passion for investments and trading, is majoring in finance.

Both are set to graduate later this year.

“Myles is truly my brother. I think that speaks to the relationships you forge at Priory in general,” says Wilmsen. “Attending Priory is more than a ticket to a first-class education, it’s a lifelong brotherhood, a bond that can’t be broken and extends beyond time.”



# STACEY NEAL

EDUCATOR INSPIRES STUDENTS AND FACULTY

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Educators possess a unique passion for teaching that inspires both students and colleagues alike.

Key qualities of an outstanding teacher include excellent communication skills, active listening, engaging instruction, subject matter expertise, creativity, a commitment to lifelong learning, and patience. Priory's Mathematics and Technology Department Chair Stacey Neal embodies these characteristics and is an example of what makes a teacher truly exceptional.

"Stacey is an important member of the Priory team because she demonstrates care, dedication, and a genuine desire to teach," says Math Teacher Jan Poth. "She establishes an environment for the students to feel valued and challenged. She provides constant support to our department and ensures that we have everything we need to do our best work. She is someone you can always count on for advice and is great at troubleshooting problems."

> Stacey Neal with her Emerson Excellence in Teaching award



“Stacey is an important member of the Priory team because **she demonstrates care, dedication, and a genuine desire to teach.**”

– Math Teacher Jan Poth

“What makes Stacey a great teacher and mentor is her passion for education and care for people,” Dr. Seth Arnold, math teacher says. “Stacey is attentive to the needs of her students and others. Advice from Stacey is curated to the individual and fosters a growth mindset. I have grown so much as an educator due to my discussions with Stacey.”

Neal, who has taught at Priory since 2018, recently received the Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award after being nominated by Assistant Head of School for Intellectual Formation Tim Malecek.

The award annually recognizes educators in the St. Louis metropolitan area – from kindergarten teachers to college professors – who are examples of excellence in their field.

“Stacey is an exemplary teacher,” says Malecek. “Perhaps best described as a warm demander, she holds all her students to high standards of accuracy and precision while simultaneously providing encouragement and support. Her classroom is organized, efficient, caring, positive, and full of engagement.”

He continues, “While her passion is honors geometry, she is great at connecting with students who are more anxious about math. Stacey is talented at breaking down complex problems into smaller chunks without sacrificing intellectual rigor. She puts her students first. Even on the busiest of days, if a student asks for help, she will drop everything to meet with him immediately. She goes above and beyond to reach out to struggling individuals and partner with parents for the best chance of success.”

“Although I typically prefer to stay out of the spotlight, it’s an honor to be recognized with this award,” says Neal. “Priory is fortunate to have so many exceptional educators, and being recognized among such a talented faculty is truly humbling.”

She adds, “The most meaningful part of receiving this award has been the kind words of congratulations and gratitude from my current and former students. Whether in class, in the halls, or through online messages and emails, their words have meant the world to me.”

Neal double majored in math and education at Webster University where she considers her leadership training at Webster an equally important part of her education.

Through the program, she attended an intensive leadership institute, several retreats and workshops, and completed a leadership course. She met wonderful people and mentors through the program, including her now-husband, Adam.

After graduation, she moved to Los Angeles, California, where she lived for 12 years teaching 7th through 11th grade math at a private co-ed school. While teaching there, she earned a Master of Science degree in counseling with an option in school counseling from California State University, Northridge.

“My school counseling program was one of the most transformative experiences of my professional career,” Neal adds. “The program provided me with a holistic view of education covering social, emotional, career, college, and academic counseling. I gained a deeper understanding of the school as an entire system of student support and how policies and programs can impact student outcomes.”

She continues, “I use the skills I developed in my counseling program such as active listening, conflict resolution, goal setting, collaboration, mentoring, and student advocacy daily as a classroom teacher.”

In 2015, she returned to St. Louis to raise her and Adam’s two boys near family. She then got a job as a math specialist for grades 4 to 6 at Chesterfield Day School.



“Although my passion is working with middle and high school students, this experience provided me with a comprehensive understanding of students’ development of mathematical thinking from elementary through high school,” reflects Neal. “I am now better able to identify and address gaps in students’ foundational understanding, which is crucial for helping students tackle more advanced mathematical concepts.”

Her experience in counseling and development has proven to be extremely helpful, especially for students struggling in math.

She understands math can be challenging for some students and it can be tough for those students when they see others in class solving problems faster than they are.

However, she wants students to know it’s okay for the work to be difficult. It’s called “productive struggle,” where deep learning can occur.

“When I was in school, I dreaded math races, and I was often the last person to finish math tests. Looking back, I realize that the extra time I took completing the work paid off in the end. It gave me a deeper appreciation for math and helped me fully grasp the concepts,” Neal says.

One of her many goals is for students to feel supported and comfortable seeking help when it is needed.

“I believe mathematics is based on making connections, discovering patterns, and developing critical thinking skills,” Neal says. “I encourage students to recognize there is often more than one way to solve a problem.”

Neal likes to incorporate routines into her classes to encourage students to discuss and think critically about mathematical ideas. They include: ‘What do you notice?’, ‘What do you wonder?’, or ‘Which one doesn’t belong?’

In her mind, by spending a few minutes discussing these prompts with other students, they often discover mathematical ideas, which they then reinforce and discuss together.

What we do know is that Neal belongs at Priory. She has a gift of connecting with her students, showing them that she cares, and wants them to succeed.

Neal shows attention to her students, engaging in back-and-forth discussion about problems. She encourages students to think outside the box, and often walks around the classroom to make sure they are on the right path with the problem.

The way she carries herself in the classroom is reminiscent of her time as a student in high school. “It wasn’t until high school that I really thought about being a math teacher. My Algebra II teacher, Mr. Gillman, was the first person to notice my interest in math and helping others.”

She adds, “He encouraged me to consider becoming a math teacher.”

Priory is glad she became one. We are lucky to have Stacey Neal.



# Priory Alum and Military Veteran Headlines Assembly



To celebrate Veterans Day, Dr. Esan Simon, MD, MBA, FS, CAPT, USPHS (Ret) '90, returned to Priory's campus to share his inspiring journey at a special assembly with high school students.

From his service in the United States Navy, the US Coast Guard, and the US Public Health Service, to his career as a doctor, Simon captivated the audience with his stories of perseverance and determination. He reflected on his time as a student and how his Priory education provided him with the foundation to achieve his goals and make a positive impact in the world.

Simon has a remarkable family history that exemplifies the American dream. His father was born in Guyana and became the first black man to attain the rank of Lieutenant in the British Royal Navy's history. He met Simon's mother while they were both studying in England. The couple had three other sons, Carey '86, Sacha '88, and Yohance '98, who also attended Priory.

According to Priory Teacher and Coach Tony Finan, "After their father's service in the British Navy, the Simon family moved from Guyana to St. Louis, where they fell in love with Priory's English roots and knew it was the perfect place for their sons' educations."

Simon thrived in every way at Priory. Not only was he an outstanding student, but he also excelled in three varsity sports.

In addition to athletic success, Esan became a leader within the school and was known for his modest, self-deprecating personality and unparalleled optimism, according to Finan who introduced Simon at the assembly.

Simon says one of the best things about Priory is the community. "There were 41 in my graduating class, and we were a very tight-knit group. We played sports together and supported each other. It's not just my classmates, but the entire community. There are some faculty who are still here. This community means so much to me."

< Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02 with Dr. Esan Simon '90, and Tony Finan

**"The education at Priory is outstanding. It prepared me for future challenges."**

– Dr. Esan Simon '90

### Lessons Learned At Priory

As a student athlete, Simon learned resilience and resourcefulness.

"During the summer, I would bike 50 minutes to the weight room, work out, and then bike back home. I also mowed lawns and participated in sports each trimester," he says. "These experiences taught me balance. Priory teaches you how to manage responsibilities in a way where you must perform in multiple areas. It taught me how to manage life."

Trusting in the guidance of mentors like Finan allowed Simon to listen to and embrace new opportunities.

"The opportunity to attend Harvard was made possible by Coach Finan who encouraged me to apply," reflects Simon. "He arranged a meeting with the Harvard football coach during his visit to St. Louis. If it wasn't for Coach Finan, I never would have applied to Harvard. I've been able to take that encouragement from him and other Priory teachers and mentors and weave that through my 26-year military career as well."

Simon attended Harvard University, earning a bachelor's degree in biology and achieving varsity letters in indoor and outdoor track, as well as football.

"Having the solid foundation and the ability to manage multiple different things simultaneously and effectively was one of the most important things I learned at Priory," Simon says. "The education at Priory is outstanding. It prepared me for future challenges."

"I didn't know it when I was at Priory, but **it teaches you moral character and provides faith foundation.**"

– Dr. Esan Simon '90

### Military And Medical School

Following Harvard, Simon attended Emory University Medical School on a U.S. Navy scholarship and was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy after graduating in 1998.

He completed a pediatric internship and the arduous six-month Navy Flight Surgery school before serving multiple tours as a Navy Flight Surgeon, including a deployment to the Persian Gulf as a Flight Surgeon for Carrier Air Wing THREE aboard the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier the USS Harry Truman (CVN75).

Simon was a Flight Surgeon for most of his military career, and in that capacity was not only a primary care Physician for military pilots, but also certified as aircrew where he integrated into aviation units and gained the trust of personnel in these units by regularly flying in a variety of fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft throughout his aviation career in the Navy and Coast Guard.

"A military unit has a lot of similarities to athletics and the team dynamic," Simon says. "You are united for a common purpose. Everyone is on the same page. I learned how to sort through issues with my football team at Priory. It was the same in the military. You work as a unit to determine how you're going to execute a common goal."

### Benedictine Values

Priory's mission emphasizes the development of well-rounded young men with strong character, who not only excel academically, but also possess a solid moral foundation.

"I didn't know it when I was at Priory, but Priory teaches you moral character and provides a faith foundation. So that when you go out into the wider community and become fathers, husbands, community leaders, and do things around the country or even around the world, you have solid moral character, integrity, and you do the right things. The building blocks begin at Priory. The hope is that you are impacting society positively – not to get anything from it – but because it's the right thing to do."

Simon resides in Potomac, Maryland, with his wife Valerie and three children Elliott (16), Olivia (14), and Evan (12).



^ Senior STUCO members JP Nadreau, Jake Waltz, Ben Duke, and Colin Pim with Dr. Esan Simon in the middle

< Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02, Peter Gunther '90, Willy Morgan, '90, Dr. Esan Simon '90, John Edwards '90, Mike Oliver '90, and Tony Finan



# SIXTH GRADE PROGRAM

Priory's Sixth Grade Program is designed to cultivate intellectual skills and foster habits of inquiry, service, leadership, and collaboration. Grounded in Catholic, Benedictine principles, students will engage in a curriculum that emphasizes critical thinking, community development, and personal and spiritual growth.

SUBJECT	MEETING PER WEEK
<b>Literature and Grammar</b> Developing expressive skills through reading, writing, and grammatical exposition	7
<b>Theology: Understanding St. Benedict and the Benedictines</b> Examining Benedictine principles, traditions, and values	4
<b>Fine Arts Rotation</b> Introducing Studio Art, Theatre, Vocal Music, and Medieval Arts each quarter	3
<b>Mathematics</b> Building strong foundations through tailored placement and responsive instruction	5
<b>Classical Civilizations</b> Exploring Persia, Greece, and Rome in a project-based approach	4
<b>Science and Engineering</b> Engaging students in hands-on coding, robotics, and design projects	5
<b>Physical Education</b> Nurturing physical fitness through daily sports and activities on a 150-acre campus	5
<b>Seminar Program for Study and Life Skills</b> Supporting academic and personal growth in weekly sessions with peers and Priory's counseling team	1

## Enrichment Activities During Exam Week

Priory's exam weeks offer a distinctive experience for our sixth-grade students, balancing academic preparation with meaningful enrichment. With a thoughtfully reduced exam schedule, students gain exposure to cumulative assessments while developing productive study habits in a supportive environment.

In the latter half of the week, sixth graders participate in a dynamic array of activities designed to foster personal growth, collaboration, and curiosity. From overnight retreats and service projects to leadership workshops, immersive field trips, and academic explorations beyond the standard curriculum, these experiences enrich their learning journey while reinforcing key life skills.

## Intentional Technology

While students will have access to Chromebooks, the sixth-grade program will make intentional choices of when and where to use technology, recognizing that technology is merely one tool among many others. Emphasis is placed upon traditional pencil-to-paper learning and organizational methods to build up necessary soft skills for continued learning.

## Advisory Program for Community Building

A self-contained advisory system for our 6th grade students will foster brotherhood, belonging, and servant leadership with age-appropriate programming.

To learn more about our Sixth Grade Program or admissions, contact the Admissions Office at 314.434.3690 or email [admissions@priory.org](mailto:admissions@priory.org).

# Every Contribution Counts

## KOVAC FAMILY COMMITTED TO PRIORY MISSION

The heartfelt contributions of time, talent, and treasure from Priory parents John and Kimberle Kovac illustrate their commitment to the mission of the school.

Every contribution to Priory, from volunteering time to donating to the Priory Fund, carries a profound significance, as they collectively allow Priory to fulfill its mission to help talented and motivated young men develop their full potential as children of God.

John is the managing partner at Aspire Consulting, a global IT consulting company, and owner of Kovac Mechanical, a HVAC and refrigeration business that was founded by his grandfather in 1947.

Since their son, Austin '27, joined Priory as a Form I student, John and Kimberle have become pillars of the school community through their unwavering commitment to service.

John, currently the Fathers' Club treasurer, has been actively engaged in numerous initiatives including coaching baseball, sponsoring the Xanadu auction, and playing an instrumental role in securing funds for the new athletic scoreboards on campus.

Kimberle's dedication is evident in her tireless volunteer efforts for various events and projects including Trivia Night and the Xanadu auction, where her attention to detail and creativity have significantly elevated the quality of these events.

Director of Advancement Natalie Covey notes that the Kovacs were among the first families she met when she began working at Priory. "They have proven to be consistently engaged and reliable no matter what is needed."

"John's work with the Fathers' Club has increased attendance and brought forth new perspectives and fresh ideas," says Covey. "The Kovacs show up and support Priory in so many ways, and we are so grateful to them."

John began as a volunteer coach in the Priory baseball program, and that eventually led him to becoming Priory's JV baseball coach. His background as a high school and college baseball player made him an ideal fit for the role.

"Coaching the student-athletes is a fulfilling experience," John says. "The boys work hard and want to perform well. It's a pleasure to work with the players and other members of the coaching staff."

Austin has followed in his father's athletic footsteps, participating in football, basketball, and baseball, with a particular passion for baseball.

### Generosity

In addition to volunteering time and talent to many initiatives at Priory, the Kovacs contribute in financially meaningful ways.

The Kovacs share their treasure by giving to the Priory Fund as well as sponsoring Xanadu and Trivia Night. They've also contributed to the Fund-A-Need for scoreboards, donated to the renovation of the weight room and the baseball improvement



< John and Kimberle Kovac



Austin '27 and John Kovac ready for some football



Abbot Gregory Mohrman, O.S.B., '76,  
Kimberle Kovac, and Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02



Austin '27 playing baseball for the Ravens



Abbot Gregory Mohrman, O.S.B., '76, Austin '27,  
and Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02



John, Austin '27, Kaelynne, and Kimberle Kovac



Roya and Monte Dover (Alex '29) with  
John and Kimberle Kovac at Xanadu in the Lou 2025

## **“The Kovacs are examples of humility, faith, and work.**

They donate and volunteer for the sake of it and never for anything more. I can't thank them enough.”

– **Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02**

project, and they look forward to contributing to other improvement projects at Priory. In addition, they were thrilled to have the winning bid for the Xanadu puppy in 2022 and welcomed her into their home.

Priory is more than just a school to the Kovacs.

“We appreciate the fact that Priory is a private school that places emphasis on Benedictine values and the overall formation of young men,” says Kimberle. “Because it's a private institution, Priory doesn't have access to public funding. Importantly, Priory benefits greatly from the financial generosity of its community.”

### **Admissions Ambassadors**

The Kovacs have been actively involved in helping with the recruitment process at Priory. They believe deeply in the transformative power of a Priory education.

The distinctive qualities of Priory graduates make the school an exceptional choice for parents who value long-term success, strong character development, and a sense of community, according to the Kovacs. “The entire Priory community plays a pivotal role in supporting and enhancing the school's admissions efforts,” says John.

“Priory's emphasis on academics, athletic participation, theology, camaraderie, community, and accountability made it a perfect fit for Austin,” says Kimberle. “The Benedictine monks are worldly and extremely well-educated. It is a blessing to have them living on campus and involved in classroom teaching in addition to

all-school Mass on Fridays. The monks provide spiritual guidance that is critical to the overall formation of Austin's upbringing.”

Austin attended Rossman, and the Kovacs appreciated the smaller class sizes. “We wanted to continue the favorable teacher-to-student ratios. We also believe one of the most effective recruiting tools for Priory is how students mature and graduate into successful, well-adjusted, humble, spiritual, and family-oriented men,” says John.

He added that his family understands the need to identify and communicate with prospective students who may be weighing multiple secondary school options. “We have opened our home to host recruiting events for students who express interest in Priory.”

Sharing the great experience they have had at Priory is very important to the Kovacs. “Priory has had a very positive impact on our son's life. The academic rigor requires strong dedication and an exceptional work ethic,” John says. “The academics are central to the Priory experience. Many aspects of the educational experience are enhanced at Priory, including spirituality, time management, athletic commitment, sacrifice, humility, and friendship.”

Headmaster Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02 is very grateful to the Kovacs for their continuous support of Priory.

“One of the best things about being Headmaster is that I get to know some parents very well,” he says. “Especially when it relates to the common love of our school and the students, as well as the common virtues of who we are. The Kovacs are examples of humility, faith, and work. They donate and volunteer for the sake of it and never for anything more. I can't thank them enough.”

John encourages others to contribute to Priory in whatever way works for them. “Financial contributions aren't the only way to support Priory. There are so many volunteer opportunities. The Priory faculty, monastic community, and leadership team have shown tremendous gratitude and appreciation for our family's volunteer efforts.”

The Kovacs have been married since 2007. In addition to Austin, they have a daughter Kaelynne who attends Mary Institute and Saint Louis Country Day School. Together, they have built a close-knit family that values education, personal growth, spirituality, and the Priory community.

# REMEMBERING

BROTHER SYMEON GILLETTE, O.S.B.

Brother Symeon Gillette, O.S.B., left an indelible mark on the world with his passions and talents. He established the Medieval Arts Guild, known officially as The Guild of Saint Columkille, at Saint Louis Priory School and created stunning works of art that continue to inspire awe and admiration.

Born on July 15, 1949, in Hicksville, New York, into a family of six children and given the name Michael, he embodied a love for nature, animals, art, teaching, and people.

He entered the Saint Louis Abbey in 1977 and took the religious name Symeon. He made his simple vows in 1979 and solemn vows in 1982.

Brother Symeon is best known for his stained-glass work. He taught classes at Priory in the 1990s. In addition to stained glass, he taught mechanical drawing, calligraphy, and banner-making. His students affectionately called him "Bro."

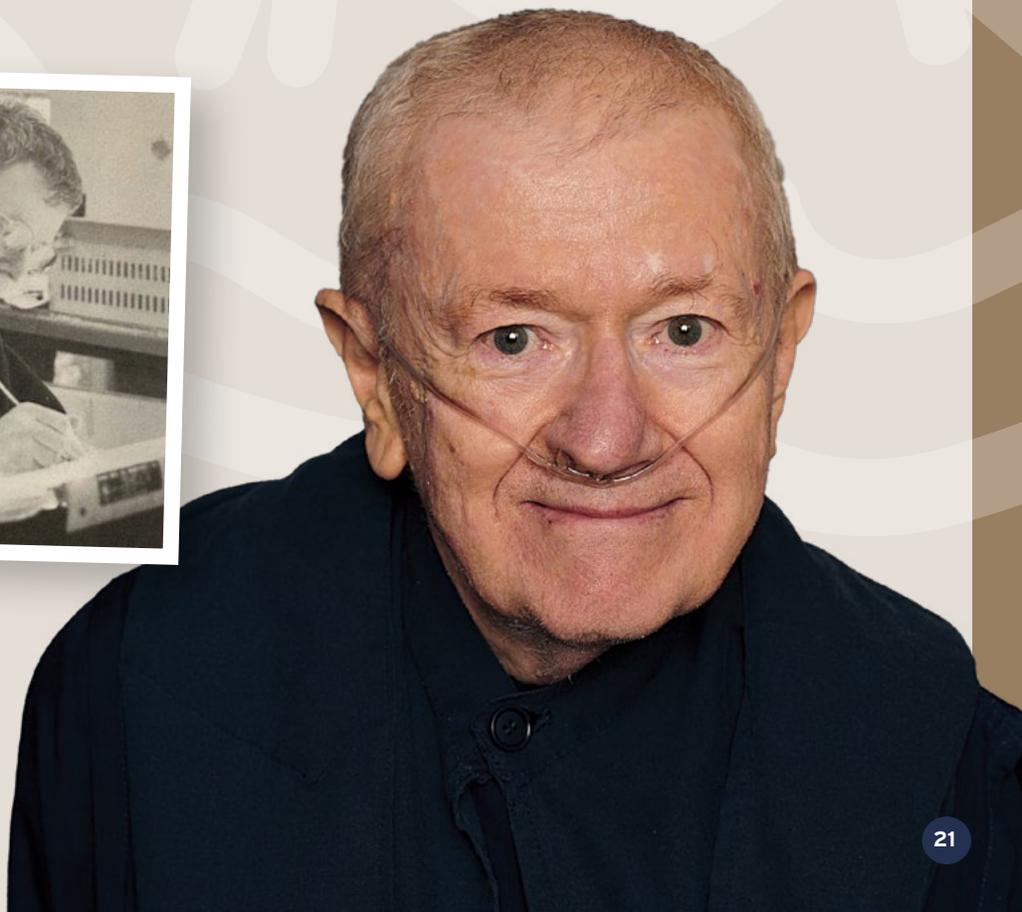
Encouraged to imitate past masters, students crafted stained glass projects inspired by Chartres Cathedral in France. As the school planned an extension, Brother Symeon proposed creating two commemorative windows: The Millennial Window and The Jubilee Window.

"I was fortunate enough to be Bro's friend and his fellow master of The Guild," says Medieval Arts Teacher Mary Claire MacDonald. "He mentored me in his quiet, gentle, distant way. For five years, everything I've done here has been to make him proud. My entire way of behaving here is underwritten by a deep love and respect for Brother Symeon – and that's not going to change."

MacDonald, whose husband Joe MacDonald '06 attended Priory, says Brother Symeon's relationship to time was "so beautiful, so ancient, so new – and it required special equipment to maintain."



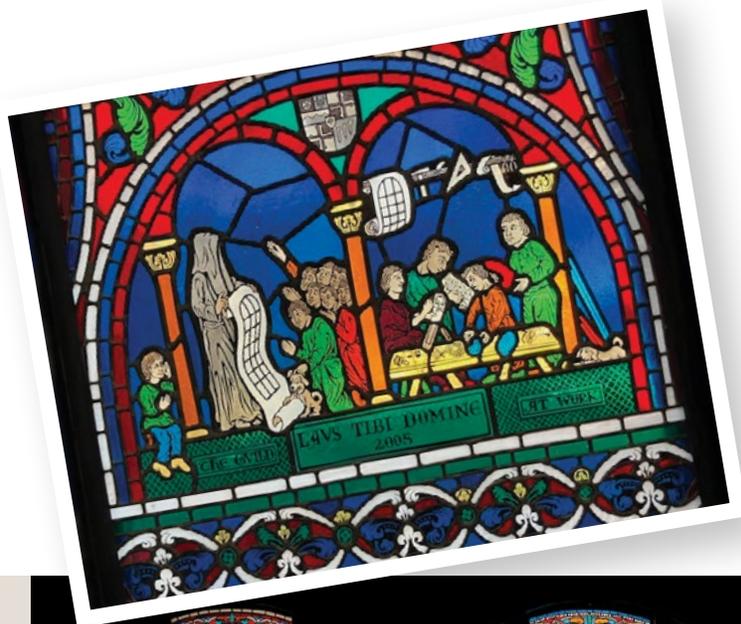
> Brother Symeon Gillette, O.S.B.



"This equipment was faith and love," she fondly remembers. "You don't put different but precise amounts of water into orchids with a pipette for years if you don't have faith they will eventually bloom and be beautiful. And you don't do this if you don't love plants and more profoundly – if you don't love beauty. In this same way, Bro cultivated his students and all those around him. He taught gently, personally, almost imperceptibly nudging people in the right direction, quietly, often by telling stories."

MacDonald reflects, "His faith in his students, colleagues, and friends enabled his gentle way of leading and teaching. It's not a love that ebbs and flows – but one that's constant, one that undergirds each little action and gesture. One of my favorite Bro quotes is 'When you have faith in kids, great things happen.'"

Brother Symeon inspired many and embodied Benedictine values, quietly accepting suffering, and embracing simplicity, patience, and humility. May he rest in peace.



## The Emerson Stained Glass Windows

In 1995, under the direction of Brother Symeon Gillette, O.S.B., Priory launched a new program to commemorate two important anniversaries. The goal was for students to build two significant stained-glass windows. The windows were to be incorporated into the fabric of the high school.

The first window is known as the Millennial Window commemorating the Two Thousandth Anniversary of the Incarnation of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

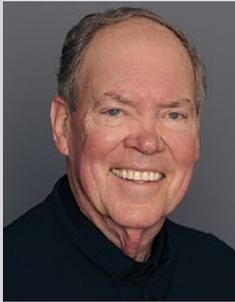
The second window is known as the Jubilee Window and commemorates the 50th Anniversary of the arrival in St. Louis of the first three monks from the Benedictine Abbey of Ampleforth, England.

Each window consists of 21 separate hand-crafted stained-glass panels. The master drawing for each panel was sketched then refined by brush and India Ink. Each is either an interpretation of an existing window or an original design by Brother Symeon. With the use of these drawings, most panels were crafted by students who cut, ground, and painted (where needed) more than 15,000 individual pieces of glass.



# GOD FOUND ME AT THE ABBEY

By Brother Luke Kalhorn, O.S.B.



I'm Brother Luke, and the journey that led me to become a monk at the Saint Louis Abbey is quite unique. Unlike any of my Benedictine brothers, I have four children, including three Priory graduates, and I also have 12 grandchildren.

My adventure to become a monk began a long time ago. My wife Susan and I fell in love with the Abbey at a meeting for incoming Priory parents. Abbot Luke Rigby, O.S.B., said to the parents, "We are so happy you have decided to send your boy to Priory, and we are honored you have entrusted us with their education and with their adventure in finding God."

That was the beginning of a long love affair. Because we had three sons at Priory (Chris '88, Steve '97, and Tim '99), our activities spanned well over a decade.

> Brother Luke and his wife Susan

Susan became immersed in Xanadu, working her way up to being chair, and was also president of the Mothers' Club. I followed her lead, a very good practice, and became Fathers' Club president. We met so many wonderful people as a part of our Priory journey. Even to this day, we still count many of them as our best friends.

The monks married our children, including our daughter Jennifer, and baptized some of our grandchildren. They renewed our wedding vows, a practice I highly recommend, and continued to be close to our growing family.

After a long and successful career as senior vice president of Watlow, I purchased Watlow's largest distributor, TAPCO, a factory automation



distributor in Cincinnati. Following that, God had a different plan for us. Susan developed heart problems and passed away four years ago.

We had always planned to eventually sell the company and move back to St. Louis. During our more than 15 years in Cincinnati, we regularly traveled “home” and always visited with our great friends, the monks, and especially Abbot Luke and Abbot Thomas Frerking, O.S.B.

Now, it was time to sell our home and business. Once I moved back to St. Louis, I attended 7:30 a.m. Mass and daily Lauds. It brought me great joy and comfort.

One morning, after Lauds, Father Gerard Garrigan, O.S.B., sat down beside me and said, “Have you ever thought of becoming a monk?” I thought he was crazy to suggest such a thing.

The next week I mentioned it to Abbot Thomas, and he said, “I have not talked to Father Gerard about this, but that is exactly what I was thinking about for you.” I said, “What can I do in the monastery that I can’t do now?” Abbot Thomas replied, with his classic big smile – “You can give yourself to US!”

Next, I met with Abbot Gregory Mohrman, O.S.B., '76 and explained my faith calling experience and the feedback from my meeting with Abbot Thomas. He invited me to move to the monastery, and I never left.

What I most like about being a monk is praying the divine office in common with my brother monks, doing the sacristy work of setting up the altar for masses, private prayer at the Mary Shrine (everyone needs a special place to pray), spending time with the students at Priory, and doing meaningful work for the Abbey, especially the Affiliates of the Abbey team and working on the new Abbey website.

On September 28, 2024, I made my final promises as a monk oblate, and Abbot Gregory conferred my new name as Brother Luke. So, all along, it has been God’s plan. I was looking for God and God found me at Saint Louis Abbey.

∨ Brother Luke’s family left to right: Tim, Brother Luke, Rebecca (Steve’s wife), Steve, Susan, Jennifer, and Chris



# SAINT LOUIS ABBEY JOURNAL

## MY DEAR FRIENDS,

As I write this, we are experiencing the coldest days of the winter season. The warmth of the Christmas festivities is gone, and the profusion of decorations has given way to the stark simplicity of late winter. Though the days are growing longer, spring still seems far away!

Spring is also the harbinger of Lent, that great season of reflection and renewal in anticipation of the glorious celebration of the Paschal Triduum and the Easter season. The endless round of the liturgical year, together with the ongoing cycles of the seasons, gives us both the continuity and the continual change that marks all our lives.

In the monastery, we marked the passing of our beloved Brother Symeon, who leaves behind an awe-inspiring legacy of his art and creative skill, as well as his inspiring witness to perseverance in the monastic life. He is sorely missed, but we rejoice that he has "passed through the veil" and entered that deeply mysterious transformation, which is the mark of the Kingdom of God.

The rest of the monastic community remains fairly hale and hearty, a bit older perhaps, but still vital and committed to the daily round of prayer and service, which is the hallmark of Benedictine life. Needless to say, we need new members, and I ask you to pray on our behalf to God for an increase in vocations to our abbey.

As always, know that all of you are in our prayers each day. May God richly bless and keep you in His tender care.

Yours in the Lord,

*Abbot Gregory Mohrman, O.S.B.*

Abbot Gregory Mohrman, O.S.B., '76



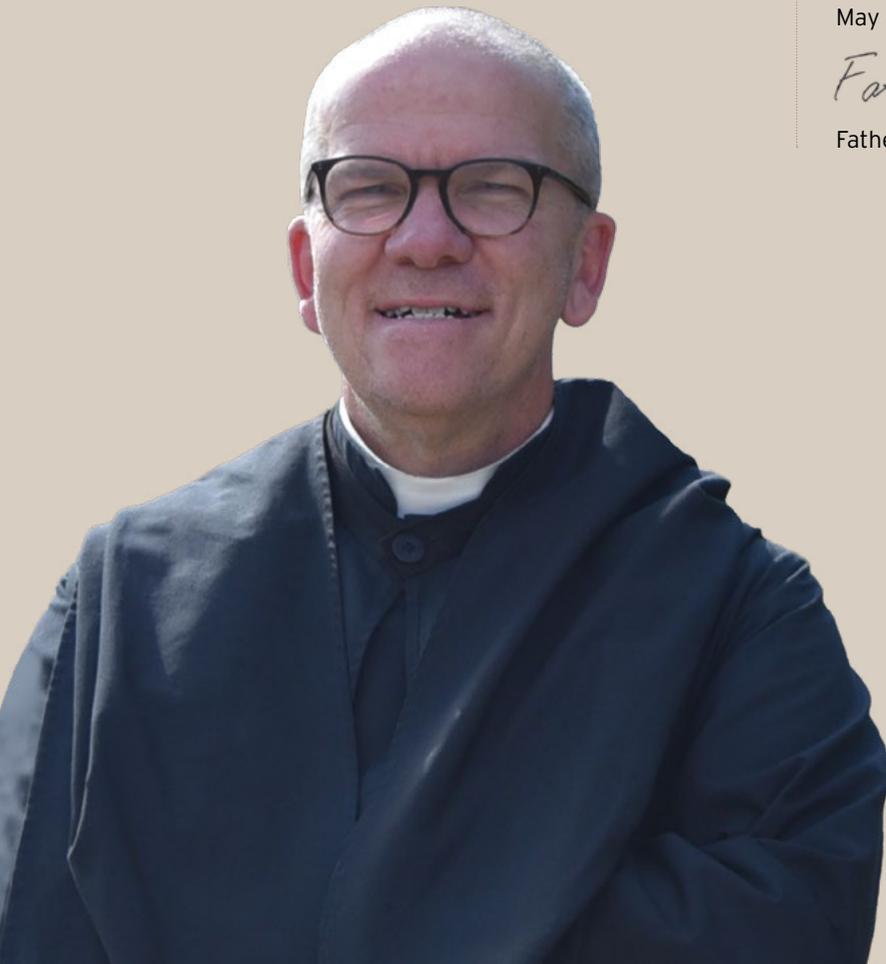
# SAINT ANSELM PARISH NEWS

Dear Abbey and Priory Friends,

I pray you had a beautiful fall and Christmas season! We always share, and I will again, it's odd to write these articles about the fall and winter when you'll be reading this page-turner of an article in early spring!

The fall and Christmas seasons were quick and beautiful. In addition to our Advent and Christmas celebrations and liturgies, our major parish event was our annual **Saint Vincent de Paul Christmas breakfast**. The breakfast is principally a sign of appreciation for our generous parishioners in their support of the work of our Saint Vincent de Paul conference. The breakfast also serves as a fundraiser to support the mission of this important work of our parish community.

Director of Youth Ministry **Courtney Rockamann** and **Maria Olivos** shepherded a group of college students to the **SEEK25 Conference** in Salt Lake City. Many of the students were former members of our Parish Youth Group. The SEEK conference is a weeklong event geared towards encouraging and forming college students in their faith. The week consists of daily Mass, an opportunity for Confession, Adoration, and dynamic speakers. Thank you to those parishioners who helped support this event. It was a beautiful and blessed week for the group.



I wanted to share an update on our **Parish Center Renovation** project. You may remember, a little over a year ago, the parish began to discern and discuss the possibility of a renovation project of the parish center. We have continued to meet with a group of parishioner stakeholders and architect **Kevin Kerwin '89**. We are working through various design proposals. The project will include an upgrade of our HVAC systems, plumbing infrastructure, windows, doors, and brickwork. The project will also look to make our parish chapel a more beautiful and permanent place of worship. We envision an expansion of the lower level to create a more stable gathering area for our parish ministries and activities.

The vision is to continue developing and promoting our existing ministries, outreach, and formation programming. The renovations will also include an elevator and other accessibility upgrades to offer a more welcoming and functional space for our parishioners and wider community. We have initiated the feasibility study process and have received a wealth of feedback on the proposed designs, which we hope to address soon. To share this feedback, we will host a parish town hall meeting in the coming months. We hope this will also further serve our campus community. Please keep our project in your prayers.

Thank you for all you continue to do for our monastery, school, and parish communities.

May God continue to bless you and your families,

*Father Aidan McDermott, O.S.B.*

Father Aidan McDermott, O.S.B.



Courtney Rockamann, Abbot Gregory Mohrman, O.S.B., '76, and Maria Olivos



Brantley and Hank Tolan checking in with Santa Claus (Anthony Zarbo)



Annamarie Porter loves helping at Saint Anselm.



SEEK25 Conference

# IN MEMORIAM

JULY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2024

Julia Baker, mother of Chris Baker '76 and Fritz Baker '78

Eric Bergmann, grandfather of David Sadasivam '22 and Jonathon Sadasivam '27

Tom Bottini, father of John Bottini '96 and Dr. Alex Bottini '03

Joan Braeckel, mother of Paul Braeckel '87, grandmother of Colby Braeckel '11 (deceased), Mason Besencenez '17, and Chancellor Besencenez '22

Elizabeth Clamp, parishioner

Ed Costigan Jr., parishioner

John DePaul, grandfather of Michael Morgenthaler '19

Tom Ebenhoh, father of Dave Ebenhoh '83 and Tom Ebenhoh '88

Kim Elfrink, mother of Erik Elfrink '06

Brother Symeon Gillette, O.S.B.

Edward Hamilton, Confrater, husband of Confrater Nancy Hamilton

Florence "Sissy" Hawes, Confrater and Abbey Society Member, wife of Confrater and Abbey Society Member Lee Hawes (deceased), mother of Fred Hawes Jr. '79, grandmother of James Mangano III '09

Elizabeth Huffaker, grandmother of Nicholas Tornberg '23

Margaret Johnson, grandmother of Jack Johnson '29

Mary Catherine Kaveney, mother of Kevin Kaveney '92 and Brian Kaveney '94, grandmother of Sean Kaveney '26 and Kit Kaveney '29

Maria Kazner, grandmother of Michael O'Keefe '19, Patrick O'Keefe '21, Wynn O'Keefe '25, and Danny O'Keefe '29

Joseph Kingston, grandfather of Sam Kingston '25 and Jack Kingston '27

Calvin Kinsella '02, son of Chris Kinsella '74, brother of Dr. Chris Kinsella '00, nephew of Colin Kinsella '79

Daniel Kuenzle, father of faculty member Jan Poth, grandfather of Tom Poth '07 and Stephen Poth '15

Charles Madinger, parishioner

Mirth McMahon, grandmother of Drew Acker '24

Pat McNamara, parishioner

George Mills, former Priory faculty member

Michael O'Keefe, father of Dan O'Keefe '87, grandfather of Michael O'Keefe '19, Patrick O'Keefe '21, Wynn O'Keefe '25, and Danny O'Keefe '29

Luther Oliver, father of David Oliver '87, Michael Oliver '90, and Tom Oliver '93

Roy Perschbacher, father of Jim Perschbacher '91, grandfather of Connor Perschbacher '27

Nancy Pollnow, mother of Charlie Pollnow '80 and Dean Pollnow '92, grandmother of Bill Pollnow '15, Joseph Pollnow '19, and Thomas Kraeger '25

Judy Pouyer, parishioner

Ron Purcell, father of Capt. Chris Purcell USN '96

E. Lawrence Quatmann, father of Comptroller Chris Schoemehl, grandfather of PJ Quatmann Jr. '30

Helen Ricci, grandmother of Michael Ricci '15 and Luke Ricci '16

Virginia Rice, mother of John Rice '72, Jim Rice '74, and grandmother of Andrew Rice '01

Doug Ries Jr. '65

Jane Ryan, parishioner

Dr. Bill Sciortino '74, brother of Dr. Robert Sciortino '79

Michael Simpson '63

Suzanne Slattery, parishioner

Kelly Stokes Sr., brother of custodial staff member Terry Stokes

Sondra Thee, sister of Brother Luke Kalthorn, O.S.B.

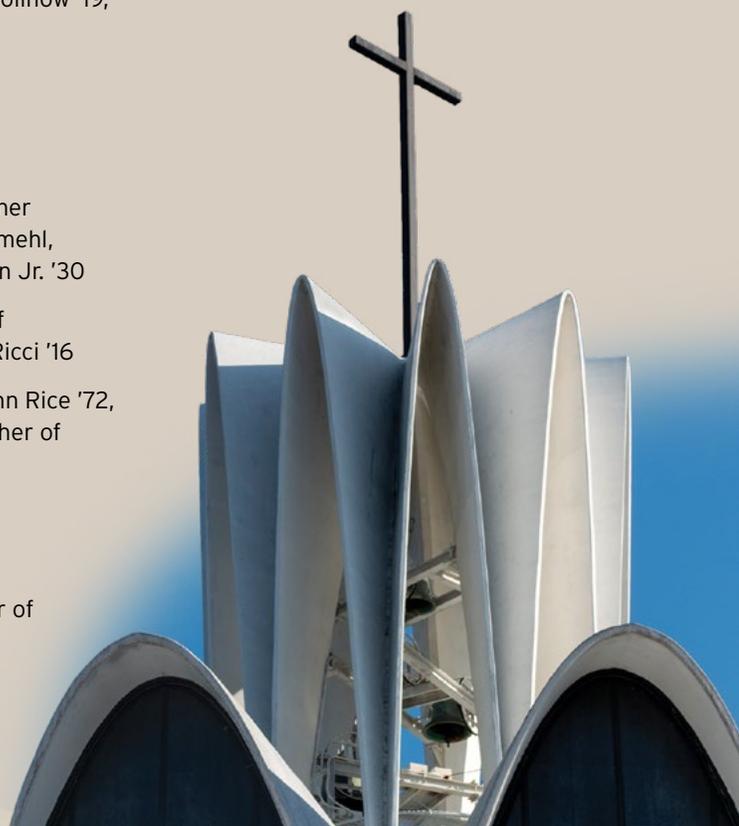
Jeanne Tracy, grandmother of Will Sandifer '19

William Travis '64, Abbey Society Member, husband of Abbey Society Member Joelle Travis, father of Philippe Travis '92, brother of Glennon Travis Jr. '72, David Travis '76, uncle of Alan Beugg '92 and Peter Beugg '94, and grandfather of William Byrne '28

Ellen Umlauf, Confrater, wife of Confrater Larry Umlauf (deceased), mother of Corge Umlauf '89 and Shane Umlauf '96 (deceased)

Marie Witscher, parishioner

Mary Wright, mother of maintenance staff member Gary Wilson



# FATHER AMBROSE BENNETT, O.S.B.

## A Beacon of Faith Serving the Church and God in the Falkland Islands



This year is the 25th anniversary of Father Ambrose Bennett's, O.S.B., profession of simple vows, a significant milestone in his religious life and ministry.

The silver jubilee serves as a testament to his unwavering dedication to the Benedictine order and his lifelong commitment to serving God and the Church.

Father Ambrose's remarkable and fascinating journey encompasses numerous accomplishments, including his service to the Saint Louis Abbey, Saint Louis Priory School, and in the Falkland Islands. He has had a profound impact on the lives of countless individuals through his spiritual guidance and selfless dedication.

Father Ambrose, born in 1965 in New Mexico, attended Catholic parochial schools through the seventh grade and later attended an Episcopal high school on scholarship.

It was in his teenage years that he read John Henry Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, the story of Newman's discovery of the Catholic tradition as the unfolding of the apostolic faith and proclamation. Newman's path from the Church of England to the fullness of Christian truth in the Catholic Church led Father Ambrose to take Catholic truth claims seriously.

Father Ambrose's understanding of the centrality of the sacred liturgy was shaped by the writings of Father Joseph Jungmann and of the Anglican Benedictine monk, Dom Gregory Dix – both key figures in the 20th-century Liturgical Movement. The intertwining of the *Lex Orandi* (the law of praying) with the *Lex Credendi* (the law of believing) has always been at the center of his thought.



Father Ambrose with the penguins in the Falkland Islands



^ Father Ambrose commemorating the British victory at the Battle of the Falklands with Maurice Lake, chaplain at the Seafarer's Mission in Stanley

The often-sharp criticisms of Catholicism by evangelicals and fundamentalists, as well as the challenge of weighing and refuting the conflicting truth claims of non-Christian religions, also led Father Ambrose to take an interest in Catholic apologetics.

He began his college studies at Princeton University, but due to family financial struggles, he left Princeton temporarily to return home and work in his family's restaurant business. He returned to Princeton in 1995 and graduated in May 1996 with a degree in comparative literature.

"After finishing my undergraduate work, I was free to seek a religious vocation – something I believed was indicated by the unusual path I had followed. I was a reader of a journal where I saw many ads for Saint Louis Abbey. Since I had no idea where to begin, I wrote to Father Ralph Wright, O.S.B., the vocations director," Father Ambrose says. "I made two visits and was impressed by the spirit and the liturgical life at the Abbey. The balance of respect for tradition and contemporary adaptation was in line with what the Second Vatican Council intended. So, I thought this was where I should enter."

He took the name Ambrose in honor of the English Benedictine martyr, Ambrose Barlow, one of the Forty Martyrs canonized in 1970. He professed simple vows on January 9, 1999, and made his solemn profession in January 2002. His priesthood ordination took place on August 28, 2004.

Father Ambrose taught theology and Spanish at Priory from 2000 to 2013. Following that, he was the assistant school librarian.

In 2018 Father Ambrose was asked to fill in at St. Mary's in Stanley in the Falkland Islands for the priest who needed to return to England for three months. When that priest couldn't return, and after getting permission from Abbot Gregory Mohrman, O.S.B., '76 and consent of the Saint Louis Abbey monastic council, Father Ambrose continued his service in the Falklands.

"I felt my appointment there could be a positive experience for me, as well as a real help to the Church in that part of the world," says Father Ambrose. "Father Abbot requested I return to St. Louis in late April and meet with him in person. Father Abbot and the Council consented to my return to the Falklands for a year. The permission can be renewed yearly, depending on how it goes and Father Abbot's assessment of my situation and that of the community."

Father Ambrose says he is grateful for being given permission to engage in the pastoral care of the faithful in the Falkland Islands at the ends of the earth. "I see it as entirely consonant with an English Benedictine Congregation monastic vocation: after years in the monastery and the school, I have gone on the mission, as so many English Benedictine monks have done in the past."

v Father Tom Thomas, I.C. (Institute of Charity, also known as the Rosminians) pictured with Father Ambrose. Father Tom is the Apostolic Administrator of the Prefecture of the Falkland Islands.



## Raven Roundup

Students had the opportunity to learn more about clubs and activities at Priory at the annual Raven Roundup event. Participating clubs set up displays in the high school commons and participants enjoyed a shaved ice treat.

## National Latin Exam Awards

The National Latin Exam is a national competition in Latin, classical mythology, derivatives, Latin literature, Roman life, history, and geography.

**Chase Parmeter '28, Alex Siedband '28, Charlie Edwards '28, Simon Van Engen '28, Ethan McGee '28, and Tripp Redmond '28** received a perfect score in Introduction to Latin level.

**Matthew Goss '27** and **Jonathon Sadasivam '27** received a perfect score in the Beginning Latin level. This is the second year in a row that Matthew and Jonathon received a perfect score.

## Priory Alumni Network Hosts Workshop

The Priory Alumni Network hosted Form VI students for a resume and interview workshop. Alumni **Tom Cummings '89, Gabriel Santa Cruz '92, Ondray Wells Jr. '85, Mike Reedy Jr. '00, Teddy Altepeter '09, and Ted Horan '04** shared their expertise and best practices for resumes and interviews. We appreciate all the wisdom and guidance they shared to prepare our students for the future.

## Career Day at Busch Stadium

**Tyler Witkowski '25, Alex Bader '26, Barrett Beimdiek '26, and Davis Weas '25** joined Priory Director of Athletics Phil Brotherton for Career Day at Busch Stadium. Students and educators enjoyed a special pre-game panel discussion with executives focusing on careers in sports and media. They also attended an exclusive college fair with colleges and universities from around the Midwest.

✓ Priory students attend career day at Busch Stadium



Students learn about Priory's Chess Club at the Raven Roundup



National Latin Exam awardees



Priory Alumni Network presenters



National Merit Semifinalist - Thomas Kraeger '25 and Charles Schanbusch '25

National Hispanic Recognition Award - Matthew Singer '25

## National Merit Recognitions

Congratulations to our Priory seniors who have been recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. This impressive group represents 14% of our senior class!

*National Merit Semifinalist* - **Thomas Kraeger '25** and **Charles Schanbusch '25**

*National Merit Commended* - **Michael Roxas '25, Deven Creeth '25, Samuel Faust '25, and Ben Duke '25**

*National Hispanic Recognition Award* - **Matthew Singer '25**



National Merit Commended - Michael Roxas '25, Deven Creeth '25, Samuel Faust '25, and Ben Duke '25

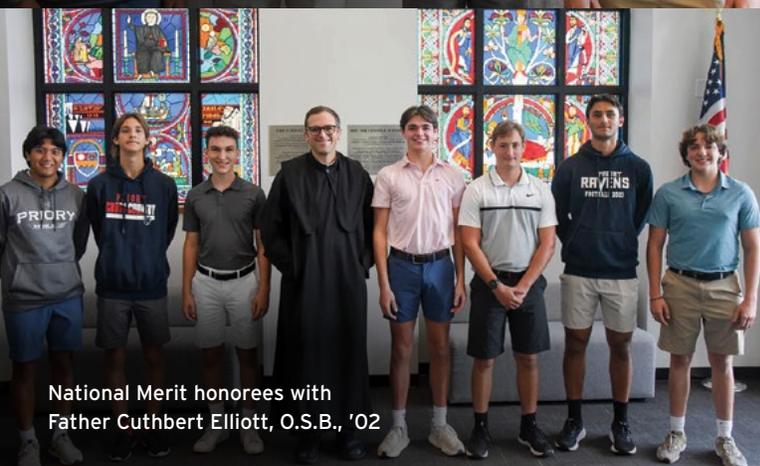
## Form I Retreat at Camp Ondessonk

Form I students enjoyed their retreat at Camp Ondessonk. They were challenged to learn about themselves and their peers. The theme of the retreat was The Rule of St. Benedict. It included talks, small group sharing, monastic prayer, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, an opportunity for Confession, and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

## Presidential Service Awards

Congrats to Priory students who were recognized with Presidential Service Awards for the community service they did last year.

- **Simon Whitlock '27** volunteered 112 hours and received the *Presidential Service Award Gold Medal*.
- **Joseph Frei '27** volunteered 101 hours and received the *Presidential Service Award Gold Medal*.
- **Miles Herr '25** logged 160 hours and received the *Presidential Service Award Bronze Medal*.



National Merit honorees with Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02

▽ Priory students receive Presidential Service Awards



Form I retreat attendees play gaga ball



- **Ben Duke '25** logged 108 hours and received the *Presidential Service Award Bronze Medal*.
- **Thomas Rempe '25** logged 102 hours and received the *Presidential Service Award Bronze Medal*.
- **Thomas Kraeger '25** logged 100 hours and received the *Presidential Service Award Bronze Medal*.
- **David Peter '25** logged 100 hours and received the *Presidential Service Award Bronze Medal*.
- **John Zemlyak '25**, logged 100 hours and received the *Presidential Service Award Bronze Medal*.

### Kinnaman '26 Named World Champion

Congratulations to **Noah Kinnaman '26** on being the Junior Boys' World Champion at the 2024 IWWF Barefoot Water Ski World Championships in Florida. Kinnaman swept gold medals in junior boys' slalom, elite men's tricks, and jumps. Photo credit: Lynn Novakofski



Kinnaman named World Champion

### Pim '25 Recognized as Outstanding Leader

**Colin Pim '25** was recognized by the Saint Louis County Outstanding Leadership Program. He was Priory's student council president and was nominated for his leadership and service to the school community. As part of the program, he participated in a leadership conference at Washington University and was officially recognized by members of the County Council at a ceremony in Clayton.



Colin Pim '25 receives leadership award from County Executive Sam Page.

### Priory Presents Fall Play

Last fall, Priory students performed onstage and served in backstage support to present the play *Is He Dead?* in the Kevin Kline Theatre. Audience members enjoyed the farcical comedy, which was written by Mark Twain in 1898 and adapted for the stage by David Ives in 2007.



Fall play - *Is He Dead?*



Andrew Broder '25 with his Esports team

### Broder '25 and Team Win Esports Tournament

**Andrew Broder '25** and his Esports team won the Overwatch Championship in the "Stay Plugged In" Esports Tournament in South Carolina. The tournament is a showcase for college recruitment. Broder will be attending Maryville University on an Esports scholarship.

### Fishing Club Takes Field Trip to Westover Farms

The Fishing Club had a very successful trip to Westover Farms, owned by the Glarner family, for fly fishing. Last fall's rains and flooding overflowed the fish pens, allowing the students to catch over 200 fish.

### Scholar Bowl Team Has Another Successful Season

The Priory Scholar Bowl Team finished in fourth place at the Private League Scholar Bowl Finals. **Sam Faust '25** and **Charlie Schanbusch '25** both earned medals based on individual point scores.

Congratulations to the following team members:

**Charlie Schanbusch '25** (captain), **Thomas Rempe '25**, **Sam Kingston '25**, **Sam Faust '25**, **Andrew Broder '25**, **Nicholas Brier '25**, and **Chuck Taylor '26**.

### Faust '25 Awarded Latin Book Prize

**Sam Faust '25** was awarded a book prize by the National Latin Exam for earning a gold medal for the fourth consecutive year. He's progressed through the introductory, beginner, intermediate, and advanced prose levels of the National Latin Exam.



Luke Nowak '26 enjoyed fishing at Westover Farms

> Sam Faust '25 awarded book prize



Scholar Bowl Team



# FALL SPORTS 2024

## Cross Country

The Priory varsity cross country team had a strong 2024 showing finishing the season in 11th place at State.

The Ravens got the season underway at the Forest Park Cross Country Invitational where they came in 11th, led by **Nathan Singer '25** who finished 36th with a time of 19:08.

Priory earned its first top-10 finish at its next meet, the 39th Annual Fulton Cross Country Invitational, coming in eighth. **Justin Nangle '25** paced the Ravens with a 19th-place finish, coming in at 18:54.69.

Two weeks later, the Ravens hosted the Mike Rebello Cross Country Open and had its best placing of the year, coming in third. Nangle finished 13th at 18:48.08, while **George Schwartz '27** (19:23.73) and **Sam Faust '25** (19:36.69) ended in 19th and 20th place, respectively.

After a 10th-place finish at the Orchard Farm Invitational, the Ravens closed out the final meet before Districts with a fourth-place finish at Hancock.

At Districts, the Ravens came in fourth place overall having three runners finish inside the top 25: **Sean Kaveney '25** (16th), **Jacob Kheriaty '28** (17th), and Nangle (22nd).

At the State Championship, the Ravens finished in 11th place with Nangle leading with a 43rd-place finish and a time of 18:03. Kaveney crossed the line in 52nd place at 18:12, while Kheriaty ended the day at 18:16 for 59th place.

Kheriaty, Kaveney, and Nangle earned All-District honors to close out the year.



Seniors Sam Faust, Nathan Singer, and Justin Nangle head for the finish line at the Mike Rebello meet.



Senior Samuel Faust finished strong in his final Priory cross country season at the Class 3 State Championship meet.

# FALL SPORTS 2024



The Priory offensive line prepares to hike the ball in a game against Jefferson.



Quarterback Jack Parent '25 finds the gap and runs the ball at a game against Jefferson.

## Football

The Priory varsity football team had an up-and-down 2024 season with highlight wins over Lutheran South (42-13) and Principia (35-7) at Homecoming.

Prior to a season-ending injury, quarterback **Jack Parent '25** threw for 671 yards and five touchdowns. Backup quarterback **Gavin Gittemeier '26** tossed a career-high 712 yards and six touchdowns.

Parent also led the rushing attack with 45 carries for a team-high 351 yards and five touchdowns. Gittemeier (215), **Andrew Harrison '27** (164), **Owen Eisenbeis '25** (155), and **William Harrison '25** (110), all had at least 100 total yards of rushing.

Eisenbeis posted a team-high 59 catches for 632 yards and four touchdowns. **Will Puschel '25** was second on the team with 38 catches for 371 yards and one touchdown.

Defensively, **Davis Weas '25** led the Ravens with team-highs in individual tackles (33), assisted tackles (15), total tackles (48), and sacks (four).

**Tripp Redmond '28** was second on the team with 21 tackles, while Puschel contributed 20. **Parker Meek '26** was second on the Ravens with two sacks.

At the conclusion of the year, both Eisenbeis and **Miles Herr '25** were named to the Metro League All-Conference First and Second Team, respectively.

Eisenbeis was selected to the First Team as an athlete and Second Team as a returner. Herr was named to the First Team as a punter and Second Team as a kicker. **Sam Jung '26**, Puschel, and Weas also were named to the Second Team. Meek and Parent earned Honorable Mention.

Academic All-State winners included **Christian Bolin '26**, **Deven Creeth '25**, Gittemeier, Jung, **Aidan Edwards '25**, Harrison, Meek, Eisenbeis, Herr, Parent, **Colin Pim '25**, and Weas. These 12 players set a new mark for Priory football in honors earned.

**Head Coach Jake Parent** noted how resilient the group was while facing a variety of challenges throughout the year. "While facing the injury bug throughout the year, these guys did not give up," says Parent. "Some stepped into new roles and others stepped up their game. We were playing our best football at the end of the season."

## Soccer

The Priory varsity soccer team advanced to the Class 2 District 1 Championship, but fell 1-0 in overtime against eventual State Champion, Clayton. The Ravens finished the year 12-13 overall.

Priory had a slow start to the year, opening at 3-7 through the first 10 games. From there, the Ravens team found its groove, winning seven of its next 10 games, capped off by a 9-0 victory over KIPP St. Louis to get to the .500 mark at 10-10. The Ravens dropped its final two regular season games but still earned the No. 2 seed in the district tournament.

The Ravens dominated Sullivan in the quarterfinals with a 6-1 win and followed that up with a 4-0 shutout victory over DuBourg. However, the Greyhounds played spoiler in the championship game, going on for the overtime win.

**Jake McAtee '27** led the Ravens with eight goals and three assists for 19 points. **Charlie Cusumano '27** added five goals and two assists for 12 points. **Drake Polcyn '25** and **Brendan Top '26** tied with four goals each. In net, **Will Hoffman '26** compiled seven shutouts and 114 saves.

At the conclusion of the year, Hoffman and **Michael Roxas '25** were named to the Metro League All-Conference First Team. **Sean Kaveney '26** was named to the Second Team.

Hoffman also earned Class 2 Region 1 Goalkeeper of the Year and was selected to the Class 2 All-State First Team. Roxas was named to the Class 2 Region 1 First Team and Class 2 All-State Second Team, while Kaveney earned Class 2 Region 1 Second Team honors.



Ravens celebrating from left to right: Alex Buckalew '27, Jake McAtee '27, Drake Polcyn '25, Raphi Clark '27, and Ben Pacheco '27



Miles Herr '25 taking a shot at goal



# SUMMER

## PROGRAMMING AT PRIORITY

### ATHLETIC CAMPS

At Priory athletic camps, young athletes learn the keys to success in sports and in their personal lives. Sports camps are held on Priory's beautiful 150-acre campus, and coaches emphasize the pleasure of playing sports while developing athletic skills and good sportsmanship.

### ABBEY OAKS CO-ED DAY CAMP

The **Abbey Oaks Co-Ed Day Camp for 5th through 8th Graders** is an extraordinary summer camp experience that offers an exciting array of activities and opportunities that promote personal growth, friendship, fun and unforgettable memories. You don't need to be a Priory student to attend.

### INCOMING PRIORITY 9TH GRADERS

The **Scholastica Rising 9th Grade Day Camp** for admitted and current students is an invaluable opportunity for new Form III students to forge connections with their future classmates and teachers before the academic year officially kicks off. The program plays a vital role in fostering camaraderie among new students while providing a warm welcome to the Priory community.

### ESSAY WRITING WORKSHOP FOR PRIORITY SENIORS

Priory rising seniors can attend this optional weeklong workshop, which includes discussion on what the main Common Application essay should accomplish, followed by brainstorming, introspection exercises, and drafting and editing work. Essay topics will be selected from the 2025-26 Common Application main essay prompts.

### SUMMER ADULT LANGUAGE COURSES

Intensive language courses ideal for those seeking a new skill or reviving an old passion, preparing for Christian ministry, expanding language skills for work or travel, or simply meeting new and like-minded people. All abilities and backgrounds are welcome.

Visit [www.priory.org/summer](http://www.priory.org/summer) to register or learn more about these programs!





## Xanadu in the Lou 2025 Hits a Homerun!

On February 8th, Priory held its first Xanadu Auction off campus at the **Missouri Athletic Club Downtown**. With the theme **Xanadu in the Lou**, the evening was a great success and featured live and silent auctions, raffles, delicious food and drink, an afterparty, and more! The annual fundraising event supports the school's commitment to providing an exceptional Catholic, Benedictine education to motivated and talented and young men.

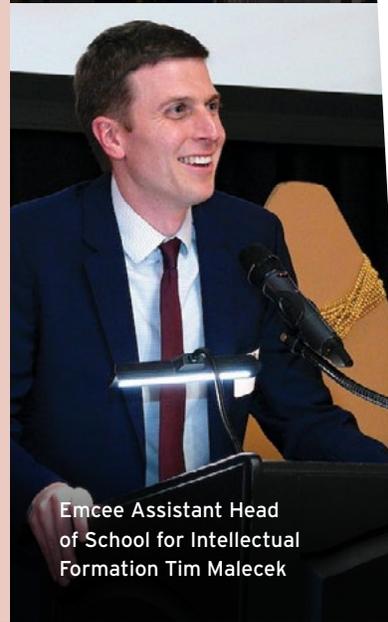
The 2025 Fund-A-Need, **Piazza Priory**, will be located next to the dining hall where students, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, and friends of Priory can enjoy dining and gathering in the fresh air. The beautiful space will include comfortable tables and chairs and a pizza oven! All perfect for bringing the Priory community together.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to all who supported the Priory auction, with a special acknowledgement to our dedicated co-chairs, **Laura Polcyn** (Drake '25) and **Eleni Zemlyak** (John '25). Their tireless efforts and commitment contributed immensely to the success of this memorable event. Thank you, too, to emcee of the night, Assistant Head of School for Intellectual Formation **Tim Malecek**. The exciting afterparty featured the Adam Bitter and Friends band.

✓ Priory mom Valerie Brier (Nick '25) with co-chairs Laura Polcyn (Drake '25) and Eleni Zemlyak (John '25)



Oh, what a night! Standing: Xanadu in the Lou co-chairs Laura Polcyn and Eleni Zemlyak celebrate with Priory Form VI parents sitting from left to right: Tom Polcyn, Courtney and Kevin Harrison, Mary and Dan Charles, George and Valerie Brier, and Jim Zemlyak



Emcee Assistant Head of School for Intellectual Formation Tim Malecek



Kevin and Emily McAtee (Jake '27) had the winning bid on the Priory auction puppy "Lou Lou."



The Adam Bitter and Friends band kept Xanadu in the Lou going at the afterparty.



Priory juniors made Xanadu more meaningful by volunteering their time. Pictured from left to right are Form V students: Sam Palka, Simon Lin, Jude Badoy, Matthew Hansen, Everett Feldmeier, and Gavin Gittemeier

# MOTHERS' CLUB



Under the leadership of **Jennifer O'Keefe** (Danny '29, Wynn '25, Patrick '21, and Michael '19), the Mothers' Club hosted a series of exciting and successful events throughout late fall and early winter.

## Blooms & Blazer Sale

Priory moms gathered for one of the first Mothers' Club events of the school year at the Blooms and Blazers Sale. Parents had the opportunity to purchase gently used blazers, generously passed down by other Priory students, ensuring new families were well-prepared for the year ahead. In addition to shopping, mothers enjoyed assembling their own beautiful flower bouquets while catching up with friends. Thank you to **Laura Rothery** (Eddie '25) and **Carrie Parent** (Jack '25, Mark '23, and Luke '20) for organizing this fun event.

## Labor Day Monks' Dinner

The Mothers' Club Board organized a group of generous volunteers to provide the Saint Louis Abbey monastic community with a plentiful dinner on September 2.

## Reflection & Connection

The Mothers' Club hosted Reflection & Connection, a special gathering designed to nurture faith, community, and meaningful conversations. The morning began with a beautiful Mass celebrated by **Father Augustine Wetta, O.S.B.** Following Mass, guests enjoyed a warm and inviting breakfast at the Switzer House. Thank you to **Irene Buckalew** (Alex '27 and AJ '23) and **Sara Clark** (Raphi '27, Michael '23, and R.J. '21) for hosting.

## Form I & Form II Mother Son Event

In November, Form I & II moms and sons gathered at the MAC West Clubhouse for an exciting murder mystery dinner. The event provided a perfect mix of intrigue, laughter, and quality time together. As participants worked to unravel the mystery, they enjoyed a night filled with suspense, interactive entertainment, and delicious food. Thank you to **Susie Brown** (Henry '29) and **Suzanne Miller-Farrell** (Rory '29) for putting together this event.

> Moms Melissa Albers (Caleb '29), Anna Westhoff (Wesley '30), and Jennifer Blatz (Dylan '29, Aidan '28, and Owen '26) with one of the actors at the murder mystery dinner.

## Annual Christmas Boutique and Luncheon

The Christmas Boutique took place in early December in the Priory multi-purpose gym. Attendees, including current and alumni moms, teachers, and friends, enjoyed shopping from over 30 vendors, featuring the Priory Campus Store, Mothers' Club, and Xanadu items. Guests also indulged in delicious food and drinks, making for a festive and enjoyable event.

A debt of gratitude goes out to all the volunteers who made this event possible including chairs **Erica Rose** (Jackson '28), **Mary Bower** (Joseph '25), and **Sara McAtee Johnson** (Jack '29). The bake sale wouldn't be possible without the organization of **Kristin Waltz** (Charlie '28, Jake '25) and **Mariann Witkowski** (Ryan '29, Tyler '25). And finally, thank you to the plant sale organizer **Chrissy Frazier** (Cade '28).

## SAVE THE DATES

### Spring Luncheon

**Thursday, May 1**  
Old Warson Country Club

### Senior Mother & Son Mass & Brunch

**Wednesday, May 14**  
Bellerive Country Club





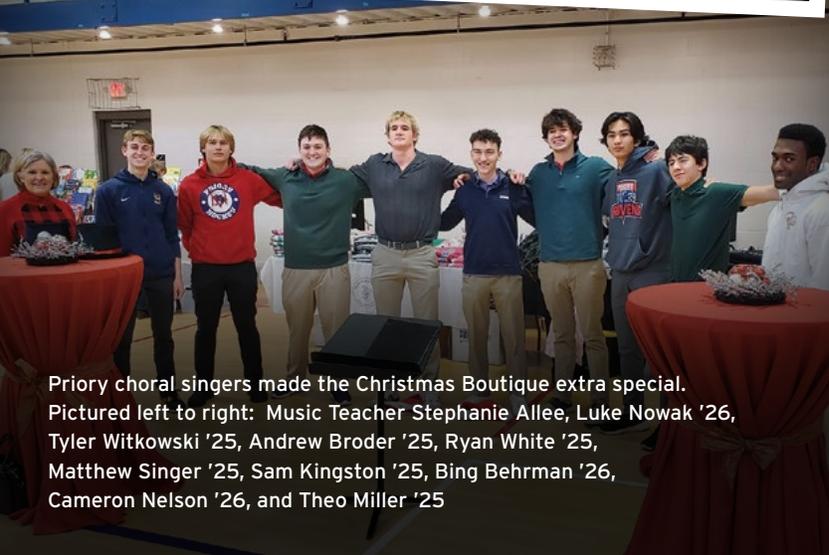
Dimana Teneva (Dany Iliev '30), Kelly McNair (SJ '30), and Cindy Hunt (Joshua '30) enjoy Blooms and Blazers.



Kate Spencer (Andrew '30) and Nubia Schlijker (Liam '30)



Priory moms at Reflection & Connection: Katie Rengel (Micah '30), Maura Devereux (Will Johnson '30), Michelle Quatmann (PJ '30), Megan Williams (Jack '28), and Elizabeth Foss (Eli '25 and Ethan '24)

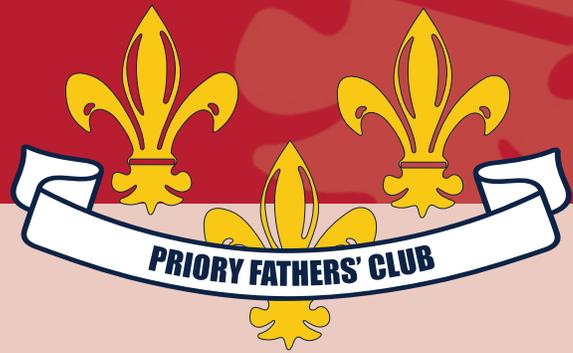


Priory choral singers made the Christmas Boutique extra special. Pictured left to right: Music Teacher Stephanie Allee, Luke Nowak '26, Tyler Witkowski '25, Andrew Broder '25, Ryan White '25, Matthew Singer '25, Sam Kingston '25, Bing Behrman '26, Cameron Nelson '26, and Theo Miller '25



A debt of gratitude goes out to all the volunteers who made the annual Christmas Boutique possible, including chairs Erica Rose (Jackson '28), Mary Bower (Joseph '25), and Sara McAtee Johnson (Jack '29).

# FATHERS' CLUB



Fathers' Club president **Ken Bower '89** (Joe '25) and the Executive Board provided guidance this year as they continued to increase participation and involvement in many events for Priory students and their father figures.

## Bags Tournament

In August, the Fathers' Club hosted a lively Bags tournament to warmly welcome new students and their dads. Thank you to **Rick James Sr. '80** (Thomas '27 and Rick '18) for revamping this fun event.

## Welcome Dinner & Weight Room Ribbon Cutting

In September, the Fathers' Club shared updates on the year's agenda and goals. The evening was made even more memorable by the unveiling of the newly renovated weight room. The weight room ribbon cutting was organized by **Jason Frey** (Grady '28), **Anthony Johnson** (Andre '28), and **Jim Hill** (Auggie '28).

## Fall Happy Hour

The Fathers' Club organized a fall happy hour at Rosalita's West, bringing together Priory dads. Attendees had the opportunity to connect and hear important updates on the state of athletics. Thank you, **Justin Schlaikjer** (Liam '30) for planning!

## Father & Son BBQ and Bus Trip

The Fathers' Club organized an outing to cheer on Priory's varsity football team. The group enjoyed dinner and games at the Switzer House before boarding a charter bus to follow the team to Freeburg. **TJ Remond Jr. '99** (Tripp '28) did a great job of putting this event together.

## Form I and II Rec Night

Fathers' Club hosted two successful Rec Nights for Form I and II students and their dads. The fall Rec Night featured dodgeball games and pizza. In January, the crew met at the MAC West Clubhouse for pickleball, snacks, and fun before watching the Priory varsity basketball team take on Principia. Thank you, **John Kovac** (Austin '27), **Peter Blumeyer '98** (Cullen '29), and **Steve McNair '01** (SJ '30) for planning these events.

## SAVE THE DATES

### Father & Son Banquet

**Monday, April 14** at the Missouri Athletic Club Downtown

### Senior Father & Son "Finish Line" BBQ

**Thursday, May 15** on the Switzer House Lawn



Fathers' Club welcome dinner



# ALUMNI MOTHERS' CLUB



The Alumni Mothers' Club (AMC), under the leadership of **Janet Whalen** (Brody '21), works to keep alumni mothers connected to Saint Louis Priory School and the monastery. Thank you to Janet for her dedication this year to strengthen the AMC.

## Fall Mass and Dinner

The AMC enjoyed an evening of fellowship, beginning with a Mass in the Abbey Church and continuing with a delightful dinner in the dining hall. The keynote speaker, **Carrie Parent**, is both an alumni parent and current parent (Jack '25, Mark '23, and Luke '20).

## Thanksgiving Food Drop-Off for the Monks

The AMC tradition of donating food to the monks for Thanksgiving is a cherished annual gesture. By providing this special meal, they offer the monks an opportunity to relax and fully enjoy the holiday in a spirit of gratitude and fellowship. This thoughtful tradition reinforces the deep connection between the alumni community and the monastic community.

## SAVE THE DATE

### Margarita Party

The AMC Annual Margarita Party will be held from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 5, at Rosalita's Cantina in Des Peres at 12796 Manchester Road. All alumni mothers are encouraged to attend.



All alumni mothers are invited to join the AMC. The AMC promotes the goals of the Abbey and the school, strengthens ties with the monastic community, builds a deeper spiritual link with the Benedictine tradition as lived by the monks, and creates a strong bond among alumni mothers. To join or learn more about the AMC, visit: [www.priory.org/parents/alumni-mothers-club](http://www.priory.org/parents/alumni-mothers-club) or scan the QR code below.



# HOMECOMING

This year's Priory Homecoming was nothing short of spectacular. Under a clear blue sky and with a warm breeze, the campus came alive as alumni, students, families, and fans gathered to celebrate tradition, community, and the excitement of the big game. The perfect fall weather set the stage for what would be an unforgettable day.

The highlight of the day was the varsity football matchup against Principia. The stands were packed with fans in Priory colors, creating an exciting atmosphere that fueled the team to victory.

We honored senior players and their families on the field. Each senior was introduced, walking arm-in-arm with his parents. It was a heartfelt moment of pride and gratitude, reminding everyone of the bonds that make our community so special. Go Ravens!

This year, a new kids' section added a touch of magic to the festivities, which included a face painter, balloon artist, and a variety of yard games. The kids enjoyed exploring, playing, and making memories with friends and family.

The day would not have been complete without the delicious food and sweet treats that brought everyone together. A heartfelt thank you goes to the **Alumni Board** for the complimentary barbecue, which was a crowd favorite. Additionally, the **Alumni Mothers' Club** provided an extra touch of sweetness with an ice cream and snow cone truck, perfectly complementing the sunny weather.

As the day ended, the smiles on everyone's faces reflected the joy and camaraderie that Priory Homecoming brings. It was a celebration of community, tradition, and the unbreakable bonds that make Priory such a special place. Here's to another incredible Homecoming – already looking forward to 2025!

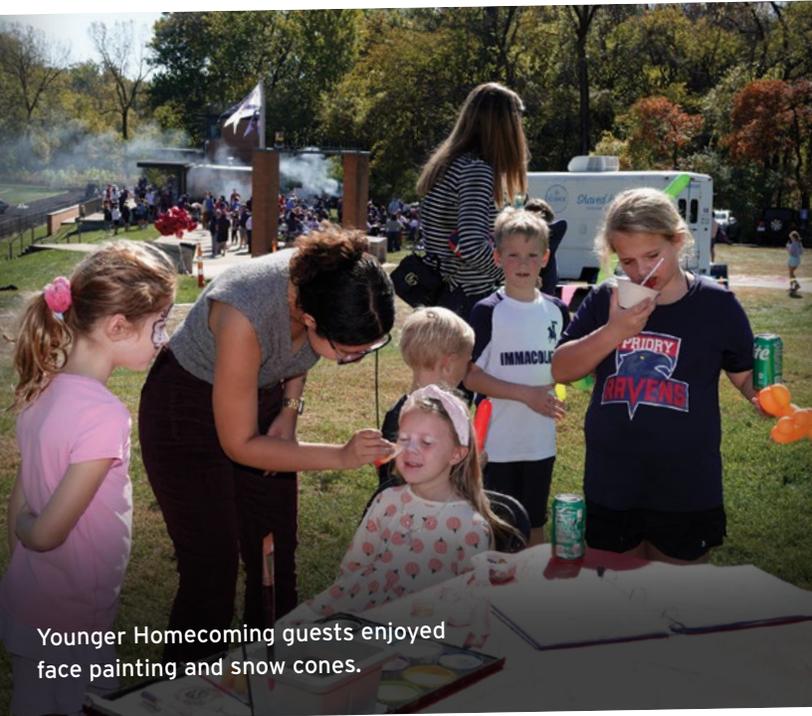




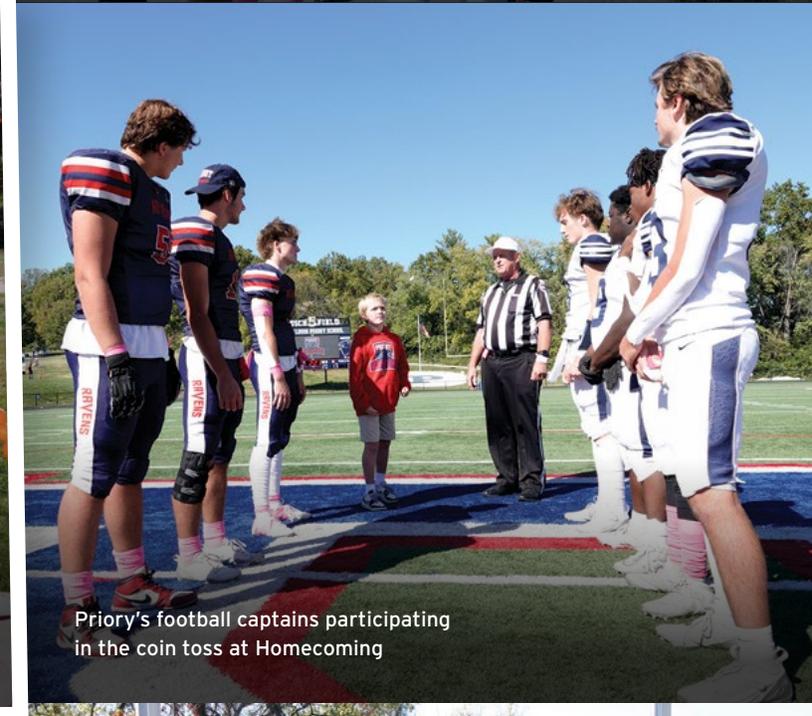
Priory's hospitality staff and the Alumni Board cooked and provided delicious BBQ for the annual Homecoming game.



Priory varsity football players heading down to Todd Stadium for their Homecoming game versus Principia



Younger Homecoming guests enjoyed face painting and snow cones.



Priory's football captains participating in the coin toss at Homecoming



Priory quarterback Owen Eisenbeis after the snap



Priory students enjoy Homecoming. Pictured: Aidan Strauss '27, Charlie Cusumano '27, Jake McAtee '27, Michael Roxas '25, Matthew Singer '25, and Sam Kingston '25

# ALUMNI NETWORK

## RECONNECTING WITH OUR ROOTS

### Living Benedictine Values at Saint Louis Priory School

At Saint Louis Priory School, our Benedictine values form the cornerstone of our community, shaping not only the way we educate but also how we live and connect with one another. Grounded in the principles of *ora et labora* (prayer and work), our commitment to humility, hospitality, and stewardship extends far beyond the walls of our campus. These values guide our mission to foster a lifelong bond among our students, alumni, and the broader Benedictine community.

In recent years, we have taken bold steps to reconnect with our alumni across the country. Recognizing the importance of maintaining strong ties, we embarked on a series of visits to cities with high concentrations of Priory graduates. These trips were not just about reminiscing but also about celebrating the enduring spirit of our school and sharing how our Benedictine heritage continues to thrive today.

Alumni from various walks of life reflected on how their time at Priory instilled in them a sense of purpose, discipline, and a commitment to service. From careers in medicine and law to roles in education and public service, Priory graduates shared stories of how the teachings of Saint Benedict have guided their decisions and helped them navigate life's challenges.

Each city visit featured moments of prayer, fellowship, and dialogue. Whether over a shared meal or during a reception, the gatherings reinforced our belief in the power of community and the timeless relevance of Benedictine principles. They also provided an opportunity to share exciting developments at Priory, including initiatives to enhance student programs, foster global perspectives, and strengthen our spiritual foundation.

These efforts to reconnect with alumni also reflect the Benedictine value of stewardship. We are called to care for the gifts entrusted to us – our relationships, our resources, and our shared faith. By reaching out to alumni, we honor the legacy they helped build while inviting them to play an active role in shaping our future.

As we continue this journey, we are reminded of the words of Saint Benedict: *"Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ."* These visits have allowed us to extend that hospitality, ensuring that every member of our Priory family knows he or she has a home in our community, no matter where they are.

At Saint Louis Priory School, our mission is not just to educate but to nurture hearts and minds for a lifetime. Through the lens of our Benedictine values, we continue to strengthen the bonds

that connect us, ensuring that the spirit of Priory thrives in every corner of the world. Together, we look forward to a future filled with faith, fellowship, and shared purpose.

## ON THE ROAD

### Boston

The alumni receptions in downtown Boston provided a memorable evening of reconnection and reminiscing. **Abbot Gregory Mohrman, O.S.B., '76**, **Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02**, and Director of College Counseling **Nikki Hostnik** enjoyed the reception. They also visited area colleges to reconnect with former students and further deepen the sense of community and tradition that ties the Priory community together.

### New York City

Priory alumni gathered at the NYC Yale Club in December for the Abbot's Reception in the heart of Manhattan. Guests from many generations, including **Abbot Gregory** and **Father Cuthbert**, reconnected and mingled. Many visited with old friends and made new friends. The evening was enriched by the camaraderie and strong sense of unity rooted in Benedictine values.



## REUNIONS

### Class of 1964

Alumni from the Class of 1964 gathered in October to celebrate their 60-year reunion with a private dinner at The Racquet Club. The group shared a wonderful evening filled with laughter and connection.

### Class of 1974

A lively happy hour took place at the Switzer House in September for the Class of 1974. The 50-year reunion continued with a delicious dinner in the dining hall where old friendships were rekindled.

### Class of 2014

The historic Missouri Athletic Club in downtown St. Louis was a fabulous location for the Class of 2014 to hold their 10-year reunion. It was a great evening for the classmates to celebrate their accomplishments since they graduated a decade ago.

### Class of 2019

Pizza, drinks, and laughter filled the Switzer House when the Class of 2019 gathered for their five-year reunion in November.



Priory alumni from the Class of 1974



Priory alumni from the Class of 2019



Priory alumni from the Class of 1964



Avi Amin '87, Abbot Gregory Mohrman, O.S.B., '76, Sean Pinney '86, and Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02 in New York City



Priory alumni from the Class of 2014



Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02, Abbot Michael Brunner, Andrea Nouss, and James Nouss III '03 at the Abbot's Reception in New York City

# CLASS NOTES



**Ian Banks '16** started a new job at C3 Solutions as a research fellow.



**Mark Ciapciak '17** was promoted to an associate for Lincoln International.



**Paul Davies '14** celebrated his marriage to Caroline in November of 2024. He was also recently promoted to lead data scientist at Grainger.



**Joe Hunt '20** was promoted to account executive in group sales for the Chicago Bulls.



**Nick Parafiniuk '22** traveled to the United Arab Emirates with Saint Louis University's international

business program for the first step in his consulting project for Mastercard's Middle East and North Africa headquarters. The trip was full of cultural activities and business meetings with global business leaders. Now, he is in the process of formulating his recommendations to strengthen Mastercard Commercial.



**Andrew Rhodes '12** was promoted to sales team lead for ZB MidARK.



**Sean Sigillito '11** was promoted to senior associate at King & Spalding.



**Dr. Esan Simon '90** started a new job at Chenega Professional Services strategic business unit as the chief medical officer.



**Sohaan Swaminathan '15** was married in June, 2024, in Chicago. Many Priory alumni

attended the wedding including Logan Bealke '15, John Cook '15, Elliott Dow '15, Grant Dow '15, Parker Dow '15, Bryan Dunbar '15, Eddie Griesedieck '15, Brendan Koltoff '15, Jeff Michalski '15, Michael Ricci '15, Nitin Soorya '91, Sandeep Soorya '93, Danny Steurer '15, Sohil Swaminathan '16, and Zach Kuchan '15.



**Stephen Theisen '10** started a new position as consultant at Bain & Company.



**Perry Wilkins '05** was one of four Dowd Bennett attorneys to receive the Best Lawyers: Ones to

Watch award. The award recognizes attorneys who are earlier in their careers for professional excellence in private practice in America.



**Jack Wegmann '11** started a new job at Alaffia Health as the senior director of finance.



Join us in wishing **Stephen Willman '75** a happy retirement as he begins the next chapter of his life.



**James Wong '22** accepted a position with PwC as an audit and assurance intern for the winter of 2026.



**Ted Yemm '06** was promoted to associate partner at DHR Global.



**Dominic Young '17** began a new role as associate at CBRE.

## ATTENTION!

Calling all alumni who attended the University of Oxford! We'd love to hear from you. Please reach out to Bridget Mallon at [bmallon@priory.org](mailto:bmallon@priory.org) to share your experience and update our alumni data. Your journey is an inspiration to current and future students, and we look forward to hearing from you!

# SAINT LOUIS PRIORY SCHOOL

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2023-24 FISCAL YEAR

Priory's success each year depends on the generosity of our families and alumni. Thank you for your support! In the 2023-24 school year, you contributed \$2.1 million to our fundraising efforts. In addition, we distributed \$1 million from our endowment funds. These endowments allow donors to make gifts that support Priory in perpetuity. With your continued support to our annual fundraising and endowments, we will continue to offer our students preparation for an exceptional life.

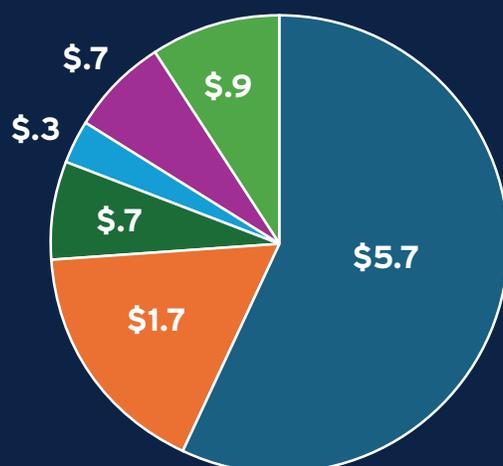
### 2023-24 Operating Cash Receipts (\$ in millions)

Net Tuition	\$ 6.1
Other School Receipts	\$ 0.8
Fundraising	\$ 2.1
Distributions From Endowments	\$ 1.0
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 10.0</b>



### 2023-24 Operating Cash Expenditures (\$ in millions)

Instructional	\$ 5.7
Facilities	\$ 1.7
Support Services	\$ 0.7
Software and Services	\$ 0.3
Advancement	\$ 0.7
Administrative	\$ 0.9
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 10.0</b>



# LEADERSHIP

## Monastic Council

Abbot Gregory Mohrman, O.S.B., '76  
Prior Dominic Lenk, O.S.B.  
Father Augustine Wetta, O.S.B.  
Father Aidan McDermott, O.S.B.  
Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02  
Father Athanasius Soto, O.S.B.

## Board of Advisors

Roger E. Cammon, *Chair*  
Jerold A. Dow  
Daniel J. Leary III '87  
Father Paul McCormick, O. Cist.  
Francis J. Merenda Jr. '96  
Alicia T. Noddings  
Daniel M. O'Keefe Sr. '87  
Michael T. Reedy Jr. '00  
William C. Stude III '91  
Ondray Wells, '85  
Philip L. Willman '71  
Lisa Flavin, *Emerita*  
James Switzer '64, *Emeritus*

## Alumni Board

Michael T. Reedy Jr. '00, *President*  
Kevin Hoffman '93, *Vice President*  
Kevin McAtee '97, *Secretary*  
Nick Ahlering '04  
Teddy Altepeter '09  
Jake Bealke '98  
Dave Binz '01  
Alex Borchert '02  
Tom Byrne '85  
Tom Cummings '89, *Past President*  
Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02  
Jim Ferrick '87  
Charlie Garvin '76  
Anthony Gennaoui '99  
Jim Havel '09  
Ted Horan '04  
Andrew Iqbal '03  
Chris Kerckhoff Sr. '68  
Ted Lane '08  
Ryan McDonald '99, *Past President*  
Abbot Gregory Mohrman, O.S.B., '76  
Gerard Mudd '75  
Jack O'Brien '12  
T.J. Redmond '99  
Eric Stange '14  
Cartan Sumner Jr. '83  
Patrick Thornton '02  
Matt Wagner '90, *Past President*  
Ryan Wehking '08  
Ondray Wells '85  
Jimmy Williams '79  
Phil Willman '71

## Saint Louis Priory School Leadership Council

Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02  
*Headmaster*  
frcuthbert@priory.org

Mike Nickolai '03  
*Associate Headmaster*  
mnickolai@priory.org

Lise Riet-Lague  
*Assistant Head of School  
for Mission Advancement*  
lrietlague@priory.org

Tim Malecek  
*Assistant Head of School  
for Intellectual Formation*  
tmalecek@priory.org

Scott Welz  
*Assistant Head of School  
for Facilities and Finance,  
CFO of Saint Louis Abbey*  
swelz@priory.org

# YOU'RE INVITED

## SAINT LOUIS ABBEY ICON WORKSHOP

Led by Iconographer **Alex Echeandia Loro, O.S.B.**



### Workshop #1 Mother & Child (Blue Veil)

8 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
June 23 - 27 in the  
Medieval Arts Guild at Priory



### Workshop #2 Mother & Child (Red Veil)

8 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
June 30 - July 4 in the  
Medieval Arts Guild at Priory



**Father Alex** apprenticed in Guatapé, Colombia, studied under Aidan Hart at the Prince of Wales' School of Traditional Art, and completed his training at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv Oblast,

Ukraine. He and Priory Headmaster **Father Cuthbert Elliott, O.S.B., '02**, became friends during their monastic studies in Oxford, England.

All proceeds benefit the monastic community of *Maria de La Santisima Trinidad in Lurin Peru*.

Workshops include materials, refreshments, and lunch. Each student will take home his or her completed icon! Space is limited. 14 students per workshop.

**\$750** per workshop

**\$700** per workshop for Early Bird registration on or before May 28, 2025

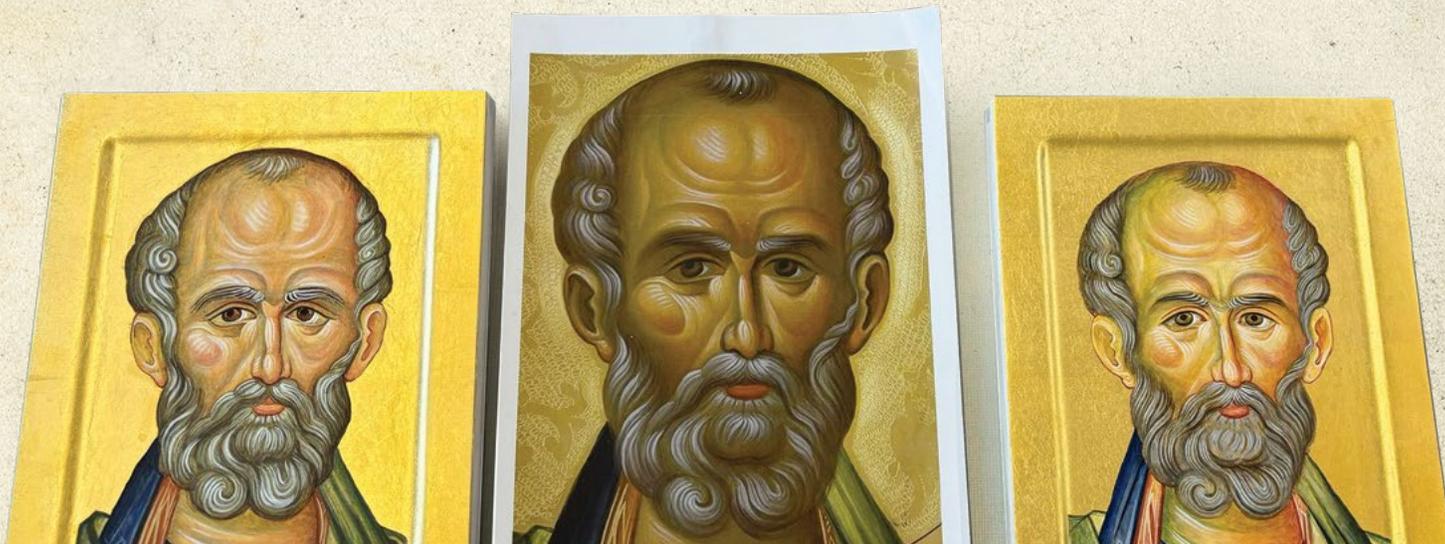
**\$650** per workshop for students (must be 18 or older with a valid student ID)

All registrations except Early Bird are due no later than June 3.

Make checks payable to: Saint Louis Abbey (Memo: Icon Class) or Venmo to @STLPriory (Memo: Icon Class)

### Questions? Contact:

Ann Weinerth  
Saint Louis Priory School  
314.434.3690, ext. 139  
aweinerth@priory.org





**SAINT LOUIS  
PRIORY SCHOOL**

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St. Louis, MO 63141-8522

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SAVE THE DATE

**MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2025**

HOSTED BY THE ALUMNI BOARD

**Glen Echo Country Club**  
3401 Lucas and Hunt Road  
St. Louis, MO 63121

Sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information, visit [www.priory.org/golf](http://www.priory.org/golf) or contact Bridget Mallon at 314.434.3690, ext. 326 or [bmallon@priory.org](mailto:bmallon@priory.org).



**PRIORY  
GOLF  
SCRAMBLE**

